

TERMS OF REFERENCE FPA WATCH GROUP

I - Background

The first FPA Watch Group was formalised in 1999, following on from the work of the “Dialogue group”. Its initial task was to monitor the implementation of the new FPA. The group was later charged with consulting, on behalf of ECHO Partner NGOs, on certain aspects of the 2003 Framework Partnership Agreement. Following the consultation process resulting in the 2003 FPA, the necessity arose of continuing the Group to monitor the implementation of the new FPA and any future modifications.

II – Purpose

To represent the views of ECHO NGO partners in the monitoring, review and consultation of all matters relating to the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) that governs the contractual relations between ECHO and its NGO partners. To work towards a common interpretation and consistent application of the FPA between ECHO and its Partner NGOs.

III – Commitments

1. To defend the general interest of all ECHO NGO partners as related to the FPA
2. To collect and organise any comments that are made from the wider community of ECHO NGO partners with regard to the ongoing implementation of the FPA, and to communicate to ECHO any important issues that arise
3. To collect and organise any comments and feedback towards improvement of the FPA that are made from the wider community of ECHO NGO partners
4. To be the contact representing ECHO NGO partners to which ECHO may refer when wanting to discuss any planned or potential changes to the FPA
5. To analyse any difficulties working with the FPA, as well as any planned or potential changes to the FPA, from the view point of ECHO’s NGO partners
6. To share any important issues arising from discussions with ECHO with the wider community of ECHO NGO partners
7. To identify and facilitate the sharing of any new tools towards the better comprehension and implementation of the FPA
8. To provide and share input spontaneously or in response to solicitations from the TF

IV - Members: organisations represented by individuals

1. The group will be composed of around 30 NGOs that are ECHO partners, or networks representing ECHO NGO partner organisations. These organisations must have good knowledge and a regular contractual relationship with ECHO. The Watch Group will consist of a range of NGO partners, from a variety of European countries, and membership of the Watch Group is open to all NGO partner organisations regardless of size or partner status (‘A’ or ‘P’).
2. Each of these member NGOs must designate one individual to be part of the FPAWG and attend meetings.
3. The names of the organisations and of the individuals representing them will be communicated to ECHO by the group.

V - Methodology

a) FPA Watch meetings

1. The group will aim to meet at least 2 times a year to discuss any comments and proposals that have arisen either from ECHO NGO partners or from ECHO.

2. The Group will establish a yearly calendar of meetings, with each meeting being confirmed 3 weeks in advance.
3. Minutes of meetings will be written within 2 weeks of each meeting, filed with the Secretariat of VOICE and published on the VOICE website in order to be available to the community of ECHO partners.
4. The meetings will usually take place in Brussels, hosted by VOICE. However, the group will endeavour to hold meetings in other European locations if it is advantageous and cost-effective to do so.

b) Meetings with ECHO

5. The group will be led by a Task Force (and establish other ad hoc working groups as required) that will meet with ECHO to discuss ideas and comments that have arisen, and to negotiate issues as necessary. The meetings between this working group and ECHO will be scheduled as necessary.
6. From time to time, and at the request of either ECHO or the FPA Watch Group, representatives of ECHO may be invited to some FPA Watch Group meetings.

c) Consultation, analysis and reporting back

7. The group will receive from the wider community of ECHO NGO partners any comments that arise in relation to the FPA. These will be communicated via the Secretariat of VOICE, including via the FPA Watch email (fpa@ngovoice.org).
8. During or in between the meetings, the group will analyse any comments or issues that have been received from the wider community of ECHO partners, and any changes to the FPA that ECHO are proposing.
9. When there is a need to get a broader perspective, the group will consult with the wider community of ECHO partners using the infrastructure of VOICE and through various channels.
10. At various points during the year, the group will provide a report on progress to the wider community of ECHO NGOs partners through various channels: e.g. the annual VOICE General Assembly, ECHO's annual partner meeting.

VI. FPA Watch member organisations agree to respect the following rules:

1. To be an ECHO NGO partner organisation, or a network that represents ECHO NGO partner organisations
2. To have a regular contractual relationship with ECHO
3. To have their nomination agreed by ECHO NGO partners having accepted the representativity of the FPA Watch Group
4. To nominate one individual to work on FPAWG matters and attend meetings
5. To be able to participate in a minimum of 2 FPA Watch Group meetings per year
6. To commit to confidentiality concerning practicalities discussed by the Watch Group

VII. Additional indications

1. Membership in the Watch Group shall be reviewed and reconfirmed each two years.
2. The role of VOICE in the FPA Watch Group shall be limited to the stipulations of the above Terms of Reference.
3. The names of all the organisations and individuals in the group will be communicated to all ECHO NGO partners, and to ECHO.
4. The above information will be communicated to all ECHO NGO partners and to ECHO by VOICE.

Brussels, 13 May 2008