

Terms of reference for the preparation and implementation of projects under the Assistance Programme¹

Introduction

1. This document contains the terms of reference for the preparation and implementation of projects under the Assistance Programme. They are intended to ensure clarity of procedures, tasks and responsibilities so as to increase effectiveness and transparency, to improve monitoring and evaluation.

Preliminary considerations

2. In accordance with the Assistance Programme² (CP.TEIA/2004/2), adopted by the Conference of the Parties in 2004, the secretariat of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, being part of the secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and guided by the Bureau and the Working Group on Implementation, is responsible for coordinating and managing activities under the Assistance Programme.

3. Guided by the relevant UN rules and regulations and ECE procedures, and taking into account the relevant decisions taken by the Conference of the Parties the secretariat manages the Assistance Programme activities in such a way as to best address the needs of the beneficiary countries, which are expressed in the approved project proposal.

I Submission of project proposals

4. Countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, which have qualified for the implementation phase of the Assistance Programme, can submit project proposals through their competent authorities and/or through their focal points. They should do so following the Strategic Approach of the Assistance Programme and using the related Assistance Programme's tools.³

5. Project proposals should be prepared according to the "Template for the submission of project proposals under the Assistance Programme".⁴

6. Project proposals need to be submitted to the Working Group on Implementation, through the secretariat, and should be accompanied by an updated self-assessment on the status of implementation of the requirements of the Convention⁵ and an action plan, describing steps which need to be taken to address gaps identified in the self-assessment.

II Review of the substance of the project proposal

7. The Working Group on Implementation reviews the substance of the project proposals, ensuring their consistency with the updated self-assessment and updated action

¹ At their joint meeting (Boothle, 27–28 November 2013), the Convention's Bureau and Working Group on Implementation discussed and subsequently adopted the current document.

² International supported Assistance Programme.

³ Available from: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/industrial-accidents/areas-of-work/assistance-programme/envteiaapttools.html>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Even if a beneficiary country is not a Party to the Convention.

plan. The Working Group reviews also whether the project proposal has been prepared according to the template mentioned in paragraph 5.

8. The Working Group, when reviewing the project proposals, should also seek that those proposals would not duplicate past or on-going activities in the country, including those implemented outside the framework of the Convention.⁶ The Working Group should additionally consider cost-effectiveness and encourage cooperation between beneficiary countries resulting in joint events on related topic.

9. Based on the results of the review, the Working Group may:

- Decide whether the project proposal is suitable for implementation under the Assistance Programme;
- Ask the submitting country to provide additional information or clarification, as appropriate;

10. The Working Group informs the Bureau, through the secretariat, about its findings regarding project proposals.

III Approval of the project proposal

11. The Bureau approves project proposals that are found by the Working Group to be suitable for implementation under the Assistance Programme if adequate resources (financial and human) for the implementation of the projects are available, taking into account other commitments in relation to activities under the workplan and allotted funds for extrabudgetary staff.

12. If adequate resources (financial and human) for the implementation of a project are not available, the Bureau will endeavour to identify additional financial and human resources required for its implementation.

13. If different project proposals have been submitted at the same time and the resources required to implement them do not match those available, the Bureau will assign priority to proposals submitted by Parties to the Convention. Furthermore, higher attention will be given to proposals submitted by more than one Party/country.

14. The Bureau will inform the submitting country and the Working Group, through the secretariat, about its decision and arrangements for the implementation of the project.

15. The Bureau and the Working Group have the overall responsibility vis-à-vis the Conference of the Parties to ensure that the objectives of the approved projects are realistic and achievable.

16. The ECE secretariat:

(a) Negotiates an agreement with donor(s), in case additional financial resources will be sought for a given project. Communication with donors should be carried out in one of the ECE official languages, preferably in English. To this end, both the secretariat and donor(s) should identify a contact person;

(b) Hires additional staff if additional resources/expertise are required.

⁶ According to the Benchmark document ((ECE/CP.TEIA/2010/6), also activities and projects in the areas of work covered by the Convention, but organised under different frameworks, should be included in the self-assessment and action plan.

IV Project implementation

17. The beneficiary country(ies) has (have) the responsibility for the implementation of the project and will identify an executing agency to implement the project's activities.

18. The ECE secretariat has the overall responsibility to manage and monitor the use of resources under the Assistance Programme and to oversee their efficient use under each project. It is also responsible for the oversight of the project implementation.

Preparatory and administrative steps

19. The Executing agency(ies):

(a) Draws up an implementation plan including timeframe and submits it to the secretariat for approval. The implementation plan should include:

- The name and contact details of the project coordinator;
- Tasks and activities to be implemented, specific objectives to be achieved, deadlines and timeframe;
- The procedures to be followed if any modification of the project implementation plan is needed;
- The procedures for reporting (reporting on substance and financial reporting).

(b) Supports the secretariat in drawing up documents and providing information needed for the preparation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).⁷

20. The ECE secretariat:

(a) Reviews the implementation plan, including the timeframe, and all the documents needed for the creation of MoU, prepared by the executing agency and approves them;

(b) Screens, in case the executing agency is a non-for-profit organisation, the identified executing agency according to the ECE practices, based on references, statements of financial sustainability, and a certificate of registration in the country of origin;

(c) Carries out administrative procedures to transfer funds to the executing agency, when needed, and on the basis of the abovementioned terms of reference.

Project execution

21. The Executing agency timely implements the project and its specific activities in accordance with the agreed versions of the implementation plan and its timeframe as well as the terms of reference and the budget.

22. The ECE secretariat checks at regular intervals that the implementation plan and the terms of reference for specific activities are implemented according to the agreed timeframe and budget. The secretariat will also check whether corrective actions are needed and it will keep the Bureau and Working Group informed accordingly.

23. In the case of large-scale projects (in terms of duration and/or resources involved, especially when more than one country is involved) the Bureau may recommend creating an advisory group to advise the beneficiary country(ies) on the implementation of the project. The advisory group may be composed of national project coordinator(s), representative(s) of executing agency(ies), members of the Bureau and/or of the Working Group on Implementation, the ECE secretariat and donor(s).

⁷ The secretariat will be in contact with the countries and/or with the executing agencies concerning the documents needed to prepare MoUs and other documentation needed for the project.

V Reporting and possible evaluation

24. The executing agency drafts a project report on substance, including an assessment to which extent the objectives of the project are achieved. The report should be drafted in one of the ECE languages, preferably in English. It should also contain Table 3 attached to the Benchmarks document - containing the indicators and criteria and the templates for self-assessments and action plans⁸, filled in with the summary of the results of the project and should be submitted to the Working Group on Implementation, through the secretariat.

25. The Working Group assesses the report to which extent the project achieved its objectives and informs the Bureau accordingly, through the secretariat. If the project objectives appear not to have been achieved from the content of the report, the Working Group will request the executive agency to amend the report to demonstrate how the objectives have been achieved or to substantiate the reasons why the objectives have not been achieved.

26. The executing agency also submits a financial report, according to the MoU and sends it to the secretariat for approval.

27. The beneficiary country presents the results of the project at a CoP-Meeting.

28. The ECE secretariat reports on the use of financial resources under the Assistance Programme and in relation to specific projects to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and to the Bureau. The secretariat also reports to external donors according to the agreements set up with them as well as according to the UN rules and regulations and ECE procedures as well as practices.

29. In the case of projects for which the Bureau or external donor(s) decide that an evaluation is needed, the secretariat will engage an independent external evaluator, using funds set aside for that purpose within the project.

⁸ Benchmarks for the implementation of the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (ECE/CP.TEIA/2010/6), available from: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/industrial-accidents/areas-of-work/assistance-programme/envteiaapttools.html>.