

Fifth Meeting of the Issue management Group on Sustainable Management in the UN System.

Rome, Italy, 21-22 June 2011

Meeting Report

The 5th meeting of the Issue Management Group on Sustainable Management in the UN System (IMG5) took place in Rome, Italy on 21 and 22 June 2011. The meeting was attended by some 45 IMG focal points and observers in person, with another 20 participants joining on-line. The meeting was held at FAO and IFAD, and included a guided tour in IFAD's new building, displaying many good ideas for sustainability in the work place. The meeting agenda is attached.

Agenda item 1: Introduction and adoption of agenda

A. General information

The chair of the meeting (Niclas Svenningsen, SUN) introduced the agenda and provided a brief history of the IMG, its mandates and progress achieved so far. He also stated the objectives of this meeting; to take stock of work progress, to plan future work, and to prepare input to the Senior Officials Meeting of the Environment Management Group (EMG), which will take place on 19 September 2011. Finally, participants provided brief introductions.

B. Suggestions

None

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

The agenda was adopted.

Agenda item 2: GHG inventory preparation 2011
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A. General information

Florian Krautzer/Jacob Kurian (SUN) provided an update about the progress of work on the greenhouse gas inventory system. The participants were informed that the flat files are completed and tested and that translations will be available in early July. At the moment, the team is testing the various aggregation levels (UN-wide, agency-wide). They further informed about the methodology for lump sum travel and proxies office electricity consumption based on surface area as well as on timelines and activities expected from the focal points. Three issues were lifted for discussions/decision:

- The use of base year
- Inventory Management Plans
- External verification of inventories

B. Suggestions

IMG members provided the following comments/suggestions:

- The company/organization “Carbon Zero” offered to verify the UN inventory pro bono. There could be an option to verify the methodology only, or also the data collection. At the moment, methodology verification would be more feasible. SUN agreed to follow up to explore possibilities to make use of their services.
- Integration of GHG inventory into SAP would automate the auditing as the SAP is audited annually. It was noted that this is an important aspect to keep in mind, but at the same time that many UN organizations do not use SAP.
- Verification could be integrated into GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)
- It was suggested that Inventory Management Plan could be renamed into Inventory Management Log to avoid confusions regarding past and future activities. It was noted that the “Inventory Management Plan” is a term of art, i.e. is normally used to describe this kind of documents. However a clarification can be added to the IMP itself to explain that the IMP of the inventory is actually a document describing, for future reference, how the inventory has been compiled

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

- Frequency of preparing/updating Agency IMPs
It was concluded that IMPs for 2008 and 2009 are voluntary for all agencies. It was recommended that organizations that use 2008 as base year for their Emission Reduction Strategies (ERS), prepare an IMP for their ERS base year. As of 2010 (i.e. the inventory that is prepared in 2011), the preparation of IMPs becomes mandatory. To do so, the focal points can choose between two types of templates provided by SUN. This includes a comprehensive template following the format used by the USEPA Climate Leaders as well as a condensed format (2 pages) which focuses on key indicators to simplify the data collection.
- Most appropriate Base Year
It was concluded that a dynamic approach for the base year would reflect best the varying data quality across the organizations. While no base year was formally defined, most participants agreed that it might be most reasonable to use a combined base year (2008 and 2009) for now and reassess this choice as new inventories are completed. The final definition of a base year should be done once the methodology is completely finalized and reporting is very accurate.

➤ Approach towards external verification

Several participants raised the concern that the inventories of 2008 and 2009 do not meet comprehensive quality standards, which limits the benefits from external verification. At the same time it was recognized that external verification should remain a goal for the UN GHG inventory to ensure credibility, internal and external, of the inventory process. This is also recommended by OIOS.

It was concluded that SUN will develop an option paper, outlining different possible approaches to verify UN's GHG inventories. This paper should be presented to IMG in early 2012 for decision on what approach to follow.

Agenda item 3: Update on work streams
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A. General information

a. ERP systems/Umoja

Molly Kamara (UMOJA) together with Markus Noertemann (consultant) introduced the UMOJA project and its goals.

b. Sustainable procurement

Isabella Marras (SUN) gave a brief update on Sustainable Procurement and invited comments. Isabella further gave an update on on-going cooperation with the International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications (IAMLADP – UN's "meeting professionals network") to develop a green meeting guide for large events (the existing guide focuses on small-medium sized meetings).

c. Sustainable buildings/INFM

Dominique Brief/Niclas Svenningsen (SUN) presented the status of the work on Sustainable buildings, in particular with regard to the cooperation with the UN Interagency Network for Facility Managers (INFM). INFM has established a sustainable buildings working group that is tasked to develop best practice guidance, being supported by IMG through SUN.

d. Green meetings

Lorenzo Gavilli (ICAO) presented the ICAO green meetings calculator, which allows for identification of what venue would cause the smallest greenhouse gas emissions from travel by participants, given each participants point of departure.

e. Training modules

Presented the following day under Agenda item 11

Imogen Martineau (SUN) presented an update on the working group on training and described the tools currently under development to improve staff capacity regarding sustainability.

f. Senior management compacts and UN competencies
Sophie Ravier (DPKO) presented on OHRM and environmental sustainability and inclusion of core competences. Since 2010 Climate Neutrality is included as an indicator in the senior management Compact.

g. Budgeting for sustainability investments
Niclas Svenningsen (SUN) revisited the findings from the report on budgeting for sustainability investments, which was originally presented to IMG3 in October 2010. It was agreed that while budgeting for sustainability investments is a very important issue for the overall sustainability effort in UN, IMG does not have the capacity to undertake work on this matter for the time being, as other issues have higher priority. It was decided that the issue should be put on hold until further notice. In the meantime the summary of the report will be uploaded to the password protected part of Greening the Blue (www.greeningtheblue.org).

h. Greening UN field operations
Dominique Brief/Niclas Svenningsen (SUN) informed IMG that SUN has started a project to develop practical hands-on guidance on how to improve the sustainability of UN field operations (refugee camps, emergency aid operations etc). IMG was invited to propose field operations that the project could use as case studies. The contact person for the project in SUN is Dominique Brief

B. Suggestions

The following comments were provided by IMG members:

- Rio +20 could be a very important “green meeting” and suggested that Rio +20 should be climate neutral.
- Suggestion that import of participant lists from excel would be a useful function to the Green Meeting calculator. Lorenzo (ICAO) agreed and responded that, although this function is currently not available, it should be available in future versions.
- Some questions were asked about whether the green meeting calculator may discriminate against meeting places with a low UN agency density and suggested that a weighting factor could be included. It was noted that while the climate footprint is one consideration, it would not be the only consideration for choice of venue in most cases.

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

Although this item was mostly for information, a few action points were agreed on:

- Sustainable buildings/INFM: Anne Fernqvist (UNDP) to share information with SUN on “green” criteria, which were taken into account in the recent renewal of the lease for the building in New York.
- Green meetings: Isabella Marras (SUN) agreed to look into the possibility of making Rio+20 a Climate Neutral meeting and to circulate the “Green meeting guide” to all interested Focal Points.

- Budgeting for sustainability investments: The summary report will be uploaded to password protected part of Greening the Blue.
- To allow field offices to become more sustainable without policy changes, SUN agreed to develop a short version of the “Quick-list” to emission reductions, to help field offices to come up with a list of quick-wins for field offices.
- To aid the development of a more detailed green field operations toolkit, all organizations are invited to share best practice examples of green field operations with SUN.

Agenda item 4: Emission Reduction Strategies (ERS)

A. General information

Dominique Brief (SUN) presented the background and status of the work on developing Emission Reduction Strategies (ERS) in each UN organization. She mentioned that 21 organizations have submitted draft or final ERS, and encouraged remaining organizations to try to meet the deadline in November 2011 to submit their ERS. It was further explained that while the deadline is November 2011, there is a clear expectation that approval of ERS will need more time. However, this is all the more reason to not delay preparation of the ERS. For organizations that for any reason cannot develop a full ERS, they are still kindly requested by SUN to still seek to develop and submit a list of the top five actions that the organization can take to reduce their climate footprint. The format for ERS, as well as for the top-5 list, are available on Greening the Blue. It was finally explained that ERS will also provide a step ahead for organizations when they start work on their Sustainability Management System (SMS - please refer to item 9 below) since much of the information collected for ERS can also be used for the preparation for the SMS

B. Suggestions

Suggestions from the IMG included:

- A formal note or letter from SUN to attach to the ERS for submission would be very helpful. SUN agreed to provide such a letter.
- It was noted that each organization had different budget timelines and a centralized deadline for ERS adoption would therefore be difficult to adhere to.
- It was also proposed that reduction targets should be linked to key indicators such as Emissions per \$ budget and suggested that threshold studies of the costs for Economy class travel +DSA instead of Business class travel would be useful.

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

- SUN agreed to provide a formal letter to accompany the ERS for submission to management.

- The following organizations agreed to share their ERS with the other FPs on the Password protected area of GtB or to ask their management if this could be allowed: ITC, UPU, FAO, UNFCCC, ECA, WHO, ICAO
- All organizations are invited to share ideas on more indicators for emission reduction (e.g. Emissions per \$ budget, etc.), also reflecting changes in budget, number of staff etc, which may impact the climate footprint beyond emission reduction activities.

Agenda item 5: Sustainable e-communications in the UN system

A. General information

Gert De Laet (SUN consultant) presented a study of the potentials for increasing the use of e-communication in the UN system. This study has been provided to the HLCM network on ICT for follow up.

B. Suggestions

The following questions/comments were provided by IMG members:

- Ensure that a any new ICT system are really productive and meets the needs to achieve emission reduction Some past experience have not been so positive in this regard.
- Telecommuting policies should be stronger prioritized and implemented by decision-makers. It was mentioned that SUN is working to finalize a study on flexible working arrangements in the UN system, which may support this.
- Several participants noted that extensive ICT equipment is available at their facilities but there is limited knowledge on how to use them. Training could create a great and fast improvement in the frequency of use for some organizations.

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

- It was agreed that the e-communications report will be published at Greening the Blue as soon as it is finalized.
- Follow up to the report should be done by the HLCM ICT network, but IMG/SUN may wish to support this network to that end.
- UNEP has developed a similar report on the potential for improved use of e-communications in UNEP specifically, and will also share this at Greening the Blue for inspirations and comparison in other organizations.

Agenda item 6: Presentation and discussion on EMG work on social and environmental safeguards.

A. General information

Michelle Fanzo (EMG Consultant) introduced the EMG work on UN safeguards. This is an EMG work stream, parallel to IMG, but takes a more holistic approach to sustainability in the UN system. At the 16th meeting of EMG in September 2010, the senior officials of the EMG welcomed the progress made in the consultative process on environmental and social sustainability. The ongoing work on sustainable management (IMG), combined with environmental and social sustainability, was seen as representing the foundation for advancing the internal sustainability agenda in the UN system at the level of policy/ strategy, facilities/operations and programme/ project management. It was felt that the Rio 2012 Conference represents an opportunity to demonstrate how the UN can implement the internationally agreed norms which, among others, are set out in the MEAs and in other internationally agreed goals, targets and standards.

The purpose of the Safeguards work stream can be seen as to providing the “other aspects” of sustainability that the IMG are not directly addressing. This includes i.a. economic and social aspects of sustainability, as well as their application in UN’s external operations, policies and programs. The immediate concern is now to ensure that the Safeguards work and the sustainability work (IMG) are coordinated and mutually supportive.

Immediately after the IMG5, a separate meeting was organized to further develop the report on Safeguards, which will be presented to EMG-SOM 17.

B. Suggestions

Some minor questions for clarification were provided.

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

- It was agreed that coordination between the Safeguards work stream and the work of IMG is important and SUN and IMG members also involved in the safeguards work stream should seek to ensure a coordinated presentation at EMG-SOM.

Agenda item 7: Sustainable travel in the UN
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A. General information

Mr. Ruvan de Alwis (SUN consultant) has been engaged by SUN to undertake a study of how current travel policies and regulations impact the ability of UN organization to adopt more sustainable travel practices. Mr. de Alwis presented initial results and

requested IMG's input to the draft report, to be circulated to IMG in mid-September. The final version of the report will be presented to the Inter Agency Travel Network at their next annual meeting in Rome in October 2011.

B. Suggestions

- The presenter noted that the best place for a toolbox on sustainable travel would be Greening the Blue.
- It was noted that several organizations are already today informing staff about the impact (climate footprint) of their travel, so as to help them reduce travel. Indicators need to be easily understandable and interpretable for this purpose.

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

- It was agreed that SUN will prepare an article to dispel the "stereotypes" regarding travel reductions/savings. All IMG focal points were asked to provide details to Imogen Martineau (SUN) on the most common myths and arguments to help her prepare this item.
- It was also suggested that SUN should monitor and report IMG's travel footprint.

Agenda item 8: Wall of suggestions / Wrap-up of day 1
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The Chair summarized the conclusions from the day, as reported above.

Agenda item 9a: Proposal for a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Management System in the United Nations System

The chair for the second day of the meeting, Isabella marras (SUN) welcomed participants back to the meeting and presented the agenda and practical arrangements for the day.

A. General information

Niclas Svenningsen and Julie MacKenzie (SUN) presented the Proposal for a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Management in the UN System. They explained that the proposal has been developed by the IMG working group on Sustainability Management in the UN and thanked the members for their excellent contribution so far. They highlighted that the Strategic Plan presents a vision for how to move forward with the sustainability work in UN, taking notice of the need for a more integrated approach (than IMG/SUN can provide in their current roles and with their current resources). It was also noted that this plan will be presented to EMG SOM on 19 September, and that their response to this

plan will decide the future work and function of IMG.

B. Suggestions

See below under Agenda item 9 b

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

See below under agenda item 9 b.

After lunch, the meeting moved over from FAO to IFAD, where meeting participants were provided with a guided tour of IFAD's new building. IFAD's building is recently constructed and provides a very nice example of a well thought out approach to minimizing the environmental footprint of a building, while maximizing comfort and convenience for staff working in the building.

Agenda item 9b: EMG comments on the Proposed Strategy
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A. General information

Ivar Baste (EMG adviser) provided an overview of how the work of IMG is perceived at senior levels (very positively) and that it is important that IMG maintains the momentum built in the past years. Regarding the Strategic Plan specifically, he mentioned that this represents a strategic move towards integrating sustainability in the UN system, but that it has to be closely coordinated with the work on Safeguards as these two elements (IMG sustainability and safeguards) together forms a very strong package that can be proposed for consideration and adoption at senior levels in UN, as well as an input to Rio+20. He proposed that IMG plans to continue work and mentioned that IMG and SUN are essential to keep UN's sustainability work progressing at good speed.

Hossein Fadaei (EMG) advised that the plan is already a good piece of work but can be further strengthened by building on the additionally that can be achieved through a common approach. Furthermore, he advised that he heads of agencies need to come to EMG SOM "well briefed" and should be able to make an informed decision. He advised that the progress report and recommendations for actions should be submitted to EMG by mid August. Follow-up needs go ahead with the implementation of the presented action plan. The EMG secretariat can support the report submission.

B. Suggestions

Several comments and suggestions were provided, including:

- A feedback mechanism from people working on the SMS to the Sustainability office as well as interaction in an IMG will be necessary for exchange and feedback.
- Include a specific mandate from EMG for the strategic plan and to make it short and concise. He indicated that a formal mandate is necessary but we should not fall at this hurdle.
- The Strategic Plan needs to be positioned correctly. Agencies should not perceive this as a one-agency project, “forced” on other agencies but as a central “service”. It should contain the possibility of expansion (teaming with Human rights, etc).
- The HLCM structure could be a good harboring point for the office. The funding proposal should reflect the possibility that some agencies might not be able to provide the same funds as other (larger) agencies.
- The vision should be to integrate this environmental management system into a future sustainable management system. While the links to social issues should not be cut they might only be included peripherally for now. The system should be similar to the financial sustainability system, which is in use. Down the road, environmental issues should flow into management decisions.
- A mandate needs to be obtained at General Assembly level, otherwise funding will be very difficult to mobilize. It was agreed that this is important, but that in the meantime an absence of a GA mandate should not hold us back from promoting this in our own organizations.
- Cost sharing is a sensitive topic, especially equal cost sharing. Given the existing budget decisions, implementation would not be possible in some organizations before 2015.
- Some IMG members voiced concerns that there was too much pressure on individual organizations and not enough common approach. Any approach should have real implementation power, which would require stronger pressure from the entire UN System. This means that the positioning of the coordination office is crucial.
- Some IMG members suggested to look into integrating the common structure in the global compact and suggested that the DOCO office could be used as a model.
- The report could be strengthened by including the value / return on the investment made by organizations.
- Some INMG focal points proposed that the Strategic Plan should be

implemented within existing resources, as it might be difficult to get additional funds from member states.

- The IMG may want to seek recognition from CEB as a “community of practice” in which case its work, including this strategic plan, could be published at the CEB website, thereby earning recognition from member states. This might result in funding.

C. Outcome/Results/Action points

- It was decided that SUN, based on inputs received, will prepare a revised version of the Strategic Plan, and circulate it among IMG members in the first half of July, for comments/additional input, with the objective to have a final version ready in the last week of July.
- It was decided that based on discussions and outcomes of all the sessions in IMG5, SUN will propose work plan for IMG for 2011-2012, and circulate among IMG members for approval before submission to EMG SOM.

Agenda item 10: Communication & awareness

A. General information

Imogen Martineau (SUN) presented the communication efforts currently undertaken by SUN to gain visibility for the UN’s climate neutral work. Further, she gave a short training on social media and how they are used in the context of Greening the Blue.

Agenda item 11: Next steps
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A. General information

Niclas Svenningsen (SUN) concluded the meeting with a wrap-up of the main findings and follow-ups to this meeting. These included are included as action points in this report. The following action points were highlighted:

- A review of the Strategic Plan will be conducted by SUN in the coming weeks in consultation with the members of the working group and the EMG. The updated Strategic Proposal will then be circulated to the whole IMG for comments/feedback. The objective is to finalize the Strategic Plan by 15 August for submission to EMG (background papers for EMG SOM 17 need to be submitted a month before the meeting). If required, an extra on-line IMG meeting will be organized on 28 July to resolve any outstanding issues.

- The meeting report from IMG 5 will be provided by July 13. A summary of the meeting will be provided before, to aid preparation of mission reports for meeting participants.
- IMG focal points are kindly requested to:
 - a. Seek to finalize ERS by November 2011.
 - b. Seek permission from management to share draft ERS with other IMG focal points at the password protected part of Greening the Blue.
 - c. Inform their representatives to EMG-SOM about the Strategic proposal and to seek their support for the same.
- SUN will prepare a support letter for the IMG focal points to go along with the submissions or ERS proposals to increase management support.
- IMG focal points are invited to provide input to the review of travel policies and sustainable travel in the UN system (in September).
- IMG focal points are kindly reminded about the schedule for preparing the next GHG inventory and to submit this and other input to the 2012 Common Climate Neutral Report for the UN system. This report is scheduled to be released in March/April 2012 to match preparations for Rio+20.
- SUN will post by 15 August, on the password protected part of GtB the schedule of activities for the next 12 months, including for preparation of inventories, ERS and IMP.
- IMG focal points are invited to send news and updates to Greening the Blue. In particular, SUN welcomes examples of annoying arguments against sustainable behavior, which SUN will compile into an article which may be useful as reference/inspiration for all IMG focal points.
- The date and venue for next IMG meeting will be proposed by SUN to IMG after EMG-SOM in September. The timing should be in the last quarter of 2011. The ICAO green meeting calculator will be tested to aid the decision about the venue.
- On behalf of all the participants to IMG5, the hosts; FAO and IFAD, with generous support from WFP, were thanked for an excellently hosted meeting.

The meeting closed at 17.00 on 22 June 2011.

The meeting protocol was compiled by Christina Stuhlberger, Florian Krautzer, and Imogen Martineau.