

# **Integrating South-South Cooperation in the UNEP Programmes of Work**

## **Policy Guidance**

**FINAL**

**12 February 2011**

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# Policy Guidance for systematic integration of South-South Cooperation in the UNEP Programmes of Work

## I. Executive Summary

1. South-South Cooperation in the context of UNEP is not a separate process or initiative. It serves as an integral cross-cutting delivery mechanism that should be systematically mainstreamed in the work of UNEP. South-South Cooperation is therefore a means to an end as opposed to being an end in itself.
2. The purpose of the present policy guidance is to facilitate the systematic integration of South-South Cooperation in the UNEP Programme of Work in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (UNEP/GC/23/6/Add.1), adopted by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Forum (GC/GMEF) on February 2005.
3. The policy guidance was prepared in response to UNEP Governing Council Decision 25/9 which requests that the Executive Director “develop a policy guidance for coherent and coordinated implementation of South-South Cooperation approaches across the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme.”
4. The guidance is based on consultations with several UN agencies, inter-governmental organizations and a broad spectrum of experts, including UNEP staff and Permanent Representatives to UNEP. The policy is also informed by UNEP Governing Council decisions, the UNEP Medium Term Strategy, relevant UN General Assembly resolutions and related regional trends in South-South Cooperation as well as recent UN system-wide reforms, including “Delivering as One”, which is intended to promote greater coordination and coherence in the delivery of services by the UN.
5. It provides an overarching framework for integrating South-South approaches across the divisions of UNEP in keeping with the priorities laid out in the Bali Strategic Plan and the medium term strategy, 2010 – 2013 (MTS).
6. The guidance has been formulated to address significant conceptual, institutional, managerial, organizational and financial challenges that impede the systematic integration of South-South Cooperation in UNEP’s work and more specifically in the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan. It provides strategic direction for:
  - Stronger policy and programming support for South-South Cooperation specifically in determining how South-South Cooperation as a key delivery mechanism will be integrated under each thematic priority in the new matrix approach to programming;
  - Strengthening and facilitating opportunities for country-country exchanges through the regional offices and in close collaboration with the UN Country Teams (UNCTs);

- Strengthening engagement in UNCT processes to enhance the integration of environmental sustainability in UN Country Programming processes including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF);
  - Working to initiate and sustain South-South Cooperation approaches in the UNEP Programme of Work with adequate resources that will be built into the biennial programming processes;
  - Strengthening the coordination structures and capacities for South-South Cooperation at UNEP headquarters and in the regional offices including provision of relevant training, awareness raising and incentives for enhanced delivery on South-South Cooperation;
  - Establishing strategic partnerships and participation in multi-lateral forums to promote South-South Cooperation in environment and also to leverage synergies and complementary technical expertise and resources for identified South-South Cooperation activities;
  - Adopting and implementing comprehensive communication and outreach tools to ensure coherent and effective information exchange within UNEP as well as among other relevant stakeholders on, *inter alia*, expertise, experiences, knowledge, methodologies and tools, technologies, best practices, opportunities, and resources.
  - Consistent follow up and reinforcement through design, appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of South-South Cooperation activities in the UNEP Programme of Work to ensure that stated commitments are duly delivered.
7. In keeping with the provisions of this policy guidance, UNEP is committed to enhancing the capacity of developing countries through the South-South Cooperation modality. Effective implementation of this guidance will require active participation and involvement of all staff and the discipline to embrace and make use of the above provisions in the delivery of the UNEP programme of work. UNEP senior management is fully committed to promoting that change in culture.

## **SECTION 1:       CONTEXT**

### **II.   Purpose of the Policy Guidance and Operational Guidelines on South-South Cooperation**

8. The purpose of the present policy guidance is to facilitate and enhance the systematic integration of South-South Cooperation in the UNEP Programme of Work in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (UNEP/GC/23/6/Add.1, hereafter referred to as, “the Bali Strategic Plan”), adopted by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Forum (GC/GMEF) on February 2005.
9. In keeping with a number of key General Assembly resolutions and UNEP Governing Council decisions (UNEP/GC/24/12 and UNEP/GC/25/9), as well as commitments made under various global and multilateral frameworks, UNEP is committed to promoting South-South Cooperation as a means of supporting capacity building and technology support efforts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition through systematic partnership-building and the exchange of expertise, experiences, best practices and knowledge among experts and institutions of the South.
10. The policy guidance document has been prepared in response to UNEP Governing Council Decision 25/9 which requests that the Executive Director “develop a policy guidance for coherent and coordinated implementation of South-South Cooperation approaches across the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme.” It provides an overarching framework for integrating South-South approaches across the work of UNEP in keeping with the priorities laid out in the Bali Strategic Plan.
11. At the operational level, this policy guidance will be supported by a set of detailed operational guidelines which will provide a range of practical “how-to” approaches and support tools to assist UNEP staff in the integration of South-South Cooperation modalities in the design and execution of capacity-building programmes and projects.
12. Together, the policy guidance and operational guidelines will serve as agency-wide reference tools for, and a substantive input into UNEP’s efforts to establish strategic partnerships and networks with stakeholders at the national, sub-regional, regional and global levels to strengthen South-South Cooperation and complement North-South Cooperation in the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and current and subsequent Medium Term Strategies.
13. The present policy guidance was formulated on the basis of extensive documentary research, consultations and analysis of major events and processes relevant to South-South Cooperation. Interviews were conducted with UNEP staff at headquarters in Nairobi as well as with staff at each of the six regional offices and at several UNEP out posted and liaison offices (Paris, Geneva, New York). Ambassadors (Permanent Representatives to UNEP) and experts on South-South Cooperation were also consulted. Extensive research was conducted on relevant trends in South-South

Cooperation at the global, regional and sub-regional levels as well as on current developments within the UN system and inter-governmental entities, including the Group of 77 and China (G-77). An expert group meeting was convened by UNEP to review and help finalize the draft guidance document and updated guidelines.<sup>1</sup>

14. Future versions of this guidance will be informed by ongoing consultations with UNEP Senior management, programme staff, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Governing Council/GMEF, among others. It is hoped that the present document will spur further dialogue and discussion on ways to strengthen the South-South and triangular cooperation modality within UNEP.

### **III. Target audience**

15. The primary audience for this guidance is UNEP staff, from senior managers to programme staff at various levels both at headquarters, regional offices as well as divisions and offices in outposted locations. In particular:
  - for Senior Managers – the guidance provides strategic direction for oversight on commitment to deliver on the recommended policy actions and more specifically in meeting global obligations on South-South Cooperation, on programming processes, institutional mechanisms, funding arrangements, strategic partnership development and capacity development in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan
  - for programme staff – it provides the policy context for their operational work, especially in the identification of South-South Cooperation opportunities and approaches and their systematic incorporation in the design, development and implementation of capacity building project activities in the context of the implementation of the UNEP programmes of work.
  - for the UNEP Quality Assurance and Support section (QAS) – the guidance provides strategic direction for assessing the adequacy of the integration of South-South Cooperation approaches in the various stages of the programme of work cycle and more specifically in the review and approval of project documents. It also provides guidance to QAS on the systematic documentation of the results of the South-South Cooperation initiatives, lessons learned and the opportunities to inform and guide subsequent programming processes.
  - for the Evaluation Unit - it provides the policy context and strategic direction for accountability of South-South Cooperation commitments made in approved programmes and projects.
16. The secondary category of audience comprises the UNEP governing bodies (the Governing Council and the Committee of Permanent Representatives), specifically from the standpoint of providing general policy guidance to UNEP for the direction and coordination of South-South Cooperation as one of the key delivery mechanisms for the Bali Strategic Plan.
17. UN agencies, Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, other relevant organisations, collaborating centres, networks, regional cooperation mechanisms, key donor agencies, civil society, scientific and research communities and the private sector also constitute another important target audience in view of the range and scope of partnerships to be developed, the identification of

potential joint implementation arrangements and the leveraging of complementary technical; and financial resources envisaged in the implementation of this guidance.

## **IV. Global Context**

### **Definition and Background**

18. Within the global context, South-South Cooperation is defined broadly as the exchange of knowledge, best practices, technical support, human resources, trade and policy advice among developing countries. It is: “a process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual or collective development through cooperative exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how.” Ideally, such cooperation is “initiated, organized and managed by developing countries themselves with governments playing a lead role while involving public and private institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals.” It is “multidimensional in scope and can therefore include all sectors and all kinds of technical cooperation activities among developing countries, whether bi-lateral, multi-lateral, subregional, regional or interregional in character.” (17 March 2003, TCDC/13/3, par. 8).
19. South-South Cooperation differs from official development assistance (ODA), in that it is characterized as a “partnership among equals, based on solidarity” and is guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty and ownership, free of any conditionality.<sup>ii</sup> However South-South Cooperation is not meant to replace North-South Cooperation, but is best positioned to complement North-South exchanges.

### **Typology of UNEP South-South Cooperation activities**

20. In the context of UNEP, South-South Cooperation serves as a mechanism for the delivery of capacity building components of relevant project activities articulated in the UNEP biennial programmes of work. While the scope, focus and outputs of UNEP’s South-South Cooperation initiatives vary from sub-programme to sub-programme, the overall thrust of the various approaches employed reflect deliberate efforts to use expertise, knowledge, experiences, best practices, partnerships and network resources available in countries of the South to deliver the identified capacity building activities.
21. Typically, the range of services provided by UNEP’s South-South Cooperation initiatives include specialized data support, policy advice, technical backstopping support, training and related capacity development, expertise inputs including tools and methodologies, outreach materials and mechanisms for information sharing. The typology of the various forms of UNEP South-South Cooperation activities falls into three broad categories defined by the scope, duration and funding arrangements.
22. Short-term South-South Cooperation initiatives are largely typified by workshops or training sessions that are held over a period of a few days to one week specifically to promote the sharing of

experiences, best practices and lessons as well as the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. The provision of short-term advisory services and related technical backstopping support by southern experts or institutions usually in the form of consultancies also falls under this category of UNEP South-South Cooperation initiatives. Funding for this category of activities is correspondingly fairly low. Many of UNEP's capacity building activities that are defined and documented by UNEP staff as South-South Cooperation fall under this specific category.

23. The use of centres of excellence, collaborating centres, specialized networks and partnerships with other organisations including the scientific and research community to provide medium to long-term support (data, expertise, methodologies, tools, databases, etc.) is often the preferred mode of institutional strengthening that is incorporated in several of UNEP's long-standing programmes and projects. Examples of such initiatives include the UNDP-UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI); integrated environmental assessment and reporting (GEO and related regional and national outlooks and state of environment reports); climate change adaptation; sustainable consumption and production; ozone networks; regional seas; freshwater assessment, management and cooperation; sustainable land management, among others. Funding for such initiatives is fairly substantial and is routinely built into the budgets of the biennial programmes of work and/or leveraged from extra budgetary resources. In addition, formal cooperation arrangements in form of MoU's between UNEP and the collaborating partners are established and updated signifying a major departure from the ad-hoc consultancy arrangements associated with the short-term South-South Cooperation initiatives.
24. The third category comprises activities that fall under Triangular Cooperation or North-South-South Cooperation. While, this mechanism of support is less common than the other two, it is gaining increasing attention and interest internally in UNEP and outside particularly from the standpoint of the opportunities to leverage complementary technical and financial resources from partners in the north. Examples of this form of support include attachments, staff exchanges and training in specialized areas often for periods of up to one year or more. Funding for these initiatives is also correspondingly substantial and its disbursement is governed by formal partnership agreements between UNEP and the participating organisations and institutions. The on-going UNEP and Fredskorpset (Norwegian Peace Corps/FK Norway) programme of reciprocal exchanges of young professionals between Norway and national and regional institutions in Africa is a good example of this category of support that is intended to strengthen institutional capacities for integrated environmental assessment and reporting within the framework of the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN).
25. The on-going activities in the three categories of UNEP South-South Cooperation initiatives are dispersed across sub-programmes and biennial Programmes of Work and for most of these, there are no systematic attempts to follow-up on results achieved and lessons learned and their impacts are therefore not well articulated and fed into subsequent programmes of work processes.



## Evolution of global mandates on South-South Cooperation

26. Much of the impetus behind South-South Cooperation has traditionally come from developing countries and Southern-based inter-governmental organizations such as the G-77 and China<sup>iii</sup> and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
27. However, a broad range of stakeholders, including developed countries, multilateral institutions and organizations and inter-regional and regional bodies now recognize South-South Cooperation as a key mechanism for the delivery of development assistance. Indeed, a dimension of South-South Cooperation that has become increasingly common is triangular cooperation, whereby a developed country or multi-lateral organization provides resources to a developing country with the objective of assisting and facilitating its cooperation with other developing countries.<sup>iv</sup>
28. Significantly, the United Nations continues to be a key player in systematically advocating and supporting South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation.<sup>v</sup> In his 2007 report to the sixty-second session of the General Assembly (A/62/295), the UN Secretary-General called upon the international development community, including the UN to assist in strengthening South-South Cooperation through:
  - a) Orienting South-South efforts towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;
  - b) Intensifying multi-lateral support for South-South initiatives;
  - c) Fostering inclusive partnerships for South-South Cooperation, including triangular and public-private partnerships;
  - d) Improving coherence of United Nations system support for such cooperation; and
  - e) Encouraging innovative financing for South-South Cooperation.<sup>vi</sup>
29. Furthermore, on 23 July 2008 the Policy Committee of the United Nations Secretary-General issued decision No. 2008/26 on South-South Cooperation, emphasizing the United Nations', "strong commitment to South-South Cooperation as a critical tool for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals."<sup>vii</sup>
30. South-South Cooperation is a globally recognized modality for enhancing, strengthening and accelerating capacity-building and partnerships for sustainable development. Moreover, increased commitment to South-South Cooperation has been demonstrated by heads of state at a number of recent high-level conferences and summits, including the Marrakech Conference of 2003, the World Summit in New York City in 2005, and the Ministerial meeting of the G-77 and China in 2008.<sup>viii</sup> The G-8 and World Bank have also advocated South-South and triangular modalities in addressing critical development issues, such as food security, poverty alleviation, climate change and in the efforts of developing countries to achieve internationally agreed upon development goals.
31. In December 2009, the General Assembly High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation issued the Nairobi Outcome document which reaffirmed that South-South Cooperation is a 'manifestation of solidarity among people and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being,

national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.” It urged United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to take concrete measures to mainstream support for South-South and triangular cooperation “at their request and with their ownership and leadership, to develop capacities to maximize the benefits and impact of South-South and triangular cooperation.”<sup>ix</sup>

32. In September 2010, the 65th session of the UN General Assembly adopted the Outcome Document of the High-Level Plenary meeting on the Millennium Development Goals which welcomed the on-going efforts to strengthen and support South-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation and called for effective implementation of the Nairobi Outcome document.

### **Global and regional trends**

33. A clear global mandate in support of South-South Cooperation has emerged over the years as its scope has expanded beyond government-to-government exchanges to include businesses as well as civil society, educational institutions, multilateral financial mechanisms, regional banks and research centers, on a broad range of economic, social, environmental, and health issues.
34. Several countries of the global South have become economic powerhouses with significant influence in their respective regions and beyond. New political and economic alliances among emerging economies reflect the dynamism and increasing influence of Southern economies in the areas of industrial growth, trade, investment, and technology.
35. Regional integration and inter-regional cooperation have also intensified significantly in recent years. The mandates of a number of regional organizations of the South have expanded to encompass free trade zones, as well as cooperation agreements on a range of issues, including climate change, health and energy security. Notably, many regional partnerships have called for increased efforts to mainstream South-South Cooperation in the work of key environment and development partners.
36. Indeed, there are now new opportunities for South-South Cooperation, including triangular cooperation, as many countries look to innovative cooperation and funding mechanisms to facilitate market recovery and promote economic development and environmental sustainability. Triangular partnerships have been increasingly adopted as an innovative method of financing by several Northern countries, as well as multilateral and regional banks.
37. Many new partnerships have been driven by a growing urgency to meet MDGs and other internationally agreed upon development goals. Among its provisions, the MDG’s call for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (Goal 1) and the promotion of environmental sustainability (Goal 7) as well as the development of a global partnership for development (Goal 8).

## **V. South-South Cooperation in the Context of UNEP**

38. Within the United Nations system, there is an emphasis on greater coherence, harmonization of development assistance, increased focus on the role of the private sector, national ownership of development programmes and results-based management. (“Proposed biennial programme and support budgets for 2010-2011: Report of the Executive Director,” UNEP/GC/25/X)

### **Existing policy frameworks**

39. The following UNEP policy instruments and processes provide the mandate and strategic direction for the systematic integration of South-South Cooperation in the programmes of work of UNEP specifically as a means to deliver capacity building and technology support in the thematic priorities areas of the UNEP programmes of work.
40. The Bali Strategic Plan stipulates UNEP’s role in strengthening capacity building and technology support in line with country needs and priorities. It highlights the importance of South-South cooperation as a key delivery mechanism and underlines the importance of developing human resources and institutions of the South. In particular, the Bali Strategic Plan “stresses the need to intensify efforts directed towards institutional capacity building, including through the exchange of expertise, experiences, information and documentation between the institutions of the South in order to develop human resources and strengthen the institutions of the South, and places emphasis on the important role for economic and social development played by scientific knowledge and technology<sup>x</sup>.”
41. The Medium Term Strategy (MTS), 2010-2013, is a significant milestone in UNEP’s efforts to become a more effective, efficient and results-based organization; one that is more responsive to governments and stakeholders in responding to global environmental challenges and opportunities. The MTS highlights South-South Cooperation as one of the “key mechanisms” for the delivery of relevant projects on the ground and calls for “engaging a wide range of partners and organizations,”. It also calls for “developing a North-South programme, including engaging centres of excellence in the North with a wide range of national partners and organizations in the South, especially in the areas of environmental data, information and assessment.”<sup>xi</sup>
42. The UNEP Programme of Work provides an umbrella framework for the design and implementation of South-South cooperation activities through the various sub-programmes in line with the vision, priorities and objectives outlined in the Medium Term Strategy. The PoW requires systematic reporting on the integration of the Bali Strategic Plan across all six sub-programmes, and thus, a basis for including the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation approaches in the programme narrative, used as the basis for the design and implementation of individual projects.
43. The Programme of work for 2010-2011 states that UNEP “will strongly promote and facilitate South-South Cooperation as one of the key mechanisms for implementing the Bali Strategic Plan.” It serves as the most logical entry point for the systematic integration of South-South Cooperation in the design, review and delivery of its programmes and services. (UNEP/GC/25/X, p. 19) The project review and approval processes also provide additional strong entry points for ensuring that South-South Cooperation is included across UNEP’s Programme of Work.

44. In addition, UNEP has introduced a matrix approach in its programming to promote “One UNEP” delivery. UNEP is also re-orienting its priorities to respond in its normative work to country needs in line with the Bali Strategic Plan.
45. Under the “Delivering as One” reform process, UN agencies, including UNEP, are taking significant internal steps to promote greater coordination and coherence in the delivery of their services. Since 2007, UNEP has been strengthening its internal processes to enhance its engagement in the Delivering-as-One programmes in some countries implementing this initiative. Examples of such measures include development of a guidance note on UNEP operations and engagement at country level; focused training for UNEP staff on UN country programming processes; strengthened coordination role of regional offices; enhanced UNEP presence and visibility in selected countries; contribution to the development and roll out of guidance notes on mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate change in UN country programming processes; establishment of Virtual Country Teams and network of divisional focal points; and liaison and participation in UNDG processes including the work of Regional UNDG Teams as a means to strengthen UNEP’s work with UN Country Teams.
46. UNEP Governing Council decisions (UNEP/GC/24/12 and UNEP/GC/25/9) provide the legislative mandate for UNEP to continue to advance the application of South-South Cooperation approaches in the delivery of the capacity building and technology support objectives of the Bali Strategic Plan.

### **Current challenges and gaps**

47. The significant reforms undertaken by UNEP expand the opportunities for the systematic integration of South-South and triangular cooperation. However, significant conceptual, institutional, managerial, organizational and financial challenges remain.
48. First, there is an implementation gap between stated policy commitments in the Medium Term Strategy, the Bali Strategic Plan and relevant Governing Council Decisions on the one hand and efforts to apply South-South Cooperation approaches in project activities on the other. Although current efforts to apply South-South Cooperation approaches in UNEP’s projects have yielded useful lessons, these efforts remain dispersed across sub-programmes and are also often of limited scope and duration. In addition, there is a perception amongst several staff that South-South Cooperation happens through ad hoc workshops with no real wider implications or impact globally, or over the long-term.
49. At the same time the outcomes of various relevant South-South Cooperation activities, including workshops, are not institutionalized or reported on after they are completed, through for example, ongoing evaluations, or through the monitoring of outcomes of such workshops and activities. Such efforts would provide valuable input on the impact or the lessons learned from any given enterprise. There is therefore a need for a comprehensive strategy on South-South Cooperation which consolidates the on-going efforts and links all planned South-South Cooperation activities to the UNEP Programme of Work.<sup>xii</sup>

50. Second, there is also the perception that South-South Cooperation is a relatively more expensive and less efficient undertaking than traditional modes of capacity-building. In fact, South-South Cooperation is a very useful mechanism for enhancing regional cooperation and the delivery of UNEP's programmes. For example, it is a key modality for encouraging partnerships among Centres of Excellence to build capacity and exchange knowledge tools at the regional, sub-regional and national levels<sup>xiii</sup>.
51. Third, while UNEP is working to become more responsive to country demands and needs, particularly through deeper engagement with UN Country Teams (UNCTs), there still exists some residual challenges of adequate alignment of UNEP's capacity building activities with national priorities and needs, which in turn pose challenges to the delivery of these activities through South-South Cooperation modalities. Although the 2010-2010 Programme of work process is designed to address such challenges, these efforts would be further strengthened by a comprehensive South-South Cooperation Strategy that is also responsive to national priorities and needs.
52. Fourth, there is a need for greater internal coordination in systematically strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation within UNEP and across its regional offices. Greater information sharing on South-South initiatives within UNEP would alleviate this problem as would the availability of information regarding existing networks and resources from which to draw on to strengthen South-South partnerships and the use of Southern experts and resources.
53. In general, consultation and coordination between divisions and regional offices remain a significant challenge, particularly in the development and implementation of programmes and projects. Traditionally, individual UNEP divisions implement programmes at the regional and national level, often in a top-down manner. Thus they are often isolated from one another. In addition, current criteria used by the project review and approval processes do not reflect South-South Cooperation approaches as key components of UNEP's capacity building and technology support activities.
54. Finally, although commitments made under the Bali Strategic Plan are gradually being instituted, the pace of delivery on these commitments for the most part has been less than optimal at the programming and implementation level. There is insufficient follow-through on monitoring, reporting and consistent evaluation of commitments made under previous Programmes of Work. This policy guidance presents an opportunity for senior management to promote and facilitate South-South Cooperation in keeping with numerous GC decisions and the provisions contained in the Bali Strategic Plan.

## SECTION 2: NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### VI. Implementing priority actions

55. The following sections articulate new strategic principles and commitments to ensure that South-South Cooperation approaches are systematically and consistently applied as a key delivery mechanism for UNEP's capacity building and technology support activities.

#### **Stronger Policies and Institutional Support for South-South Cooperation**

56. UNEP senior management is committed to ensuring that agreed upon mandates and commitments on South-South Cooperation are translated into concrete action. In this regard, efforts to follow through with requests made by the Governing Council in its 2009 decision and subsequent decisions that have implications for South-South Cooperation will be prioritized.<sup>xiv</sup>

57. The current 2010-2011 PoW will be reviewed to determine how South-South Cooperation will be integrated under each thematic priority. The PoW for 2012-2013 and subsequent Programmes of Work will reflect the importance of South-South Cooperation as a key delivery mechanism of the Bali Strategic Plan, consistent with relevant Governing Council decisions. Specifically, the Bali Strategic Plan section of the narrative will include explicit language and specification of the means by which South-South Cooperation approaches will be applied, through, for example, the promotion of networking, sharing of experiences, or partnerships and drawing on the capacities and expertise of regional and national centers of excellence. In this regard, UNEP regional offices will explore areas where there may be synergies between the priorities and programmes laid out in a given PoW and the identified priorities and needs of a given country.

58. With regard to the Programme of Work process and content, explicit provisions for inclusion of South-South Cooperation approaches will be included in the criteria listed for review by the project review and approval process. While this process currently requires that consideration be given to the criteria of technology support and capacity building, further elaboration of the methods for sharing lessons learned, best practices and expertise among developing countries will also be emphasized. Detailed practical guidelines for integrating South-South Cooperation approaches at various stages of the programme and project development processes are elaborated in a separate stand-alone "Operational Guidelines" (see paragraph 11 above). The new UNEP project manual has been revised to incorporate the appropriate links to the South-South Cooperation operational guidelines.

59. UNEP will continue to strengthen its involvement in the UNDAF processes. It will step up participation in key UNCT meetings to strengthen the integration of environmental sustainability

into UN programming processes. UNEP's regional offices will also facilitate and strengthen opportunities for country-to-country exchanges in collaboration with other members of the UNCT in line with the BSP.

### **Towards Systematic Funding for South-South Cooperation**

60. South-South Cooperation, including triangular cooperation, is a delivery mechanism for implementing UNEP's sub-programmes. As such, the main source of resources for South-South Cooperation activities will be from existing sub-programmes and projects regardless of source of funding. In addition, UNEP will work to initiate and sustain South-South cooperation approaches in the UNEP Programme of Work with adequate funding that will be built into the biennial programming process. Any funding that is allocated for capacity-building activities should include resources mobilized for knowledge sharing and the exchange of best practices as a key means of strengthening South-South and triangular partnerships across the sub-programmes<sup>xv</sup>.
61. UNEP will work with governments and relevant organizations to provide financial and other resources for further facilitating South-South Cooperation, as stated in UNEP GC Decision 24/12 (2007). South-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation are increasingly accorded significant importance and enjoy broad-based support from both developing countries and the donor community. Correspondingly, financial support must also emanate from governments and relevant organizations in response to the identified needs.
62. In particular, UNEP will work to leverage existing triangular partnerships with governments such as Norway, Sweden and Japan that have demonstrated strong support for South-South and triangular cooperation in the past with ongoing support to UNEP and UNDP initiatives on issues related to environmental sustainability. UNEP will also explore opportunities for catalyzing support from GEF, UN Development Account and in liaison with UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, opportunities offered by the UN Fund for South-South Cooperation, the India-Brazil-South Africa Trust Fund and the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund, among others.

### **Strengthening UNEP institutional mechanism to deliver on South-South Cooperation**

63. Without adequate staff support and resources, commitments made under the BSP and MTS will remain lip service. UNEP senior management is therefore committed to providing policy support for a strengthened institutional mechanism and operational procedures particularly at the regional level to ensure coordinated and coherent identification, development and delivery of South-South Cooperation activities in the context of PoW implementation. This is particularly necessary because of the increasing requests from member states and key stakeholders for UNEP to support and enhance South-South and triangular cooperation for the delivery of capacity building and institutional strengthening activities.
64. The actual implementation and driving force for South-South Cooperation will depend on the strengthened coordination and capacities of regional offices with the support of relevant staff from technical divisions. Regional Directors will be accountable for developing South-South Cooperation

initiatives and coordinating their implementation within and between their respective regions in line with the priorities and programmes outlined in the PoW through the various sub-programmes. Staff at the regional offices will be designated to oversee and assist in the coordination of South-South Cooperation activities and programmes. Accordingly, their terms of reference will be revised to reflect this function.

65. Relevant divisional staff will be designated as focal points for South-South Cooperation efforts within their respective divisions and their terms of reference will also be revised to reflect this support role. In particular, the divisional focal points will be tasked to facilitate coordinated consultations and liaison between divisions, regional offices and the South-South Cooperation Coordination Unit at various stages of programme of work cycle including facilitating and promoting sharing of South-South Cooperation experiences and lessons within their respective divisions
66. UNEP corporate South-South Cooperation and related support functions will be carried out by a Coordination Unit located at headquarters. The Unit will coordinate a coherent UNEP response to global obligations including liaison and policy dialogue, strategic partnership development with UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, other UN agencies, international and regional organisations as well as UNEP participation and inputs in relevant global processes and events such as the biennial meetings of the UN High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and the UN Secretary General's report for these meetings.
67. The Unit will also coordinate the development and promotion of the application of support tools, including further development, operationalisation and regular updating of the UNEP South-South Cooperation operational guidelines. These guidelines will serve as a practical toolkit or manual to facilitate the systematic integration of South-South Cooperation approaches at various stages of Programme of work development as well as in the design, development and implementation of the associated capacity building project activities. The Unit will play a particularly crucial quality assurance role in the project review and reporting processes and also ensure that results achieved and lessons learned and their impacts are well articulated and fed into subsequent programmes of work processes.
68. Further, the Unit will engage in regular consultations among UNEP regional offices, divisions and sub-programmes to refine existing operational guidelines and approaches for integrating South-South Cooperation more effectively in support of capacity-building efforts at various levels. It will also hold internal workshops, consultative meetings to leverage and make use of feedback on any relevant programmes and projects that could be better delivered using South-South Cooperation modalities.
69. An important aspect of UNEP's strategy for integrating South-South Cooperation will involve outreach efforts to build awareness internally in UNEP as well as with relevant partners, including through the training of staff, on the available mechanisms, tools, modalities, policies and inter-governmental processes that exist with regard to South-South and triangular cooperation<sup>xvi</sup>. Incentives will be developed to encourage the implementation of South-South approaches in capacity building efforts, through for example, on modalities and tools for integrating South-South



Cooperation in programming and implementation of specific projects. The initiation and facilitation of these activities will constitute key tasks of the Coordination Unit.

70. Further the Unit will continue to guide and provide oversight for the further development and maintenance of the South-South Cooperation exchange mechanism specifically to enhance UNEP's ability to meet requests for facilitating the matching of available South-specific expertise and knowledge to expressed needs. The Unit will continue to liaise with relevant staff in regional offices and division as well as sub-programme coordinators to leverage support from internal resources and extra-budgetary sources for the further development, operation and maintenance of the exchange mechanism.
71. The staff complement of the coordination unit will comprise at a minimum, one full-time professional staff at P-4/5 level supported by one full-time junior staff specifically to support the content management of the South-South Exchange mechanism. The location of the Unit, with adequate funding for corporate functions and operational costs, will remain in the Division of Regional Cooperation for the time being. However, in view of the envisaged quality assurance support function to be carried out by the Unit, it will be necessary to establish operational and liaison linkages between the Unit and the Office for Operations to ensure that South-South Cooperation is reflected in programme development, monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes.

### **Participation in multi-lateral forums to promote South-South Cooperation in the Environment**

72. UNEP will step up efforts to support policy dialogue regarding South-South Cooperation on environmental issues at international conferences including meetings of the COPs in order to promote partnerships for enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation. In particular, UNEP will continue to provide substantive inputs and also participate in the biennial conferences of the UN High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. As requested by the GC, UNEP will contribute to the Secretary General's future reports on South-South Cooperation, which constitutes the main discussion document for the conferences of the UN High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation.
73. In addition, UNEP will continue to take the lead in the organisation of the solution forum on climate change and environment as a key component of the annual Global South-South Development Expo specifically to showcase UNEP-supported initiatives that have provided successful solutions to climate change/environment problems through effective leadership, innovation and partnerships.
74. Further, regional environmental forums will provide an important basis for the identification of emerging needs and priorities, as well as inputs on relevant policy recommendations and the UNEP programme of work development processes.

## Enhanced Partnerships

75. UNEP will demonstrate and communicate the role and value of South-South Cooperation as an effective delivery mechanism for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan. Accordingly, UNEP will develop strategic outreach activities (targeted briefings, updates, web-based promotional tools, publications and materials, etc.) to raise the profile of South-South and triangular cooperation which are consistent with existing UN system-wide priorities and initiatives, as well as corporate UNEP commitments.<sup>xvii</sup>
76. UNEP will engage in regular consultations and exchange of information in areas where there are opportunities for joint programming and execution in the context of implementation of the UNEP programme of work. Strategic partnerships with relevant UN agencies, Secretariats of Multilateral Environment Agreements, regional/sub-regional inter-governmental organizations, cooperation mechanisms, networks, bilateral and multilateral institutions will be developed or strengthened to leverage complementary technical and financial resources for identified South-South Cooperation activities articulated in the UNEP programme of work.
77. Specifically, UNEP will continue to draw on the capacities and expertise of relevant collaborating centers, centers of excellence and networks to support joint programming and execution of identified South-South and triangular cooperation activities in the six sub-programmes of UNEP's programme of work. Partnerships and interaction with the Ozone networks, National Cleaner Production Centers, Climate Change networks, centres that support UNEP's work in ecosystem management, integrated environmental assessment and reporting as well as other emerging opportunities for programmatic and other substantive cooperation will be further explored.
78. In particular, UNEP will actively engage with the CBD Secretariat to explore and identify opportunities for synergies and possible joint initiatives in the context of the implementation of the Multi-Year Plan of Action for South-South cooperation on Biodiversity for Development in support of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan of the CBD and its contribution to the achievement of the MDGs.
79. In addition, close cooperation between UNEP, UNDP and GEF will be established and maintained to assist countries in their capacity-building and technology support needs. In this regard, UNEP in its submissions to GEF will, to the extent feasible, incorporate South-South Cooperation elements, building on the experience and lessons of previous and on-going UNEP/GEF project activities,.
80. Regular liaison, dialogue and consultations will be maintained with the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, as the system-wide coordinator and facilitator for South-South and triangular cooperation. The existing Memorandum of Understanding between UNEP and UNDP provides a basis for deepening coordination between the two agencies to strengthen joint programming and implementation of South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.

## Development of communication and outreach tools

81. The South-South Cooperation Coordination Unit will adopt a comprehensive communication and outreach strategy to ensure coherence between headquarters, its divisions, as well as UNEP regional offices in the key messages and priorities that are conveyed, internally in UNEP as well as with external partners, consistent with the strategic actions of this policy guidance and operational approaches for systematic integration of South-South Cooperation across the work of the organisation.
82. The communication and outreach strategy will be guided by the UNEP corporate external and internal communication strategies as well as the Programme of work processes. It will apply dynamic multi-channeled approaches and tools to high-light the relevance and value added of South-South Cooperation, promote engagement and interaction within UNEP and outside with relevant partners to shape and convey messages and outreach products tailored to the specific target audiences.
83. UNEP will also produce a range of products to strengthen the South-South Cooperation Outreach to target audiences. Such products will include corporate information materials on South-South Cooperation, website and on-line resources, publications, newsletters, brochures and briefings notes, presentations, training materials on relevant environmental themes and state-of-the art technologies, case studies and best practices that have the potential for scaling up and replication in other countries or regions.<sup>xviii</sup>
84. While the current UNEP South-South Cooperation website is quite comprehensive and of a high-quality, it will be updated regularly with direct web links created to ongoing UNEP wide South-South Cooperation related activities to reflect up-to-date information on program priorities, tools and activities geared towards a wide range of UNEP staff and relevant partners. (<http://www.unep.org/south-south-cooperation/>)<sup>xix</sup>
85. A key component of the communication strategy will focus on the further development, operation and maintenance of the South-South Cooperation exchange mechanism specifically to facilitate effective information sharing among relevant stakeholders (<http://www.unep.org/south-south-cooperation/chm/>). Internally in UNEP, the exchange mechanism will serve to document and disseminate in a more systematic way, many of the South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives that have been built into previous and on-going UNEP's capacity building project activities

## Appraisal, Monitoring and Evaluation

86. The South-South Cooperation Unit will continue to liaise with regional offices and divisions to to promote and assist UNEP project managers to explore South-South Cooperation opportunities and strengthen the capacity building aspects of the projects particularly at the identification and design stage. The membership of the Project Review Committee (PRC) will include a representative of the

South-South Cooperation Coordination specifically to help assess the adequacy of projects' incorporation of South-South Cooperation approaches. Specific guidance for this assessment will be incorporated in the existing criteria for project review and approval under PRC and PAG. The Quality Assurance Section (QAS) representative in the PRC will ensure that the PRC members pay attention to the institutional arrangements of projects, their sustainability, their compliance with the requirements of stakeholder and partnership analyses and to their socio-economic and gender aspects, particularly as they relate to South-South Cooperation.

87. What gets measured gets done. Without systematic monitoring and evaluation efforts to assess whether results have been achieved, South-South Cooperation is unlikely to receive the attention that it merits. Both QAS and the Evaluation and Oversight Unit (EOU) will ensure that consistent follow up and reinforcement, through appraisal, monitoring and evaluation of South-South Cooperation activities, will be in place to ascertain that stated commitments are duly delivered and that the results achieved, lessons learned and impacts are systematically documented in the programme performance reports, IMDIS, and related evaluation reports and that they are fed into subsequent programmes of work processes. In this regard, South-South Cooperation will be strengthened in the design, review, approval and implementation process of programmes and projects. In addition, these initiatives will also be regularly entered and updated in the Programme Implementation Management System with a specific module to track progress of implementation
88. Many activities within UNEP already include components of South-South Cooperation but are not recognized or understood as such. The operational guidelines will articulate details of the typologies of the on-going and proposed South-South Cooperation initiatives designed to deliver capacity building activities in the UNEP programmes of work specifically to provide clear guidance to UNEP staff on the range of options, approaches and entry points for systematic of South-South Cooperation in UNEP's programmes and projects. The UNEP project manual has been revised to incorporate appropriate linkages and references to the South-South Cooperation operational guidelines.
89. The implementation of the above strategic actions will be reviewed as part of the continuing management and monitoring of the UNEP programmes of work. This effort will be aimed at assessing progress made and identifying additional opportunities to enhance understanding of the real value added in integrating South-South Cooperation approaches and therefore better articulation of these approaches and associated benefits in subsequent programming processes. Effective implementation of this guidance will require active participation and involvement of all staff and the discipline to embrace and make use of the above provisions in the delivery of the UNEP programme of work. UNEP senior management is fully committed to promoting that change in culture.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Summary reports describing in detail the research conducted, the methods and timeline of the consultancies, etc. are available on request from the office of the Coordinator of South-South Cooperation, Division of Regional Cooperation, UNEP.

<sup>ii</sup> As stated in Nairobi Outcome document put forth in 2009. United Nations Press release DEV/2781, 3 December 2009.

<sup>iii</sup> The Group of 77 and China remains the largest grouping of developing nations with 132 members.

<sup>iv</sup> In a 2008 report entitled, "Background Study for the Development Cooperation Forum: Trends in South-South and triangular cooperation," ECOSOC defines triangular cooperation as follows: "Triangular development cooperation has been interpreted as OECD/DAC donors or multilateral institutions providing development assistance to Southern governments to execute projects/programmes with the aim of assisting other developing countries." p. 3. The largest triangular partners, in terms of funding and priorities, are Japan and the United Nations, according to the same report.

<sup>v</sup> See Annex for description of UN agency-wide SSC activities and programmes.

<sup>vi</sup> "The State of South-South Cooperation: Report of the Secretary General," A/62/295, 23 August 2007

See: <http://ssc.undp.org/uploads/media/A62295E.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> Senior officials were called upon to take further steps to mainstream United Nations system support to South-South cooperation. The United Nations system was also called upon to prepare an inter-organizational collaborative framework to enhance United Nations collective support to South-South efforts on food security, climate change and HIV/AIDS.

<sup>viii</sup> The Group of 77 and China adopted a set of "South-South cooperation principles" in 2008 and reaffirmed these principles at its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of Ministers in 2009. Among the principles outlined, are the following: South-South cooperation is a common endeavor of peoples and countries of the South and must be pursued as an expression of South-South solidarity and a strategy for economic independence and self-reliance of the South based on their common objectives and solidarity; South-South cooperation is a development agenda based on premises, conditions and objectives that are specific to the historic and political context of developing countries and to their needs and expectations. South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion; South-South cooperation strives for strengthened multilateralism in the promotion of an action-oriented approach to development challenges; South-South cooperation promotes the exchange of best practices and support among development countries in the common pursuit of their broad development objectives (encompassing all aspects of international relations and not just in the traditional economic and technical areas); South-South cooperation seeks to enable developing countries to play a more active role in international policy and decision-making processes, in support of their efforts to achieve sustainable development. (See Annex for full list.)

<sup>ix</sup> Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2009 (resolution 64/222), the Nairobi Outcome reflects the commitment on the part of member states and the UN system to work towards strengthening South-South and triangular partnerships in a systematic, coordinated effort based on previous commitments, while adapting them to new and emerging areas for cooperation.

<sup>x</sup> BS note

<sup>xi</sup> Notable results and experiences are captured in [www.unep.org/dgef](http://www.unep.org/dgef)

<sup>xii</sup> UNEP, as one of the GEF implementing agencies, has over the past decade provided operational support in

- Development of toolkits, case studies, technical guidance and peer reviews;
- Linking science to policy;

- Providing technical support and guidance on substantive scientific issues in the context of country-country support in the South
- Experiential knowledge sharing to the COP processes for the SCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC
- Networking;
- Awareness raising, advocacy, and knowledge management

See [www.unep.org/dgef](http://www.unep.org/dgef) and also the following links [www.unep.org/biosafety](http://www.unep.org/biosafety); <http://www.unep.org/biosafety/Publications.aspx>; [http://bch.cbd.int/help/topics/en/webframe.html?Training\\_Materials.html](http://bch.cbd.int/help/topics/en/webframe.html?Training_Materials.html); <http://www.unep.org/biosafety/Advisors.aspx>

<sup>xiii</sup> A clear example of this among several UNEP-GEF interventions is the Program on Development of Development and Implementation of National Biosafety Frameworks: The UNEP interventions in Biosafety with funding from the Global Environmental Facility made to date is listed below

- **Pilot Enabling Activity** - 1995 – 1999 for 18 countries
- **Global Project on *Development of NBFs*** (approved by GEF Council of November 2000), to be implemented by UNEP and intended to cover the development of NBFs for 100 countries. This project was subsequently extended by the GEF Councils of January 2004 and June 2005, to assist a further 30 countries. This global initiative in line with decision BS was used to assist countries (mainly from the South) to develop their “legal, technical, administrative and related frameworks” to meet their obligation to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. A major output of these processes are a final draft NBF, a broad framework instrument to assist countries to build capacity and fine tune national policy, regulatory and technical frameworks to manage the safe use and transfer of LMOs. Presently the project is going through final technical and administrative closure. As at June 2010, 111 of final draft NBFs had been published by UNEP covering all the six UN languages<sup>xiii</sup>. In addition to the NBFs, the project support as catalysed the ratification to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as had been envisaged in the eligibility criteria for the Protocol.
- **Demonstration (pilot) projects for *NBF Implementation*** in 12 countries<sup>xiii</sup> (approved by GEF Council December 2001 – November 2002).
- **Global Project to support “*The Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH)*”** of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 50 countries, with a subsequent add-on for 89 more countries (approved by GEF Councils of March and November 2004, respectively).
- As at July 2010, the Protocol has 160 Parties, the highest in terms of Party accession/ratification for any Multilateral Environmental Treaty. The capacity building interventions also resulted in the development of several biosafety regulatory instruments either as standalone Biosafety laws, subsidiary legislations – including regulations and guidelines. UNEP through these interventions also develop global toolkits to assist in the development of the NBFs and also consolidated experiences which were shared through global and regional meetings. The structure and model of the NBFs have become a reference point for all interventions on Biosafety at national, regional and international levels. This capacity building support is one of the largest targeted global interventions by UNEP in support of an implementation of an environmental treaty.

In total, according to the GEF Projects Database ([www.gefonline.org/](http://www.gefonline.org/)), approved funding for the national and multi-country biosafety activities (including BCH support) and the initial Pilot Project during the period 1998 - 2010 amounts to US\$ 201 million, of which around US\$ 107 million is provided by GEF and US\$ 94 through country co-financing

<sup>xiv</sup> For example, under GC Decision 25/9, the Executive Director is requested to, *inter alia*:

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- deepen the cooperation of UNEP with related UN agencies, regions, subregions and existing SSC initiatives to develop joint activities and synergies of capacity in advancing South-South cooperation in support of capacity-building and technology support in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan and the Medium-Term Strategy 2010, 2013;
  - initiate formal cooperation arrangements with existing mechanisms and centres of excellence active in South-South cooperation, such as the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation, to foster cooperation in the field of the environment;
  - strengthen the UNEP coordination mechanism and structure for South-South cooperation, including its regional presence, with a view to enhancing its role and function; and
  - develop further and implement high-profile demonstrable projects in South-South cooperation in the field of the environment.
  - Meanwhile, Governments and other relevant organizations are invited to provide the necessary adequate resources for the work of UNEP in South-South cooperation.

<sup>xv</sup> See especially UNEP in GEF publications and the Knowledge Center at [www.unep.org/dgef](http://www.unep.org/dgef)

<sup>xvi</sup> See toolkits/guidance materials developed under the UNEP/GEF Biosafety project

<http://www.unep.org/biosafety/Publications.aspx>;

[http://bch.cbd.int/help/topics/en/webframe.html?Training\\_Materials.html](http://bch.cbd.int/help/topics/en/webframe.html?Training_Materials.html)

<sup>xvii</sup> Decision 25/9 of the Governing Council requests that the Executive Director of UNEP “deepen cooperation with other United Nations agencies, regions, sub-regions and existing South-South cooperation initiatives to develop joint activities and synergies of capacity in advancing South-South cooperation in support of capacity-building and technology support in the context of the Bali Strategic Plan and as reflected in the Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013.” (footnote to 60)

<sup>xviii</sup> The newsletter can update partners and stakeholders on any relevant developments in South-South cooperation within the UN system at the global and regional levels, including the convening of high-level conferences, summits and workshops, information on multi-lateral and regional forums and any relevant UNEP programmes and initiatives that are being developed. As stated in the Bali Strategic Plan, “UNEP should play a more proactive role so that its technology support and capacity-building activities are more widely disseminated in the United Nations systems and mainstreamed In country-specific initiatives undertaken at the field level.” (para.

5)

<sup>xix</sup> For example see [www.unep.org/dgef](http://www.unep.org/dgef); [www.unep.org/biosafety](http://www.unep.org/biosafety)