

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

**GUIDELINES FOR THE RECOGNITION OR
RECONFIRMATION OF
WMO REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRES (RTCs)**

(Second Edition)



WMO

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL PANEL OF EXPERTS ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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1. INTRODUCTION

The guide is designed for those who review, or monitor, the requirements for recognition or reconfirmation of a WMO Regional Training Centre. The reviews are conducted against the EC Criteria for the Recognition or Reconfirmation of Regional Training Centre, approved by EC- LXII in June 2010 (see Annex I). Use of the guide should lead to reporting in a harmonized and standardized manner.

At its 48th session (May, 1996), the WMO Executive Council agreed on mechanisms for regularly monitoring WMO RTC activities. In addition to the WMO Education and Training Office continuing to monitor RTC activities through annual reports and adhoc consultation, a two-step review process has been applied to every RTC, every two financial periods by the EC Panel. That process consists of a self-assessment followed by an external review. The EC Panel consider the review, its recommendations, other relevant reports and make a recommendation to the Executive Council regarding confirmation or reconfirmation of the institute as an RTC.

2. RECOGNITION OF A WMO RTC

A WMO Regional Training Centre (WMO-RTC) is an institution that undertakes training in meteorology, hydrology and related sciences to meet the needs of the Region. It is established only to meet the expressed requirements of more than half of the Members of the regional association that cannot be met by existing facilities. The designation of a Centre will last for a specified period which shall not exceed eight years, as described in the signed agreement.

2.1. *Processing steps for Recognition of RTCs*

The normal procedures for the recognition of RTCs are as follows:

A Member wishing to offer its national training facilities as a WMO RTC submits its proposal for consideration and recommendation by the regional association, or by the president of the regional association on behalf of the regional association¹, concerned.

- A representative of the WMO Secretary-General will survey the training facilities and programmes and assess, using the template in Annex III (a), their compliance with the criteria for the recognition of WMO RTCs. This will usually include a site visit to the RTC.
- The recommendation of the regional association, or its president, and the report of the Secretariat mission are considered by the EC Panel of Experts on Education and Training or, by its Chairman on behalf of the Panel.
- The Panel's recommendation is considered by the Executive Council.

After endorsement by the Executive Council, the establishment of the centre is subject to an agreement which is drawn up between WMO and the host country and/or organization. Contents of this agreement are specified in Section III of the EC Criteria for the Recognition or Reconfirmation of Regional Training Centres.

3. RECONFIRMATION OF WMO RTCs

The aim of the review process is to support the RTCs in providing high quality training programmes, which contribute to meeting regional training needs. In this way the RTC network will become more efficient and focused on the highest priority needs of the WMO

¹ In this case the president of the regional association would be expected to advise the EC Panel of how the support of Members for the proposal was obtained.

community. In addition, there will be the sharing of good practice and innovative approaches to education and training.

The review process is designed to:

- Assess the degree to which an RTC satisfies the current WMO criteria for the recognition of an RTC.
- Reveal the strengths of the training programmes provided by the RTC and areas for development.
- Support the RTC in identifying ways of developing its training activities so as to enhance the quality, relevance and scope of what is on offer.
- Monitor the support given to WMO fellows.
- Help the RTC obtain potential leverage to acquire critically needed resources.

Annex II on the Role and Function of RTCs outlines some key areas that should be examined in the review, Annex III (b) expands upon the key areas in Annexes I & II with possible questions.

3.1. Processing steps for reconfirmation of RTCs

The review process consists of two steps.

- **Self-assessment.** The self-assessment carried out by an RTC includes an assessment of the current training programmes and the degree to which the institute(s) satisfies the current criteria for establishing an RTC. It is recognised that performing this assessment might lead to the RTC correcting, or planning to correct, any particular deficiencies before the external review takes place.
- **External review.** The external review is carried out by a Review Team, appointed by the Chairman of the Executive Council Panel of Experts on Education and Training. It consists of a member of the Panel, as convenor; a member (not from the RTC being assessed) nominated by the Permanent Representative of the RTC host country; and a member nominated by the President of the Regional Association, preferably from another RTC. The Review Team studies the self-assessment, arranges, within the available resources, for a site visit by at least one member of the Review Team and reports its findings to the Panel for subsequent consideration by the Executive Council. For WMO-RTCs that possess university components, the WMO monitoring should take into account the autonomous university assessment procedures. Therefore the external assessment of WMO-RTCs should be focused primarily on the operational component. An RTC, which EC considers no longer satisfies the EC criteria, would have two years to correct its deficiencies.

3.2. Review Schedule

Once it has been decided that a review will take place and the Review Team has been appointed, the normal schedule of events is as follows:

- At least 9 months before an external review, the Education and Training Office requests an RTC to carry out a self-assessment.
- The RTC completes the self-assessment and sends it to the Education and Training Office at least 6 months before the external review.
- The Education and Training Office sends the self-assessment to the Review Team.
- The Review Team considers the self-assessment and informs the RTC about any additional information required before the external review takes place.

- At least one member of the Review Team accompanied by a staff member of ETR visits the RTC and conducts the external review. A standard template for the review is provided in Annexes II and III. A programme for the visit is proposed by the RTC. This should normally include:
 - Time for a review of the self-assessment and examination of documentation.
 - Site visits and discussions with managers, trainers and students.
 - Exit interview with the RTC Director.
- If possible there should also be a meeting with at least one high-level stakeholder of the RTC (e.g. senior member of the National Meteorological Service and/or the university to which the RTC is affiliated).
- The external review team is also strongly encouraged to contact a number of the countries who utilise the RTC to obtain feedback from the users regarding the quantity, quality and appropriateness of the education and training offered by the RTC
- After the external review, the Review Team has 90 days to finalise the report of the review and a one-page executive summary. During this period the RTC will have the opportunity to comment upon a draft of the report. The final report and summary are submitted to the Education and Training Office.
- The Education and Training Office sends copies of the report to the Head of the RTC, the Permanent Representative of the country in which the RTC is located and the President of the Regional Association to seek their comments on the contents of the report and agreement or otherwise with the recommendations in the report. At this stage the President of the Regional Association is expected to advise upon whether the Centre meets the expressed requirements of more than half of the Members of the regional association.
- The Education and Training Office sends a copy of the final report to the Chairman of the EC Panel of Experts on Education and Training for approval to dispatch to the remainder of the Panel. The Panel considers the report and recommendations on an intra-sessional basis. If there is unanimous agreement, the Chairman of the Panel advises the subsequent Executive Council meeting of the recommendation of the Panel regarding the RTC. If the Panel cannot come to an agreement the Chairman of the Panel will advise the subsequent Executive Council that the WMO-RTC has been assessed but the EC Panel need further time to consider the report and recommendations.
- The report is considered at a meeting of the Panel of Experts on Education and Training and its deliberations and associated recommendations are included in the minutes of the meeting. The minutes also include an executive summary from the report as an Appendix.

4. STANDARD FORMAT FOR REPORTS OF REVIEWS

To assist the reviewers, and provide more consistency and transparency, the Panel decided at its 24th session to have a standard format for the reports of the assessments. Annex IV provides an annotated template for the report.

4.1. *Report Ratings and Recommendations*

To assist the EC Panel in making a recommendation to the Executive Council on the recognition or reconfirmation of a particular institute as an RTC, the report should provide ratings against each of applicable criteria with the aid of the templates in Annexes III (a) & (b). The following ratings are suggested:

- **Fully meets.** There are no problems at all with this criterion. Any recommendations associated with this criterion would be pointing out best practice for other RTCs

- **Mainly meets but some room for improvement.** No cause for immediate concern but room for improvement. This would be associated with recommendations of a preventative nature, ie things that the RTC should do to maintain or improve quality.
- **Partially meets but significant room for improvement.** The external assessment identifies significant problems with this criterion. Whilst recognising that the RTC is meeting some of the criteria, recommendations associated with this criterion would be of a corrective nature and could lead to a delay in the recognition or reconfirmation of the institute as an RTC.
- **Does not meet.** This would lead to recommendations of a corrective nature that would have to be fully addressed for the institute to be recognised or reconfirmed as an RTC.

Based upon the individual ratings, the report should then provide an overall assessment of whether or not to recognise or reconfirm the institute as an RTC or to recommend delay to allow them to address the corrective recommendations.

The EC Panel, when considering the assessment report, should take into account the recommendations and the full report as well as comments from the RTC, the PR of the host country, the Regional President and input from the ETR Office.

Once the decision of the Panel regarding the recommendation to EC has been finalised, the Director of the ETR Office will convey the decision on the recommendation to the RTC, the PR of the host country and the Regional Association President. Any questions or concerns regarding the recommendation are to be addressed to the Chair of the EC Panel who will confer with the Secretary-General on the process and timing to address the concern.

Annex I: EC Criteria for the recognition and reconfirmation of Regional Training Centres²

I. RECOGNITION

To be designated as a WMO Regional Training Centre (WMO-RTC), institutions which undertake training in meteorology, hydrology and related sciences shall satisfy the following criteria:

1. A Centre is established only to meet the expressed requirements of more than half of the Members of the regional association that cannot be met by existing facilities;
2. A Centre is designed to meet the requirements of the Region, as expressed in a decision of the regional association as recorded in a resolution or statement in the general summary of the Abridged Report or, during an intersessional period, upon the request of the president of the regional association, after consulting all its members;
3. The Centre is located within the particular Region concerned and its location decided by the Executive Council, in the light of the views of the regional association, or its president after consulting its Members, the advice of the technical commission concerned and the EC Panel of Experts on Education and Training, and the comments of the Secretary-General;

The following conditions shall apply to each Centre:

- The Centre is open to students from all countries in the Region and, subject to availability of resources, to interested countries in other Regions;
- The education level of the various courses of instruction carried out at the Centre is consistent with the guidance material issued by WMO;
- The Centre has processes in place to identify training needs of the region and to evaluate the training provided;
- The Centre has adequate buildings and training facilities, and has the necessary equipment and facilities for an efficient and effective use and exchange of training resources and modules based on modern technology;
- The Centre has competent instructors in terms of their technical ability and training skills;
- The Centre has adequate arrangements for administration, governance, planning and self-assessment;
- Knowledge and competency of students must be assessed and documented in a fashion suitable for a recognized quality management system.

The establishment and maintenance of the Centre is largely the responsibility of the host country and/or organization. The WMO shall have the right to monitor the work of the Centre.

The designation of an RTC will last for a specified period as described in the signed agreement in Part III of this document. This specified period shall not exceed eight years.

II. RECONFIRMATION

Every RTC must be reconfirmed at least once in every eight year interval. To be reconfirmed as a WMO Regional Training Centre (WMO-RTC), institutions which undertake training in meteorology, hydrology and related sciences shall satisfy the following criteria:

1. The RTC must re-apply using the RTC Self-Assessment Form.
2. A Centre shall meet the expressed requirements of more than half of the Members of the regional association. The number of international students will be considered in assessing this criterion.

The following conditions shall apply to each Centre:

- The Centre is open to students from all countries in the Region and, subject to availability of resources, to interested countries in other Regions;
- The education level of the various courses of instruction carried out at the Centre is consistent with the guidance material issued by WMO;
- The Centre has processes in place to identify training needs of the Region and to evaluate the training provided;
- The Centre has adequate buildings and training facilities, and has the necessary equipment and facilities for an efficient and effective use and exchange of training resources and modules based on modern technology;
- The Centre has competent instructors in terms of their technical ability and training skills;
- The Centre has adequate arrangements for administration, governance, planning and self-assessment;
- Knowledge and competency of students must be assessed and documented in a fashion suitable for a recognized quality management system;
- The sustainability of the Centre is largely the responsibility of the host country and /or organization. The WMO shall have the right to monitor the work of the Centre.

The designation of an RTC will last for a specified period as described in the signed agreement in Part III of this document. This specified period shall not exceed eight years.

III. WRITTEN AGREEMENT

The obligations of WMO and the host country and/or organization shall be the subject of a signed Agreement to abide by certain principles between WMO and the host country, and this will cover the following matters:

- The purpose and functions of the Centre;
- The number and entrance qualifications of students;
- The right of WMO to examine syllabi and other relevant material to ensure that the level of education and training is consistent with the guidance material issued by WMO (e.g. publication WMO-No. 1083. *Note that WMO No. 258 was phased out on 1 Dec 2013.*);
- The administrative arrangements of the Centre;
- WMO obligations - financial or otherwise;
- Obligations of the host country and /or organization;
- Obligations of the Centre;
- Withdrawal of the designation of the Centre;
- Expiration or Termination of the Agreement.

Annex II: Role and Operations of RTCs - Steps to improve the education and training provided through RTCs

- (a) ***To reinforce regional cooperation in the organization and operation of RTCs.*** The existing arrangements for identifying regional training needs, and the procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of RTCs to satisfy these needs should be reviewed by the Regional Associations in partnership with the RTCs and the EC Panel. There should be enhanced cooperation between Regional Training Centres and NMHSs to ensure their activities are complementary.
- (b) ***To improve awareness of the capabilities of RTCs.*** The RTCs, their host countries and WMO should be active in ensuring the NMHSs are aware of the training programmes and facilities that are offered. RTCs should take the initiative in entering into dialogue with NMHSs in their Region to ascertain their training requirements and how the RTCs might contribute to satisfying these needs and this must be documented in their self-evaluation. The memorandum of agreement between the institute, the host country and the WMO should spell out what is required of all parties to ensure that the RTC meets the needs of the region.
- (c) ***To improve the planning of human resource development.*** NMHSs should be more active in communicating the planning for the development of their human resources so that the RTCs are able to anticipate the new requirements and develop their training programmes accordingly. For this to be successful there must be more emphasis on mobilising funds required for the national/regional implementation of those plans.
- (d) ***To encourage lifelong learning and continuing professional development.*** Policies and plans for the development of a lifelong learning culture should be introduced in NMHSs and RTCs in parallel with enhancing the availability of continuing education, both at the centres and utilizing online and distance learning techniques. In particular, plans for the continuing professional development and specialization of the staff are also needed. Such initiatives may require changes to traditional management styles in order to cope with the new demands from public and private sectors, and more development and utilization of distance learning, especially for aeronautical meteorology, climate change and adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
- (e) ***To improve the content of education and training programmes.*** Curricula and courses should be updated to adequately reflect the advancements in meteorological science and training techniques. In doing this, account should be taken of **WMO 1083** and changes to requirements for aeronautical meteorological forecasters.
- (f) ***To enhance the learning process.*** Instructors should be encouraged to develop their training expertise so that they are able to promote active learning methods, integrate new technologies into the learning process, and be innovative in their approach to training.
- (g) ***To improve access to training materials.*** Improved access to training materials and meteorological information should be facilitated by initiating/accelerating connection of RTCs to the Internet. The international exchange of educational expertise, products and services should be encouraged, especially for access to training in aeronautical meteorology, and access to courses that are college degree equivalent.
- (h) ***To strengthen the role of the Education and Training Program (ETRP).*** The role of ETRP in monitoring international trends in education, assessing the results of

educational research and their impact on WMO activities, and undertaking comparative analyses at regional/sub-regional training requirements should be strengthened. Also ETRP should continue to facilitate the promotion of joint projects to strengthen national and regional educational capacities, and seek partnerships between WMO and other relevant organizations to improve the quality of training in meteorology (including climatology), hydrology and related environmental disciplines.

Annex III (a)

TEMPLATE FOR THE REVIEW AND RECOGNITION OF A WMO RTC						
Compliance with the EC Criteria for the recognition of Regional Training Centres						
Key Issues and Questions	Responsible Body	Remarks	Grading			
			1	2	3	4
<p><i>Opening of the Centre to students from the Region and elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the admission requirements? • Are there any restrictions or preferential treatment on particular countries or genders either at the institution or to gain student visa? • What are the cost structures for tuition stipend and other fees? • Will the tuition fee for WMO fellows be waived? • Will the institution assist prospective students with visa's, scholarships, accommodation, settling in? 						
<p>Educational level of the Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What courses (face-to-face as well as e-learning) are offered? • What guidance material is being used? • How does the institution check consistency with WMO guidance and what evidence is available to support the statement? • How are the courses reviewed and updated? • How are the courses linked to education levels in the country? • Are there mechanisms for external review of the course content and implementation? 						

<p>Identification and evaluation of training needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are training needs of WMO Members in the Region identified? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Passive: from WMO reports, ○ Active: formal exchange / discussions with the RA, exchange with neighboring countries, direction from the PR of the host country.....? • What evidence is there that changes to programmes have been made based upon the identified training needs? • Will feedback be sought from the international students and their parent organizations on the applicability of the courses to their needs? 						
<p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the teaching facilities appropriate for the types of courses? • What is done to ensure security of the students? • Do the students have access to an appropriate library? • Do the students have access to online journals and resource material? • Do the students and / or lecturers have access to real time or near real time meteorological and / or hydrological data and products for teaching and research? • Do the students have access to computers, software, and internet for study related use? • Are there practical workspaces (computer rooms, laboratories, observation sites, private study...)? • Are there onsite facilities such as cafeteria, sports facilities, medical facilities, student welfare....? 						

<p>Instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the number of teachers, support staff ...? • What are the academic qualifications of the academic staff? • What are the teaching qualifications and experience of the academic staff? • What is operational experience of the academic staff? • Is there an appropriate staff development programme? 						
<p>Administrative Arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a plan to have a nominated WMO point of contact? • Is there a nominated Student point of contact? • Are there arrangements with the education authorities in the country and other institutions? • Is there a strategic plan for the future of the institution and courses? • Are activities reported biennially to the WMO? • How are records of student attendance, results kept? 						
<p>Student Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the student assessment policy? • Do you implement your own policy? • How are student knowledge and skills assessed? • What is the process for student failures? • What certificates / diplomas are issued? 						

<p><i>Sustainability and maintenance of the Centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are upgrades of facilities funded? • What are the links with the NMHS / PR of the host country? • How is awareness of your Centre's capabilities maintained or improved? • From the perspective of (RTC staff, students, clients, etc.), what are the strengths / weaknesses of the Centre? 						
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Annex III (b)

TEMPLATE FOR THE REVIEW AND RECONFIRMATION OF WMO RTC						
Compliance with the EC Criteria for the reconfirmation of Regional Training Centres						
Key Issues and Questions	Responsible Body	Remarks	Grading			
			1	2	3	4
<p><i>Opening of the Centre to students from the Region and elsewhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the admission requirements? • Are there any restrictions or preferential treatment on particular countries or genders either at the institution or to gain student visa? • What are the cost structures for tuition stipend and other fees? • Have the tuition fee for WMO fellows been waived? • Has the institution been assisting prospective students with visa's, scholarships, accommodation, settling in? 						
<p><i>Educational level of the Centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What courses (face-to-face as well as e-learning) are offered? • What guidance material is being used? • How does the institution check consistency with WMO guidance and what evidence is available to support the statement? • How are the courses reviewed and updated? • How are the courses linked to education levels in the country? • Are there mechanisms for external review of the course content and implementation? 						

<p>Identification and evaluation of training needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have or what is planned to identify the training needs of WMO Members in the Region? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Passive: from WMO reports, ○ Active: formal exchange / discussions with the RA, exchange with neighboring countries, direction from the PR of the host country.....? • What evidence is there that changes to programmes are based upon the identified training needs? • Is feedback sought from the international students and their parent organizations on the applicability of the courses to their needs? 						
<p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the teaching facilities appropriate for the types of courses? • What is done to ensure security of the students? • Do the students have access to an appropriate library? • Do the students have access to online journals and resource material? • Do the students and / or lecturers have access to real time or near real time meteorological and / or hydrological data and products for teaching and research? • Do the students have access to computers, software, and internet for study-related use? • Are there practical workspaces (computer rooms, laboratories, observation sites, private study...)? • Are there onsite facilities such as cafeteria's, sports facilities, medical facilities, student welfare....? 						

<p>Instructors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the number of teachers, support staff ...? • What are the academic qualifications of the academic staff? • What are the teaching qualifications and experience of the academic staff? • What is operational experience of the academic staff? • Is there an appropriate staff development programme? 						
<p>Administrative Arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a nominated WMO point of contact? • Is there a nominated student point of contact? • Are there arrangements with the education authorities in the country and other institutions? • Is there a plan for the future of the institution and courses? • How are records of student attendance, results kept? • Does the RTC report biennially to the WMO about activities? 						
<p>Student Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a student assessment policy? • Do you implement your own policy? • How is assessment of student knowledge and skills done? • What is the process for student failures? • What certificates / diplomas are issued? 						

<p><i>Sustainability and maintenance of the Centre</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are upgrades to facilities funded? • What are the links with the NMHS / PR of the host country? • How is awareness of the Centre's capabilities sustained or improved? • From the perspective of (RTC staff, students, clients, etc.), what are the strengths / weaknesses of the Centre? 						
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Standard Format for Reports of RTC External Reviews

1. Executive Summary

2. Overview of the Training Centre

In this first section, the training centre is described. Points for inclusion include inception, location, history, funding sources, general comments on size and capacity, etc.

3. Facilities

In the second section, the physical training environment is described. Pictures can be included to add to the readability of the report and to provide a better feeling for the facilities. This can include but is not limited to

- the number and size of classrooms
- heating, cooling and ventilation
- desks and tables
- computer facilities and communication capacity
- residence facilities (if applicable)
- non-educational aspects such as leisure areas, lunch room, toilet facilities, etc.
- staff offices and meeting rooms
- overall impressions of the learning environment
- partnerships with other institutions could also be listed here

4. Courses and Programs

In this section the courses and programs of the RTC are described. Current or recent class sizes can also be listed in section 3. Where significant additional capacity exists, this could also be stated. More detail on partnerships with other institutions or other RTCs should be included in this section. Formal agreements should be included as an Annex. This is generally the largest section of the review document as all programs should be described in detail and all courses should be listed. Detailed course descriptions could also be included as another Annex to the main document.

5. Staff

The staff of the RTC is described. Factors such as education level of the staff, number of faculty and level of IT and administrative support are included. Detailed qualifications for each staff member are not necessary though these could be included in an Annex.

6. Student Feedback (for reconfirmation only)

A key aspect of the RTC review is the feedback from the students. Using a standard process of open-ended questions, feedback should be solicited from students either individually or in groups. Students should feel safe in that their comments will not be attributed to them. In particular, common topics or themes should be included in the review document.

7. Clients (for reconfirmation only)

Every RTC serves a set of clients who provide students for the programs. It is very important that the RTC review include input from these clients. As with the student feedback, an open-ended interview framework will provide valuable input while allowing subsequent data to be grouped and analyzed. Ideally, the interviews with clients can be done in person at the same

time as the RTC Review visit. However, in reality, these interviews may need to take place by telephone or at a later date. The interview responses are summarized and presented in the review document.

8. Progress since past review (for reconfirmation only)

Unless the review is for a new RTC, the past review document should be reviewed with particular attention to the recommendations. These recommendations are listed and details or progress noted. It is not expected that every recommendation will be satisfied. Some may be in progress, deemed impossible or may have become irrelevant. Others may simply be annotated as “completed”.

9. Links to WMO or other international training requirements

Here, specific examples of how the RTC satisfies domestic or international requirements are provided. This may include parts of WMO No. 1083, Technical Regulation 49 or other educational or vocational qualifications.

10. Summary and Recommendations

A summary of the RTC review is provided followed by a detailed list of recommendations. The recommendations should be achievable though not necessarily in the short term. The next review of the RTC may be as many as 8 years into the future. Recommendations may be grouped into topics as appropriate and priority may be given to a smaller number of key recommendations.