



UNDP Environmental Mainstreaming Strategy

A strategy for enhanced environmental soundness and sustainability in UNDP policies, programmes, and operational processes

**United Nations Development Programme
UNDP Environmental Mainstreaming Strategy**

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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Millennium Declaration & Millennium Development Goals

“Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants.”

[Paragraph 6, alinea 5, United Nations Millennium Declaration]

Respect for nature is one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in the twenty-first century and duly noted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.¹ In order to translate shared values into actions, the Millennium Declaration identifies key objectives of special significance. Accordingly, no effort must be spared to free all of humanity, and above all our children and grandchildren, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities, and whose resources would no longer be sufficient for their needs. The Millennium Declaration reaffirms support for the principles of sustainable development, including those set out in Agenda 21, agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and expresses the resolution to adopt in all our environmental actions a new ethic of conservation and stewardship. More particular, the Millennium Declaration mandates that a number of “first steps” be taken, and thus establishes a mandate for environmental mainstreaming in a number of areas:

- To make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol², preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases.
- To intensify our collective efforts for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.
- To press for the full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity³ and the Convention to Combat Desertification⁴ in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa.
- To stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national, and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies.
- To intensify cooperation to reduce the number and effects of natural and manmade disasters.
- To ensure free access to information on the human genome sequence.

The Millennium Development Goals⁵, approved in 2000 as part of the United Nations’ Secretary-General’s Road Map⁶ towards implementing the Millennium Declaration and to be implemented within the framework of the United Nations’ overall mission and goals, as well

¹ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly 55/2 (A/RES/55/2). United Nations Millennium Declaration , 2000. (available at <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>).

² Kyoto Protocol, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (available at <http://unfccc.int/>).

³ Convention on Biological Diversity (available at <http://cbd.int/>).

⁴ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (available at <http://www.unccd.int/main.php>).

⁵ UNDP Millennium Development Goals (available at <http://www.undp.org/mdg/>).

⁶ Road Map Towards the Implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration: Report of the General Secretary (A/56/326), 2001 (available at <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/56/a56326.pdf>).

as the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, give a clear place also to the protection of the environment and the rational use of natural resources. The 2000 Millennium Development Goals constitute the main focus of all UNDP activities. Accordingly, “energy and environment” is implemented as one of five practice areas in UNDP.

As one of eight Millennium Development Goals, ensuring environmental sustainability (goal 7) is to be achieved strategically by integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes (“environmental mainstreaming”) and by reversing the loss of environmental resources. The Millennium Development Goal 7 also targets, specifically, to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water, and by 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

1.2 Rio Mandate for environmental integration and mainstreaming in UNDP

In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.

[Principle 4, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992]

At the strategic level, the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals refer to the “principles of sustainable development” which include those set out in Agenda 21, agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.⁷ Its Principle 4, cited above, provides the link between sustainable development and environmental mainstreaming. By declaring that development cannot be isolated from environmental protection, it calls for the integration of environmental protection into development policies, a concept also known as environmental policy integration. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg 2002 reaffirmed the commitment to Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration adopted by UNCED ten years earlier.⁸

With reference to UNDP among the relevant United Nations programmes, the WSSD Plan of Implementation⁹ states that “[t]he international community should [e]nhance the integration of sustainable development goals as reflected in Agenda 21 and support for implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit into the policies, work programmes and operational guidelines of relevant United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, GEF and international financial and trade institutions within their mandates [...] to achieve sustainable development [...]”.

Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development.

[Paragraph 2, WSSD Plan of Implementation, 2002]

The UNDP Executive Board, in a 1999 Resolution, prominently addressed environmental

⁷ Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (available at <http://www.unep.org/Documents/Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163>).

⁸ Para. 8, The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, 4 September 2002, (http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/summit_docs/1009wssd_pol_declaration.doc).

⁹ World Summit on Sustainable Development, Plan of Implementation, paragraph 122(a), 2002 (available at http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/summit_docs/plan_final1009.doc).

mainstreaming, and there has been progress since then, notably in the way, UNDP engages environmental expertise in the field, in programming and in operations. Some regional bureaux such as Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, and the Pacific have developed substantive programmes on the environment.

Whilst the environmental component of UNDP's work has grown, the importance and integration of environmental protection requirements in other, non-environmental areas has fallen. Since 1999, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers appeared as main agenda items; they reflect environmental requirements to some extent but evaluations suggest that they would offer room for improvement. Focus in UNDP is now on Results Based Management, rather than on extensive planning. This systematic approach can be used to evaluate progress also on environment.

1.3 Rationale for and objectives of environmental mainstreaming

Poverty reduction and development, and the protection of the environment are mutually dependent. The integrity and diversity of nature and the rational, sustainable use of natural resources are the foundations for human existence, social development and economic activities, not only today but also for future generations. The overall goal of reducing poverty can only be achieved if economic activities, and social and institutional development respect and serve to protect the integrity and diversity of nature and ensure that uses of natural resources are equitable and ecologically sustainable.

The links between poverty, environment, natural resources, development, and human security are well understood but not often rehearsed. The links are most clearly understood by the poorest people in any country, as the most economically deprived and socially unstable areas also tend to be the most environmentally degraded. UNDP, through its policies, programming and operations, serves many purposes, including to protect

- the quality of natural water resources so that people do not contract water-borne diseases or become affected by toxic chemicals in the water they drink, bath in, or wash and prepare their food with. This is particularly relevant for the health of women and girls whose role it often is to fetch water, prepare food, and wash and clean. We seek to avoid polluting water also to ensure that fish, shellfish and other foods found in water systems are plentiful and safe to eat, and that the fruits and irrigated crops are not affected by pollution. The protection of water bodies is also important for maintaining the diversity of water-dependent ecosystems and the biological diversity found in them;
- the quantity of natural water resources, on the surface and in the ground, so that water-dependent ecosystems maintain their productivity for food, both plants and wildlife, and irrigation for crop production can be sustained over the longer term. In many instances, maintaining reliable water supply requires rational management at river basin scale and the protection of forests and other ecosystems in the headwater regions as well as along the course of rivers, around lakes, and throughout wetland regions;
- soils and soil cover, whether in cultural landscapes where animal husbandry, agriculture, and horticulture prevail, or in wilderness areas where soils are important buffers, and where soil loss can lead to high levels of erosion, sometimes with catastrophic consequences. Fertile soils need to be protected not only from land use pressures but also from the consequences of ill-conceived crop production practices, such as oxidisation from overuse of fertiliser, pollution from the inappropriate use of artificial pesticides, salination or water-logging resulting from bad irrigation practices, or compaction through heavy machinery. UNDP seeks to avert soil degradation as it would reduce food production and pest control, ecological security, and through

these and other links severely aggravate poverty and its effects;

- air quality, both short-term, short-range and long-term, long-range for its effect on human health, especially in densely populated areas but also of women and girls working in kitchens, including in less densely populated, rural areas; and
- biological diversity of wild, as well as cultured and domesticated species, as a basis for food security, ecosystem stability and as a common heritage of all. A large part of indigenous knowledge, for instance in the field of traditional medicine, is closely linked to natural biodiversity, which is thus an important asset for developing countries from which significant economic benefits can arise.

UNDP seeks to ensure that natural ecosystems are managed based on the principles of sustainable development so that they maintain their capacity for supporting human life, food gathering and production, social progress and economic activity. More specifically, UNDP promotes

- access to renewable and non-renewable natural resources, including genetic resources, open spaces and energy, and the equitable sharing of benefits. This applies among others to water-borne resources, such as fish, or forests and forest-derived resources;
- measures to enhance integrated regional development, specifically rural development, with a view to increasing the value added produced and earned by local and regional communities. The intelligent use of geographic indications or labels of origin for products are of particular interest in that respect; and
- fighting corruption and corrupt practices, and environmental crime such as illegal logging and the illegal trade in endangered species, hazardous chemicals, and wastes. The unlawful appropriation of benefits is at the same time damaging to institutional development, disruptive for social progress and balanced economic development, and destructive for the natural environment, which is a common heritage and produces common or collective goods.

In summary, there can be no sustainable social progress or expansion of economic activity unless the natural foundations for human existence are maintained, and there can be no effective protection of the integrity and diversity of natural ecosystems, rational use of natural resources or equitable sharing of benefits unless the necessary institutions are developed. In recognition of this interdependence, UNDP's Energy and Environment Group has drafted this Environmental Mainstreaming Strategy to ensure that environmental protection requirements will be integrated fully into policies, programming, and operations.

1.4 Environmental Mainstreaming Strategy Mandate

The core values of the United Nations and established practice areas continue to commit UNDP to provide for effective mainstreaming of environmental requirements into all areas of policy, programming, and operations. UNDP has long recognised the environment-poverty linkage and can be proud of pioneering activities in environmental mainstreaming. The efforts and experiences of various parts of the organisation, and the considerable achievements obtained to date provide a solid in-house basis of best practice within UNDP. This is complemented with lessons learned in other international institutions to form the core of this Environmental Mainstreaming Strategy.

2. What is Environmental Mainstreaming?

“Environmental mainstreaming is the integration of environmental considerations into UNDP’s policies, programming and operations to ensure the coherence and sustainability of our mission and practices.”¹⁰

Environmental mainstreaming refers to the integration of environmental policy considerations into core institutional thinking with other policies and related activities, as well as with coordination and harmonization, to ensure policy coherence.

Mainstreaming systematically takes into consideration environmental issues as early as possible in the decision-making process where decisions can best benefit from environmental opportunities and avoid negative impacts on the environment. In this way, mainstreaming can help align policies, programmes and operations with the long-term requirements of sustainable development, help modernise development policy content and procedures, and promote a pro-active approach rather than responding to impacts as they unfold.

The main challenge to environmental mainstreaming is finding a strategic nexus and compatibility between development priorities and environmental management objectives where tradeoffs can be addressed pragmatically and capitalize on potential opportunities that benefit both environmental resources and functions and development priorities. Environmental mainstreaming is, therefore, a policy principle, placing the environment at par with economic and social aspects of decision-making. Environmental mainstreaming goes far beyond the mere application of the conventional Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to each project, and is regarded as a key component of an institution's broader environmental strategy. Stand-alone environmental initiatives are considered insufficient in addressing environmental issues.

Effective mainstreaming involves an integration process to pursue environmental policy interests in coordination with other development policies and programmes. Sustainable development involves integration of environmental considerations in substantive, procedural, and methodological dimensions.

2.1 Environmental mainstreaming in the context of UNDP core activities

Environmental mainstreaming in UNDP involves integrating sustainability objectives into poverty reduction practices, building internal and external capacities, promoting regional strategies for maintaining environment, enhancing environmental soundness and sustainability of UNDP policies, programmes and operational processes, and improving the capacity of environment programmes to achieve broader socio-economic and human development goals.¹¹

Taking stock of environmental mainstreaming involves assessing the extent to which a policy, a programme or an activity may affect or improve environmental sustainability, considering the procedures currently in place within the organization. Environmental mainstreaming is implemented in internal procedures and practices through corporate strategies and policies and related management, programming, and operational process procedures, using specific instruments and in-house capacity. Environmental mainstreaming implementation is monitored and evaluated with the help of verifiable indicators using

¹⁰ Definition agreed by the participants of the workshop „Mainstreaming Environment in UNDP – Taking Stock and moving forward“ in New York on 21-22 October 2003.

¹¹ It is the essence of sustainable development definition to recognize that environment, economic and social interests need to be balanced to ensure that the needs of the present do not compromise those of the future.

management reporting tools as new forms of dialogue.

The most recent outline of UNDP core services to partner countries is found in the Multi-Year Funding Framework 2004-2007 (MYFF), which seeks first and foremost to respond to the strategic goals and areas of support defined by programme country needs, and reflected in country level UNDAFs and UNDP-supported programmes. The vision and objectives represented by the MDGs, the broader mandates of the UN and UNDP as assigned by the United Nations Charter and international agreements, and the internal transformation of UNDP in becoming an effective catalyst for development change provide the global political legitimacy and macro context for defining the MYFF goals. Accordingly, the second MYFF proposes separate goals derived from ongoing country programmes, the MDGs, and the mandates assigned to UNDP at the World Summit for Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development.

- Based on the foregoing, the MYFF 2004-2007 proposes the following core goals:
 - Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty;
 - Fostering democratic governance;
 - Managing energy and environment for sustainable development;
 - Supporting crisis prevention and recovery;
 - Responding to HIV/AIDS.

Each of these core goals has specific services areas, totalling some 30. Amongst these 30 core services, other than Energy and Environment Services, those that potentially have environmental implications, negative effects or opportunities to reinforce include:

- 1.1 MDG country reporting and poverty monitoring
- 1.2 Pro-poor policy reform, to achieve MDG targets (notably targets 9 to 11; energy)
- 1.3 Local poverty initiatives, including microfinance
- 1.4 Globalization benefiting the poor
- 1.5 Private-sector development
- 1.6 Gender mainstreaming
- 2.1 Policy support for democratic governance
- 2.6 Decentralization, local governance and urban/rural development
- 2.7 Public administration reform and anti-corruption
- 4.1 Conflict prevention and peace building
- 4.2 Recovery
- 4.3 Small arms reductions, disarmament and demobilization
- 4.4 Mine action
- 4.5 Natural disaster reduction
- 4.6 Special initiatives for countries in transition

These services offer potential entry points for environmental mainstreaming. Note that the majority are services under crisis prevention and recovery. As well, services under UNDP's Energy and Environment Practice goals may offer the same opportunities: These are:

- 3.1 Framework and Strategies for Sustainable Development
- 3.2 Effective Water Governance

- 3.3 Access to Sustainable Energy Services
- 3.4 Sustainable Land Management to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation
- 3.5 Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity
- 3.6 National/sectoral Policy and Planning to Control Emissions and Persistent Organic Pollutants

2.2 Mainstreaming environment in other development agencies

Further environmental mainstreaming in UNDP can apply lessons and draw inspiration from the experience with environmental policy integration and environmental mainstreaming in other international institutions, or parts of institutions with a focus on development.¹² Among them, the World Bank provides experience as development lender, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC) focuses on criteria-based evaluation and policy-learning, Directorate-General Development of the European Commission has relevant experience with mainstreaming in a context of reform of policies and procedures, and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) provides insights on procedures in a context of transparency and involvement.

The **World Bank** sets environmental priorities in project and programme design and encourages linkages between environment and macro-economic measures, a strategy that aims to improve quality of life and quality of growth by focusing on better resource management. The Environment Strategy¹³ has reinforced Environment Mainstreaming into sector lending by stressing the need for cross-sectoral approaches to environmental issues. Often in connection with the Bank's risk management in its lending portfolio, GEF, the Multilateral Fund for the Montreal Protocol, and other grant facilities provide financing for projects with global environmental benefits.

The Development Assistance Committee of the **OECD**¹⁴ aims for the simultaneous achievement of environmental, social, and economic policy objectives, and in view of the overall mandate of the OECD, refers to the introduction of environmental goals primarily into economic policy objectives. Further emphasis is placed on strategic and participatory processes of analysis, debate, capacity strengthening, planning, and action towards sustainable development. According to the OECD/DAC, National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD) should form part of the mainstreaming strategy for donor practices¹⁵, ideally functioning as an umbrella framework, the "main vehicle for integrating economic growth with social improvement and responsible approach to environmental management." Recently, DAC's environmental network has initiated a stock-taking exercise of donor experiences on mainstreaming environment.

The **European Union** (EU), in the 1997 Luxembourg European Council Summit of heads of state and government linked environmental protection requirements to EU policies and activities with the aim of promoting sustainable development. The Cardiff Summit in 1998 established an overall integration strategy process that integrated the environment into individual policy areas. The EU views environmental integration as a process through which

¹² Section added based on Andreas Kraemer's note of 13 February 2003.

¹³ World Bank Environment Strategy (available at <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/envext.nsf/41ByDocName/EnvironmentStrategy>).

¹⁴ *The DAC Guidelines: Strategies for Sustainable Development*, OEDC, 2001. (available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/34/10/2669958.pdf>).

¹⁵ „[T]here should be a current national strategy for sustainable development, in the process of implementation, in every country by 2005, so as to ensure that the current trends in loss of environmental resources are effectively reversed at both global and national levels by 2015“ (OECD/DAC: *A Better World for All* at <http://www.paris21.org/betterworld/goals.htm>).

sustainable development should be promoted, namely using management tools, dialogue, aspiration statements, sectoral and institutional reforms, and implementation of environmental the *acquis communautaire*, the extant body of EC environmental law (and policy). European Development Policy requires that the environment as a cross-cutting issue be considered in all thematic priorities, including trade and investment, conflict prevention, human rights and governance, and international organisations.¹⁶

The **Inter-American Development Bank** (IDB) adopted its Environment Strategy Document¹⁷ as one guiding instrument among seven, covering two cross-cutting issues and four sectors, and the seventh addressing the environmental dimension that needs to be inserted into broad development objectives in a balanced and harmonised way. UNDP acts as the executing or implementing agency. The fundamental objective of the IDB Environment Strategy is to attain greater effectiveness in the support that the Bank offers each of the borrower countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve their sustainable development goals. The Strategy is horizontal and sets forth a new paradigm for IDB action in environmental matters by establishing cross-cutting links to all sectors through its focus on governance and the policy and incentive frameworks that affect natural resources and environmental management. The Strategy is linked to the two overarching strategies and the four sector strategies. It seeks to insert the environmental dimension into broad development objectives in a balanced and harmonised way across sectors. The IDB Environment Strategy proposes specific actions for improving overall environmental performance, in terms of Bank's activity, related to the cycle of programming, design, and implementation of projects.

2.3 Lessons learned: experiences from gender mainstreaming

The mainstreaming of gender issues within UNDP (as well as in the wider UN system) faces challenges that are in many ways similar to those encountered in environmental mainstreaming. In consequence, lessons may be learned from experiences in that field.

UNDP views gender mainstreaming as: "the systematic integration of gender equality objectives into policies, programme formulation, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation and the establishment of good practice."¹⁸ The mainstreaming of gender equality goals into all of UNDP activities presupposes transformation of the organisation. Transformation means recognising that gender is not just about programmes, policies and personnel balance, but also about institutional culture. It is about caring, flexibility, and empowerment, which affect behaviour, rules, programmes, and impacts. The first responsibility centre is senior management in policy-setting and monitoring results. As long as the Gender in Development Programme (GIDP) and gender focal points are seen as the only responsibility centres, gender mainstreaming will not take place. We have to examine our rules and behaviour: are they based on distrust and fear or flexibility and empowerment?

Necessary measures include:

- Mainstreaming gender equality requires positive action to ensure outcomes and improved results;
- Senior management are the first centre of responsibility to provide active leadership in implementing the UNDP commitment to gender equality;

¹⁶ The EC is developing and updating an Environmental Integration Manual, with many documents spelling out tools and procedures covering all segments of the development policy cycle from policy-making, via programming, to project management and operations. Details can be found at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/theme/environment/env_integ/env_integration/index1.html

¹⁷ *Environment Strategy Document*, Inter-America Development Bank, 2003 (available at <http://www.iadb.org/sds/doc/sds%2DEnvironment%2DStrategy.pdf>).

¹⁸ [Multi-Year Funding Framework](#), 2004-2007.

- The Resident Coordinator must take an inter-agency lead in mainstreaming gender equality considerations;
- The Resident Representative's active advocacy and support is a requirement for progress;
- To be effective as catalysts for change Gender Focal Points must have strengthened capabilities and the support of senior management;
- Need systematic and consistent attention to gender equality objectives through the programming;
- Commitments by the Gender in Development Programme (GIDP).

Effective information flow is a prerequisite for mainstreaming gender equality, and, once effective in practice, gender mainstreaming can be an effective tool for expanded public relations.

Box: Key Messages from Experience in Europe and with Gender Mainstreaming

The experience in Europe, at national and European levels, and in the OECD contains a number of messages for consideration in implementing UNDP's Environment Mainstreaming Strategy. Notably:

- Successful environmental mainstreaming requires regular expressions of commitment and support from the top, providing clear language and unequivocal support, and setting priorities for the organisation;
- Such commitment and support is necessary to secure adequate financial resources, and as a backdrop to the establishment of effective internal routines, information systems, etc.;
- Successful environmental mainstreaming requires a strong central unit working on environmental issues, in order to:
 - formulate environmental protection requirements,
 - provide core competence and expertise, as well as institutional memory,
 - maintaining strong contacts between all units, stimulate and facilitate information exchanges, operational learning and training, and peer reviews (maintaining the knowledge network),
 - evaluate experience, document and disseminate best practice, and fulfil core reporting requirements, and
 - act as contact point for similar units in other international organisations;
- The central environment unit needs to be adequately staffed with people with very good communication skills who carry environmental thinking into other units;
- All other units also need persons with some expertise (and interest) in environmental issues, as well as formal competences, in order to:
 - act as contacts and liaison with the central environmental unit,
 - champion environmental issues in their units, and give encouragement to the (usually weak) voices for environmental sustainability, and
 - gather expertise and advise from the central unit and elsewhere, and to stimulate local or in-country providers of information and expertise;
- The formal aspects of environmental mainstreaming, such as strategic environmental assessments of policies and programmes, or environmental impact assessments of projects,
 - have helped to bring more rationality to decision-making process and avoid misjudgements and misappropriations made in haste,
 - help build a traceable chain of evaluation and decision-making and thus avoid conflicts;
- Results depend also on donor communities, building partnerships with constituencies¹⁹ and other UN agencies (e.g. UNEP), international organisations (e.g. the GEF), and enlightened or sympathetic people anywhere,

The European Union's development policy and the reforms currently undertaken clearly show the benefits of environmental mainstreaming in building credibility of process and results of obtained, and thus legitimacy for development policies in the eyes of (Member State) donors and the (tax-paying) public;

The work of the OECD/DAC on environment and sustainable development, including indicators, provides a good basis for determining if mainstreaming occurs and measuring its success or otherwise.²⁰

¹⁹ It is worth noting that UNDP is generally not scrutinised or criticised from the outside for its environmental record. This is in stark contrast to the attention given to other international institutions, notable Bretton Woods institutions.

²⁰ Sustainable Development, Environment and Development Co-operation, OECD (available at http://www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_34421_1_1_1_1_1,00.html).

3. Stock Taking: Environment Mainstreaming in UNDP Policy & Programming

3.1 Review of environment mainstreaming in UNDP

3.1.1 Past commitments

A "Mainstreaming Environment Advisory Committee" was established in the late 1990s to foster participation and ownership of the initiative among the different units of UNDP and has helped to guide implementation. An in-depth background study on Environment Mainstreaming and a feasibility study for enhancing the integration of environment into UNDP policies and programmes – Towards Environmental Soundness and Sustainability within UNDP – were carried out in 2000. An Action Plan was adopted in 1999 to further integrate (GEF-related) global environment issues into UNDP regular operations (1999).²¹

The following additional actions are noteworthy:

1. In 1999, the Executive Board raised questions on the environmental soundness and sustainability of UNDP activities²². Some of the Regional Bureaux²³ and Country Offices developed environmental strategies for their programmes. Since then, the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) regional programmes, as well as more recently in the Regional Bureau for Asia & Pacific (RBAP), the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RLAC), have been developed with environmental governance as one of the three major pillars, while environment remains a cross-cutting theme in the Regional programme for Africa;
2. Environmental sustainability concerns and procedures have been incorporated in 1999-2000 into the UNDP Programming Manual (PM)²⁴ as described in the next sub-section; and
3. With the introduction of Results-Based Management, in 1999 a Strategic Results Framework (SRF) template on environment became a useful tool for COs to indicate the environmental results (outputs and outcomes) sought by country programmes and to introduce systematic monitoring and reporting on results in the Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR).

3.1.2 Development of programming instruments

Past mainstreaming efforts have included the development of the UNDP Handbook and Guidelines for Environmental Management and Sustainable Development. The handbook promoted environmental overviews as a means of incorporating environmental considerations into programmes and projects during their formulation. During the 1990s, efforts were made to adapt the Environmental Overview (EO) into the Strategic Overview described as "an interdisciplinary, in-country, participatory, structured process where a group examines a development programme proposal against a set of environmental and social systems, identifies potential environmental and social opportunities as well as alternative, options and modifications to enhance the sustainable development outcomes. The process is based on multi-stakeholder, participatory procedures at the earliest stages of policy and programme formulation in order to systematically integrate equity, environmental management and

²¹ UNDP, *Integrating GEF-Related Global Environmental Objectives into UNDP managed programmes and Operations - An Action Plan*, 1999.

²² UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board. First regular session, 25-29 January 1999. DP/1999/8, p. 26.

²³ The Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean has developed, in collaboration with UNDP's environment staff, a regional environmental management strategy, *The Road towards Sustainable Development (2000-2005): the Strategy for Latin America and the Caribbean*. The strategy provides a model for similar exercises in UNDP's other regions.

²⁴ Programming Manual, UNDP (1999) (available at <http://www.undp.org/bdp/pm/>).

sustainable development considerations into development activities.”

Drawing from experience in developing the Strategic Overview, several integrated programming tools were proposed in the late 1990s: an Integrated Programming and Assessment Tool (IPAT), developed by the Operations Support Group (OSG) in collaboration with the Sustainable Energy and Environment Division (SEED), the Management Development and Governance Division (MDGD) and the Social Development and Poverty Elimination Division (SEPED) to assist country offices in adopting an integrated approach to programming. Revised Environmental Management Guidelines as well as updates were made to the Programming Manual, including considerations for quality programming.

The principles behind EO are reflected in the current versions of the Programming Manual, as well as in draft companion guidance, such as the IPAT and revised Environment Management Guidelines (EMG). Annex 2F to the Programming Manual provides a series of questions for quality programming which provide reference dimensions for the preparation of Country Programmes (CP) (see Appendix 11). The latter sets out UNDP programme activities for the country concerned, building on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) - a strategic framework for the country-level activities of the entire UN system.

Feeding into the UNDAF and CP, a Common Country Assessment (CCA) exercise is undertaken by the UN country team (led by the UN resident coordinator), providing the United Nations system with a common analysis and understanding of key development issues with a focus on the MDGs and the other commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration and international conferences, summits, conventions and human rights instruments of the UN system.

Mechanisms for undertaking CCA often involve thematic groups comprising a wide range of development partners. The CCA document contains:

- An assessment and analysis of key development problems and trends, including those addressed by the global conferences and conventions;
- A set of key issues that provide a focus for advocacy and a basis for providing the UNDAF;
- Indicators.

The country programme is the basis of UNDP country planned collaboration over a multi-year period. Review committees have an advisory and oversight function that supports the formulation and implementation of country programmes and projects to ensure high-quality programming of UNDP resources. These committees base their reviews, inter alia, on the considerations for quality programming, which are presented in annex 2F. These same considerations are used in the planning and design of programmes and projects. These include stakeholder participation, contribution to poverty reduction, protection, and regeneration of the environment, governance, incorporation of lessons learned and capacity development and sustainability as well as issues of integration, and synergies.

UNDP advocates the programming approach where the problem to be addressed cuts across sectors, themes, and geographical areas.

"All UNDP-supported programmes and projects must be environmentally sustainable. Negative impacts need to be avoided or minimized, positive impacts should be strengthened and environmental opportunities seized. The Environmental Management Guidelines are to be used irrespective of the sectors covered by a programme or project."²⁵

²⁵ UNDP Programming Manual 4.1.10 (available at <http://www.undp.org/bdp/pm/chapters/progm4.pdf>).

Box: Key Issues in Environment Management Guidelines

The Environmental Management Guidelines (EMG)²⁶ incorporated into the UNDP Programming Manual²⁷ refer to the following basic tasks and lead questions:

- 1. Understand the current situation (Programming Manual Ch. 4, tasks 1&2)**
 - Are existing environmental conditions, problems, their causes, and consequences associated with the development problem sufficiently well understood?
 - What are the baseline environmental conditions, social, economic, and cultural context?
 - How are environmental problems contributing to development problems?
 - What policies, laws, and regulations govern and influence use and quality of the environment?
 - What environment related expertise and capacities exists? What are the gaps?
- 2. Assess options (Programming Manual Ch. 4, Tasks 3&4)**
 - What are the environmental risks and opportunities associated with the considered development options? Which development options are therefore preferable?
 - Are modifications to policies, laws regulations envisaged that may pose risk or offer environmental opportunities?
 - How can environment related opportunities of governing institutions be strengthened?
 - Do you expect effects due to changed physical infrastructure, such as roads, industry, urban development, settlements, etc?
 - Could the ecological balance of natural systems, protected or fragile areas, or sites of social importance be impaired or improved?
 - Do you expect increases in consumption, waste, pollution or health problems?
- 3. Defining the Operational Strategy (Programming Manual Ch. 4 Tasks 5 to 12)**
 - What measures for implementation need to be reflected in objectives, outputs activities, inputs, indicators, risks, management arrangements, and prior obligations?
 - Which environment-related elements should objectives, specific outputs and related activities reflect?
 - Can environmentally sound inputs (personnel and materials) be used?
 - How will you monitor the environmental consequences of the proposed operational strategy?
 - What are the external risks, which could lead to deterioration of the environment?
 - How do management arrangements and prior obligations take environment into account?

3.1.3 Capacity development within UNDP

The last decade has included significant efforts with respect to human resource capacity in environmental management:

- Designation of Environmental Focal Points (EFPs) in each Country Office;

²⁶ UNDP's Handbook and Guidelines for Environmental Management and Sustainable Development, revised – draft 1999-2000.

²⁷ UNDP Programming Manual, Preliminary version, 2000 (available at <http://www.undp.org/bdp/pm/table-of-contents.html>).

- Extensive training in the early 1990s on the Handbook and Guidelines for Environmental Management and Sustainable Development;
- Development in 1994 of a network of advisors in Country Office to help with the application of the tools for EM and to promote policy and advocacy work on sustainable development and more recently establishment of Sub-regional Resource Facility (SURF) out-posted advisers;
- Virtual Development Academy courses on environment and sustainable development for staff.

3.1.4 Situation at the Country Office level

Country Offices were requested to prepare "Environmental Overviews of their Country Programmes" indicating how environmental risks were being minimized. Planning and reporting on environmental achievements is currently voluntary and country-priority driven. In effect, environment degradation, its causes, and its consequences were and often still are sidelined as a result. However, the 2001 Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR)²⁸ demonstrates that UNDP's efforts to assist countries on environmental issues are showing results, as indicated by government commitments and by integrated responses to global, regional and national environmental issues in national planning. UNDP Country Office programmes are creating links between environmental management, sustainable energy and poverty reduction. Sub-regional Resource Facility (SURF) and Head-Quarter Policy Advisors have the mandate to provide technical backstopping to programming teams to identify key environmental objectives and to ensure they are reflected into Common Country Assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) and national programmes, where there are synergies with country priorities.

3.2 Recent opportunities for environmental mainstreaming

UNDP has undertaken significant change in recent years, which offer opportunities for further improving mainstreaming tools and facilitating their effective implementation:

- The programming approach ensures that appropriate attention is paid to cross-cutting development issues including poverty, governance, gender, equality, environmental sustainability and capacity-building;
- The Programming guidance is being redesigned as an interactive tool with more explicit business process mapping;
- The next version of the UNDP Strategic Results Framework and balance scorecard are in the final stages of redesign;
- The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) provides a single country framework umbrella under which all individual UN development agency national programmes will fit together. The revised CCA/UNDAF Guidelines may offer new opportunities for environmental mainstreaming.

3.3 Efforts to date to mainstreaming environment in operations processes

At the operations level, starting in 1995, Country Offices have been urged to adopt Green

²⁸ *Results-Oriented Annual Report 2001*, UNDP, 2002. The Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR) is UNDP's principal instrument for reporting on the entire range of activities implemented by operational units. It provides the most comprehensive analysis of the performance of UNDP and is a key element in meeting UNDP's commitment to manage for results, and to provide a guide for future work, offering practical insights to support stronger programme management. (available at <http://www.undp.org/osg/documents/roar2001.pdf>).

Procurement, and to recycle paper, promote energy conservation, recycle office wastes and minimize use of harmful chemicals.

On the initiative of the management network facilitator, a green-office contest was held and has prompted a revised interest in greening across the management network country office participants and UNDP as a whole.²⁹

Box: Renovation of the “FF” building in New York

The renovation of the “FF” building in New York provides some practical insights. UNDP’s greening effort in the FF building took place in two phases. In phase one, UNDP focused principally on energy efficiency, with some indoor environmental quality considerations. For the second phase, UNDP implemented further measures in energy efficiency, as well as green materials and indoor environmental quality (IEQ) as part of the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) office renovation project. As a demonstration of the commitment to sustainable development, it was determined that UNDP should secure independent, third party certification of its successes in greening the renovation. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED’) Green Building Rating System was chosen as the green certification protocol for the construction renovation projects.

3.4 Lessons learned

The key lessons from UNDP experiences in promoting environmental mainstreaming include:

- Actions need to be taken at levels of corporate policies, procedures and culture, country programme development and dialogue with programme countries in order to influence institutions, policies, day-to-day practices and expenditures;
- Mainstreaming receives its legitimacy by being perceived as the responsibility of all individuals and units rather than being associated with any one unit within the organization;
- The achievement of mainstreaming is contingent upon bringing together capacity building, long-term commitment and the involvement of many UNDP actors;
- Mainstreaming must be based on an understanding of the motivating forces operating within an organization as well as the constraints that these forces place on the process;
- Effective mainstreaming needs to be based to the existing functions and procedures of an organization, rather than create new ones.

The late 1990’s efforts show that the challenge is to ensure systematic use of mainstreaming tools, development of human resource capacity, and achievement of expected outcomes. The success of the strategy will depend on the ability of UNDP units to stay engaged in programme countries in

- a) incisive, but participatory, analysis of the poverty-environment linkages;
- b) realistic setting of targets in dealing with priority problems;
- c) assessment of the cost effectiveness of the public actions to be taken; and
- d) instituting a systematic monitoring and evaluation of expected outcomes.

²⁹ UNDP Conducts First “Most Green Country Office Contest”, UN Chronicle (available at http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/webArticles/022004_Green_office.asp).

4. Emerging Strategy – Key entry points and building blocks

The right entry points for environmental mainstreaming refer to the specific conditions of any institution willing to implement the principle. As no international standards or guidelines exist to determine the scope for EM, the entry points result from a management decision.

4.1 Corporate strategies and policies

To be effective the broader management system as well as the business planning process must integrate environmental dimensions. In addition, a precondition to the success of a mainstreaming strategy is the involvement of all parts of the organization, with particular attention from senior management.

- **Policy Statements:** Environmental mainstreaming may require a clear public endorsement and ratification of a strong policy statement by the Administrator and UNDP's most senior management that identifies its overall goals and objectives. It also requires an active commitment for follow up and implementation.
- **Management:** The implementation of the Atlas system will support the organization in management. Once fully implemented during 2004-2005, Atlas will have a considerable impact on UNDP operations, including opportunities for a further consolidation of functions.

4.2 Programming guidance

Environmental mainstreaming at the Country Office level would imply that environment objectives and synergies with social and economic objectives are reflected into UN/UNDP programmes. UN Resident Coordinators and UNDP Resident Representatives should be advised on the environmental soundness of programme and dialogue promoted with programme countries in order to influence institutions, policies, and expenditures. At the Country Office level, UNDP can also ensure that environment is systematically considered during Local Programme Advisory Committees (L-PAC) and Environment Programmes are contributing to other development goals and are consistent with non-environmental programmes. UNDP might carry out a survey and assessment of the current situation as regards environmental mainstreaming via the support of Environmental Focal Points and out posted Policy Advisors. Priorities and targets are set in partnership with Regional Bureaux. As regards to the integration of the environment into practice areas activities at Country Office level, particular emphasis is given on poverty, governance and crisis prevention and recovery.

4.2.1 Programming guidance for UNDP's Energy and Environment Practice

Following the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in September 2002, the Energy and Environment Group and associated UNDP practices, architecture, and approaches were adjusted to align with the rewrites set forth by the Secretary-General. Issues of integration between Energy and Environment sub-practice areas will be incorporated in the series of six practice notes: Core principles and approaches will be captured in the Practice Note on Frameworks and Strategies for Sustainable Development and complement note on mainstreaming environment. Each of the notes relating to sub-practices will outline how mainstreaming environment is ensured in services for Effective water governance; Access to sustainable energy services; Sustainable land management to combat desertification and land degradation; Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and National/sectoral policy and planning to control emissions of ozone-depleting substances and persistent organic pollutants. Participation in the consultation on the energy and environment practice note is encouraged.

4.2.2 Programming guidance for other practices

Additional Country Office guidance regarding mainstreaming in development practice will be captured in a practice note on mainstreaming environment in Country partner policies and programmes. Guidance for UNDP programming will be captured in relevant sections of the revived Programming Manual. This CO guidance will consider the actual ecological footprint of UNDP activities, as well as key planning and reporting tools.

Integrate the environment into other Bureaux and UNDP practice area strategies: EM leads to cross-sectoral policies and approaches and making practices more interdisciplinary and mutually reinforcing. This involved introducing environment into individual bureau business plans, especially crisis prevention and recovery.

4.3 Operational processes

A proposed action programme for operational processes including procurement building management, etc, will be outlined as experience has shown that plans quickly move out of date and are best managed in efforts of continual improvements.

Encourage UNDP managers/units to set their own environmental targets and indicators of success.³⁰

4.4 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

UNDP reporting activities on progress made vis-à-vis mainstreaming strategy is strengthened. Major corporate reporting tools such as NHDR³¹, MDG country reporting or the ROAR better reflects UNDP's role in advocating Environment Mainstreaming benefits, which Senior Management and Country Offices reinforce.

³⁰ For instance, the Bureau for Latin America and Caribbean has developed its own environmental strategy: The road towards sustainable development 2000-2005.

³¹ *Environment in National Human Development Reports: Guidance Notes and Good Practices*, Kanjee Natasha and Dobie Philip, Draft for comments, UNDP/BDP/DDC, August 2002.

5. The Emerging Action Plan

Environment Mainstreaming Action Plan³² provides objectives, means, and individual responsibilities. The Action Plan progress (Annex 1) made under the plan would need to be reviewed regularly to identify and revise areas that need strengthening.

5.1 Policy

- Policy statement and EM Strategy for endorsement by Mark Malloch Brown - **OA**
- Progress report and renewed mandate from the Executive Board - **BDP**
- Practice note endorsed by MMB and implementation promoted - **BDP**
- Green balance scorecard - **BOM**
- “Green” HDR, RHDRs and NHDRs - **HDRO**
- Promote development and use of indicators for MDG 7, target 9 - **BDP**
- Ensure other E&E Practice notes reflect EM principles - **BDP**
- Work with UNEP to promote EM within UNDG, e.g., Common Country Assessment/UN Development Assistance Framework Guidelines - **BDP**

5.2 Programming

- Raise profile of environment and SD in CCA/UNDAF guidelines - **UNDG/CDG**
- Integrate environment into Regional and CO programmes - **RBx**
- Update and revive guidance on environmental appraisals in Country Programme/Country Programme Action Plan - **CDG**
- Encourage and enable practice focal points to champion EM in COs – **BDP/RBx**
- Ensure Atlas/Programming Manual reflects EM strategy and tools – **BOM/CDG**
- Develop specific tools and training to implement EM strategy, including Strategic Environmental Assessments - **BDP**
- Evaluation Office to assess the extent to which environment has been reflected in other practices - **EO**
- Identify good practice of mainstreaming in other practice areas – **BDP/BOM**
- Pilot EM cross-practice model projects (e.g., with Poverty Group/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery/Regional Bureaux) – **BDP/BCPR**
- Incorporate an EM module into Learning Resources Centre training materials - **LRC**

5.3 Operations

- Joint appointment of a green office coordinator within Bureau Of Management to develop a green office programme including procurement policy, building, transport
- Introduce green office strategy to newly built UNDP offices - **BOM**
- Quantify cost savings associated with office greening - **BOM**
- Provide financial and other public judgment incentives to good office practice - **BOM**
- Identify good practice of mainstreaming at the operational level - **BOM**
- Develop and implement measures to make UNDP “carbon neutral” - **BOM**
- Introduce a green office index into the balance scorecard - **BOM**
- Collaborate with UNEP to extend the green office agenda to entire UN system - **BDP**
- Develop Public-Private Partnerships to advance this agenda - **BRSP**

³² Revised at October 2003 Mainstreaming Environment in UNDP Workshop.