

Management response to the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) Assessment of UN Environment August 2017

United Nations Environment welcomes the institutional assessment carried out by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network secretariat and appreciates the close collaboration throughout the exercise with the secretariat, IOD PARC and the Institutional Leads, Finland and Sweden. The assessment came at a particularly useful time when UN Environment has been strengthening its strategic focus in response to Member States' priorities and looked into ways to be more concrete and impactful in its actions.

General observations

UN Environment was pleased to find that it meets the requirements of an effective multilateral organization and that "it shows continued strength in terms of being a global authority on environmental issues and providing a robust evidence base for advocacy and policy dialogue." It was also pleased to find that it is considered by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network to have "a sound operational model and has in place the appropriate policies, processes and procedures that are expected of a well-functioning multilateral organization...". We appreciate the acknowledgement of the evaluation of UN Environment's strategic planning, and quality assurance and evaluation processes and procedures, as good practices. The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network also noted that the organization has "achieved a solid level of performance in achieving stated programme objectives."

In addition, it was useful to receive suggestions so the organization can improve its delivery, notably as far as the use of performance data and lessons learned from past interventions to strengthen planning are concerned. Insights into how to strengthen its comparative advantage in working with other UN agencies and how to ensure sustainability of initiatives were also useful.

Strategic management

UN Environment was noted by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network as having in place "a long-term vision (Vision 2030) and results framework, which provide a clear strategic direction...The new *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2021* sets out a **long-term vision and results framework**, targeting a 2030 outcomes horizon". Still, more could be done to reduce the risk of duplication and overlap with other agencies and complement the expertise of others.

The organization could also be more effective if it integrated broader **social governance and justice** issues into its work, such as on inequality and human rights. UN Environment in 2016 approved Policy Guidance on Environment, Human Rights and Addressing Inequalities.

UN Environment has been streamlining its programme and project review processes while increasing the technical guidance available to staff in the organization to ensure that a quicker paced process goes hand in hand with quality. The aim is to improve the understanding of staff on how to better design initiatives that create long lasting outcomes, while at the same time enabling teams to move quickly to implementation by **delegating authority** in decision making to where implementation

takes place. Such delegated authority will come with a **new accountability framework** in the organization.

Operational management

UN Environment was commended by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network for having “organizational systems and processes [that] are on the whole very good and fit for purpose”. The evaluation noted that the organization could strengthen its operational management by having a clearer and consistent approach to **resource mobilization**. The organization has already embarked on a process of establishing a new resource mobilization strategy, and will push this forward more forcibly in the period to come.

In addition to the need for faster human resource related processes (widely acknowledged as being an area where improvement is needed across the UN Secretariat), the evaluation also noted the need for **increased transparency of resource allocation** decisions in UN Environment. This has indeed been considered as an area which needed to be transformed, and a new, more strategic and transparent, allocation process is being put in place.

Finally, UN Environment was recommended to continue its **focus on results-based management**, which requires the organization to work on all facets of services required, from communication and advocacy to technical assistance to partners and countries, if concrete impact for people are to be realized. UN Environment will continue on this trajectory to ensure relevant and regular reporting to Member States, including showing a clear **link between expenditure and actual results** achieved, given that the evaluation noted the need for better documentation on this front.

Relationship management

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network noted that while UN Environment has strengthened its regional presence, the organization must manage this process carefully to ensure **efficient service delivery at the national level** and that **working through partnerships** will be central to these efforts. It also noted the need for the organization to ensure that there is effective partner consultation and capacity analysis in the design of all its interventions. It states that this would help ensure the organization delivers sustainable outcomes. UN Environment, has recently launched new toolkits to assist staff enhance their strategies for sustainability and is holding internal discussions to raise awareness internally on this issue.

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network has also suggested that while UN Environment has, over the years, improved its approach to risk management, the organization’s **corporate risk management** approach needed to be strengthened. We are in the process of adopting new due diligence procedures for reviewing, for instance, our work with external partners while streamlining procedures so as to establish partnerships rapidly.

Performance management

UN Environment was acknowledged for its efforts to monitor and report on results achieved, having created a **stronger results-based focus**. However, the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network noted that the organization could strengthen its drive for results, if all teams in

the organization focused more consistently on concrete outcomes. The evaluation also noted the need to **use monitoring and performance data consistently** to adaptively manage what it does so that results are achieved. UN Environment is currently working with the UN Secretariat to develop the programme management module of its Enterprise Resource Planning System – Umoja, a process driven by the UN Secretariat. The aim is to have the Business Intelligence arm of this system able to provide information and data that will be more useful to managers and teams across the organization.

In addition, it was suggested that the independence of the Evaluation Office could be further improved by more regular reporting to UN Environment’s governing bodies. Complementing this is the need for sufficient resources to achieve organizational evaluation coverage targets and to reduce the time lags for completing evaluations, which has already become a focus with upstream evaluation planning exercises.

Conclusions

The assessment has helped validate the performance of UN Environment, while at the same time providing valuable insights on what further improvements are necessary. As illustrated above, work is already underway to refine our practices with a focus on concrete impacts for people and the planet. The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network’s recommendations are key to helping reduce bureaucracy and improve the organization’s effectiveness.