



MOPAN 2015-16 Assessments

**United Nations Environment Programme
(UNEP)**

Executive Summary

Executive summary

This institutional assessment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) covers the period from 2014 to mid-2016. Applying the MOPAN 3.0 methodology, the assessment considers organisational systems, practices and behaviours, as well as the results UNEP achieves. The assessment considers five performance areas: four relate to organisational effectiveness (strategic management, operational management, relationship management and performance management) and the fifth relates to development effectiveness (results). It assesses performance against a framework of key performance indicators and associated micro-indicators that comprise the standards that characterise an effective multilateral organisation. The assessment also provides an overview of its trajectory of performance improvement. UNEP was last assessed by MOPAN in 2011.

Context

UNEP

- Is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote international co-operation in the field of the environment.
- Is governed by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) and its operations are led by its Executive Office at its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Has a medium-term strategy (2014-17) set within a longer-term vision (Vision 2030) that speaks to its critical normative (growing in significance with the Sustainable Development Goals) and operational roles.
- Provides access to timely, substantiated knowledge about the environment and emerging issues for informed decision making in the focus areas of climate change; disasters and conflicts; ecosystem management; environmental governance; chemicals and waste; resource efficiency and environment under review.
- Is funded predominantly through earmarked contributions. Since Rio+20, there has been a commitment to increase UNEP's non-earmarked funding.
- Introduced a New Funding Strategy in 2014 to consolidate resource mobilisation and developed proposals on strengthening its regional presence.

Organisation at a glance

- Established 1972
- Expenditure: USD 796m (2015)
- Active globally
- Over 900 staff
- Operates through:
 - Nairobi headquarters
 - 7 regional offices
 - 5 sub-regional offices
 - 5 country offices
 - 3 liaison offices

Overall performance

The overall conclusion of the 2016 MOPAN assessment is that while there are some areas where performance can be improved, UNEP meets the requirements of an effective multilateral organisation. UNEP shows continued strength in terms of being a global authority on environmental issues and providing a robust evidence base for advocacy and policy dialogue. Its organisational architecture is aligned to the organisation's mandate and comparative advantages, especially in relation to global normative frameworks and leadership on environmental issues. It has a sound operational model and has in place the appropriate policies, processes and procedures that are expected of a well-functioning multilateral organisation, although greater use of performance data and lessons learned from past interventions would strengthen planning outcomes. It has improved the way it integrates cross-cutting issues into operations and project/programme design processes, although further strengthening is needed.

UNEP is making a strong contribution to global advocacy on environmental issues including in advancing normative frameworks through the management and strategic integration of work on multilateral environmental agreements. Overall, UNEP has achieved a solid level of performance in achieving stated

programme objectives and obtaining expected outputs. However evidence of its results at the project level is somewhat mixed, and evidence of results on cross-cutting outcomes is limited.

On the whole, UNEP's interventions for countries and at the country level are assessed as generally positive, and they appear to be aligned with member needs and priorities. UNEP also leverages effective partnerships and catalyses resources to deliver results at the national level. However, alignment and integration of its interventions with the work of other UN agencies, to make best use of its comparative advantage, remains a work in progress. The organisation is strengthening its regional presence so it can better align its strategic planning and programme of work with member state needs and priorities.

Key strengths and areas for improvement

Key strengths

- **Long-term planning** horizons and results framework provide clear vision and strategic direction.
- **Organisational architecture well aligned** with mandate and comparative advantages, with matrix management system now well embedded.
- **Organisational systems and processes** mostly very good and fit for purpose.
- Good **compliance with audit findings**, and operates in accordance with UN financial regulations.
- Systems in place to integrate **analysis of cross-cutting issues** into operations and project/programme design processes.
- Forms **effective partnerships** that are central to its service delivery model and leverage considerable additional resources.
- **Results-based management** now embraced and being applied across organisation, with training and appropriate guidance manuals and tools in place.
- **Independent evaluation function and quality assurance systems** operate effectively and were well regarded in recent external assessments.
- **Substantial results at the international level;** contributions to advancing normative frameworks on global environment and well received knowledge products that drive global dialogue.

Areas for improvement

- Regional strengthening and changes to delegation of authority framework should further drive decentralisation, but they will need to be **monitored to ensure effectiveness**.
- **Strong gender policy/architecture** now in place, but unclear whether **gender results** are being delivered at the project level.
- Application of **results-based budgeting** still work in progress.
- **Analysis and integration** of broader governance and social justice issues need greater attention.
- **Alignment and integration** with other UN agencies need to be better demonstrated, especially where there is potential overlap at a national level.
- **Partner and capacity analysis** needs improvement at the national level.
- **More emphasis to the monitoring and reporting of project outcomes** to rebalance the current focus on project activities and outputs.
- Greater **use of performance data and lessons learned** from past interventions would strengthen planning outcomes.
- **Post-intervention monitoring and evaluation** would substantiate sustainability of outcomes, an aspect that currently lacks clarity.
- **Country-level relevance** of interventions and actual results/benefits delivered to target beneficiaries could be more clearly documented.