

## Proposal Outline

The meeting identified the need to address the following priorities in the formulation of project proposals that would help to develop additional core materials on the application of HA as part of EA:

### Priority A

**# 1 Core materials library and database**

### Priority B - short-term

**# 2 Country-level assessments**

**# 3 Development of a generic guidance document**

### Priority B - long-term

**# 4 Additional core materials production**

**# 5 Regional and country-level capacity-building programmes**

Bearing in mind the activities already underway at the initiative of WHO, PEEM and several national institutions, as well as the initial focus on Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific, the group emphasised that proposals should fit in with these regional efforts while at the same time provide methods and materials in support of activities in other parts of the world. Close cooperation with WHO and its collaborative networks would therefore be essential.

It was unanimously felt that the establishment of a *Core materials library and database* (# 1) would be a priority objective for immediate implementation once the resources and a suitable host institution had been identified. All existing core materials should be identified, traced, described and categorized, brought together in a database and made available to potential users. This would need to be an ongoing activity, to be undertaken in close association with existing international programmes on environmental epidemiology, environmental management, risk assessment and impact assessment, several of which operate within WHO (GEENET, PEEM, HEADLAMP).

It was also agreed that while *Country-level assessments* (# 2) of skills and materials required (i.e., needs of target audiences) would be a very high priority, it should run in parallel with the *Development of a generic guidance document* (# 3), so that these two processes would be mutually catalytic. While a draft generic guidance document would be indispensable in country-level needs assessments, its further development would benefit greatly from the findings of such assessments. In consultation with WHO, the countries in greatest need of assessment should be identified at an early stage and a number of them selected for early implementation. Simultaneously, a draft generic document should be produced with the help of consultants.

Although the components with the most long-term focus, the *Development of additional core materials (# 4)* and the initiation of *Regional and country-level capacity building programmes (# 5)* would clearly need to build on the output generated by the earlier activities, and describing them in sufficient detail would consequently need to be deferred to a later stage.

## Summary

In response to recommendations made on environment and health by the 10th Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting (Cyprus, 1992), an expert group meeting was arranged to prepare suggestions for improving the role of health assessment (HA) in overall environmental assessment (EA) of projects, plans and policies. There was considerable consensus that such an improvement would depend on many factors, including increased awareness of the importance of human health in the economic development effort, more appropriate legislation and more adequately trained human resources. Concentrating on the training needs, the meeting went on by establishing a logical framework of EA components, which led to the identification of skills required and key sources of information to be used. It was demonstrated that the framework can be used to identify training goals for EA team members in charge of health assessment, review, monitoring and ongoing evaluation (audit), but also in external specialists serving as sources of information in the EA process.

The group recognised that a wealth of training materials was already available. A few of these were briefly reviewed, but the need was felt to complete this effort and to bring all suitable materials together in a database, which should be continuously kept up-to-date and made accessible to practitioners. The group also noted various ongoing attempts to improve HA in EA, particularly those underway in the collaborating centres networks of WHO and PEEM in various countries, including important initiatives in some Commonwealth states. A focus was noted in the Southeast Asian and Western Pacific Regions of WHO, where there was still considerable scope for advancement.

The group concluded by expressing the need for a full project proposal, focusing on the creation of a core training document and assembled core materials, which would facilitate collaboration with WHO (with potential for UNEP support) and a number of institutions in UK and the Asia-Pacific. In order to maximize the utility of the meeting's findings, the deliberations were concluded by prioritizing a number of components (immediate, short-term and long-term) to be incorporated in a proposal.