UN environment programme

Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme
Evaluation Summary

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Adapted from a presentation made by:
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Description of Evaluand

▶ **Sub-Programme** (SP) = results-oriented and thematically bounded construct and the **Economy Division** = structure through which large part of the SP portfolio is operationalised

▶ Representative of a technical/substantive SP and gave an opportunity to look beyond the project portfolio to issues of a sub-programme as an evaluand

▶ Evaluation covers 2010-17 and assesses **performance during 2014-17,** looking forward to the Medium-Term Strategy 2018-21

▶ **Resource Efficiency Sub-Programme:**
- established 2010; 50+ projects listed since then
- *Annual example:* USD43m expenditure in 2016; 73% XB (Trust Funds & Earmarked)
- 3 Branches in Economy Division: Energy & Climate; **Resources & Markets**; Chemicals & Health

▶ The strategic emphasis of the SP is largely driven at the **level of individual projects (incl Flagships)** and sometimes by trends in extra-budgetary funding, with project alignment and contributions to results being frequently fitted either **retrospectively or additionally** to the results frameworks of the consecutive Programmes of Work 2010-2017

Evaluation Focus (from TOR)

► TOR outlined three areas of focus:

1) Project level performance

2) Exploration of key Theories of Change

3) Contribution to higher level results and global change processes

► The Evaluation followed a number of **'lines of inquiries'** relevant to the SP:

   ► *synthesized analysis* of 25 project evaluations against standard evaluation performance topics

   ► *higher-level results reporting*

   ► *regional aspects* of the SP

   ► *institutional narratives* on influence of global processes

   ► *change processes* and the *theory of change*

Evaluation Method

▶ **Evaluation Team: Dr Marcel Crul** (TL), **Dr Dick Van Beers**, **Dr Derek Eaton**, **UNEP Evaluation Office** (Dr Michael Spilsbury, Dr Janet Wildish)

▶ **Evaluation Reference Group:**
Dr Mark Halle, Associate and Former Executive Director, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Switzerland;
Dr Alice Kaudia, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Kenya;
S. Vijay Kumar, M.Sc., Distinguished Fellow at TERI; IRP Panel member, India and
Dr Oyun Sanjaasuren, Head of the Zorig Foundation, Former Minister of Environment and Green Development, Mongolia.

▶ **Document Review:** (synthesis of findings from 25 project evaluations

▶ **Transition Management workshop:** (Geneva) with staff responsible for the SP portfolio

▶ **Interviews:** 70+ people

Performance: Project Level (1)

▶ Consistent with project performance in the Biennial Synthesis Report (2016-17)

Areas of Strength

▶ **Strategic relevance** is **high**, (SP makes substantial contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 8 & 12)

▶ **Project outputs** appear to be delivered **effectively** and as planned across the board.

▶ **Stakeholder engagement** is **well developed** and is given high priority in key multi-stakeholder knowledge and implementation platforms in the SP. [However, **stakeholder participation and cooperation** was assessed as **relatively poor** across the 25 project level evaluations, possibly caused by different interpretations across evaluations].

▶ Themes of resource efficiency, sustainable consumption and production and, more specifically, **inclusive green economy and sustainable finance** have made their **impact** at a global level.

Performance: Project Level (2) Areas Deserving Further Attention

▶ **Translation of outputs into longer-term outcomes and impact** deserves further attention.

▶ **Sustainability** of the SP is **reduced** by the strong dependency on external funding

▶ **Actual impact of the SP on change in the recipient countries and organisations is hard to gauge**, since the changes that are reported show a limited picture of the deeper change that possibly takes place.

▶ **SP has not been actively applying UN approaches** on *Human Rights, Rights of Indigenous People and Gender Equality.*

▶ There is a **need to accelerate the process of better aligning results** (Expected Accomplishments if possible) with the SDGs, especially 12 and 8, and thus embedding results on a more strategic level.

▶ **M&E is the lowest scoring criterion** - overreliance on the reporting in the Project Information Management System (PIMS) to serve as 'monitoring'

▶ **Difficult to assess the efficiency** of the SP - little detailed financial information available at a disaggregated level (and limitations of Umoja system)

Performance: Higher Level Reporting (1)

- During 2010-17, the SP has made **considerable progress** in developing a robust and transparent results reporting system

- The results (i.e. Expected Accomplishments) that have been reported are found to be **evidence-based and consistent** with external sources of information.

- Reported results offer only a **partial and fragmented** picture of the **change processes** that are taking place in countries, business sectors, cities and among people, among others because:
  - Deliverables counted are close to **project outputs**
  - Narrow definition of monitoring **does not capture in-depth understanding**
  - **Time necessary for change** is outside reporting periods
  - The **Project Information Management System is inadequate** for gathering the required high level data (reporting has high transaction costs)

- Attribution/credible association of results is **highly complex and difficult to demonstrate** for various reasons:
  - UNEP is driving an integrated change process with a variety of actors, countries and topics
  - Relying on project level results to get to High Level results

- A **better understanding/articulation** of causality and a stronger narrative across the SP will help to claim credible association.

Performance: Higher Level Reporting (2)

- The tension between the normative role UNEP is designed to play, and the operational role it often plays in practice contributes to **substantive changes outside projects not being reported.**

- **Integration and collaboration** are important topics in the SP, but are **hard to capture** within the current results framework. Evidence for integration was found, but this agenda needs to be pushed forward.

- The Programme of Work 2018-2019 for the SP is designed around 10, rather than the former 5, indicators giving **more homogeneity** in each indicator. This still does **not allow for insight into the scale of the adoption of change** or the full implementation of agreed action.

- From a results perspective, the recent (2018) incorporation of the Sub-Programme Coordinator into the Economy Division increases the **potential perception of compromised impartiality. (This change has now been reversed)**

- As a result of this, **more corporate level results monitoring is effectively devolved to a divisional level** and the likelihood of dialogue on results reporting across SPs or at corporate level lessens.

Performance: Regional Aspects

▶ Regional offices, currently managing the implementation of several large projects, can **support the integration of project activities** across the SP.

▶ The **development of local partnerships and stakeholder engagement** is a key activity that can be performed at a regional or sub-regional level and it is important that such relationships are **valued and understood** within the context of a change process and UNEP's business model.

▶ Substantive divisions and regional offices operate within a symbiotic relationship within which early inclusive planning, two-way communication and **recognition of the equal value of technical and contextual knowledge is essential.**

▶ A number of contributions were received on the 'bigger picture' behind UNEP's regional, sub-regional and country presence. This evaluation cannot do justice to the questions being raised, **more clarity around the operationalisation** of the *'Strengthened Regional Strategic Presence Policy'* would be beneficial.

Roles of Substantive and Regional Offices

TRANSFER OF NEW KNOWLEDGE AND ADOPTION OF TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

PARIS/GENEVA TEAMS – technical expertise from the substantive division

PROJECTS GENERATING/STORING SCIENTIFIC DATA:
Green Growth Knowledge Platform
International Resource Panel

PROJECTS DEVELOPING/TESTING TECHNICAL APPLICATION:
Green Economy; PAGE; Eco-Innovation; 10YFP
Sustainable Lifestyles; UNEP Finance Initiative

Facilitate Science to Policy interface (IRP, GGKP, 10YFP)
Advise governments, and support development of national policies, and its enforcement (10YFP, GE, PAGE)
Support networks of peer-to-peer / South South cooperation: RECPNet gathering cleaner Production centers, 10YFP
Develop, demonstrate / pilot innovative solutions : Eco-innovation, Sustainable Lifestyles, UNEP FI, PAGE, 10YF), with Regional Office support and gather findings for harmonization.
Represent UN Environment and provide substance to cooperation efforts.

Technical advice

New project ideas

REGIONAL OFFICE TEAMS – technical support from the Regional Sub Programme Coordinator

Inform and Support National Mechanisms:
- ❖ Ministerial Fora/Conferences
- ❖ Sub-regional economic communities
- ❖ Regional roundtables *(meet every 2 years, have a devolved structure)*
- ❖ Network of **National Focal Points** *(appointed by Minister of Environment, has contextualized technical knowledge)*
- ❖ **National Coordinators** *(funded by projects)*
- ❖ **National Technical Coordination Committees** (how funded?, gazetted in Kenya)
- ❖ **Cleaner Production Centres** *(semi-autonomous centres hosted by technical institutions and technical partners in UNEP and UNIDP projects)*
- ❖ Not-for-profit organisations *(funded by projects)*

Work Together within an Extended Team:
- ❖ **Global Sub-Programme Coordinator** *(coordination, communication, project cycle expertise, institutional perspective)*
- ❖ **Fixed term consultants:**
- ❖ Funded by projects against TOR
- ❖ Line managed by Project Manager in substantive division?
- ❖ Technical supervision by Regional Office staff member *(ensure consistent narrative)*
- ❖ Exit strategy
- ❖ Other **Regional Sub-Programme Coordinators in same region** *(dialogue coordinated by ...?)*
- ❖ Regional Sub-programme Coordinators in **other regions** *(dialogue coordinated by the global Sub-Programme Coordinator)*
- ❖ **Colleagues in substantive divisions** *(project based)*
- ❖ **Colleagues in Country Offices**

Provide Informed Representation and Support:
- ❖ **Create synergies** between interventions, deliver integrated effort on the ground
- ❖ **Advise on what new knowledge/approaches** are available and where to find information
- ❖ **Amplify key messages**
- ❖ Follow **potential funding sources**
- ❖ Contribute to **project design development**
- ❖ **Advocacy at regional for a** *(Use of IRP reports to influence political narratives)*
- ❖ **Demonstration** (UNEA exhibitions)
- ❖ **Innovative/contextualised ways to highlight issues** *(Food Waste – celebrity chefs, hotels, Tesco)*
- ❖ **Generation of materials?** *(Global SCP Handbook)*

Management of Regional Projects:
- ❖ SWITCH Asia
- ❖ SWITCH Med
- ❖ SWITCH Africa Green
- ❖ EaP Green
- ❖ Sustainable Consumption and Production in Brazil

Through these channels, aim to:
- ❖ Advocate for specific technical approaches
- ❖ Raise awareness in sectors
- ❖ Advise government on policy
- ❖ Disseminate technical information
- ❖ Lobby on specific issues
- ❖ Influence agendas

Inform on regional needs and priorities

Describe stories of change

Feedback on successes and challenges

Insights into How Change is Expected to Happen

Insights: Driving Change

▶ New social and economic pathways, like the SP is advocating, have a hard time competing with the existing mainstream systems. The **potential for Transition Management** as an approach to help achieve these changes has been explored successfully.

▶ Transition Management advocates a **disruptive strategy** for change followed by an '**evolutionary stabilization**' and impact strategy, fitting within the UNEP Business model to catalyze a steep learning curve until a take-off stage handing over further implementation to partners.

▶ Distinctive **comparative advantages** of UNEP such as technical expertise, political independence, global representation and normative approaches can **support and accelerate** disruptive change.

▶ The **normative character of UNEP is put under pressure** (e.g. when raising funds; need to demonstrate results etc) **to move to a more operational role**.

▶ However, **normative processes do fit well** in a project based approach – they also require proof of concept, enabling environment and taking to scale (similar to other projects) thus need to be set up in a **similar way** as other implementation processes.

Insights: Institutional Narrative

▶ Looked at '**Snapshots**' of influential bodies of work - *Green Economy Initiative*; *Finance Initiative and the Inquiry*; *Resource Efficiency* (through the International Resource Panel) and *Sustainable Consumption and Production*.

▶ The SP has **substantial influence** on initiating and accelerating novel concepts in global processes as well as on stewarding implementation.

▶ Green Economy and Inquiry are good representations of a more **disruptive** model of action, influencing processes of G7 and G20.

▶ Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production, represent a more **evolutionary** model of action, focused on stewardship of the work until it can be handed over to partners previously engaged in the sector.

▶ Both models are **strongly connected and fit** within the UNEP Business Model to first catalyze efforts in the steep learning curve followed by implementation and embedding.

▶ The SP would benefit of **becoming more conscious** of these connected models and take them into account in the **design** of SP and Projects

Insights: Theory of Change

▶ Reconstructed TOC 2014-2017 shows **consistent alignment** of project outcomes with SP results. However, TOC on the SP level has a **limited use in practice** compared to project level TOCs

▶ Three main causal pathways (Science Base & Policies, Management & Practices; Consumption & Lifestyles) are reflected in the design of its major projects (**relatively low emphasis** on the third pathway on consumption and lifestyles)

▶ Need to further improve the articulation of the **causality:**
  ➢ between SP interventions to the **key deliverables and EAs**
  ➢ on **Science Policy Interface** (not well represented)
  ➢ on role played by the **development of capacity and communications/outreach** (not well represented)

▶ Questions on strategic distribution of resources to deliver optimally to objectives, especially on **sustainable consumption and lifestyles** (causal pathway 3).

Recommendations

Sub-Programme (SP) Recommendations

Topic		Overall recommendation
Strengthen Theory of Change	1	Strengthen the Theory of Change of the SP so that it can better inform strategic thinking and operational planning: - Making longer term results levels in the TOC consistent with levels in the Outcome Mapping - Continue to establish strong alignment/links with SDGs - Ensure causal pathway on science-policy interface is well represented - Incorporate thinking on disruptive innovation approaches - Include communication and capacity building within the TOC
Improve Longer Term Impact and Results Reporting	2	- Continue working to keep resource efficiency issues on the G7 and G20 agendas - Work with Science Division and SDG Unit to identify ways of recording longer-term country level effects
Strengthen Sub-Programme Portfolio of Projects	3	- Continue to develop strong common narrative for the SP - Define strategic niche of projects and create strong integration, linkages and synergies with related topics - Experiment with limited number of transition arenas (alliances, frontrunners etc) - Strengthen causal pathway 3 (sustainable consumption and lifestyle initiatives)

Sub-Programme Recommendations (cont.)

Topic		Overall recommendation
Strengthen Project Designs	4	In the areas of: - Sustainability (clear continuation strategies) - Effectiveness (beyond delivery of outputs, strengthen outreach) - Human Rights, Social Issues and Gender (pro-active approach in design, document/share successes)
Improve Donor Relations and Report Formats	5	- Ask for rationalization of donor reports and use successful examples as leverage (PAGE, 10YFP etc) - Proactively proposed pooled funding approaches
Work More Closely with Regional Offices	6	- Document in more detail Sub-Programme approach to working with regional, sub-regional and country offices - Continue to increase involvement of regions at design stage - Promote enhanced connectivity and team building between global and regional offices

Institutional Recommendations

Topic		Overall recommendation
Improve Institutional Narrative	1	- Embed long-term results within a strong integrated narrative that reflects more strategic thinking and global level processes - Reflect comparative advantages and normative function within this narrative
Provide Strategic Internal Budget Allocations	2	- Base internal budget allocations on strategic priorities along with profound insights into what bilateral donors will fund - Include consideration of the potential effects of high donor dependency in certain areas of work - Include consultation with substantive divisions and regional offices in resource allocation discussions
Strengthen Project Design	3	- Increase project design capacity at initial approval stages and at mid-point assessments/revisions - Continue to emphasize strong TOCs and logframes as well as clear project roles for UN Environment and partners

Institutional Recommendations (cont.)

Topic		Overall recommendation
Maximise Umoja 2.0	4	- Ensure potential for data to be compiled and interrogated at country and regional levels is fully realized - Configure useful report templates centrally - Provide adequate training in a timely manner for all Project Managers and Fund Management Officers
Share Regional Workplans	5	- Share regional workplans more widely and ensure they are available centrally

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION