

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Thursday 23 January 2020  
9:00 am - 12:00 pm, 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm  
United Nations Office of Nairobi  
Conference Room 4

**Background Document for Agenda Item 4:**

**Findings of the Resource Efficiency Subprogramme Evaluation**

This note serves as a background document for consideration under Agenda Item 4: Findings of the Resource Efficiency Subprogramme Evaluation. It provides a summary of the findings from the evaluation of the Resource Efficiency sub-programme, which draws on the completed evaluations of 25 projects within the sub-programme and is organized around the following lines of inquiry: exploration of how change is driven at the sub-programme level; review of the sub-programme Theory of Change; establishing institutional narratives that can reveal influences on global change processes; reflecting on higher-level results reporting; insights into regional aspects of sub-programme development and delivery and consideration of factors affecting performance.

Member States are invited to consider the findings of the evaluation and provide feedback on which aspects of the report are considered most useful.

# EVALUATION OF THE RESOURCE EFFICIENCY SUB-PROGRAMME

## A. FOCUS OF DISCUSSION

The key objective is to share the findings from this evaluation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives. Sub-Programme evaluations tend to raise institution-wide and strategic insights as well as learning specific to the sub-programme itself.

## B. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF KEY ISSUES

This is an established, sizeable and well-performing sub-programme, which presented opportunities to look at the sub-programme as an entity in its own right, rather than purely as an aggregation of the performance of the projects within its portfolio. The large majority of the projects are delivered through one division, Economy. The evaluation provides an assessment organised under six main topics:

- 1) *A synthesis of the findings from 25 project evaluations from this sub-programme, against the standard evaluation criteria.*
  - The findings follow a similar pattern to those highlighted in the Biennial Evaluation Synthesis.
- 2) *A review of the change processes articulated in the Sub-Programme Theories of Change and Outcome Map.*
  - Some of the findings and insights are common to other sub-programme Theories of Change and Outcome Maps and provide some of the earliest reflections on sub-programme Theories of Change, which were first constructed for 2018-19.
  - The evaluation provides a discussion of ‘disruptive change’ strategies that were evident in some of the sub-programme’s projects, as well as the more ‘evolutionary’ models:
    - An understanding of these different models can be beneficial in designing both ‘operational’ and ‘normative’ interventions.
    - The conceptual thinking can also be applied to UN Environment’s existing business model (delivering to a ‘take off’ point and engaging with partners to continue work streams) and the science-policy interface (by what means are policy/decision-makers influenced and encouraged to take up science-based approaches).
- 3) *The identification of ‘institutional narratives’ that support claims of key areas of work having an influence at global level.*
  - Looked at: Green Economy Initiative; Finance Initiative and the Inquiry; Resource Efficiency (represented by Intl Resource Panel); Sustainable Consumption and Production.
  - Tracked the global processes over time where this work was present (engagement with opinion leaders; contributions to key events; pivotal moments; chronological links between presence and key decisions etc).
- 4) *A review of the systems and processes that underpin the reporting of higher-level results (i.e. at Expected Accomplishment level)*
  - Despite a transparent and well-structured data collection and reporting process being in place there are fundamental limitations to how well the aggregation of project results (or in some cases single-case results) can represent the systemic changes that UN Environment aims to achieve. This is an institution-wide issue.
  - The long-term and cumulative effects (multiple UNEP projects; UNEP contributions to country-level change) of UN Environment’s work at country and regional levels is difficult to capture within the existing results framework.

5) *Broad-based reflections on regional aspects of the sub-programme*

- Clarity around the operationalization of the *Strengthened Regional Strategic Presence Policy* still limits the potential analysis of UN Environment's regional effects.
- This evaluation provides feedback on the way in which the symbiotic relationship between the substantive division and regional offices is currently experienced (diagram).

6) *Update on current issues constituting factors affecting performance*

- Common factors affect performance across the institution and, as evaluations are fundamentally retrospective, issues of concern are always in a state of flux and emerging development (Umoja; PIMs; Sub-Programme Coordinator role and institutional placement)

### C. AREAS WHERE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE MADE:

#### Specific to the Sub-Programme:

- Strengthen the Sub-Programme Theory of Change to better articulate the causal pathways that are intended to drive the intended change (reflect science-policy process; align with SDGs etc)
- Focus attention on long-lasting impact and results reporting (e.g. global agendas, work with other units in UNEP)
- Strengthen portfolio of projects delivering on the Sub-Programme (strong narrative, linkages and synergies, conscious testing of models)
- Strengthen project designs in areas of translation of outputs to outcomes; sustainability; human rights and gender
- Proactive approach to donor contributions and needs (common reporting formats, pooled funding)
- Work more closely with Regional Offices (continued connectivity)

#### For the institution:

- Improve institutional narrative
- Allocate internal budget strategically
- Strengthen project design capacity and support mechanisms
- Maximise potential of Umoja 2.0
- Share regional workplans more widely