Terms of Reference of the International Network for Education and Training on Emergency Preparedness and Response (iNET-EPR)

1. Introduction

The responsibility for establishing and sustaining a modern, flexible and professional emergency preparedness and response (EPR) system lies with the State. Member States have requested the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to work towards the establishment of an International Network for Education and Training on Emergency Preparedness and Response (iNET-EPR) to facilitate the sharing of information and resources and to promote collaboration and coordination in EPR-related matters among Member States that have, or intend to have, capacity building centres (CBCs) and those that do not have, but wish to benefit from, other States’ experience in this area.

2. Mission and Objectives

2.1 Mission

The mission of the iNET-EPR is to assist Member States by establishing a mutually supportive network of academic educators and practical trainers. It also aims to contribute to global efforts to create, enhance and sustain capacity building in EPR, including an effective and collaborative network of CBC-EPRs.

2.2 Objectives

The main objectives are to encourage cooperation, support joint activities, identify best practices and to strengthen information sharing and expertise exchange among participants in the iNET-EPR.

The Network will bring together academics, education organizations, training organizations, universities and professionals offering, or planning to offer, educational programmes in EPR as part of a collaborative platform. This will enable the provision of education and training; the establishment of a supportive network of academic educators, trainers and professionals in capacity building in EPR; and the development and exchange of teaching and training materials. It will also facilitate the provision of degrees and certification in EPR and provide a model curriculum for an EPR postgraduate programme.

To achieve these objectives, a wide range of activities will be carried out related to human resource development, technical and scientific support, materials for educational and training activities, outreach activities, exchange of information and best practices related to EPR programmes. The Network will provide a solid, mainly web-based, platform for coordination and collaboration with other networks and initiatives in safety and security issues in the EPR domain.

3. Structure and Management

3.1 Membership

Network membership is open to all organizations and entities in IAEA Member States involved in education and training related to EPR. Requests for membership shall be made in writing to the IAEA’s Incident and Emergency Centre (IEC) through a State’s official channel for formal correspondence with the IAEA Secretariat.

Observer status, upon request through the official channels, may be granted upon the decision of the relevant bodies, on a case-by-case basis, and in line with the relevant documents for such status in the General Conference and Board of Governors meetings.
A list of network members and observers will be made available to all network members, and regularly updated.

3.2 Points of Contact

In accordance with IEC custom and practice, each Member State will designate one or more Point(s) of contact (PoC) for the network, indicating stated preference for the specific working groups in which they wish to be included. The PoC(s) will act as the main interface with the IAEA Secretariat, through official channels with the IEC, and will be responsible for managing their profile on EPR capacity building on education and training programmes on the network’s portal. The PoC(s) is (are) expected to have good knowledge of the State’s EPR human resource development and technical and scientific support programmes and to carry out specific tasks in this regard.

3.3 Working Groups

Working groups will be established to cover different functional areas in EPR and to carry out the activities of the network. The number of working groups will be flexible and determined as work is progressing. Working groups will be open to all members of the iNET-EPR and determined by Member States themselves. Each working group will be led by a Chair and a Vice-Chair and will be made up of representatives from the network members.

Working groups will hold at least one working session per year during the Annual Meeting of the Network. PoCs will be expected to contribute regularly to one or more of the working groups. Network members may assign additional representatives to participate in other working groups, as may be permitted by their internal resources and approval processes.

At the initial stage, it is envisaged that three working groups will be established:

- Working Group A: Coordination, Collaboration and Good Practices;
- Working Group B: Education and academics; and
- Working Group C: Information Sharing, Promotion, and Outreach.

The roles, functions and activities will be defined by the working groups.

3.4 Network Bureau

The iNET-EPR Network Bureau will be the leading management body of the Network and will comprise the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Network, as well as the Chair and Vice-Chair of each working group as chosen by the groups’ members. The Bureau will ensure coordination among working groups and their members, including through regular meetings, correspondence and periodic teleconference calls. The minutes of each meeting and teleconference calls will be made available to all members of the Network.

3.4.1 Network Chair and Vice-Chair

The Network Chair will coordinate the Network’s activities with the IAEA Secretariat, support working group activities, lead the Bureau in setting the overall strategy of the Network, track the overall status of implementation of Network activities and serve as Chair of the Annual Meeting and other meetings. The Chair will issue a report at the end of each Annual Meeting and other meetings. The Chair will be supported by the Vice-Chair, who may also represent the Chair in the event that the Chair is unavailable.
3.4.2 Working Group Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Working Group Chairs will lead and coordinate the activities of the respective group, communicate tasks to be completed and report on progress in implementing working group activities at the Annual Meeting and/or Bureau Meeting. Working Group Vice-Chairs will support the Chairs in their roles and may also represent the Chair if the Chair is unavailable. Working Group Chairs and Vice-Chairs are also expected to support the Network Chair and Vice-Chair in setting the overall Network strategy.

3.4.3 Selection and Terms of Office for Bureau Members

The Network Bureau will be selected from and by the Network members at its Annual Meeting. The term of the Network Chair and Vice-Chair and for each Working Group Chair and Vice-Chair will be two years. Individuals serving in such positions may be re-elected by the network members to serve for an additional term. The maximum term for a person in one of these positions will not exceed two terms.

When the Network Chair or Working Group Chair position becomes vacant the Network Vice-Chair or Working Group Vice-Chair will, as is customary, be first offered the opportunity to replace them to ensure continuity.

If the Vice-Chair chooses not to take on the role of Chair, the Bureau may nominate an interim candidate among the other Bureau members or from the broader network membership to take the position of the Chair. If the Network Vice-Chair or Working Group Vice-Chair position chooses not to perform those roles during the intersessional period, an interim candidate will be nominated from the members of the Bureau or from the broader network membership to take that position until the next Annual Meeting.

The time of service as interim Network Chair or Working Group Chair will not count against the two-year term for these positions.

4. Network Meetings

The iNET-EPR will hold normally one Annual Meeting organized by the IAEA, which will be open for participation to all IAEA Member States. These meetings will serve as the decision-making mechanism of the iNET-EPR. Decision making will normally be by consensus but, if necessary, by simple majority vote from each iNET-EPR member. During these meetings, the Network will hold plenary sessions on key topics of the iNET-EPR, select new Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the Network and for each working group, where appropriate, and convene working group sessions to discuss priorities and planned activities for the upcoming year.

4.1. Bureau Meetings

The Network Bureau will convene meetings limited to the Chairs and Vice-Chairs for the Network and working groups during the year. The objectives of these meetings will be to develop and update the Network’s strategy and to review the implementation of, and propose necessary updates to, working group action plans. In addition, these meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss cooperation with other networks and initiatives and to plan the next meetings. Working group action plans may be updated as necessary in the intersessional period and, as is customary, will be adopted by consensus or simple majority vote. The Network Bureau will take note of these decisions and may make comments as appropriate.

4.2. Ad Hoc Meetings and Activities

The Network may, as needed, organize ad hoc topical, regional or sub-regional meetings in cooperation with the IAEA Secretariat in order to implement specific tasks or activities contained in the
agreed working group action plans. These meetings may also address emerging issues identified by the Secretariat and/or Network Bureau members.

5. Role of the IAEA Secretariat

The IAEA Secretariat will play a coordinating and facilitating role in the iNET-EPR. In support of that role, the IAEA will help convene Network meetings and will support other ad hoc network activities, subject to the availability of resources. The IAEA Secretariat will work with the Bureau to follow and coordinate the activities of the working groups, will provide technical support, and will advise on and provide inputs to long-term network objectives and priorities.

The IAEA Secretariat will inform the Network of relevant decisions taken by the IAEA’s Policy-Making Organs and report on the Network’s activities to the IAEA’s Policy-Making Organs, as appropriate.

5.1. iNET-EPR Portal

The IAEA will offer its existing IT infrastructure to create and manage the iNET-EPR Portal. This portal will provide the Network with a secure web-based platform in order to facilitate the sharing of information, as well as collaboration, among network members.