

CONNECT

“Connecting the Network of Networks for Enhanced Communications and Training” Terms of Reference (ToR)

1. Vision

“To provide an integrated internet based experience enabling IAEA Network participants to find needed technical expertise and quality training resources in a timely manner”

2. Purpose

This document provides an overview of CONNECT for IAEA managers and staff and potential CONNECT users in the Member States. The CONNECT background, objectives, activities, and the methods of work are described below.

3. Background

Since 2001, the IAEA has developed the concept of “networks” to facilitate the sharing and exchange of knowledge and experience amongst organizations involved in radioactive waste management and the decommissioning of nuclear facilities. The networks are intended to channel support from Member States (MS) with well-developed programmes to organizations in Member States with nascent or otherwise less well-developed programmes. Network participants include government agencies and private organizations charged with responsibility for managing radioactive wastes and for regulating the management of such wastes; research organizations, universities and non-governmental organizations (with their MS support) may also be represented. Networks are highly effective mechanisms that leverage the collective resources of the community of participants. However, with the growth of the existing IAEA waste management networks has come a proportional increase in the numbers and sophistication of requests for assistance and services. Recent successes with the Waste Technology Networks have resulted in expanded interest across the Agency in the methods and tools of these networks. To permit the IAEA to respond and to take advantage of the increased sources of expertise available in the networks and to assist the IAEA Member States to gain access to suitable tools, protocols and channels to facilitate effective communication between the participants are required. The large number of requests for each of the functionalities contained in this ToR, have coming from both those Member States with developed and those with developing programmes, provides evidence of the widespread interest in the platform.

The term CONNECT connotes both the “Network of Networks” and the web-platform which serves it. The latter is essentially a professional networking system that will provide a gateway for interconnecting existing and planned IAEA Networks, increasing the participation of individuals and organizations involved in them, and making available additional sources of information which complement existing training.

4. Name

CONNECT: Connecting the Network of Networks for Enhanced Communications and Training

5. Objective

To provide enhanced capabilities and capacity in Member States by facilitating the exchange of expertise and knowledge through the use of internet-based technologies and to develop the multimedia content of the networks for distance training including both activities structured in accordance with formal curricula as well as less-formal “how to” training.

Over time, it is expected that the services of CONNECT will become self-supporting and will expand to become the standard “way of doing business” for the Agency around the world, as its functions replace less efficient and less effective training and assistance with direct support amongst the participants of all IAEA Networks

6. Scope

CONNECT will provide a common platform suitable for use by all IAEA Networks with similar needs, objectives, activities, and methods of work. CONNECT will focus initially on meeting the needs of the existing networks based in the Nuclear Energy Department (NE).

The key functions of CONNECT are to facilitate interactions between network participants such as discussion forums and co-operative document production, and provide an e-library of audio-visual material and a data-base of concise, structured summaries of the “lessons learned” from successful and unsuccessful projects.

7. Participation

CONNECT is designed to serve individuals (users) belonging to organizations associated with the IAEA Networks (network participants and partners) indicated above. Individuals seeking to participate in CONNECT will be required to first join one of its associated networks. In general, such participation requires the participant to be (a) professionally engaged with an organization belonging to one of the networks and (b) personally willing and able to contribute professionally to the work of the network in which he/she is enrolled.

The work of the networks is essentially “non-commercial”, and while individuals from private, commercial organizations are not excluded from joining one of the IAEA Networks, their activities are expected to be consistent with the objectives and non-commercial nature of the networks (refer also to “Methods of Work” in Section 6).

8. Activities, Methods of Work and Governance

Activities

Creation of CONNECT will involve development of a web-based e-platform application, which will be configured to provide the following functions:

- A streamlined process by which register users can register themselves, providing a complete professional profile of his/her background and technical interests, current challenges, and successful experiences.
- A search capability to permit individuals to find relevant contacts with specific expertise with a minimum of effort (using the above facility), to find reliable information and to efficiently contribute their knowledge and skills to problem solving through the networks.
- A “workspace” where issues of common concern can be examined.
- An e-library of multi-media material, based on provision of new or enhanced training materials and suitable for training courses, workshops, post-event review, and other activities.
- Collection of concise summaries (i.e. “lessons learned”) from completed activities in a prescribed format documenting the nature of the challenge, approach taken and lessons learned.

The majority of the work foreseen in creating CONNECT involves the upgrading and improving of training materials to permit them to be used as web-based audio-visual materials, and creating and populating the data base of experience summaries noted above.

Methods of work

A formal registration process will be provided through an on-line link. In principle, CONNECT will be accessible from anywhere in the world. In order to sign up to the network, individuals will have to register online, provide explicit information on their experience and express their interest in certain Technical Topic Areas. This will be used by coordinators of activities to support the identification of suitable participants for a specific activity.

CONNECT will have a formal code of conduct, which will be available to all participants prior to joining the network. The basic elements of this code of conduct shall require users to:

- respect other members at all times – ideas, not people, may be challenged
- refrain from defamatory comments or conduct
- avoid obscene comments and postings
- avoid engaging in any intellectual property or copyright law infringement
- avoid using the network tools to conduct direct sales advertisement or promotion of their organizations’ activities / products / services

The code of conduct will include mechanisms for “reporting” infringement of the code of conduct, responsibilities of the IAEA to respond to such reports, and actions that may be taken.

When the CONNECT platform and basic e-library content are available for general use, they will be progressively “rolled out” (refer to Section 7). During the latter stages of this roll-out, efforts will focus on training users - especially those in the MS with developing programmes - in the effective use of the tools offered by CONNECT. For this, the normal methods applied

by the Department of Technical Cooperation (TC) are foreseen, e.g. Expert Missions, Workshops, Group Scientific Visits and Training Courses. It is important to note that CONNECT itself will provide a key mechanism for “rollout” and training of the platform.