

# REVIEW OF THE ECOSEC BASIC TRAINING CYCLE

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

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## 1. Introduction

The aim of the ICRC Economic Security Unit is to ensure that the victims of war are able to maintain or regain their economic security at the household level. In practice this is translated into three different types of humanitarian action: relief, production and structural interventions.

EcoSec programmes cover a wide range of activity sectors, ranging from food assistance to agricultural rehabilitation through micro economic initiatives, targeting communities, individuals or specific services. These programmes obviously require a large variety of skills and competencies. To implement them, the EcoSec Unit relies on 11 persons at Headquarters and, in the field, on some 100 delegates<sup>1</sup> and 700 delegation employees, generalists and specialists alike. The latter include agronomists, veterinarians, nutritionists and economists. The present pool of 12 EcoSec trainers<sup>2</sup> on the other hand come from all of these backgrounds, and have been instructed and coached in adult education.

Over the past 5 years, EcoSec programmes around the world amount to one-quarter of all ICRC field expenditures, amounting to some CHF 250-300 m p.a. and benefiting millions persons on a yearly basis. In general, 75 % of the yearly EcoSec budget is allocated to relief programmes (food, non-food & agricultural assistance), while production interventions account for 20 % and structural interventions for 5%.

Up to 2006, the EcoSec "training" consisted of a 2-day extended EcoSec briefing in Geneva, following the completion of the Integration Course. Later in their career, EcoSec staff members participated in a decentralised EcoSec consolidation course (25 pax / course), usually held once a year in Kenya. These decentralised courses however could not accommodate all EcoSec delegates; there was no EcoSec training aimed specifically at Delegation Employees, except the usual on-the-job coaching. In addition, yearly seminars and workshops were held: EcoSec coordinators seminar, agro workshop and nutrition workshop.

As of mid-2006, the EcoSec training strategy was finalised. The ultimate objective of the new strategy was to improve the implementation of EcoSec programmes throughout the project cycle by strengthening the competencies of all EcoSec staff members. 4 years into its implementation, it is time to assess to what extent the new training strategy has achieved its objective.

## 2. Background information

The EcoSec Position Paper 2007-2010<sup>3</sup> mentions training as *"another priority that was identified by the Unit in the 2003 analysis. As indicated earlier in relation to the Unit's current human resource base, this matter has been tackled seriously and successfully with the inclusion of an 80% training position within the Unit, and the strengthening of regional capacities. The Unit is now in a position to develop its training strategy, and create or reinforce existing links with academic and Movement resources with a view to devising*

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<sup>1</sup> Delegate is used as a generic term for an expatriate involved in an EcoSec programme, regardless of his/her position (delegate, team leader, programme manager or coordinator)

<sup>2</sup> There is a trainer in every delegation with a major EcoSec programme: Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia (for the Philippines), Iraq, Israel and Occupied Territories, Ivory Coast (flying trainer covering delegations in West Africa), Kenya (covering also Somalia), North Caucasus, Pakistan, Sudan, Yemen

<sup>3</sup> OP\_ASSIST\_SE 07/12 BBY - February 2007

technical training modules. It has also enabled the Unit to increase its field presence and, thus, respond more adequately to requests from both delegations and National Societies.

Training priorities are thus threefold:

- Revision of the overall training strategy in order to improve existing practices;
- The creation of a number of technical training modules;
- Sharing training practices within the abovementioned networks."

Although 3 types of competencies (generic / transversal; technical; institutional) are identified within the ICRC, the EcoSec training focuses primarily on the transfer of technical competencies<sup>4</sup>, for which a basic training cycle has been developed.

The overall objective of the new strategy is to improve the implementation of EcoSec programmes throughout the project cycle by strengthening the competencies of all EcoSec staff members. The new EcoSec training strategy was devised along 2 lines:

1. the actual learning process, with the design and delivery of 3 basic courses (Assessment, Planning and design, Measuring results), compulsory for all EcoSec staff members, and 2 ad hoc courses (Relief, Micro-economic initiatives "MEI");
2. the "Accompanying trainees" system, or follow-up and coaching of the trainees, i.e. the monitoring of the practical use in the field of the newly acquired knowledge.

The training is also open to ICRC staff from other departments, and National Society staff.

The 3 basic courses each address one phase of the project cycle:

- **Module 1 – Assessment**

The module covers the main issues required for a successful assessment, ranging from general concepts (types of assessments, vulnerabilities) to assessment process (preparation and objectives of an assessment, field work, assessment techniques, data gathering and analysis) and household economy approach. *This module was developed in collaboration with the Federation.*

- **Module 2 – Planning and design**

The module introduces the participants to Results-based management (RBM), describing the various components of RBM and the project cycle, providing tools to analyse problems and stakeholders, design and plan projects, define objectives, determine, implement and follow-up interventions addressing the population's needs.

- **Module 3 – Measuring results**

The module focuses on monitoring, review and evaluation, and how these processes can be used to measure the results of any ICRC projects and programmes. It explains how to design monitoring systems, monitor projects, carry out and participate in locally led reviews and / or in headquarter led reviews and evaluations.

All 3 modules contribute to the practical use of Results-based management (RBM).

The "Accompanying trainees system" aims at making sure that:

- trainees benefit fully from the learning activities due to on-going and more individual support if/when need be;

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<sup>4</sup> The 2 other types of competencies are addressed through other types of training.

- the quality of programmes/projects (and consequently the quality of the support given to populations) increases due to improved practices;
- the trainers can improve the learning activities (pedagogical aspects) if need be;
- managers receive more precise feedbacks on the results of the training investments.

For each module, the EcoSec Head of training has developed teaching material intended for the trainer, and handbooks for the participants. In addition, a training of trainers has been conducted for each of the 3 modules. Once trainers have been trained on the modules, they were shadowed by the Head of training or her assistant when delivering the modules for the first time. This was done to ensure that each trainer really masters the content of the training as well as the delivery techniques. The first courses were already delivered in the second half of 2006.

An online forum has also been set up for EcoSec trainers to be able to exchange views and concerns. The Forum is composed of 2 entities:

- the actual dialogue platform, where trainers can exchange freely on any training related subject;
- a library where all essential documents relevant for the trainings are posted (trainer's guide, training documents, copies of the handbooks in the different languages).

The population targeted for the basic training cycle amounted initially (at the time when the strategy was drafted) to approximately 350 EcoSec staff members, delegation employees and delegates, located in 22 delegations throughout the world.

The tasks and responsibilities of the training team were as follows<sup>5</sup>:

- Head of training & Assistant
  - Identify courses needs with the whole EcoSec Unit
  - Create basic courses
  - Support experts in the creation of technical modules
  - Validate and support delegations in the creation of ad hoc modules (except the seminars)
  - Animate modules or provide support to other animators
  - Train and support the field officers identified as trainers in the field
- Trainers
  - Conduct whenever needed a "Training Needs Assessment" using the existing system and, in case of training National Societies, verify that an adequate overall training strategy has been decided by cooperation prior starting training volunteers.
  - Deliver autonomously the 3 basic modules (assessment / Programme-Project Management / Measuring results) to all EcoSec (compulsory) and non-EcoSec (practitioners as per delegation wishes and possibilities)
  - Adapt when needed the training package (introduce new wrap-up and energizers ideas, adapt exercises when relevant, etc)
  - Implement the "Accompanying trainees system" to improve/validate the knowledge transfer. In this view trainer is requested to take a "coach attitude" while the coordinator is the "mentor" and "evaluator".
  - Through the defined system, and together with the coordinator, evaluate the courses' outcomes.

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<sup>5</sup> Only the main tasks and responsibilities are indicated here. For a more details, please refer to the job descriptions.

Training courses are conducted onsite, which extends the training possibilities and reduces costs. It also ensures continuity within the delegation and proximity to the "clients", and allows for quick response to emerging needs, and affords first-hand, context-specific illustrations and practical application. In addition, the trainer can monitor the progress of trainees (ensure that knowledge is correctly applied in the daily work) and is available onsite for any question, advice, coaching or refreshment of the knowledge or to provide expertise for other types of trainings. EcoSec coordinators have also a role to play, as they should identify training needs, encourage participation of EcoSec and non-EcoSec staff to trainings, support the trainer during preparation and delivery of the courses, as well as the follow-up of the participants after the course.

By 2008, all 3 modules had been developed and were being successfully delivered in the field. Between 2006 and 2010, over 150 training sessions have been conducted, for more than 2'806 participants, out of which 46% are from National Societies. This trend has been confirmed in recent years, with also increasing demands from other ICRC departments.

The "Accompanying trainees system" has been presented and explained to the coordinators in March 2009, as their involvement was considered as essential to ensure maximum effectiveness of the training. However, this follow-up system has yet to be implemented in most delegations.

The former Head of training left the ICRC in spring 2009, handing over her tasks and responsibilities to her Kenya-based assistant, with the support of a training focal point in Geneva. Most trainers are still in place, except for delegations where the EcoSec programme has come to an end (Nepal, Lebanon & Liberia) and with a new position in Yemen.

### **3. Rationale for the review**

3 years after the launch of this new strategy and the change in the trainers' team set-up in 2009, it is time to examine the relevance and effectiveness of the EcoSec training strategy and courses, its methodology and to assess its overall performance (positive and negative contributions, expected and unexpected results).

### **4. Review purpose**

Firstly, to provide the EcoSec Unit and, to some extent, the Assistance Division with an independent assessment as to the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the EcoSec training. To do so, the review will assess the impact of the basic training cycle (i.e. M1, M2 & M3) in relation to the training's objectives.

Secondly, to examine if, when and how the training is relevant for participants of other ICRC departments and for staff of the National Society, in its current form or an adjusted form.

Thirdly, to identify consequences, constraints and potentially unmet training needs in light of new ICRC Institutional Strategy 2011-2014 and related strategic orientations, namely "Strengthen the ICRC's contextualized, multidisciplinary response" (especially in view of the human resources dimension and the partnership with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement) as well as "Optimize the ICRC's performance" (more specifically in view of result-based management practice, human resources development and management, and overall performance).

Lastly, based on the above, conclude whether the initial training parameters (design, approach, activities, etc) established to achieve the EcoSec objectives are still valid. If not,

identify the nature and level of adjustments necessary in order to achieve the set objectives in the future, including the possible adjustment of the training strategy, specific objectives and activities in order to improve the quality of the implementation of the EcoSec programs, throughout the whole project cycle, this contributing the Institutional strategies any priorities set in the next four years.

## **5. Intended use**

The review will be used to improve the EcoSec training, define the way forward in the years to come and contribute to further integrate it in the ICRC institutional training. To this end, the review will identify potential adjustments opportunities, taking into consideration a holistic training perspective and building on what has already been done.

It will be used as a learning tool for further EcoSec and Assistance trainings through the identification of success and failures, and highlight best practices for further EcoSec and Assistance trainings.

As a reference document, the review report should contribute to ongoing institutional dialogue between the EcoSec Unit, the Assistance Division, the Operational RBM project manager and RH\_FOR when devising and / or adapting training strategies.

## **6. Review audience**

### ***6.1. Primary audiences***

The primary internal audience of the review is the EcoSec Unit, including the Head of training, the Trainers, the Training focal point, the Head of Unit, the Coordinators and the Assistance Division.

### ***6.2. Secondary audiences***

The secondary internal audience comprises the Direction of Operations, more specifically the Deputy Head of Operations and the Operational RBM project manager, the Heads of delegation, as well as the Cooperation Department, the Operating National Societies and the Federation.

## **7. Review scope and focus**

The review will cover the period from the beginning of the implementation of the EcoSec training strategy in 2007 until December 2010 (4 years). The scope of the review should ideally comprise all delegations where trainings have been or are still being conducted. However, as it will be impossible to visit all 24 delegations due to financial and time constraints, 3 delegations will be selected according to the following criteria and by using the ranking grid for the EcoSec coordinators:

1. a delegation with a large EcoSec operation implemented by the ICRC;
2. a delegation with a large operation implemented in collaboration with the Operating National Society;
3. a delegation with no EcoSec operation but where EcoSec training was conducted for the Operating National Society staff.

A more global view on the training will nevertheless be gained thanks to the opportunity to meet with all EcoSec coordinators and EcoSec trainers during their respective seminars in March 2011.

### **7.1. Relevance**

*The extent to which the objectives of an initiative/programme/operation/policy are consistent with the needs of the target population*

- Does the basic training cycle address documented skill gaps among EcoSec staff in an appropriate manner?
- Should all EcoSec staff participate to the 3 courses? If not, define criteria for attending each course.
- To what extent is the content of the basic training cycle relevant for other Assistance units and other ICRC departments, and in which form?
- Propose alternative: to what extent is the content of the basic training cycle consistent with institutional training priorities and, as such, relevant to audiences other than EcoSec staff? Which other audiences, based on what criteria?
- To what extent does the content of each of the 3 basic courses correspond to the needs to the National Society staff involved in EcoSec or Disaster management operations?
- Should all NS staff involved in Disaster management participate to the entire basic training cycle?
- To what extent does the basic training cycle fit into ICRC's overall Results-based management approach and to the new Institutional strategy and priorities (2011-2014)?

### **7.2. Appropriateness**

*The extent to which inputs are suitable for achieving the intended results*

- Is the training methodology (course delivery, training material for the trainers, handouts and handbooks for the participants, "Accompanying trainees" system) appropriate to reach the objective/to build capacities of the participants? If not, how could it be changed / adapted (e-learning, blended learning)?
- Is the training content, i.e. the topics addressed and tools presented, appropriate to build the competencies of the participants?
- Are the human, material and financial resources allocated in the delegations adequate?
- Is the current HR set-up (team of trainers, Head of training based in Kenya, Assistant based in Ivory Coast and Focal point based in Geneva) appropriate for the successful implementation of the training strategy?

### **7.3. Coverage**

*The degree to which the target population is reached*

- Has the defined target population been reached as planned, i.e. participated to the entire basic training cycle?
- Has the target population been outreached? If what are the underlying reasons?

### **7.4. Effectiveness and results achieved**

*The extent to which the programme's objectives were achieved, taking into account their relative importance, i.e. planned or unplanned, negative or positive results, on the intended target population*

- What are the achievements, constraints and failures of the training (modules & "Accompanying trainees system"), and what are the underlying reasons?
- How has the basic training cycle contributed to build the competencies of the staff of the Ecosec and other ICRC departments, and of National Society staff?
- To what extent are the tools and knowledge transferred during the modules used / applied correctly by the participants in their daily work, thus changed their working practices?
- Has the quality of the analysis in general, and more specifically the quality of assessments, project design and planning, monitoring and review / evaluation improved since participants attended the basic training cycle?

### **7.5. Efficiency**

*A measure on how economically inputs/resources (human, technical, material, financial) are converted into outputs.*

- Is the current HR set-up the most efficient way to achieve the objective?
- Is the time allocated / planned for each training module appropriate, taking into consideration the preparation, the course delivery and the post-training reporting?
- Is the available training expertise (trainers on site, Head of training, Focal point) used in an efficient manner by the delegations?

### **7.6. Programme management and co-ordination**

*Coordination is the degree of collaboration among the different partners and stakeholders, and within the Assistance Division, with RH\_FOR, Federation, RC/RC Mvt*

- What was the degree and nature of collaboration between OP\_ASSIST\_SE, OP\_ASSIST\_CHF, RH\_FOR, the Regional Training Units and the Federation when developing the training strategy?
- Has the project been managed properly, at field and HQ level? How can the management be improved?
- Have the different stakeholders, at field and HQ level, played their part as planned / intended?

### **7.7 Sustainability**

*The extent to which the initiative/programme/operation's benefits are likely to continue after it has come to an end*

- To what extent is the training sustainable, i.e. the transfer and the use of knowledge, but also from a managerial, financial and technical point of view? For ICRC staff? For Operating National Society staff? For others?
- To what extent are Operating National Societies who requested EcoSec training for their staff willing and able to devise a training strategy to take ownership and pursue the training by themselves?

## **8. Authority and responsibility**

A representative of the ICRC Institutional Performance Management Unit (DIR\_GEN\_IPM) will be responsible for the supervision of the review process, guidance throughout all phases of execution and approval of deliverables, and provide the necessary assistance to the Review Team throughout the different phases of execution. He will be assisted by the

Training Focal point of OP\_ASSIST\_SE, the Head of training, as well as the Trainer from Assist\_CHF.

The Review Team is responsible for conducting the review, the daily management of the review and reports through the Review Team Leader to the representatives of DIR\_GEN\_IPM and OP\_ASSIST\_SE on a regular basis. Approvals will be sought for the review work plan, first draft report and final review report, before continuing the next phase of the review. Proposed changes to the approved review work plan affecting its scope or focus, methodology, schedule or budget, should be submitted in writing to the representative of DIR\_GEN\_IPM and OP\_ASSIST\_SE.

During the field visits, the review team will provide regular feedback to the OP\_ASSIST\_SE and DIR\_GEN\_IPM.

## **9. Review methods**

The review uses a large variety of review methods, including:

- Desk research / literature review
- Interviews with key stakeholders in Geneva
- Field visits in selected delegations
- Review of appraisals of staff members (field officers and delegates over a period of several years, focusing on the technical aspects (assessments, project design and management, monitoring, review and evaluation)
- Debriefing in Geneva after the interviews with the coordinators and the trainers, as well as after the field visits
- Round table meeting in Geneva before finalizing the review report

## **10. Deliverables**

The review team will produce:

- 1) a review work plan;
- 2) a review report, including a review abstract.

A draft work plan and draft review report will be submitted to the ICRC (DIR\_GEN\_IPM & OP\_ASSIST\_SE) for comments before the final documents are produced. The deliverables are to be prepared in English.

### ***10.1. Review work plan***

The review work plan is the first contracted product of the evaluation. The review team will prepare a review work plan that will operationalise and direct the review. The work plan will describe how the review is to be carried out, bringing refinement, specificity and elaboration to the terms of reference. It will be approved by the representatives of DIR\_GEN\_IPM and OP\_ASSIST\_SE and act as the agreement between the parties for how the review is to be conducted.

### ***10.2. Review report***

The draft review report is the second contracted product of the review. The draft review report should clearly identify the purpose of the review, what was reviewed, how the review was conducted, what data was collected, what conclusions were drawn and what recommendations were made and lessons identified.

The final review report is the last contracted product of the review and may require one or more edited versions before being approved by DIR\_GEN\_IPM and OP\_ASSIST\_SE. The final report includes an executive summary that highlights in five pages or less the background, methods, main findings, conclusions recommendations and lessons. Where appropriate, technical appendices should be used to separate any methodological issues, detailed tabulations or analysis of data, instruments or detailed procedure used, etc., from the main body of the report. For reasons of continuity, the appendices should also contain the original terms of reference and the approved review work plan. An outline for the final review report is given hereafter and can be elaborated upon as required.

**Structure:**

- Executive summary
- Introduction with background to the review and definition of training needs
- Description of methodologies and approach, scope and limitations
- Description of the EcoSec training project background, setup and organization
- Analysis based on review parameters
- SWOT analysis
- Lessons learned
- Conclusions and recommendations

In addition to the final text the report must contain:

- Title page
- Complete table of contents including annexes
- List of abbreviations used

**Annexes:**

- Terms of references
- Work plan / Itinerary
- Geographical map if appropriate
- List of interviewees
- References / documentation

## **11. Review team**

The review team includes a team leader and an EcoSec expert who have not been involved in the design and implementation of the EcoSec training. The team should include the following backgrounds, skills and professional experiences:

- Experience in humanitarian action
- Experience in adult training and coaching, training conception and delivery
- Experience in assessment, project design, planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Review experience, documented reporting skills
- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Good understanding of the ICRC and / or the Red Cross Red Crescent movement
- Knowledge and understanding of the ICRC institutional strategy 2006-2010 & 2011-2014

## **12. Timeline**

- The review should start mid-April 2011, with the field visits taking place in May.
- The review's final report should be completed in the second half of June 2011.