



**National Focal Points (NFP) for Environmental  
Emergencies  
Concept Note  
Rosersberg Initiative Working Group  
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**1. Rosersberg Initiative – Thematic Area 3: operational aspects of providing and receiving international environmental emergency assistance**

Having an officially designated National Focal Point (NFP) for Environmental Emergencies is a key aspect for **countries** in order to provide and/or receive international environmental emergency assistance in the most efficient and effective way.

**2. Definition**

A NFP has two main functions:

- To provide adequate information on emergencies, disaster alert and notification to the environmental emergency response system (Joint Environment Unit, World Health Organisation, European Commission, etc) and to process requests and/or offers of international assistance for environmental emergencies. (*operational*)
- To serve as a communication channel between a national government and the environmental emergency response system for non-emergency related activities, such as institutional and financial matters as for conferences. (*administrative*)

According to national specifics, countries may wish to designate multiple NFP.

**Institutional framework**

A competent national body with decision-making authority over matters that include environmental emergencies, such as Ministries of Environment, National Emergency Committees, Management Centers for Emergencies, Civil Protection Departments, Ministries of Interior, National Relief Organizations, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and other relevant competent authorities.

### **3. Terms of Reference of National Focal Points**

#### **3.1. Operational tasks**

In the event of an environmental emergency, which requires (or may potentially require) international assistance, the NFP shall provide the following correspondence:

- Early-warning
  - Notify promptly and effectively the environmental emergency response system and as required other relevant authorities as soon in the event of a environmental emergency.
- Information
  - Provide available information to the environmental emergency response system on the environmental emergency, including such details as nature of the emergency/accident, details on location and date of the accident and on the needs for assistance.
  - Provide updates on the emergency and the national and international response to the emergency to the environmental emergency response system.
- Request of assistance
  - If international assistance is needed, complete and submit to the Joint Environment Unit the Notification & Request- for- Assistance form. (Annex)
  - Establish and maintain the necessary contacts with other relevant national organizations, in order to ensure that international assistance is duly received and used.
- Offer of assistance
  - Ensure prompt receipt and dissemination, as appropriate, of alerts, notifications and requests for assistance, provided by the Joint Environment Unit
  - Ensure prompt processing of requests of assistance submitted by the Joint Environment Unit
  - Respond quickly to requests for assistance by providing the Joint Environment Unit with information on the availability of expertise and/or resources.
  - Provide details on the expertise and background of the available experts
- Deployment of international experts
  - The NFP of the receiving country shall facilitate activities of the international emergency response teams on the ground, such as field visit, coordination meetings, (de)briefing with authorities.
  - The NFP of the offering country shall act as a focal point for the deployment of the expert(s) through the Joint Environment Unit and arrange practical details, as required or the NFP will ensure direct (bilateral) deployment of the experts to the affected area

#### **3.2. Administrative tasks**

- Disseminate, as appropriate, reports, brochures and other information received from the Joint Environment Unit
- Represent country at meetings of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies, and ensure an appropriate follow-up on its recommendations, as for example the Rosersberg initiative.

- Update contact details in case of changes in the professional situation of the NFP or in case of practical changes in contact details

#### 4. Other systems

##### 4.1. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident

###### Article 2: Notification and information

*In the event of an accident specified in article 1 (hereinafter referred to as a "nuclear accident"), the State Party referred to in that article shall:*

- forthwith notify, directly or through the International Atomic Energy Agency (hereinafter referred to as the "Agency"), those States which are or may be physically affected as specified in article 1 and the Agency of the nuclear accident, its nature, the time of its occurrence and its exact location where appropriate; and*
- promptly provide the States referred to in sub-paragraph (a), directly or through the Agency, and the Agency with such available information relevant to minimizing the radiological consequences in those States, as specified in article 5*

*Article 7: Competent authorities and points of contact:*

- Each State Party shall make known to the Agency and to other States Parties, directly or through the Agency, its competent authorities and point of contact responsible for issuing and receiving the notification and information referred to in article 2. Such points of contact and a focal point within the Agency shall be available continuously.*
- Each State Party shall promptly inform the Agency of any changes that may occur in the information referred to in paragraph 1.*
- The Agency shall maintain an up-to-date list of such national authorities and points of contact as well as points of contact of relevant international organizations and shall provide it to States Parties and Member States and to relevant international organizations.*

Experiences:

- First responsibility to identify is with country.
- IAEA sends out a yearly reminder for changing contact details

##### 4.2 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA): Convention on Assistance in the case of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency

*Article 4: Competent authorities and points of contact*

- Each State Party shall make known to the Agency and to other States Parties, directly or through the Agency, its competent authorities and point of contact authorized to make and receive requests for and to accept offers of assistance. Such points of contact and a focal point within the Agency shall be available continuously.*
- Each State Party shall promptly inform the Agency of any changes that may occur in the information referred to in paragraph 1.*

3. The Agency shall regularly and expeditiously provide to States Parties, Member States and relevant international organizations the information referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2.

#### 4.3 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents:

##### **Points of contact for industrial accident notification and requests for assistance**

“In the event of a major accident with transboundary effects it is crucial to notify promptly and effectively all potentially affected countries to enable them to activate the necessary response measures. Furthermore, efficient provision of international assistance to respond to such an accident may reduce its consequences.

*The UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents calls on Parties to establish and operate compatible and efficient industrial accident notification systems at appropriate levels. It also provides for rendering mutual assistance to minimize the effects of an accident. In this context, the Convention obliges Parties to designate or establish, at the national level, one point of contact for the purpose of industrial accident notifications and one for the purpose of mutual assistance – preferably these should be the same.*

#### 4.4 The Convention of the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)

Intended to strengthen national measures for the protection and ecologically sound management of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. The Convention obliges Parties to prevent, control and reduce water pollution from point and non-point sources.

The Convention also includes provisions for monitoring, research and development, consultations, warning and alarm systems, mutual assistance, institutional arrangements, and the exchange and protection of information, as well as public access to information.

#### 4.5 Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy" or, in short, the EU Water Framework Directive

*(No requirement for notification)*

## 5. Way forward

### 5.1. Proposal for Training

Objective 1: Guarantee that NFP has sufficient knowledge on the international system to respond to environmental emergencies and the Joint Environment Unit in particular

- Send all information in hard-copy format
- Training, such as SimEx, online training
- Invitation for AGEE
- Send all information in hard-copy format
- Involve in Rosersberg Initiative

Objective 2: Guarantee that the NFP understands his ToR in depth

- Regional/global meetings/workshops on what is expected from them, for example in the framework of ASEAN, UNDAC...

## **5.2. Proposal for Update**

Objective: Guarantee that the contact details are always updated so no time is lost in case of emergencies

- Making the position of NFP in a country official
- Establish and maintain a database for NFP
- Send out a regular update (six-months, yearly?)