



Distr.: General
12 September 2019

English only



**United Nations Environment
Assembly of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

**Annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Environment Programme**

Sixth meeting

Nairobi, 7-11 October 2019

Conference Room 1

Draft roadmap for the development of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025

The Secretariat is pleased to present the attached draft roadmap for the development of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 for consideration by the subcommittee under agenda item 5: Preparation of a Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2022-25.

Draft roadmap for the development of UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025

Introduction

For almost half a century, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has served as the leading voice for the environment in the United Nations system, strengthening the science policy interface, keeping the environment under review, supporting global governance processes for the environment and convening for change.

Today we face a perilous moment in the health of our planet. Science tells us unequivocally that we have a limited window of opportunity to steer humanity towards sustainable development. Moreover, public awareness on the state of our environment and what's at stake has reached unprecedented heights. In this context, UNEP's mandate remains critical. As a nimble, science-based and member States-led organization that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment, UNEP is singularly positioned to provide unique global leadership and catalyze positive action to improve the quality and direction of the health of the planet.

With only a decade away from meeting the deadline set by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNEP needs to rise to the challenge of the growing scope, scale and speed of environmental change, and make a strategic shift towards the more integrated and transformative approach recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Against this backdrop, UNEP is initiating the development of its Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025 and Programme of Work and Budget (PoW) 2022-2023. This process represents tremendous opportunity for UNEP to review and strengthen its organizational performance as a way to achieve the transformation change as called for in the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the Rio + 20 outcome document "The Future We Want" will continue to serve as overall guidance for this process.

The year 2022 will not only initiate the implementation of UNEP's next MTS and PoW, it will also be the year that commemorates the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP. Fifty years on from the Stockholm Conference on the Environment, the next MTS will represent an inspiring opportunity for UNEP to reflect on what transformative actions are needed to safeguard our planet as means to achieve peace and prosperity and, under the lead of its Member States, catalyze direct and systematic engagement at all levels of society towards that end.

In parallel, at this critical juncture, a new Executive Director has come to the helm of UNEP. She has articulated her intention to strengthen UNEP to play a catalytic role to help transform the current and unfolding challenges facing the planet, deepening its relevance and accelerating its effectiveness. The MTS development process comes will build on this context to achieve environmental sustainability.

As part of this process, UNEP will also continue and expand its leadership within the UN system towards global environmental action. As such, the MTS will set out a clear path for how to further strengthen UNEP's

contribution to the UN reform process, both in terms of supporting the integration of environmental considerations across the work of the UN, but also using existing UN-wide delivery mechanisms in support of UNEP's mandate, to amplify our impact and results.

This note sets out the initial thinking behind the key activities to be implemented and related strategic issues to be considered throughout the formulation of UNEP's next Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work. It is accompanied by a draft roadmap outlining key activities, milestones and timelines that will guide the development and review phases of this process.

Potential impacts of the UN management reform

UNEP reports to both the General Assembly (GA) and the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA). Both governing bodies require UNEP to submit its strategic plans and budgets, but in different formats. The General Assembly approves UNEP's regular budget, whilst UNEA approves the Environment Fund.

As part of the Secretary-General's management reform, there are many recent and often significant changes to the process governed by the General Assembly. These changes include:

- Shift from a two-year budget to an annual programme of work and budget;
- Introduction of a three-year plan outline;
- Redesign of the results framework (outcomes, outputs, indicators etc);
- New online tool to develop the budget as part of phase two of the enterprise resource system Umoja.

To ensure complementarity in content and avoid duplication of work, UNEP needs to carefully consider the development of the respective documents. As 2019 and 2020 present a pilot for this reform process, Member States in New York have asked for earlier and more increased engagement in the General Assembly process. The outcome of the pilot will only be known after the GA meets in December to deliberate and approve.

For the purpose of this note, the focus will be on UNEP's next MTS and PoW maintaining the existing approach, bearing in mind that the cycle might need to shift to meet the new GA strategic planning cycle in the future

Roadmap

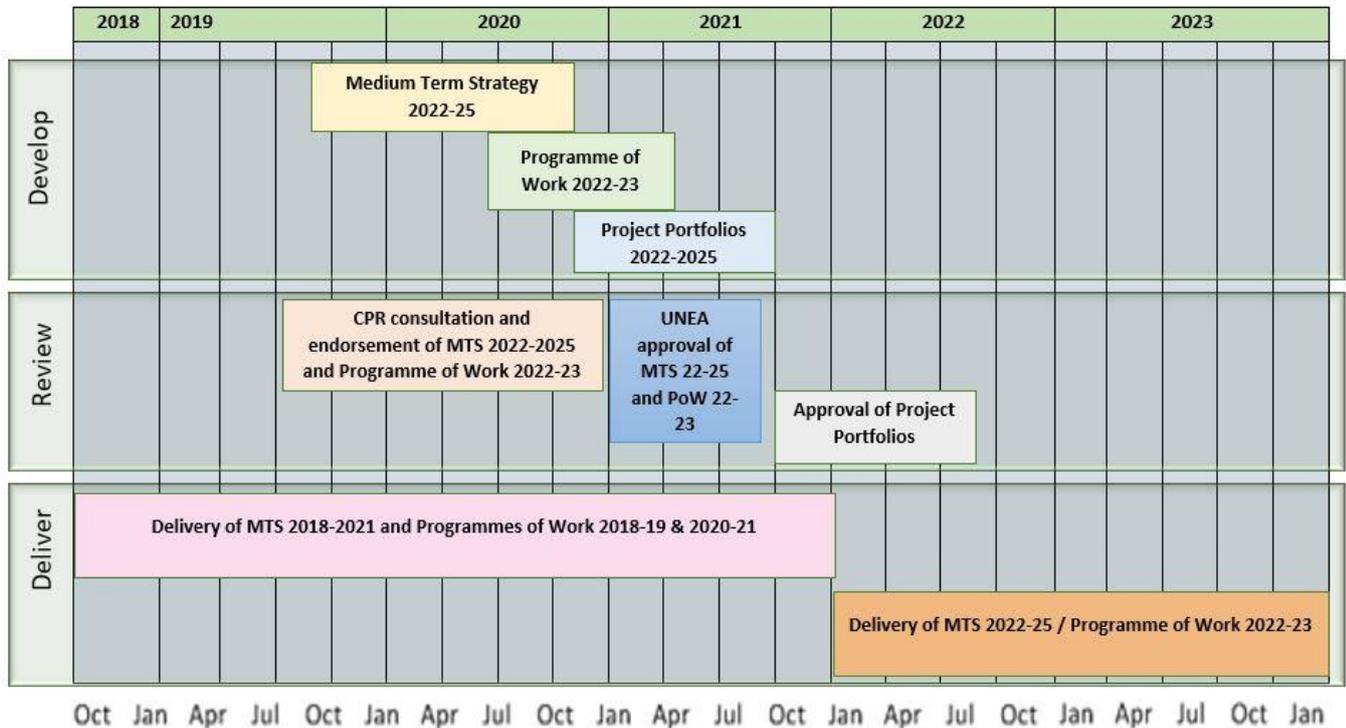
The strategic planning for UNEP’s next MTS and PoW will be articulated in the following three key phases:

Fig. 1: Phases in strategic planning



This draft roadmap covers phases one and two of the three key phases, in line with the process shown below:

Fig. 2: Roadmap for strategic planning



Develop – key activities

To develop the MTS, UNEP will collect key inputs for the identification of strategic pathways, consider key scientific findings and analyze relevant global and regional trends that affect the way in which UNEP operates, as well as undertake an extensive analysis of lessons learned from past processes and carry out wide consultations with key internal and external stakeholder, in particular, Member States and UNEP staff.

Identification of lessons learned

Lessons will be identified from previous planning processes, monitoring, evaluation and audits and subsequently analyzed to, where relevant, influence the development of the MTS. This exercise will be supplemented by an extensive collection of inputs from relevant UNEP staff.

Analysis of operating environment

An analysis of UNEP's operating environment will be undertaken with a view to identifying external factors that may affect the achievement of the intended results. As part of this exercise, the MTS development team will review global trends including but not limited to the social, economic and technological spheres and consider the related opportunities or challenges for UNEP.

Review of environmental assessments and identification of emerging priorities

UNEP has produced several flagship environmental assessments and early warning reviews, such as the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) report series¹ and the Frontiers reports². These assessments, *inter alia*, will provide important starting points to take stock of the global environmental priorities and emerging issues and identify how to tackle them through innovative and integrated approaches. In addition, inputs from the IPCC, IPBES, International Resources Panel and other scientific panels will be fed into the MTS development process to ensure a concerted and strategic approach to effectively address the most pressing environmental issues. To that extent, the MTS development team will make use of case studies to demonstrate possible different implementation pathways.

Consultations to identify regional and national priorities

UNEP's Regional and sub-regional Offices will play a critical role in identifying regional and national priorities and, when possible and relevant, holding regional consultations through existing fora. The MTS development team will run a series of workshops, including by using modern and resource-efficient information technology, with each of UNEP's Regional Offices as a way to provide a 'bottom-up' dimension to the MTS development.

Consultations with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

Consultation with the MEAs to which UNEP provides the Secretariats will be undertaken, to solicit views on how UNEP's global priorities can align with the mandates of the MEAs and how delivery of planned UNEP projects can align with the related policy processes. To support this process, the MTS development team will also engage in an analysis of the MEA strategic plans and pertinent resolutions from MEA COPs to identify priority areas for synergy.

Consultations with CPR members

The MTS development team will hold a series of consultations with the CPR to provide continuous and timely progress updates to Member States on the development of the new MTS and PoW/B, including with regard to identifying the future priorities and vision for the MTS. The aim of these consultations will be to seek feedback and clear guidance from the CPR on these issues.

¹ <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-6>

² <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/frontiers-201819-emerging-issues-environmental-concern>

Consultations with other UN System entities, Major Groups and Stakeholders and the private sector

The MTS development team will also solicit views of Major Groups and Stakeholders and relevant private sector actors, including through administering an online questionnaire, followed by a series of discussion groups, through remote connection wherever possible. Further consultations will also be undertaken with other UN system entities, principally through the Environment Management Group (EMG).

Consultations with UNEP Divisions and Project Teams

The MTS development team in collaboration with Subprogramme Coordinators will run half day workshops with division directors, branch heads and project staff from each of their respective subprogrammes to distil issues, identify priorities and determine lessons learned. These will run in tandem with the regional workshops.

Developing strategic focus – exercises to identify priorities and adjust analysis

Refreshed vision for UNEP

The MTS process provides the opportunity to reconsider and, if necessary, revise and modernize the vision for UNEP and reflect on its strategic role and positioning on the global stage. This requires looking into the future and identifying trends and issues against which to align UNEP's organizational priorities. The MTS development team will widely engage UNEP's staff at divisional and regional levels through a series of workshops, the outputs of which will be delivered to Senior Management for consideration in the context of the next MTS as well as more long term priorities. As UNEP's business model describes the rationale of how results are achieved, the scope of global ambitions guiding the visioning exercise will also suggest how UNEP's business model can be refined to improve results. Methods to be used in this process could include:

Theory of Change: Applying a “theory of change” method could help explain how UNEP's interventions are expected to lead to specific changes, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. A theory of change exercise would help identify solutions to effectively address the causes of problems that hinder progress and guide decisions on which approach should be taken, considering UNEP's comparative advantages, effectiveness, feasibility and uncertainties that are part of any change process. A theory of change also helps to identify the underlying assumptions and risks that will be vital to understand and revisit throughout the process to ensure the approach will contribute to the desired change.

Scenarios planning: A “future scenarios” and back-casting exercise would support the development of the MTS through strategic thinking. “Scenarios” could inform and affirm risks and opportunities for UNEP. Such an exercise could also incentivize new ways of thinking and provide space for questioning outdated assumptions and bring new perspectives to the work of UNEP at broader level.

Annex 1

Timeline for MTS 2022-2025 and PoW 2022-2023

The timeline below sets out the key activities and milestones in the Develop and Review phases of the strategic planning process. Those outlined in red are set by UNEP's governing bodies and cannot be moved.

Phase 1: Develop

- August 2019 Senior Management Team reviews and agrees on MTS/PoW roadmap
- Mid-October 2019 Consultation with CPR under the 6th Annual Subcommittee: **MTS roadmap**
Outcome expected: **MTS/PoW roadmap revised as necessary and agreed**
- Oct 2019 – Apr 2020 Consultations with:
- MEAs
 - Regional and sub-regional offices on priorities and trends
 - Chief Scientist on the foresight process and early warning
 - Cooperate Services and divisions on lessons learned and objectives
 - Evaluation office
 - Major groups and stakeholders and private sector
 - Other UN system entities
 - Project teams on subprogramme priorities and lessons learned
- December 2019 MTS Development team begins drafting the MTS and PoW with iterative consultation
- February 2020 CPR consultation on: **Lessons learned and coordination of HR and budget**
Outcome expected: **Agreement on action to embed lessons & coordination**
- Jan-March 2020 Budgeting and expenditure – lessons learned
- Apr 2020 CPR consultation on: **Initial discussion on strategic priorities**
Outcome expected: **Agreement on regional and global priorities**
- Jun 2020 CPR consultation on: **Sub-programme approach including, indicators, baselines, units and methods of measurement. Organizational approach, including monitoring and evaluation plan**
Outcome expected: **Agreement on results framework and organizational approach**
- Jun 2020 Internal finalization of monitoring and evaluation plan with Cooperate Services and Evaluation Office
- Apr - Oct 2020 Exercise to refresh UNEP's strategic vision
- Aug-Nov 2020 Complimentary corporate strategies developed (HR, Finance, Knowledge Management and Communications)
- Feb 2021-July 2022 Identification of project concepts and development of project portfolios

Phase 2: Review

Oct – Nov 2020	Committee of Permanent Representatives reviews draft MTS and associated PoW and budget, in view of translation and final consideration at UNEA-5
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Preliminary Internal review of strategic documents by divisions and project teams

November 2020 Submit MTS and related PoW to UNEA-5

February 2021 **Open Ended CPR** considers the draft MTS and associated PoW

February 2021 **UNEA** approves the MTS and associated PoW

Final Review of strategic documents by divisions and project teams

UN Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) and ACABQ at UN HQ in New York reviews the Annual Programme Budget Document as advisory bodies for the 5th Committee and the General Assembly

Fifth Committee of the General Assembly approves the Annual Programme Budget Document of all funds, programmes and agencies of the UN Secretariat, including UNEP

July 2022 Internal approval of Programme Frameworks within UNEP