

## Multi-National Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP)

Revision 5 – 24 June 2013

### Issue-Specific working groups Terms of Reference

#### Introduction

The Policy Group (PG) of MDEP approved formalising interactions and cooperative arrangements for issue-specific working groups. Participation in such working groups is open to interested regulators who are members, candidate and associate members of the MDEP, based on a desire for active involvement in the topic and a commitment to provide and share up to date information with the MDEP members through meetings and other methods of communication. All relevant information will be uploaded into the MDEP electronic library. The IAEA, while not a regulator, is welcomed to participate in the working groups' meetings. The NEA will provide the technical secretariat function. The working groups will provide progress reports to the MDEP Steering Technical Committee (STC).

Based on the PG approval of the STC's recommendations, initially the following three issue-specific working groups were established as part of the MDEP:

- Vendor Inspection Co-operation;
- Pressure Boundary Mechanical Codes and Standards;
- Digital I&C Standards.

Working group's participants shall commit to active contribution to the effort and share information relevant to the specific working group. Participation by member, candidate and associate member countries has been established and lead countries for each working group have been identified by the STC. Changes in participating countries or leading country(s) should be with the acknowledgement of the STC. The establishment of additional working groups can be recommended to the STC for consideration and if endorsed by the STC, the PG may approve new issue-specific working groups to be created.

As per the MDEP ToR, national regulatory authorities retain sovereign authority for all licensing and regulatory decisions.

#### Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes of the issue-specific working groups are defined in the MDEP Terms of Reference as follows:

- Increase of knowledge transfer;
- Identify similarities and differences;
- Move towards convergence on regulatory practices;
- Increase stakeholder's understanding of regulatory practices;
- Enhance regulatory cooperation;
- Share developed information by all members through an electronic library.

A significant amount of work has already been accomplished by the members through bilateral agreements and individual regulatory initiatives. It is desirable that the results of all such activity be included into the MDEP electronic library to make the documents available to other MDEP members. Documents containing proprietary information will be considered for placement in the library with access to such information controlled. The organisation and maintenance of the electronic library will be the responsibility of NEA.

### Function

While having similar objectives, each of the issue-specific working groups may follow different approaches. The details of each working group's approach should be identified early in the process and incorporated into a programme plan which will be endorsed by the STC. The programme plan will identify participants and leads, delineate specific objectives with schedules for achieving results within a time frame. Each working group should determine resource needs to meet their goal.

### **Vendor Inspection Co-operation programme**

This programme should identify areas of commonality and differences between regulatory practices of member countries in the area of vendor inspection programmes, should identify best practices, and should develop an overall framework and timeline for the conduct of inspections of vendors and a protocol for sharing results among national regulatory bodies. The results of all MDEP related vendor inspections should be available through the MDEP library.

### **Pressure Boundary Mechanical Codes and Standards programme**

The programme should identify the technical similarities and differences between the major pressure boundary component design codes used in member countries, assess the similarities and differences of these design codes and examine the potential for the convergence of codes. The programme should encourage and facilitate co-operation and convergence of technical requirements among Codes and Standards organisations. In addition, the programme should co-ordinate and facilitate the efforts of regulatory authorities to endorse, where possible and appropriate, the Codes and Standards of other countries.

### **Digital I&C Standards programme**

The programme should identify areas of greatest importance based on the priorities of member countries regarding standards, regulatory requirements and regulatory guidance. The programme should identify and document, in the MDEP library, those basic safety principles and concepts where most or all participants currently agree. This will establish the current level of regulatory convergence in the digital I&C area. The possibility for further convergence of existing standards and guidance should be identified, documented, and discussed with the I&C Codes and Standards organisations (IEC and IEEE). The necessary steps to achieve this further convergence should also be identified and reported to the MDEP STC.

### Programme plans for issue-specific working groups

**Definition:** A programme plan is a document that clearly describes what the long-term and short-term goals of a working group are as well as the actions that the working group will take to achieve those goals. A list of products and a schedule should also be included. Each working group should have a programme plan with final and interim objectives, clear schedule, periodic reports and a completion strategy identifying when the group will have completed its intended work.

**Key Attributes of programme plans:** Listing technical issues that the working group will address is important but as important is identifying the steps that the working group will take to tackle these issues. As much details as possible and timelines assignments to achievements should be included in the programme plan, consistent with the need to not make the programme plan too prescriptive and to allow the working group latitude and flexibility. Detailing measurable steps or discrete products are also encouraged to be included in the programme plan.

A programme plan is a living document that is intended to be updated periodically. Short term goals should include work through at least the following two years.

A completion strategy must be identified in the programme plan. It should include insight on when the group is supposed to have finalised its intended work and how its activity will be pursued if necessary (transfer to another organisation in form of a permanent working group, periodic ad hoc meetings of experts, etc.).

Identifying key stakeholders with whom the working group will interact is also recommended to be part of the programme plan. If and when appropriate, the programme plan should identify other regulatory groups such as CNRA, CSNI and the IAEA that may be end-users of MDEP products and that may carry on future work in a particular area. The MDEP working group is encouraged to identify these groups early in their work and to communicate with them about potential transition of the work, as appropriate.

**Guidance:** Each MDEP working group will have a programme plan that is consistent with the MDEP ToR and, as applicable, the issue-specific and design-specific ToR. The programme plan at a minimum will include the long-term goals of the working group as well as the short-term goals and actions to achieve those goals for at least the next year (preferably two years). Products, deliverables, and significant interactions with stakeholders will be identified. Each MDEP working group will submit a status of accomplishments following the previous years' programme of work as well as a programme plan for the next year(s) to the STC for review and inclusion in the MDEP annual report starting. At each working group meeting, the group should review the programme plan to determine if any changes are needed and to assess how it is

performing in meeting its goals and producing its deliverables. The working groups will continue to report the status of carrying out the programme plan at the STC meetings.

**Communications between issue-specific and design-specific working groups:**

Each working group should identify issues that may be cross-cutting or of interest to other working groups and include in their programme plan the particular issue and how they will communicate significant developments about this issue. Each working group may consider proposing joint or concurrent meetings with other working groups as they work on their programme plans. The STC may provide more guidance to working groups when the need arises.

**Maintenance of programme plans:** After approval, the NEA technical secretariat will place the working group's programme plan in the MDEP library and on the MDEP public website. The review of the programme plan as well as the evaluation of any necessary changes and updates shall be placed on the agenda of each working group's meeting. Changes to the programme plan should be communicated to the STC prior to effecting any significant change.

Organisation and Implementation

The working groups may at their discretion or through the results of the above discussions set-up smaller sub-groups to address and resolve specific issues in-depth, perform pilot inspections, initiate focused pilot programs to determine feasibility for convergence, etc., and report back to the working group. These subgroups will normally work through electronic transmittals, but may call special meetings as necessary. In addition, subgroups addressing issues similar to or the same as the design-specific working groups need to coordinate their work to exchange information and to minimise duplication of work.

The working group will meet twice or thrice a year usually at the NEA or the OECD facilities in France. The meeting location may be at a site at which there is design related construction or other related activities of interest to the group. If meetings are intended to be held at a place other than the OECD or the NEA facilities, the working group's chair will request such a meeting to be approved by the STC chair and in consultation with the NEA technical secretariat.

The maintenance and retrieval of information and documents derived from the working group (including subgroups) meetings and discussions will be kept in the MDEP library. Access to these documents will be maximised to MDEP members while assuring the protection of proprietary information.

After each meeting, the NEA technical secretariat drafts a record summary and submits it to the participants for approval.

## Communications Plan

The process is designed to allow for the continuous exchange of information amongst member countries. For the purpose of maintaining records of all activities and to assure that all records become part of the electronic library, the following guidelines should be adhered to by all members:

1. All meetings will be organised through the NEA technical secretariat;
2. All telephone / video conferences will be arranged in a manner that will afford the opportunity for participation by all members and the NEA technical secretariat. If the NEA technical secretariat cannot participate in such communications, a participating member will be designated to develop a summary with copies to the NEA technical secretariat and each participant;
3. The maintenance and retrieval of information and documents derived from the working groups (including subgroups) meetings and discussions will be kept in the MDEP library. Access to these documents will be made available to working group members and their staffs based on the different access levels assigned.