



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



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Excellency,

I would like to congratulate you and the rest of the Multilateral Organizations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) team for a constructive and well carried out MOPAN evaluation of UNEP. UNEP welcomes this independent evaluation of the organization which will help strengthen our reform efforts and stimulate further dialogue.

This evaluation is timely as UNEP is well into implementing its reform agenda and taking stock of progress to date and what further attention is needed. I am pleased to see that UNEP's reform efforts are already bearing fruit as evidenced from the MOPAN evaluation findings. The evaluation has also raised some recommendations that UNEP considers particularly useful as we take stock of what and where further attention is required.

The MOPAN evaluation findings are complemented by UNEP's own programme performance reviews and evaluations carried out on a regular basis as well as reviews from the UN's Office for Internal Oversight (OIOS) and the UN Board of Auditors. Hence, the organization has gained a tremendous amount from these different processes. As UNEP now moves forward to designing the Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2017, the lessons learnt will be critical in helping to improve the quality of this strategic plan to guide the organization into the future. UNEP is paying particular attention to organizational reforms that must go into effect from now to ensure that we are on track to deliver the Medium-Term Strategy for 2010-2013.

I am pleased to attach UNEP's Management Response, which provides an overview of how the organization will integrate the MOPAN evaluation findings as we move forward over the next years.

I look forward to our continued dialogue.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.


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Executive Office

Management response to the MOPAN assessment of UNEP -2011

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) welcomes the Organizational Effectiveness Assessment of UNEP carried out by the MOPAN secretariat and appreciates the close collaboration throughout the assessment and reporting process with the MOPAN Institutional Leads, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The assessment comes at a particularly useful time when UNEP is taking action to further strengthen its reform agenda and enhance its delivery towards results. As part of this process, the findings of the assessment will be taken into full account and its recommendations have or will be addressed as part of our ongoing internal reform initiatives.

General observations

UNEP appreciates the work done by the MOPAN secretariat in adapting indicators to reflect the unique mandate and operating structure of the organization. UNEP is not a classic development agency but also has a scientific, catalytic, advocacy and normative global remit. As decided by its Governing Council, UNEP does not have wide country presence and therefore does not fit easily with the MOPAN Common Assessment Methodology, which defines organizational effectiveness “as the extent to which the multilateral organization is organized to contribute to development results in the countries in which it operates”.

UNEP was pleased to find that the assessment showed a clear majority of strong or adequate ratings of performance indicators across the four dimensions assessed: Strategic management; operational management; relationship management and knowledge management.

In particular, UNEP was pleased with the recognition of its role concerning:

- Providing regional and global perspectives on critical environmental issues
- Commitment to managing for results
- The recognition by stakeholders of UNEP contributions to policy dialogue and its respect for the views of its stakeholders

While the report is generally positive, a few areas within the four dimensions assessed are highlighted in the MOPAN assessment as requiring attention. Many of these findings reinforce important messages already captured in UNEP’s own internal reviews and are noted below.

Strategic management:

- **Mainstreaming human well-being and poverty reduction**

The assessment finds that there is room for improvement in UNEP’s articulation of the importance of human well-being and poverty reduction at the overall strategic level. Though UNEP is neither a development agency nor a poverty reduction agency, the assessment assumes that all of UNEP work should have an explicit rather than implicit focus on human well-being. The evaluation should have considered UNEP’s contribution to the MDGs, which are part of the overall performance of the UN system. The explicit focus in two subprogrammes, Ecosystem Management and Disasters and Conflicts, identified in the assessment is because these subprogrammes have to have an explicit focus on the subject given the nature of the work. For the other subprogrammes, often the focus is more implicit as the human well-being and poverty alleviation impacts other than some of the areas are not as direct. For instance, on climate change mitigation, UNEP focuses on investment in

renewable energy, energy conservation and efficiency in countries emitting higher levels of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Had the focus been on low-GHG emitting countries, the latter would have meant a more explicit focus on human well-being and poverty reduction. In this case, where the main goal is to reduce to the largest extent possible global GHG emissions, the emphasis is on rapidly industrializing economies and large investment operations.

Similarly, UNEP's work on hazardous substances and wastes is relevant to human health (not necessarily to poverty alleviation), witness our very close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other health related institutions on this topic. Thus, UNEP's actions in this area do have a significant indirect impact on well being (health in this case); UNEP's focus is on environmental, mostly normative dimensions, while the direct mandate on health impact resides with WHO, both contributing to human well-being and quality of life, including health aspects

- **Providing Direction for Results**

The assessment acknowledges that UNEP has provided a strong basis for its results-based planning through its four-year Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and biennial Programmes of Work (PoW). UNEP's projects to deliver the results in its MTS and PoW are required by the organization to have a strong results-based focus and are reviewed through UNEP's Project Review Committees taking into account the results in the UNEP MTS and PoW. The assessment notes that UNEP could strengthen its approach to results-based management by having an explicit policy on results based management. While the assessment acknowledges that results based management principles are being included in the UNEP Programme Manual, please note that UNEP is proceeding with the development of an explicit policy on results-based management. UNEP concurs that such a policy would complement UNEP's efforts towards results-based management. UNEP is also engaged in the UN High level Committee on Management, which is finalizing a system-wide policy on common principles on Results Reporting, which it intends to use as a guide for its own reporting.

- **Programme of work output indicators**

The assessment states that output indicators are missing. For instance, the report states, "While the indicators used to measure progress against expected accomplishments are generally clear and measurable, indicators at the output level are either missing or not clear" (Page viii of the Executive Summary). UNEP is required to follow the UN Secretariat's programming procedures, which only foresee progress indicators at Expected Accomplishment level (not output level) in the Programme of Work. Output performance indicators are defined within project documents, not within the PoW itself.

Operational management:

- **Allocation of programme resources.**

The assessment notes that UNEP should make transparent its criteria for allocating programme resources. UNEP agrees with this finding and has already taken action to address the issue. An internal UNEP Task Team on Programme Management and Implementation, which concluded its work in August 2011, has defined improved procedures for allocating programme resources, which are being put into place such that resource allocation decisions will be accompanied by the criteria used for doing so. Enhanced procedures involving broad in-house consultations, have already been implemented on a pilot basis, for example, for funding prioritization with some of the recent European Commission funding.

- **Risk management framework**

The assessment finds that UNEP should improve its organization-wide risk management framework and use of performance information in adjusting and revising policies. UNEP agrees with this finding and is in the process of establishing a project-at-risk system as an integrated element of the organization's new Programme Information Management System (PIMS). For instance, through the system, projects that have a low performance on key indicators including milestone completion and budget expenditure will be flagged as projects at risk requiring management attention. In regards to improving the use of performance information in adjusting and revising policies, UNEP has already strengthened its internal processes to enhance UNEP's compliance with audit recommendations, strengthen management attention of corporate accountability reviews and improve the flow of information internally. The review of compliance with audit recommendations and major corporate accountability reviews (e.g. corporate evaluations, programme performance reviews) is now a subject of UNEP's regular meetings at management level.

Relationship management:

- **Administrative procedures**

The assessment states that some stakeholders feel that UNEP could improve its procedures to respond to changing circumstances and its administrative procedures, which are seen to affect the efficiency of project implementation. UNEP recognizes the need for continuously improving its internal administrative processes and have taken steps to reduce bottlenecks (on recruitment, procurement and fund management) in the implementation of its work by providing practical information on recruitment, procurement and other administrative procedures on the intranet and in a new UNEP Programme Manual soon to be released. Administrative staff members at the annual UNEP administrative management meeting, which took place September 2011, have received extensive briefs and training on administrative procedures.

Conclusions

The MOPAN assessment has helped validate the utility of UNEP's reform process towards organizational effectiveness. UNEP appreciates the quality of the team's review. While the review validates the progress that UNEP has made so far towards organizational effectiveness, we at the same time, recognize that there is still room for further strengthening some of our processes. Several of the areas identified by MOPAN concur with the outcomes of UNEP's internal reviews. As illustrated above, work is already underway to refine UNEP's practices, and the report's conclusions will be instrumental in adopting further measures to improve its effectiveness.

