Project Review Committee (PRC)
Terms of Reference

(Effective 25 January 2010)

In March 2009, UNEP management approved a process by which new projects would henceforth be designed and on-going projects redesigned to implement the 2010-2011 Programme of Work.

In essence, the new process requires that Divisions leading the design and redesign of projects submit the projects to the relevant Subprogramme Coordinator. Subprogramme Coordinators will then liaise with the Quality Assurance Section (QAS) to ensure consistency and quality of projects after which projects will be submitted to the Project Review Committee (PRC) through QAS. The PRC is chaired by the Deputy Executive Director and is comprised of in-house professional staff serving in their individual capacities. This document outlines the terms of reference of the PRC.

Functions

The primary function of the PRC is to ensure compatibility of projects with the Programme of Work and the Programme Frameworks as well as high quality of project design. PRC will typically focus on the topics listed below:

1. Technical quality of a project, its feasibility vis-à-vis stated objectives, timeframes and resources and the approach (es) proposed for management of project risks.
2. Coherence among the 2010-2011 Programme of Work outputs and Expected Accomplishments, PAG approved programme frameworks and projects.
3. Appropriateness of implementation arrangements and the clarity accorded to the roles and responsibilities of, and budget allocation to, internal and external partners.
4. Commitment to cross-divisional cooperation and the optimal use of UNEP’s divisional and regional office expertise in implementation.
5. Proposed mechanism and/or action for engagement with core stakeholders.
6. Monitoring plan for tracking progress in implementation against outputs and outcomes and respective delivery by divisions and regional offices.
7. Cost effectiveness of proposed resource utilization as described in project budgets and viability in respect of resource mobilization potential.
8. Compatibility of project design to the needs of countries where applicable.
9. Potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of projects
10. Gender responsiveness
11. Sustainability and replicability--the consideration thereof and measures to be undertaken in this regard.
12. Complementarity with other UNEP projects, planned and ongoing, including those implemented under the GEF.

Composition and Qualifications

The PRC is composed of UNEP professional staff assigned by Division Directors, but who serve on the PRC in their professional capacity. Division Directors will each nominate as many as 4 PRC members who can form a pool of experts to draw upon depending on the subject areas. Based on the nominations, thematic PRC Panels will be formed according to the subject matter of the projects under review.

- PRC is chaired by the Deputy Executive Director
- QAS acts as the secretary to the PRC
- PRC comprises:

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Deputy Executive Director as Chair of the PRC
Secretary of the PRC (QAS)
A representative of QAS
Two staff members with substantive thematic expertise in the subprogramme, who do not have a conflict of interest vis-a-vis the projects under review
The Gender Advisor
A representative of the Corporate Services Section

Responsibilities

All PRC members are expected to review the proposals in advance and be prepared to discuss the proposals in relation to the functions listed above.

The representative of the Corporate Services Section will pay particular attention to the project budget in order to ensure its accuracy, cost effectiveness and feasibility. The Gender Advisor will pay particular attention to whether the project has adequately analyzed and integrated the gender perspective in project development. The QAS representative would pay particular attention to the project logic, examining whether the project approach will achieve the results in the Programme of Work and whether the milestones will enable UNEP to monitor progress towards achieving those results.

PRC, having reviewed a project, shall then decide to:

• recommend the approval of the project to the Chair;
• defer any decision pending receipt of requirement for an amended project, additional information or clarification; or
• not recommend approval of the project.

The Secretary of the PRC will organize meetings from a selected list of members based on the thematic areas of the projects under review. The Secretary will submit projects to the PRC together with all necessary supporting information after ensuring that the projects have been reviewed and cleared by the relevant Subprogramme Coordinator. The Secretary will ensure that adequate advance time is given for PRC members to review the projects and call for the meetings of the PRC. The Secretary will record the decisions of the PRC and follow up on the implementation of these decisions in consultation with the Panel members.

Process

• Managing Divisions submit the projects to the relevant Subprogramme Coordinator
• Subprogramme Coordinators submit projects to the PRC through QAS
• Chair of the PRC makes the selection of thematic specialists for PRC
• Secretary of the PRC shares projects with PRC members and convenes PRC meetings
• Secretary of the PRC shares projects with Regional Directors for their written comments for PRCs’ consideration
• PRC members are given a minimum of 5 working days to review the projects
• PRC members discuss the projects and consolidated comments are forwarded to the Subprogramme Coordinators for their responses and incorporation of comments in the project documents
• The initial PRC meetings are for PRC Panels only to discuss their comments, any differing views they may have on projects under review and agree on a coherent set of comments. Subprogramme Coordinators are welcome to observe and provide a response to queries that may be raised.

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• QAS receives the revised documents with the responses from the Subprogramme Coordinators and reviews and consults the PRC Panel, if necessary, for second round of PRC meetings on any major pending issues.
• If there are comments on the projects that the Subprogramme Coordinator and managing divisions require clarification on, or have a differing view, the Secretary convenes a second PRC meeting and invites Project Managers and Subprogramme Coordinators for consultation with the PRC.
• Secretary of the PRC records the decisions of the PRC and follows up on the implementation of these decisions in consultation with the Panel members.

Figure 1: PRC process