

**PEER REVIEWING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE
OF MEMBERS OF THE UN EMG**

PILOT PHASE : CONCEPT AND WORK PLAN

Secretariat of the UN Environment Management Group

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The UN context
A mandate from the EMG Senior Officials meetings
The essence of peer reviewing

2. THE PILOT PROGRAM AS A WHOLE

Organization chart
Schedule
Resource implications
Benefits and outputs
Review of reviews

3. INDIVIDUAL PILOT REVIEWS: SUBSTANCE

Framework menu of substantive items
Report outline
Methodology and tools : supporting credibility and influence
UN accumulated experience

4. INDIVIDUAL PILOT REVIEWS: PROCESS

Voluntary reviewed entities: WMO, UNIDO, UNEP
Building the reviewing teams
Review spirit : mutual trust
Four review stages: main tasks

5. WORK PLAN: ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE, ACTORS, PRODUCTS

Annex 1 What are peer reviews?
Annex 2 Benefits
Annex 3 Small lexicon for peer reviews
Annex 4 References

Table 1 Pilot phase 2013-14: general timeline and milestones
Table 2 Pilot phase 2013-14: resource needs (for entities and EMG Secretariat)
Table 3 Main benefits of peer reviews and peer review programs
Table 4 Corporate environmental management: framework menu of substantive items
Table 5 Outline of a review report
Table 6 Reviewing teams
Table 7 Outline of typical reviewing team mission at HQ of reviewed entity
Figure 1 Peer review program, organization chart
Figure 2 2013-14 work plan: activities, timeline, actors, products

PEER REVIEWING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE OF MEMBERS OF THE UN EMG

THE PILOT PHASE: CONCEPT AND WORK PLAN¹

1. INTRODUCTION

The UN context

The UN Environmental Management Group was established to enhance UN system-wide interagency coordination in the field of environment and human settlements. It has 45 members². It adopts a problem-solving, issue-focused and result-oriented approach, to enable the formulation of effective, coherent and coordinated UN system responses, including on enhancing sustainability management of the UN.

The present peer review program of corporate environment management of facilities and operations of UN entities has to be seen as a contribution to strengthening the UN leadership role and the UN support to its Member States in furthering the global sustainability agenda. This is in line with the Rio+20 Summit outcomes³ and the UN Secretary General determination to have the UN lead by example and maintain sustainability as top priority⁴.

A mandate from the EMG Senior Officials meetings

At the 17th meeting of the EMG Senior Officials (EMG SOM, September 2011), Senior officials requested the EMG Secretariat to develop an options paper on a peer review approach concerning the environment portfolio and management procedures among members of the EMG.

¹ Prepared by Dr. Christian Avérous, Consultant, for the Secretariat of the UN Environment Management Group, February 2013.

² The UN system includes some 54 entities, with a total of about 215 000 staff, including from the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO). Some 14 entities have more than 2000 staff members, and the DPKO has some 115 000.

³ Paragraph 96 of 'The Future We Want' states: 'We call on the United Nations system to improve the management of facilities and operations, by taking into account sustainable development practices, building on existing efforts and promoting cost effectiveness, and in accordance with legislative frameworks, including financial rules and regulations, while maintaining accountability to Member States'.

⁴ The mandate of the UN Secretary General includes to act as UN Chief Administrative Officer, thereby carrying out the functions of the UN in as efficient and effective a manner as possible

At the 18th meeting of the EMG Senior Officials (EMG SOM, November 2012), Senior officials reviewed the paper “Peer reviewing the environmental profile of members of the EMG, a conceptual review of options”⁵. The paper proposed four options to choose from, mixing two substantive options (corporate environmental management versus corporate environmental and social sustainability) and two implementation options (a ‘gradual’ option with a pilot phase versus a ‘fast track’ option with a more rapid start).

At the 18th EMG Senior Officials Meeting (EMG SOM, November 2012), Senior officials chose the peer review option A1, i.e. gradual option with focus on corporate environmental management of facilities and operations, with an early pilot phase. Three agencies volunteered to be peer-reviewed: WMO, UNIDO and UNEP. They requested the EMG Secretariat to proceed and give a progress report at the next EMG SOM meeting. The Issue Management Group on Environmental Sustainability Management, was informed about the peer review process at its subsequent meeting (New York, January 2013).

The essence of peer reviewing

The proposed peer review process relies on mutual trust among peers and confidence in the peer review process by voluntary UN entities. It aims at enhanced individual and collective performance; review reports will include factual evidence, independent assessment and non-binding recommendations approved by the peer review body (PRB).

Peer reviewing relies on the experience in using peer reviews, as accumulated in several intergovernmental organizations (e.g. IMF, WTO, EU, OECD, UNEG, APRM/NEPAD) (see Annex 1). It is an important tool for international co-operation and progress

It is seen here as potentially providing multiple benefits (transparency and accountability, consistency and coherence, credibility and exemplarity), promoting effectiveness (sharing best practices) and resource efficiency (‘simply good business’). These benefits are obtained by entities reviewed, entities participating in the program, and by the UN as a whole (see Annex 2).

Peer reviewing focuses on best practices, achievements and potential progress.

⁵ Document EMG/SOM.18/INF 01. This document benefited from circulation and comments from EMG focal points as well as focal points of the IMG on environmental management and the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN system.

2. THE PILOT PROGRAM AS A WHOLE

Organization chart

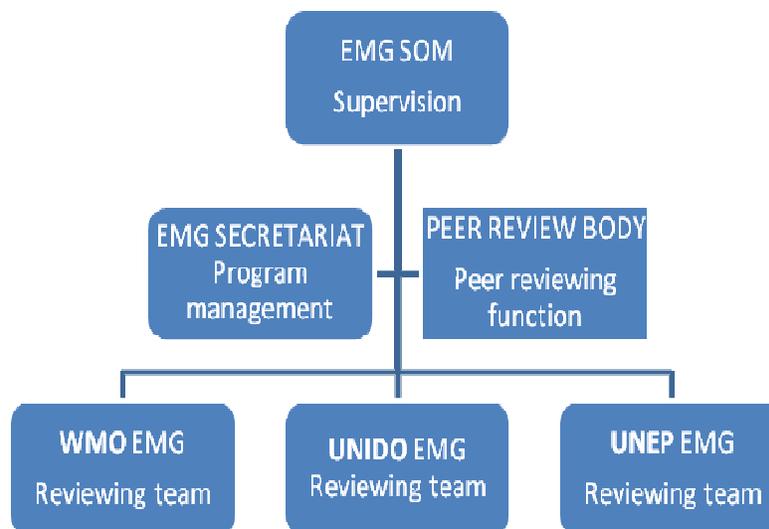
In peer review programs, the collective peer review body (PRB) is usually made of representatives of the different entities and operates with a peer spirit of open dialogue, result oriented analysis, and exchange of experience (e.g. drawing lessons from the reviewed entity experience). It provides advisory conclusions and recommendations.

Such a body is to be established during the pilot phase. It should include at the outset the three reviewed entities (UNIDO, WMO, UNEP), the other reviewing entities and all other EMG member entities wishing to participate. Its individual members should bring experience and competency in corporate environmental management.

The body should report to the EMG Senior officials meetings (EMG SOMs), including its conclusions and recommendations for individual reviews. It should supervise the overall program under the broad guidance of EMG SOMs; it should determine the frequency of its reviews; it should be able to invite ad hoc participation (local authority representatives, other non-UN International Organizations). Beyond the 45 formal members of the EMG, the PRB may wish to welcome observer participation or invite ad hoc participation.

The EMG Secretariat would implement the program with appropriate management, expertise and reliance on ad hoc consultancy (Figure1), and drive individual reviewing teams.

Figure 1 **Peer review program, organization chart, pilot phase**



Schedule

The gradual option chosen by the EMG SOM 2012 includes: i) to start with three reviews for a pilot period (2013-14), including further specification of the program at the outset and an assessment report of the pilot period at the end; ii) to move to four reviews per year in the subsequent period (2015-17) and; iii) to continue with a six reviews per year rhythm beyond 2017. The proposed schedule for the pilot phase is as follows (Table 1).

Table 1 **Pilot phase 2013-14: general timeline and milestones^f** , 2013-2014

January 2013 - September 2013

Specification of program arrangements (concept, funding, PRB, preparation questionnaire)

WMO - Preparatory stage^a

WMO - Consultation stage^b (**on site mission of reviewing team**)

UNIDO- Preparatory stage^a

UNIDO- Consultation stage^b (**on site mission of reviewing team**)

Report to EMGSOM 2013

October 2013 - January 2014

UNEP - Preparatory stage^a

UNEP - Consultation stage^b (**on site mission of reviewing team**)

WMO - Peer reviewing stage^c (**meeting #1 of peer review body-day1 in Geneva**)

UNIDO- Peer reviewing stage^c (**meeting #1 of peer review body-day2 in Geneva**)

February 2014 – December 2014

UNEP - Consultation stage (continues)

WMO - Ownership/release stage^d

UNIDO- Ownership/release stage^d

UNEP - Peer reviewing stage^c (**meeting #2 of peer review body, in New York**)^e

Report to EMGSOM 2014 (**assessment report of the pilot phase**)

Program further development (next reviews)

UNEP - Ownership/release stage^d

a) involves principally work from the reviewed entity (assembling relevant available documentation, answering questionnaire, exchange with the Secretariat) and from the Secretariat/Reviewing team members (treating documentation and questionnaire answer), from the Secretariat (early exchange with reviewed entity).

b) involves principally work: i) associated to an on-site visit of the reviewing team at the HQ of the reviewed entity; this visit is of about 3 days: one session per chapter with consultation with relevant officials of the reviewed entity and one session with concerned academics, staff, civil society and interest groups; ii) preparation of the draft report by the Secretariat and the reviewing team; iii) transmission of the report to all members of the PRB, well in advance of its meetings (including the reviewed entity).

c) involves principally work associated to the peer review meeting (one day) of the PRB made of peers. This means participation of the reviewed entity, the specific reviewing entities, other entities and the Secretariat. The draft report is revised by the Secretariat after the peer review meeting on the basis of comments received from the reviewed entity.

d) is driven by the entity reviewed to maximize ownership of the conclusions and recommendations by those having the capacity to influence change, with the support of the Secretariat.

e) back to back with EMGSOM2014

f) **milestones are in bold**

Resource implications

For reviewed entities: one person-month of work

The entities are reviewed on a voluntary basis. Being reviewed will require a total of about one person-month of work of the focal point person (answering questionnaire, initial relations with the Secretariat and 3 days for the reviewing team on-site visit, assembling 'in house' comments on draft report, participation in review meeting of PRB and related travel, preparation of ownership/release stage) (Table2). Participation in the reviewing team visit, commenting on draft report and participation in the review meeting is likely to involve ad hoc participation of other representatives.

For specific reviewing entities: half person-month of work

The specific reviewing entities also act on a voluntary basis. This will require some half person-month of work (preparation, reviewing team on-site visit, drafting, PRB review meeting) per review (Table 2). Entities being reviewed are likely to play the role of specific reviewing entity (e.g. UNEP for WMO, WMO for UNIDO, UNIDO for UNEP) or to wish to get familiar with the process before being reviewed. For the pilot phase one or two additional specific reviewing entity for each of the three pilot reviews is proposed. Further entities would participate during the pilot phase simply in the PRB, as part of its reviewing functions (e.g. finalizing recommendations for the three pilot reviews) and in its deliberations as program management supervisory body.

For the Secretariat: half person-year, both in 2013 and 2014

Secretariat support is needed for general program work (i.e. 2 person months in each year for concept paper, documentation, fund raising, questionnaire preparation, establishing reviewing teams, establishing the PRB, derived products, liaison with other groups, web and communication work, preparation of next phase) and for individual reviews (i.e. almost 3 person-month per review, mainly for analysis and drafting).

The total amount of work over the period 2013-14 is estimated at almost half a person year per year: in other terms 49 person-weeks over 2013-2014 (i.e. 21 manager weeks, 16 expert weeks, 12 consultant weeks) (Table 2).

It is estimated that the EMG Secretariat will need some USD 40 000 for 2013 and USD 30 000 for 2014, in addition to its present allocation and staffing.

Travel

Each review would entail one visit at the HQ of the reviewed entity as well as possible travel for the PRB meeting. Use of teleconferences and videoconferences will be maximized.

Travel is not included in the table below (Table 2). Participating agencies will provide their human resources as in kind contribution as well as cost of their travel to peer-review their sister agencies. The first meeting of the PRB will be in Geneva, thus minimizing travel costs for WMO, UNIDO and staff (from EMG and reviewing entities) based in Europe.

Funding

Funding of the pilot phase is proposed to be born from the EMG core budget with additional support from the EO, and over the years from extra-budgetary sources (e.g. donors, host governments, sponsors) and from economic savings generated by improved corporate environmental management. It is estimated that the EMG Secretariat will need some USD 40 000 for 2013 and USD 30 000 for 2014, in addition to its present allocation and staffing. Participating agencies will provide their human resources as in kind contribution as well as cost of their travel to peer-review their sister agencies.

Table 2 **Pilot phase 2013-14: resource needs (for entities, EMG Secretariat)^{abc}**

2013 GENERAL MANAGEMENT (EMG)

Concept paper	
Documentation	
Questionnaire preparation	
Establishment of PRB	
Report to EMG SOM 2013	subtotal EMG 8w

WMO REVIEW		UNIDO REVIEW		UNEP REVIEW	
WMO	4w	UNIDO	4w	UNEP	4w
UNEP	2w	WMO	2w	UNIDO	2w
X	2w	Y	2w	Z	2w
EMG/E	4w	EMG/E	4w	EMG/E	4w
EMG/M	3w	EMG/M	3w	EMG/M	3w
EMG/C1	4w	EMG/C2	4w	EMG/C3	4w
total WMO 6w, total UNIDO 6w, total UNEP 6w, total X 2w, total Y 2w, total Z 2w					
subtotal EMG 33w/two years					

2014 GENERAL MANAGEMENT (EMG)

Peer review body: meeting #1	
Peer review body: meeting #2	
Report to EMG SOM 2014	
Preparation next reviews (UPU,...)	subtotal EMG 8w

total EMG 49w

a) Tentative illustrative scheme, to be reviewed and revised with WMO, UNIDO, UNEP.

b) all figures in person-week time of work over the period 2013-2014. Travel costs not included in this table.

c) EMG/E= Senior Expert, EMG/M= Manager, EMG/C1= Consultant C1, etc.

Benefits and outputs

A range of benefits of the program should be expected (Table 3):

- for reviewed entities through the process of the review (at preparatory, consultation, peer reviewing stages), mobilizing interest and generating learning from participating individuals;
- for reviewed entities through the influence of the review and the implementation of its recommendations (at the ownership/release stage and beyond);
- for other entities involved as specific reviewing entities, or as part of the peer reviewing body, through a mutual learning process (e.g. sharing best practices);
- for the UN as a whole, and individual entities, in terms of: transparency and accountability (internally and towards member states); consistency (with its mission) and system-wide coherence; credibility and exemplarity; efficiency.

Table 3 **Main benefits of peer reviews and peer review programs** ^a

Enhanced individual and collective performance
Mutual learning on best practices
Transparency and accountability
Consistency and coherence
Credibility and exemplarity
Efficiency and effectiveness for reviewed entities
Cost effectiveness of the review program

a) benefits for entities reviewed, for other entities participating in the program (as specific reviewing entities or as members of the peer reviewing body), for the UN as a whole.

Finally, outputs would not only include the review reports and their conclusions and recommendations, but also some derived products could be drawn up, building on best practices or comparative result indicators.

Review of reviews

The report to the EMG SOM 2014 is expected to draw lessons from the pilot phase for subsequent development of the program. As a first review of reviews to improve the process and substance of reviews, it would open the way to conducting four reviews per year.

It was also proposed in the document presented to the EMG SOM 2012 to have, after an initial period of five years, a second review of reviews, i.e. revisiting and revising the program, for presentation to EMG SOM 2017. Building on the experience gained (e.g. improved guidelines, indicators and benchmarks, higher reliance on standard and quantitative reporting by reviewed entities, more compact assessment mechanisms by reviewing teams), it is thought that the program could cover at a higher rhythm (e.g. six reviews per year) the remaining voluntary entities, without a significant change in resources. This experience gained with the initial period of five years, could be sufficient to construct a simplified review process for entities not yet reviewed (balancing in depth reviews and lighter reviews, degree of self-assessment, etc.) Some of the reviews could also possibly include a chapter on corporate environmental and social responsibility. Over the years, It would be best to achieve some mix and diversity of reviewed entities (e.g. small and large, with different environmental profiles, different environmental footprints).

3. INDIVIDUAL PILOT REVIEWS: SUBSTANCE

Substantive focus, as chosen by EMG Senior officials, is on internal environmental management⁶; drawing from a menu of items concerning facilities and operations. This corresponds to the concept of corporate environmental management.

Framework menu of substantive items

This framework menu includes, according to the experience of a number of UN entities (see Annex 4): GHG emissions and air travel, GHG emissions and buildings (e.g. energy efficiency and type of energy used), sustainable procurement, waste management, water management, ICT and greening events and meetings, local transport, staff awareness involvement and training, environmental liability, etc (Table 4).

Table 4 **Corporate environmental management: framework menu of substantive items**

a. Standard items

GHG emissions and buildings
GHG emissions and air travel

b. Optional items

sustainable procurement
waste management (e.g. 3R, electronic waste)
water management
ICT and greening events and meetings
local transport (e.g. owned vehicle fleet and commuting)
staff awareness, involvement and training
risk prevention

The choice of standard items provides for a UN-wide coherence, while the choice of the optional items provides some diversity among UN entities. The proposed standard items are in line with the UN climate neutral objective, usually dominate the energy use and the carbon emission of international organizations and often have high cost-benefit ratios.

Report outline

For a given review, coverage should include two standard items common to all reviews (such as air travel, energy use for facilities), and optional items (two items chosen from the menu by the reviewed entity), such as sustainable procurement, waste management, water management, ICT and greening events and meetings, local transport, staff awareness and training, risk prevention. Each item would be treated in one chapter of the review report (Table 5). The number of chapters per review is constrained by resource availability.

⁶ In some instances, the wording 'sustainability management' is used. It is common to distinguish 'environmental sustainability', 'environmental and social sustainability', and 'environmental, social and economic sustainability'.

Table 5 **Outline of a review report**

Chapter 1^a GHG emissions and buildings
Chapter 2^a GHG emissions and air travel
Chapter 3^b Optional topic 1
Chapter 4^b Optional topic 2
Chapter 5 Recommendations

a) standard topic (for all entities reviewed). GHG emissions are directly connected to **energy use**.

b) optional topic (chosen by the reviewed entity from the framework menu of substantive items).

Methodology and tools : supporting credibility and influence

A peer review effort is based on factual evidence, independent assessment, non-binding recommendations. This is key for peer reviews credibility and influence. It differs from fact-finding missions per se, although fact-finding is usually a key element in the peer review process. It differs from programs requiring periodic self-reporting to independent bodies. It also differs from judicial processes leading to binding judgments or acts, and does not carry formal obligations or sanctions.

Measurement: data, indicators and their interpretation

Data and indicators contribute to factual evidence. In particular, indicators (associated or not to targets) enable quantitative assessments (in line with the management saying 'we can manage what we can measure') and contribute to comparability among reviews. They need interpretation in context. Although an important tool, they are only one among the tools available. Data used could include available data from reviewed entities, available harmonized data among entities (e.g. CO₂ emissions), and additional harmonized data among entities depending on the scope of the review and resource availability.

Policy objectives: aims, goals, targets

Policy objectives, if explicit, are important for the assessment. They are to be found in a range of 'in house' documents or other documents. 'In house' objectives refer to entity specific objectives or UN objectives (e.g. Climate neutral UN). They may be broad ones (aims), specific ones (goals) and quantitative ones (targets). They have differing strength according to their status (e.g. legal or declarative status) or simply their feasibility (ambitious or modest in a given context). The review could in general be based on a criteria of effectiveness (i.e. achieving environmental, social and economic objectives) and cost-effectiveness in achieving these objectives.

In practice this means, i) using simply resource efficient management practices, ii) capturing win-win potentials (e.g. energy or water resources savings are environmentally and economically beneficial), and iii) harvesting the flow of net benefits over time (e.g. investment in ICT and video conferences capabilities will reduce the flow of physical travel needs; investment in energy efficiency for buildings will generate energy savings flows). This will also help to capture the benefits of technological progress and of improved internal regulations, guidelines and incentives.

Performance: intentions, actions, results

A performance orientation requires distinguishing well among (declarative) intentions, (actually taken) actions, and (obtained) results. The later are to be emphasized.

Guidelines : principles, criteria, standards

A range of principles, criteria and standards, whether international (e.g. the ISO 14 000 series of standards) or from 'in house' sources, provide further guidance. Principles (which can be legal, regulatory or economic), criteria and standards (issued from executive, legislative, judicial sources as well as treaties, conventions, protocols, declarations, recommendations) provide a common body of reference, contributing to the content of reviews. Recommendations adopted in a previous cycle of reviews can play an important role, with the peer review rolling process generating by itself a common body of references.

UN accumulated experience

UN experience with methodological tools

There is already, within the UN system, a considerable body of methodological tools, dealing with environmental management. Concerning data and indicators, the most prominent tool is the GHG emissions inventory (as part of the UN climate neutrality effort), and its present support indicators: emissions per floor area (tons of CO₂eq/m²), energy consumption per floor area (kWh/m²), emissions per staff, air travel emissions per staff, % of premium class air travel, office related emissions per floor area⁷. Other indicators are under consideration within the UN system itself, such as waste reduction-reuse-recycling (in tons per year, per staff member, including for electric and electronic waste), fresh water use (in m³ per year, per staff member). Progress with harmonized indicators within the UN system could also be derived from progress within corporate sustainability reporting nationally or internationally (e.g. Global Reporting Initiative). In any case, data and indicators, both specific to UN entities and harmonized among UN entities are important in providing factual evidence for the reviews. Various techniques may accompany their use and development.

Concerning objectives (i.e. aims, goals, targets), the commitments to 'Greening the UN' (by the UN Secretary General) and to resource efficiency in management (by the mandate of the Secretary General) are key examples of aims. Further the commitment to a 'climate neutral UN' (by the UN CEB) is an example of goal, while an example of target is provided by the 2011 request by the Secretary General that all UN organizations reduce their annual travel budget by 3% (implying potentially a reduction of 25 500 tons of emissions of CO₂ eq, and a cost saving of USD 30 million).

Concerning guidelines, there is a range of UN guidelines (e.g. sustainable consumption and production; environmental aspects of field missions; GHG emissions reduction; sustainability in buildings, travel, meetings, events, green office; ozone layer; drinking-water; carbon offsets, various procurement aspects;). Beyond UN guidelines, the ISO 14 000 series of standards provides voluntary environmental standards, which are widely used in the world, for: environmental management systems (EMS)⁸, environmental and EMS auditing,

⁷ A 'verification' mechanism is being established as a quality assurance mechanism concerning GHG emission data and is thought as a form of peer review mechanism.

⁸ Sometimes called SMS in the UN context.

environmental labeling, life-cycle assessment. All these methodological tools are important to conduct reviews of corporate environmental management.

UN practice

The 2009, 2010 and 2011 reports 'Moving towards a climate neutral UN' have opened the way for measuring GHG emissions, reducing these emissions, and offsetting them, in the context of the 2007 UN-wide Climate Neutral Strategy. By June 2012, 34 out of 54 reporting UN entities had finalized their own draft GHG emissions reduction strategies. For instance the 2010 UNEP Climate Neutral Strategy focuses on travel, facilities and office operations, meetings, administrative systems, local transport, flexible working arrangements, staff engagement and communication, procurement, environmental safeguards, environmental management systems, as well as GHG offsets, and outreach. It has a payback period of 19 months thanks to cost savings, and additional environmental benefits, credibility effects, etc. Beyond climate neutral strategies there are a number of related actions already implemented, including at UN Head Quarter (e.g. building renovation, purchasing renewable energy certificates for electricity powering), actual green events management and progress with sustainable green travel.

While a Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN System is well advanced⁹, some individual entities have their own approaches not only varying much in scope and content, but also dealing sometimes with facilities and operations, sometimes with programs and projects, sometimes with strategies, plans and policies. For instance, concerning facilities and operations, DPKO has a 2009 Environmental Policy for UN Field Missions. UNDP applies environmental procurement guidelines and has taken a 'green UNDP' initiative. The World Bank Group has implemented environmental management for its facilities (becoming carbon neutral for its Headquarters internal business operations, increasing its efficiency in energy and water use, diverting waste from landfills, enhancing the sustainability of its procurement) and has demonstrated that it brings cost-savings and is simply 'good business'.

Conclusion

Overall, UN entities have already engaged in a range of activities (e.g. indicators, objectives, guidelines, frameworks, strategies, actions) concerning environmental management (Annex 4). This provides a solid basis for conducting peer reviews, building on best practices, and progressing with corporate environmental management.

However most of these activities are ad-hoc, and there is much room for progress. In particular, there is a need to move along the sequence: i) intentions (e.g. adopting strategies and plans), ii) actions (e.g. implementing them), and iii) actual results. There is also a need to manage in common some core functions and services in the context of the One UN reform, and to achieve related economies of scale and other efficiency gains.

⁹ Submitted to the UN CEB, including the concept of Sustainability Management System for entities, in practice focusing on environmental management.

4. INDIVIDUAL PILOT REVIEWS: PROCESS

Voluntary reviewed entities: WMO, UNIDO, UNEP

A reviewed entity is being reviewed on a voluntary basis. It declares its willingness to be reviewed either at the start of the program, or after being associated to initial reviews through a specific reviewing function, or at any other time as the program proceeds. The reviewed entity has the duty to co-operate by providing access to data and documentation, answering questions, hosting visits and facilitating contacts with a range of relevant individuals and organizations. It has an interest in moving reforms forward through the review process and its recommendations.

Building the reviewing teams

The reviewing team has to prepare the assessment report and its conclusions and recommendations, covering both the achievements of the entity reviewed and the areas for progress. For a given review, the team could include typically five members: two experts from two specific reviewing entities, and three members from the supporting EMG Secretariat (e.g. manager, expert, consultant). The team should be equipped with substantive knowledge, practical experience and strong realism. It could be appropriate to involve an expert from the host country or city, or additional specific reviewing entities.

The two specific reviewing entities are selected on a rotating basis from among the different members of the peer review body; their experts act as peers (not inspectors) and they lead in the peer review debate.

The supporting Secretariat has to provide independence, accuracy, and analytic quality in individual review processes and provides continuity, memory and consistency of the sequence of reviews; its involvement is labor-intensive.

The three teams for the three pilot reviews will thus include different members. First those from the specific reviewing entities: it would be advisable for each team to include one of the reviewed entities of the pilot phase (for instance UNEP reviewing WMO, WMO reviewing UNIDO, UNIDO reviewing UNEP); and one other entity with experience/expertise in one of the substantive topics covered by the review and wishing to participate and familiarize itself with the review approach. Second different consultants may be chosen for their expertise/experience in substantive topics to be covered (perhaps the optional topics). The three teams will also include similar members (from the EMG Secretariat) for the three reviews to provide continuity and consistency across reviews (Table 6).

Table 6 **Reviewing teams**, present thinking to be confirmed^a

WMO Review	UNIDO Review	UNEP Review
UNEP UPU, Geneva EMG Secretariat	WMO OECD, UNESCO ^{tbc} , Vienna EMG Secretariat	UNIDO WBG ^{tbc} , WFP ^{tbc} EMG Secretariat

a) It could be appropriate to involve an expert from the host country or city, or additional specific reviewing entities

Review spirit : mutual trust

The individual reviews as well as the overall reviewing process rely on mutual trust among entities and shared confidence in the process. This is key throughout peer reviews. In particular, individuals conducting a review have to understand that they are not inspectors or teachers, but rather peers gathering facts, assessing progress made from good practices, and providing recommendations for further progress. The review builds on exchange of best practices, use of internationally established standards and principles, non-adversarial peer reviews, non-binding conclusions and recommendations.

Four review stages: main tasks

Typically, a review will develop over a year, with four stages.

The preparatory stage

It focuses on: clarification between the Secretariat and the reviewed entity of what is to be done and not done in the review, background analysis by the Secretariat of available information and data (including data and documentation both from the reviewed entity and other sources), response to a questionnaire by the reviewed entity including recollection of its objectives (aims, goals, targets; formal and declarative), achievements and challenges.

The consultation stage

It involves: i) an on-site visit of the reviewing team with consultation with relevant officials and staff of the reviewed entity (as well as possibly concerned academics, civil society and interest groups, local authority representative) (Table 7), ii) preparation of the draft report by the Secretariat and the reviewing team; the report both gives credit to the achievements (and the lessons to be derived from good practices identified for other entities) and identifies areas for progress (including in its draft conclusions and recommendations); iii) transmission of the report to all members of the collective peer reviewing body, well in advance of its meeting (including the reviewed entity). This draft report is revised by the Secretariat after the peer review meeting on the basis of comments received from the reviewed entity.

The peer reviewing stage

The PRB (made of peers) conducts for each review: i) a free exchange among peers introduced by specific reviewing entities (without summary record), and ii) a review and revision of the draft conclusions and recommendations. The peer review meeting adopts final non binding conclusions and recommendations on both achievements and areas for progress, to be transmitted to a Senior officials meeting of the EMG and to top officials of the reviewed entity.

The ownership/release stage

It is driven by the entity reviewed to maximize ownership of the conclusions and recommendations by those having the capacity to influence change, with the support of the Secretariat. This stage may include: presentation to and by top officials; staff involvement; releases on appropriate web sites, relationships with press. Beyond this stage, it is desirable to have follow up actions and monitoring of progress.

Table 7 **Outline of a typical reviewing team mission at HQ of reviewed entity**

<u>Day 1</u>	Introductory session (one hour)
	Session on chapter 1 (GHG and buildings) (3 hours)
	Session on chapter 2 (GHG and air travel) (3 hours)
<u>Day 2</u>	Session on chapter 3 topic (3 hours)
	Session ^a for open consultation (2 hours)
<u>Day 3</u>	Session on chapter 4 topic (3 hours)
	Session ^b on chapter 5 topic (2 hours)
	Closing session (one hour)

a) consultation with academic, civil society, interest groups, local authority representatives.

b) session for reviewing team members only.

5. WORK PLAN : ACTIVITIES, TIMELINE, ACTORS, PRODUCTS

The consequent work plan for 2013-14 (Figure 2) focuses on the three pilot reviews and related meetings of the PRB and the EMG SOM.

Each review develops over a year time, with milestones associated to on-site review missions, reviews conducted by the PRB, and report and recommendations production. Consultation and a teleconference are anticipated to establish the PRB (September 2013). Two main meetings of the PRB are planned i) for the reviews of WMO and UNIDO (Geneva, January 2014) and ii) for the review of UNEP (New York, September 2014).

The main actors include the reviewed entities (WMO, UNIDO, UNEP), the EMG Secretariat, and the Peer Review Body (PRB), under the overall supervision of EMG SOMs. It is expected that a number of UN entities will act as reviewing entities either in the Peer Review Body or in the three individual reviewing teams (e.g. UNECE, UPU, FAO, WFP, WBG, UNDP).

The release and ownership stages of each individual review recommendations and report will be quite important for the actual influence of the program in the hands of individual entities. The pilot phase will anticipate the further development of the program. It is expected that additional UN entities, being associated in different ways to the pilot phase, will volunteer during the period 2013-2014 for being reviewed subsequently.

Figure 2 Work plan 2013-14: activities, timeline, actors, products

ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE 2013-2014 : months 1 to 24												MAIN ACTORS
	1/ 2	3/ 4	5/ 6	7/ 8	9/ 10	11/ 12	13/ 14	15/ 16	17/ 18	19/ 20	21/ 22	23/ 24	
1- Management concept, funding, PRB, questionnaire													EMG Sec
2- WMO review 4 stages:prep-consultation- reviewing- ownership		S1	S2 m	S2	S2	S3	S3 M	S4					EMG Sec, WMO, reviewing entities
3- UNIDO review 4 stages:prep-consultation- reviewing- ownership		S1	S2	S2	S2 m	S3	S3 M	S4					EMG Sec, UNIDO, reviewing entities
5- UNEP review 4 stages:prep-consultation- reviewing- ownership		S1				S2 m		S2	S2	S3	S3 M	S4	EMG Sec, UNEP, reviewing entities
6- EMG SOM 2013 Report					R								EMG SOM, EMG Sec
7- PRB meeting #1 Geneva: WMO & UNIDO reviews							2R						PRB, EMG Sec, WMO, UNIDO, all relevant entities
8- PRB meeting #2 New York: UNEP review, program dev											R		PRB, EMG Sec, UNEP all relevant entities
9- EMG SOM 2014 Report											R		EMG SOM, EMG Sec
10- Management Funding, next reviews													EMG Sec, PRB

PRODUCTS:

M= meeting of Peer Review Body(PRB)

m=on-site mission of reviewing team

R= report

MILESTONES

ANNEX 1 : WHAT ARE PEER REVIEWS?

A tool for international co-operation and progress

'Peer reviewing' is an important tool for international co-operation and progress¹⁰. It is an international co-operative effort by similar entities (e.g. countries), aiming at enhancing individual and collective performance. It relies on mutual trust among peers and confidence in the review process. It brings a range of benefits, including mutual learning on best practices, transparency and accountability, consistency and coherence, credibility and exemplarity, efficiency and effectiveness.

This instrument is used in several intergovernmental organizations (e.g. the IMF country surveillance mechanism, the WTO trade policy review mechanism, the EU reviews for national labor market and social inclusion policies). The Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of the African Union has covered 14 countries since 2006. The instrument has also been used by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) since 2004, and by the UN ECE.

It is most commonly associated with the OECD long-standing practice. The OECD has used peer reviews over several decades and progressively extended its use in most policy areas. It conducts systematic peer review programs covering all its member countries¹¹ and a number of others (such as BRICS), for economic, environment, energy¹², aid¹³ policies. It also uses peer reviews to foster the effective implementation of specific instruments, such as the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions.

Main features¹⁴

Some main features are at the core of the concept (and success) of peer reviewing. They are rather salient characteristics of peer reviews rather than a fixed blue print. First, a true spirit of peer reviewing should be rooted in mutual trust and confidence in the process.

Secondly, they are four main actors: the collective peer review body, the reviewed entity, the reviewing entities, the Secretariat. The collective peer review body is made of representatives of the different entities and operates with a peer spirit of open dialogue, result oriented analysis, exchange of experience, advisory conclusions and recommendations. It determines the frequency of its reviews. The reviewed entity has the duty to co-operate; it has an interest in moving reforms forward through the review process and its recommendations. The specific reviewing entities are selected on a rotating basis

¹⁰ The term "peer review" usually refers to 'the evaluation of creative work or performance by other people in the same field to enhance the quality of the work or performance in that field'. It is commonly used in a range of fields, such as academic and scientific research and professional activities (e.g. medicine, law). This definition is not fully established, and it is not this concept which is used in the present document.

¹¹ As well as some other countries (e.g. economic reviews of Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China, South Africa).

¹² OECD-IEA.

¹³ For donor countries.

¹⁴ Based on OECD review programs and experience (e.g. economic, energy, aid, environment policy reviews).

from among the different members of the peer review body; they act as peers (not inspectors) and lead in the peer review debate. The supporting Secretariat has to provide independence, accuracy, and analytic quality in individual review processes and provides continuity, memory and consistency of the sequence of reviews; the balance of its involvement with the specific reviewing entities may vary according to review programs, but this involvement remains labor-intensive.

Thirdly, the review procedure includes four stages: they are needed in sequence, for all peer reviews and are at the core of the peer review instrument: the preparatory stage, the consultation stage, the peer reviewing stage¹⁵, the release/ownership stage. The review ends there, but some programs include, on a voluntary basis, a follow-up and monitoring stage, with self-reporting on the actual implementation of the recommendations, not waiting for the next review of the same entity in the next review cycle.

Fourthly, the substantive content of reviews varies (e.g. economic, energy, aid, environment policy reviews), but also relies on some common features: indicators, a range of (domestic or international) policy objectives, and guidelines and references derived from soft law or traditional hard law.

Variations among peer review programs

There are a number of variations among peer review programs, beyond the inherent ones associated to substance¹⁶. Such variations include: the balance in attention among process, product and communication, the set up of the reviewing team, the degree of performance focus, the style of the debates among peers in the peer reviewing body, the strength of the recommendations by the peer reviewing body, the level and mix of representation of reviewed entities in the peer reviewing body, the degree of attention given to the transfer of ownership and influence of the recommendations, the follow-up arrangements, the length of the full cycle of reviews which determines the frequency of reviews for a given entity, the differences in format and substance among successive cycles.

¹⁵ Sometimes called examination stage.

¹⁶ Policy reviews (e.g. economic, environmental, energy, aid, regulatory policies) or reviews associated to the implementation of some international instruments (e.g. anti-bribery Convention).

ANNEX 2 : BENEFITS

Enhanced individual and collective performance

The overall benefit of a peer review is its actual contribution to enhancing the individual and collective performance of the participating entities (e.g. countries). Individual entities reviewed can build on the review process and the review output (i.e. the report and the recommendations) to implement the recommendations, particularly to progress towards their own objectives (effectiveness), in an efficient and cost-effective way¹⁷. The scale of progress depends on the actual transfer of ownership of the recommendations by those influencing change (public and private decision makers as well as public opinion). Experience suggests that the efficiency and result-oriented focus in the reviews translates into simply 'good business'¹⁸ and useful changes (Annex 4).

Collectively, entities involved in the review program potentially benefit of sharing best practices and mutual learning, with some economies of scale and faster transfer of know-how, which in turn means more efficient and consistent progress for the set of entities involved. Comparative elements lead to more confidence in the feasibility of achieving more ambitious objectives. In practice this overall benefit relies on a range of more specific benefits.

Mutual learning on best practices

The process of sharing experience on best practices is an important capacity building instrument, for: i) the entity under review, ii) the entities participating in the process as specific reviewing entities, and iii) the entities participating simply in the responsible collective peer review body. Mutual learning helps replace more isolated capacity building efforts. Derived products can be produced on specific topics covered in different reviews, and feature innovative and cost effective approaches.

Transparency and accountability

During the review process, the entity under review has to present and clarify its case and explain its rationale. This means enhanced transparency, internal to the entity reviewed but also external, towards peer entities and towards public opinion. This is closely associated to accountability with respect to relevant commitments and objectives. In practice, it is a soft incentive to enhancing compliance, which differs from traditional enforcement mechanisms involving administrative or legal sanctions. Transparency and accountability contribute to an explicit assessment of progress towards formal or declared objectives.

Consistency and coherence

During the review process, entities systematically exchange information, attitudes and views on what to do and how to do it. It contributes to consistency and coherence in policy design, implementation, evaluation and in individual and collective progress.

¹⁷ Formally, efficiency refers to process/output vs cost, while cost-effectiveness refers to outcome versus cost.

¹⁸ A conclusion from the WBG study 'Furthering the WBG's Corporate Environmental Sustainability'.

Credibility and exemplarity

The credibility of the review itself depends on its quality, both in terms of substance (e.g. analysis, objectivity, fairness, consistency) and in terms of process (e.g. independence, openness, transparency). Exemplarity in a 'walk the talk' logic enhances external credibility towards a range of actors (e.g. governments, enterprises, NGOs, citizens).

Efficiency and effectiveness for reviewed entities

Reviews emphasize in their analysis and recommendations economic efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the objectives of the reviewed entity, and thus help obtaining improved results and related efficiency gains for the reviewed entity. The actual gains obtained depend on the ultimate ownership of the outcome, particularly by those having the capacity of influencing change at the release/ownership stage. This capacity is usually shared by decision-makers of the public and private sectors, and public opinion.

Cost-effectiveness of the review programs

In the OECD and AU-NEPAD context, member countries have attributed a quite positive mark to the cost-effectiveness of the peer review programs themselves. They sometimes queue for being reviewed. Experience of UNEG/DAC-OECD is also positive. In OECD, reviews of non member countries have been carried out (e.g. BRICS) with funding from both the reviewed country and from member countries. Member countries are willing to contribute through their involvement during their own review and additional matching contributions to the programs, beyond the core funding of the review programs. Overall peer reviews are seen as cost effective instruments to achieve individual and collective progress, and having a capacity to enhance co-operation between the driving institution and its members.

ANNEX 3 : SMALL LEXICON FOR PEER REVIEWS

Actors

Collective peer review body : the body made of all relevant entities conducting the reviews, and approving the non-binding recommendations

Reviewed entity : the entity under review, on a voluntary basis Review meeting : meeting of the collective peer review body, at which inter alia the recommendations are approved

Reviewing team : it prepares the report and its conclusions and recommendations

Specific reviewing entities : the (two) entities playing specific roles i) in the reviewing team and ii) in introducing the peer review meeting

Secretariat : ensuring the supporting function of the program (e.g. in the reviewing teams drafting the report, for the general program support)

Stages of the review process

Preparation stage : early stage of the review process

Consultation stage : second stage of the review process (the reviewing team consults the reviewed entity and drafts the report)

Peer review stage : third stage of the peer review process (the review meeting of the collective peer review body)

Recommendations : non binding recommendations adopted by the collective peer review body

Release/ownership stage : the fourth stage of the peer review process (to maximize the influence of the report and of its conclusions and recommendations)

Follow-up and monitoring stage: the last and recommended stage of the peer review process (to accompany the implementation of the recommendations)

Tools

Indicators : selected statistics relevant, sound and measurable, provides part of the evidence base of the review

Objectives: aims (general and qualitative), goals(specific and qualitative) and targets(quantitative); environmental, social and economic sustainability objectives

Performance assessment : assessments with respect to the achievement of self-adopted objectives, distinguishing among intentions, actions and results

References : body of legal, regulatory, economic principles , criteria and standards used as framework for the substantive assessment

Effectiveness : degree of achievement of objectives (environmental, social and economic sustainability objectives)

Efficiency: degree of cost –effectiveness in the way of achieving objectives

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