



**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
(OCHA)**

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

JOINT UNEP/OCHA ENVIRONMENT UNIT (JEU)



EU/AG/57
22 April 2009
English only

ADVISORY GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES
8th Meeting co-organized with the Monitoring and Information Centre of the European Commission
Brussels, 6-8 May 2009

Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies

Note by the Secretariat

Introduction

The Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies was established in 1997, and has not been used actively since its inception. The purpose of the Trust Fund, as per its terms of reference, “is to receive and account for contributions from Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and other sources and to finance or co-finance activities and projects in the field of Environmental Emergencies.” (See Annex)

This paper provides the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE) with information on the Trust Fund, as well as an overview of means and ways for countries to support environmental emergencies activities, for which the Trust Fund can be a supplementary funding mechanism.

Background

Following recommendations of the second meeting of the AGEE in 1996, the proposal was presented to UNEP’s Governing Council at its 19th session. In accordance with the Governing Council decision 19/9 E, urging Governments and international organizations to contribute to such an initiative, then UNEP’s Executive Director, established the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies in September 1997.

Options for support

There are many mechanisms for countries and organizations to support the response to environmental emergencies. It is envisaged that the Trust Fund will start playing a complementary role to these funding mechanisms, allowing for a maximum of opportunities to generate support.

Firstly, in-kind support can be provided through joining the Joint Environment Unit’s network of supporting countries and organizations that supply expertise and equipment. The system and

resources for this type of support are described in document EU/AG/51, *Expanding the Resource Network for Environmental Emergency Response*, prepared for the eighth meeting of the AGEE.

Secondly, countries support the work of the Joint Environment Unit financially through their contributions to UNEP and OCHA. Both organizations receive a small percentage of the regular budget of the United Nations (currently ranging from 4 to 6% of their respective total budgets). The remainder of their budget is funded through voluntary contributions administered through trust funds. For OCHA, the Trust Fund for the Strengthening of OCHA and the Trust Fund for Disaster Relief are the main funds, while for UNEP this is the Environment Fund.

A third option to support activities in the field of environmental emergencies is through secondments of staff to the Joint Environment Unit. Most recently, France and Norway have seconded staff, through their respective programmes for Junior Professional Officers, while in the Joint Environment Unit's earlier days, the European Union has also contributed with secondments.

Hosting a future meeting of the AGEE is also a way to provide support. The AGEE is the key international forum for dialogue on environmental emergencies, bringing together policy makers and practitioners from around the world. Costs involved in organizing such a meeting may include support of the travel of participants from developing countries, interpretation, hospitality, accommodation and transport.

The Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies fits in neatly with the above-mentioned options for countries to support the work for multilateral response to environmental emergencies. The Joint Environment Unit receives from UNEP and OCHA a budget for yearly salaries of its small staff of three professionals and a secretary, as well as a small amount for activities. The activities and projects carried out with finances from the Trust Fund could be used to support additional projects that complement and go above and beyond the Joint Environment Unit's proposed activities, meeting the need for continuously improving vital response services. These proposed activities could necessitate the hiring of additional staff and/or consultants.

Also, the Trust Fund can form an additional tool for the Joint Environment Unit to continue its activities through dedicated fundraising, if annual budget allocations from its parent organizations are affected by a global financial crisis.

Project proposals

The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit will prepare detailed project proposals, following the outcomes of the 8th meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies for the consideration of countries.

Annex: Terms of Reference for the Administration of the Trust Fund for Environmental Emergencies

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE TRUST FUND FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES

1. The above General Trust Fund is to be established in response to the requests made by the Ministry of Russian Federation for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters (letter dated 5 August 1996 attached herewith) as well as the Second Meeting of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (Report of the meeting attached).
2. The Trust Fund to be established should be effective September 1, 1997 with a no fixed expiry date.
3. The Trust Fund is established in response to the Governing Council decision 19/9 E and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the United Nations, all relevant policies and procedures promulgated by the Secretary General of the United Nations. The purpose of the Trust Fund is to receive and account for contributions from Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations and other sources and to finance or co-finance activities and projects in the field of Environmental Emergencies.
4. The Executive Director shall maintain and administer the Trust Funds in accordance with the United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules. Personnel engaged for the purposes of the Trust Fund shall be recruited and administered in accordance with the provisions of the regulation and rules of UNEP.
5. Payment to the Trust Fund shall be deposited in convertible currency into the UNEP Trust Fund Account No. 001-1-507001, International Agencies Banking, Chase Manhattan Bank, 270 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.
6. All contributions received into the trust funds and not immediately required for the financing of project activities, shall be invested at the discretion of the United Nations and income earned shall be credited to the Trust Fund.
7. UNEP may draw on the sums deposited in the Trust Fund as required to meet the cost of activities and projects consistent with the purpose of the Trust Fund.
8. No commitments against the resources of the Trust Fund may be made in advance of receipt of corresponding income.
9. At the end of a calendar year of a financial period, UNEP may transfer any uncommitted balance of appropriations to the following calendar year.
10. At the end of a calendar year, all surplus funds will be dealt with as agreed between UNEP, SCBD and the contributors by exchange of letters.

11. In accordance with United Nations rules, UNEP shall deduct from the income of the Trust Funds a programme support charge equal to 13 percent of the expenditures charged to the Trust Fund in respect of activities and projects financed under the Trust Fund.
12. Annual accounts of the Trust Fund shall be prepared and audited in accordance with normal United Nations procedures and sent to the Secretariat as soon as the annual financial report is available.