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ADVISORY GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES

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## **Environmental Emergencies Training Roll-out Strategy**

Note by the Secretariat

### **Introduction**

This paper provides an overview of the development and content of the pilot Environmental Emergencies Training developed by the Netherlands and Sweden as part of the Rosersberg Initiative. Based on the experience gained with this first training, the paper outlines the way forward on the roll-out of the training for interested supporting countries, including cost estimates for the organization of a training course.

The Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) is invited to discuss the proposal for the roll-out of the Environmental Emergencies Training as laid out in this paper, propose amendments if necessary, and to endorse the roll-out strategy.

### **Good humanitarian donorship**

The principles and good practices of humanitarian donorship *‘request that implementing humanitarian organisations fully adhere to good practice and are committed to promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in implementing humanitarian action’*<sup>1</sup>. This implies that countries and the United Nations (in this case the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit – henceforth the Joint Environment Unit) should make environmental experts aware of the latest developments in the field of environmental emergency response and prepare them for their tasks in the field under hardship conditions. It was this implication that led to the idea of the development of an Environmental Emergencies Training.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.goodhumanitariandonorship.org/>

## **Rosersberg Initiative**

The aim of the Rosersberg Initiative, launched at the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the AGEE, is to strengthen the global regime that governs environmental emergency response and preparedness. A Working Group was subsequently created for countries to jointly implement activities under the Rosersberg Initiative.

At its first meeting, from 3 to 5 December 2007, in Tunis, Tunisia, the Working Group agreed to undertake a number of specific tasks, and as such, the Netherlands agreed to develop a training module for experts in environmental emergencies in close collaboration with Sweden (for a full overview of the Advisory Group and Rosersberg Initiative, see document EU/AG/54).

## **Steering Committee and Project Team**

Following the meeting in December 2007, a Steering Group consisting of representatives from the Crisis Management Department of the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment of the Netherlands, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency<sup>2</sup> and the Joint Environment Unit was established. The Steering Committee assembled a Project Team to develop the curriculum and present the first Environmental Emergencies Training course.

Based on the identified objectives, the Project Team was responsible for the overall design of the course and the development of the course curriculum. A combination of existing and newly developed material was used for the curriculum. The course was implemented by members of the Project Team. However, due to the array and specialized nature of the subject matter, it was also necessary to incorporate additional expertise.

## **Aim**

The overarching aim of the Environmental Emergencies Training is to strengthen the capacity of environmental experts' knowledge, skills and understanding of the specific circumstances and conditions of international deployments for environmental emergency response, to enable them to respond effectively during an international deployment in an austere environment throughout the disaster mission cycle of preparedness, mobilization, operations, demobilization and post-mission.

The course requires that prospective candidates are suitably qualified within a specific environmental discipline (e.g., sampling, analysis, assessment) to be eligible to participate. Therefore, the course aims to produce well-trained environmental experts who:

- are able to apply their skills and expertise in a safe, effective, integrated and multidisciplinary response to environmental emergencies to support the affected government and other stakeholders with the identification of contaminants;
- conduct assessments of current and anticipated consequences;
- provide advice on response activities; and,
- facilitate appropriate requests for additional support and facilitate a streamlined transition from response to rehabilitation.

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<sup>2</sup> On 1 January 2009, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency was merged into the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency.

## **Course objectives**

After participating in the training, environmental experts

- Are ensured that when deployed on international missions, they have a common level of understanding regarding the response partners, coordination mechanisms, and roles and responsibilities of the relevant stakeholders;
- Have been provided with awareness, understanding and knowledge of the humanitarian coordination system as well as with United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) led humanitarian operations;
- Are familiarized with the purpose and function of the UNDAC Reception Departure Centre and On-Site Operations Coordination Centre;
- Are familiarized with issues and principles related to safety and security during missions, the various types of environmental emergencies, and have received an orientation to the challenging nature of field conditions in disaster response environments;
- Are familiarized with key international environmental response tools and resources, in particular the Hazard Identification Tool, the Flash Environment Assessment Tool and the Environmental Assessment Module of the International Humanitarian Partnership;
- Are familiarized with the backstopping services available through BOT-mi (in the Netherlands) and RIB (in Sweden);
- Are familiarized with the principles of effective information management and are provided with an awareness of how to interact with the media.

## **Participants**

The participants of the pilot Environmental Emergencies Training course came primarily from two distinct groups. The Swedish Rescue Services Agency sent nine environmental generalists who form part of their roster for international deployment as associate experts to the UNDAC teams. The Netherlands sent 15 participants from their Institute for Public Health and the Environment (as well as two participants from the Environment Ministry) who will deploy as part of the mobile laboratory for on-site sampling and analysis. There was also one participant from Danish Emergency Management Agency. Including the trainers, there was a total of 35 participants who successfully completed the pilot Environmental Emergencies Training.

## **Curriculum**

The pilot Environmental Emergencies Training curriculum had to address the requirements of two separate target groups from the Netherlands and Sweden. The course was therefore designed using a combination of a core curriculum for all participants as well as specialist modules catering for specific target groups.

The course contained the following modules:

<b>Humanitarian Coordination System</b>	<b>Environmental Assessment Module (EAM) – Awareness</b>
<b>UNDAC Mission Cycle</b>	<b>Field Communications</b>
<b>Safety and Security</b>	<b>Stress Management</b>
<b>Introduction to Environmental Emergency Response</b>	<b>Cultural Awareness</b>
<b>Field Conditions in Disasters</b>	<b>Deployment Considerations</b>
<b>Basic Safety in the Field</b>	<b>Media Awareness</b>
<b>Hazard Identification Tool (HIT)</b>	<b>Information Management</b>
<b>Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) – Awareness &amp; Basic</b>	<b>On Site Operations Coordination Centre</b>
<b>Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) – Advanced</b>	<b>Reception Departure Centre</b>
<b>BOT-mi</b>	

### **Course evaluation**

Based on the very positive and constructive feedback received from participants, trainers and the Project Team, the pilot Environmental Emergencies Training was considered a success. Through the implementation of future training courses, a broader audience will be reached, thereby contributing greatly to the overall objective of strengthening the international environmental emergency response system, as well as enhancing the resilience of vulnerable countries.

The importance of continued efforts in the roll-out of the Environmental Emergencies Training cannot be overemphasized, and therefore participants of the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the AGEE are encouraged to support this initiative, as described in the next section.

### **The roll-out framework**

The Steering Committee for Environmental Emergencies Training held a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland on 3 December 2008 to evaluate the pilot course and propose ways forward to roll-out the training to other interested countries. It requested the Joint Environment Unit to develop a roll-out strategy to be presented for discussion and adoption at the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the AGEE.

The roll-out framework has been set up based on three guiding principles as suggested by the Steering Committee:

- The Joint Environment Unit should be the custodian of the Environmental Emergencies Training;

- The Environmental Emergencies Training should focus on strengthening the multilateral response;
- Relevant outcomes of the Rosersberg Initiative should be fully integrated in the Environmental Emergencies Training.

The first suggested principle is based on the fact that the Joint Environment Unit, as the core mechanism for environmental emergencies response of the United Nations, is best placed to be the custodian of the Environmental Emergencies Training. The Environmental Emergencies Training is not a static training, and experiences from response missions, as well as from trainings, should feed into a process of continuous improvement of the training curriculum. A system can be created by evaluating each course and ensuring the integration of lessons learnt into the next course. This system should be managed by individual countries organizing the training; the overall ownership of the process should always rest with the United Nations as the coordinator for the multilateral response.

As second principle, the focus of the Environmental Emergencies Training should primarily be on strengthening the capacities of countries that will deploy their environmental experts on multilateral response missions. In particular, countries that have well-functioning deployment mechanisms for their environmental experts are encouraged to train their staff through the Environmental Emergencies Training. While fully recognizing that many training needs exist for those countries that do not have deployment mechanisms, the aim of this course is to ensure that those experts who do provide technical assistance meet minimum standards and are fully aware of how the multilateral response to large disasters works, in order to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness.

There are a number of Rosersberg Initiative outcomes that have particular relevance to the Environmental Emergencies Training and therefore should be fully incorporated in the training programme – the third principle of the training roll-out. The ‘Best Practice Guidelines on the provision and receipt of international assistance to environmental emergencies’, including the establishment of National Focal Points, should be considered and ideally be implemented by countries organizing an Environmental Emergencies Training.

In addition to the framework of three guiding principles, it should be noted that the training should be demand-driven, based on existing needs from supporting countries to improve the response preparedness of their national environmental experts. To ensure a high-level commitment from the country intending to organize a training, it is suggested that requests be addressed to the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator/Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, or to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

### **Costs and responsibilities**

Costs for organizing a training should in principle be borne by the organizing country. Based on cost estimates of similar OCHA training courses, such as the Civil-Military Training courses and the UNDAC induction courses, a cost estimate has been made for the Environmental Emergencies Training. Cost-sharing opportunities by more than one country can obviously be considered on a bilateral or multilateral basis.

The following responsibilities for the host country (HC) and the Joint Environment Unit (JEU), and their cost estimates, have been identified. A detailed workplan and timeline should be drawn

up for each individual training, based on the guidance provided below, and agreed upon between the host country and the Joint Environment Unit.

The cost estimates are based on approximately 25 participants, five trainers/support staff and or Joint Environment Unit staff, for six working days.

<b>Organizational item</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Cost estimate (in USD)</b>
Request for Environmental Emergencies Training	HC	--
Agreement with host-country	JEU/HC	--
Identification and selection of participants	HC	--
Accommodation (including breakfast)	HC	15,000
Catering arrangements (lunch, dinner, drinks)	HC	7,000
Office supplies (printing course materials, name tags, binders, CD-ROMs or memory sticks, etc)	HC	1,000
Conference room (including facilities)	HC	1,500
Course facilitator	HC	5,000
Course coordinator	HC	5,000
International environmental expert	JEU	--
JEU staff	JEU	--
Opening reception and course closure	HC	1,000
Transport	HC	8,000
Sundry	HC	1,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>44,500</b>

### **On-line awareness course**

The Environmental Emergencies Training Steering Committee also discussed the possibility of developing an on-line awareness raising course on environmental emergencies. A proposal for this project has been prepared by the Joint Environment Unit as part of the activities under the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies.

### **Technical Expert course by the European Commission**

The Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission organizes, through its member states, a wide range of courses for civil protection, such as Operational Management courses, High Level Coordination courses, and Assessment Mission courses. For its next training cycle starting in June 2009, a new training course has been developed for Technical Experts. In principle, four courses will be organized for a total of 84 participants. The Technical Expert course will be organized by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency and is aimed at, for example, marine pollution experts, environmental experts (in particular, experts on landslides, waste management and dam stability), logisticians, and medical staff. The Technical Expert course follows the same principle as the UN Environmental Emergencies Training by preparing specialists in a particular field with the necessary awareness and skills to perform their tasks well in an international disaster setting. It is expected that this initiative by the MIC will greatly enhance the quantity and quality of European environmental experts for international deployments.

### **Conclusions**

The pilot Environmental Emergencies Training was a successful event and clearly met the needs of supporting countries in their deployments of environmental experts to affected crisis areas. It

has set standards in terms of assessment methodologies like the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool, and builds upon existing trainings such as UNDAC.

The next step is now to enrol more countries from the multilateral environmental emergencies response support network and develop a well-prepared cadre of trained experts worldwide. Suggestions for this roll-out have been proposed in the paper, and the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies is invited to discuss, propose amendments if necessary, and to endorse the roll-out strategy.