

**NINTH MEETING OF THE ISSUE MANAGEMENT GROUP ON
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT**

Online meeting

Day one: 8 October 2012 (15.30 CET)

Item 1: Opening

Isabella Marras, Sustainable UN Coordinator opened the meeting with an update on the SUN team. She explained that while the SUN continues to be small, the team benefits now from the work of Florian Krauzer acting as Helpdesk and Louise Bloom assisting Imogen Martineau on the Greening the Blue website.

Isabella Marras introduced the main purposes of the meeting as being, for day one, a discussion and agreement on the structure and funding of the Common Sustainability Office (CSO) and the related future work of the IMG and, for day two, an update on the progress of the Sustainability Management System(SMS) working group. The agenda was then presented and approved.

Item 2: Update on High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) & Environment Management Group (EMG)

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Item 3: Preparing for the EMG Senior Officials Meeting (EMG SOM) on 1st November 2012 (New York)

There has always been a need for a high level mandate for the work of the Issue Management Group (IMG). The June 2012 letter of Secretary-General and the Rio+20 outcomes have represented an important step ahead. However a solid approval from the Chief Executives Board (CEB) in April 2013 is required for our work on SMS and cost sharing in a CSO. Work on documentation for HLCM continues, so that HLCM can make a decision on the SMS and CSO, and this will then further proceed to CEB.

Thus far, an informal discussion with HLCM in September 2012 provided some feedback: HLCM requested to be well informed by an accurate cost benefit analysis of sustainability management systems; heads of management also expressed concerns about financial commitments to implement SMS and support CSO.

a) Review of requests from EMG in 2011

The plans on SMS and CSO will be put to the EMG Senior Officials Meeting on 1st November 2012, for a preliminary prepping of the members¹. The proposal will then be

¹Approval for SMS was obtained from the EMG members in September 2011 and so was an ‘in principle’ agreement that a common support mechanism would be needed to support agencies. Senior officials however requested IMG to bring more concrete options of how the support mechanism should be shaped and funded.

officially discussed in the 2013 HLCCM meeting, before it is forwarded for the CEB meeting in April 2013.

In addition: the initial mandate of the IMG on Climate Neutrality was to end by December 2012. Hence, an extended mandate for the IMG and SUN until the end of 2014 will be sought through the EMG.

Isabella Marras clarified that many EMG members are also members of CEB and EMG could be attended by heads of agencies. The meeting of the EMG this year was fixed one day before the CEB to take advantage of the presence in New York of many heads of agencies and in the hope that many of them can extend their mission by a day to attend the EMG meeting.

b) Document related to CSO proposal

Julie Mackenzie, Senior Sustainability Advisor, SUN/UN presented the document related to the CSO proposal. She indicated that it is a living document and covers such items as: background on SMS in the UN, Rio+20, the Strategic Plan, CSO, IMG recommendations, cost of CSO and funding, cost benefits in having CSO and cost recovery options. The ensuing discussion focussed on how the draft might be improved.

1. Should there be more focus on the IMG and its importance underlined?

FAO, addressing a related matter, advised against using the acronym CSO for the common sustainability office, as it was yet one more acronym in an already complex picture and risked confusing people who were only now familiar with the term SUN. As such, SUN should be used as much as possible and “common sustainability office” used as a description for SUN. WFP, IFAD and UNAIDS supported this view. IFAD, on the question of giving more emphasis to the IMG, said its importance should be highlighted, because SUN exists in a context, which is to support the IMG network, and because the proposal is asking the EMG to extend the life of the IMG. SUN and the IMG should be sold as an established package.

2. Should there be more practical cases of SMS in the documents?

UNEP raised the possibility of presenting SMS not only as a path towards greater efficiencies but also through the lens of safety and health, as FAO has done. SUN confirmed that these aspects will be described in greater detail, in material prepared for next Spring’s HLCCM meeting (eg, return on investment, in response to September HLCCM request for a cost-benefit analysis).

3. In addition to the need for a SUN/CSO set up, is the document clear on the need for agencies to have their own sustainability focal points ?

WFP proposed that para 16 be strengthened by creating a clearer link to para 26 and the table in the CSO proposal that illustrates how focal points would have managed had SUN not existed. SUN noted that para 26 and that table attempted to measure how much it would have cost individual agencies had the services provided by SUN needed to be purchased on the open market. SUN would review that section to ensure clarity.

c) Documents for EMG 2012 decision

On behalf of the Working Group on CSO, Isabella Marras explained that the documents to be brought in front of the EMG (report on actions and future program of work, the document related to the CSO proposal and a CEB draft statement) had been submitted for approval to focal points and now have to be sent to EMG. The draft CEB statement aims at committing agencies to implement sustainability management and support the continuation of the IMG and the SUN as coordination mechanism. If the new statement is approved by the CEB in 2013, the work on SMS would begin in 2014. On an input from IFAD, the group agreed to change the document to clarify that the work on the SMS will start in 'late 2014' rather than (unrealistically) 'early 2014'.

She then presented the latest version of the CEB statement, section by section, as formulated by the Working Group. The main issues and decisions are given below:

Section a) Design agency-specific strategies to measure and reduce waste production and water consumption, complementing existing strategies for the measurement and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and including steps to increase staff awareness of their role in this process'

There was a discussion on the wording "measure and reduce". WFP suggested that the word "manage" might be more suitable than "measure and reduce". SUN explained that the current language of "measure and reduce" was formulated to maintain the same words used in the original CEB statement on a strategy for a Climate Neutral UN, though an alternative could be "measure, reduce and manage". UNESCO preferred that "measure and reduce" be maintained.

UPU highlighted another angle, that the statement omits "offsetting" of GHG emissions, though the CEB statement on climate neutrality did mention it. It was clarified that the Working Group decided not to highlight "offsetting", to reduce the risk of disagreements on it. DFS confirmed that they would prefer avoiding "offsetting".

Section b) Implement regular monitoring of progress in the reduction of waste production and water consumption, and incorporate with existing monitoring of greenhouse gas emissions in an annual UN-wide report'

WFP suggested that, before implementation, it would be good to have guidance on the expected progress in implementing the SMS, including the provision of a phased approach. It would not be feasible for WFP to meet an early 2014 deadline for the design of strategies and implementing the monitoring of progress. They would be reluctant to measure and monitor the waste and water footprint of HQ alone, only to discover later (once they knew which remote location facilities could provide what level of data) that their global footprint was x times as much. WFP wondered whether the wording might reflect the need for a step by step approach, therefore. FAO appreciated WFP's concern, but considered it important to use language that made clear the requirement to go beyond HQ, even if efforts might understandably start at that level. Perhaps, "gradually implement"? Strong language was required to garner support from top management for implementing an SMS, albeit making allowances

for agencies that cannot progress as quickly as others. It was agreed that WFP and FAO would submit to SUN alternative wording.

Section c) Strengthen UN organizations' internal capacity to reach these goals through allocating the necessary human resources towards the continuous improvement of environmental sustainability management'

And

'In addition, we request the EMG and Sustainable United Nations facility (SUN) to continue their work of coordination, technical support and reporting, noting the associated system-wide benefits of efficiencies, knowledge-sharing and centralized evaluation and accountability. We request SUN to report to the HLCM through the EMG on collective achievements and forward planning. '

On reporting to the HLCM, it was suggested to include mention of the IMG also, with some explanation on it.

The group agreed to postpone the most challenging paragraph of the CEB statement (cost sharing) to the following day.

d) Associated EMG work streams : “Sustainability framework” seen through the eyes of a Focal point and “Options for a peer review process”

The EMG has two more streams of work that have a direct influence on the work of the IMG.

Sophie Ravier, Environmental Officer and Focal Point for UN DFS, presented the work of the Consultative Process on Environmental and Social Sustainability and its progress. The Consultative Process had earlier developed an Environment and Social Sustainability Framework for the UN (Sustainability Framework). The next step is to translate the Sustainability Framework into an operational model or road map that could guide and be used by agencies to create their own detailed implementation plans. The activities leading to the development of the roadmap have been elaborated in the draft work plan shared. This includes among others: further clarification of grey areas of the Sustainability Framework, information sharing, and capacity building activities. Pilot testing of the road map is expected to begin by December 2014, by volunteering agencies

Jacob Kurian, Programme officer, SUN illustrated the genesis and the content of a report that will be presented at the EMG on 1st November: 'Peer reviewing the environmental profile of members of the EMG, a conceptual review of options'. In September 2011, the Chair of the EMG, Achim Steiner proposed to the meeting participants that a system of peer review be established among UN agencies as a way to support each others in improving environmental performance. The EMG then asked the secretariat to present options for such work.

The group discussed the path that some of the EMG documents follow in individual agencies, a path that does not always bring the right documents to the right people. Should the peer review work stream be accepted by the EMG, and the option that foresees a focus on corporate environmental management be chosen, the IMG might find itself vested with this task and would need to integrate it into its work programme.

Day two: 9 October 2012 (15.30 CET)

Item 3 continued

Isabella Marras opened the second day's proceedings. She summarized the first day's discussions and decisions taken, and then continued the session on the CEB statement, covering the last paragraph. This was followed by a general discussion on the CEB statement section related to cost sharing:

'Recognising that enhanced efficiencies in individual organisations' sustainability management efforts can be realised only through a collaborative approach, we further agree to contribute to the cost recovery of the services provided by the Sustainable United Nations facility, as described in the "Proposal for a UN common sustainability office with system-wide ownership" (attachment Nr xxx)'.

The main points of discussion and decisions are given below:

- a) UPU recommended that the draft statement include mention of UNEP, making clear its funding of SUN staff, as an encouragement to others to also contribute.
- b) WFP asked what the proposed duration for agencies' commitment to cost share was. An option could be to mention a period like 5 years, after which the CEB could review the network and cost sharing arrangement
- c) All agreed with FAO that for more chances of approval, it would be better to follow cost sharing arrangements that have succeeded under other CEB networks.
- d) SUN suggested that providing too many cost sharing options might not be good for decision making. Not every focal point agreed with this analysis. UNDP suggested that managers might wish to see several options before deciding.
- e) WFP enquired if an alternate plan (plan B) exists, if the cost sharing arrangement is not agreed upon. SUN advised that there is no Plan B as such, but the alternatives were clear: either the work stopped or UNEP stepped in to cover the gap. It seemed unlikely that UNEP would/could let the SUN project fail.
- f) UPU enquired how activities of the common sustainability office would be affected if some agencies do not cost share, especially since the proposed CSO budget is smaller than current SUN funding. SUN clarified that the budget is less because there are now fewer staff and also less need to develop new tools. How non contributing agencies might be handled is suggested in the CSO document. According to discussion with HLCEM, in other interagency networks, not everyone contributes but the spirit is to do things together and those who do not contribute still have access to the services.
- g) SUN suggested that details like the Plan B option need not be included in the CSO document, in order to avoid agencies opting for the easy way out. Alternatives would be discussed with UNEP ED on 25 October, however.

Item 4: SMS Working Group, Q&A document and SMS checklist, SMS Milestones

Leo Paat, EMS consultant, WFP, made a presentation on the Environment Management System (EMS) scoping study led by him in WFP. He introduced the work and the progress made. The presentation covered the definition and applications of an EMS, various EMS Frameworks (ISO, EMAS, BS) and their features, global examples of public sector organisations that have adopted EMS and comparisons of their approaches.

He detailed 2 strategies to implement an EMS, their features and examples of organizations using them: a) in terms of the coverage of the organization (entire organization or clusters/parts of the organization); b) in terms of the process (straightforward approach covering the entire process in one go or phased approach that covers parts of the process and continues to grow and extend to the whole.)

Based on this, WFP evaluated four approaches, based on specific criteria like customization, stakeholder participation, additional cost, development period. The phased approach, which also provides learning opportunities, is preferred by WFP.

Shoa Ehsani, Climate Neutral Officer, UNEP, presented the draft document on Sustainability Management Systems, prepared by the Working Group on SMS. He introduced the four themes of GHG emissions, waste, water and staff sensitisation and discussed the indicators for each of them, the practical issues anticipated including data availability, and the discussions in the group. The main points of discussion and decisions are given below:

- a) The current indicators for water cover only water quantity/consumption from municipal/public sources (for which there is meter bill). All agreed with a suggestion to include water quality also.
- b) The group also wanted to increase the scope of the staff sensitization theme, to include the equally important aspect of capacity building and governance
- c) There was a suggestion to develop a training module on the SMS.
- d) The SMS could be implemented following a phased approach.
- e) UNDP suggested that use of chemicals could also be covered. Shoa opined that it would be better to start with the essential elements, after which the scope could be widened. SUN clarified that though the Strategic Plan recommends monitoring of GHG emissions, waste, water and staff sensitization as a minimum, it also gives the flexibility for any agency to monitor issues more relevant for them.
- f) To avoid issues like double counting, UNDP recommended that it would be good to differentiate between indicators for GHG emissions, water and waste which are more direct/primary issues, from indicators such as staff sensitization, which are indirect, process indicators that could impact the primary indicators.
- g) In the previous IMG meeting, there were requests for training on ISO, GRI and waste management. It was agreed that this needs to be done, as feasible.

Item 5: Emissions Inventory 2011

Jacob Kurian advised that the process for data collection is the same as last year's. The deadline for uploading files is 15 December 2012 and for review and approval of files is 15 February 2013. We are looking to start the 2012 inventory cycle early in February 2013 to help FPs have more time to complete.

UNESCO asked how the earlier starting date would be possible given the practical difficulties which delayed initiation of earlier cycles of the inventory, in particular need for Brindisi to update Flat Files which normally takes a number of months. SUN said there would be no changes to the Flat Files in 2013 (apart from date) and that it would endeavor to have all files to IMG FPs by February 2013.

Jacob Kurian provided an update on the proposed external verification. As recommended by OIOS, a project has been initiated to develop and implement external verification of GHG

inventories. This will be done in collaboration with Landcare Research, New Zealand, in 2 phases: Phase 1 for fund raising and Phase 2 for implementation. A MoU has been signed with Landcare Research for the first phase fund raising activities. If funding becomes available, implementation (Phase 2) is expected to start in late 2013 or early 2014. Implementation will involve: development of standards against which the verification will be done; protocols detailing the steps to be followed for verification; annual peer reviews of GHG inventory of few volunteering agencies; annual external verification of common UN methodologies/processes and of the GHG inventory of peer reviewed entities; and training of UN staff for conducting peer reviews.

This year, two half-day trainings were conducted on the GHG inventory, with around 40 participants. The Technical Group has met 3 times thus far, and another meeting is planned for January 2013.

Jacob Kurian also noted that a few external agencies had expressed interest in participating in the IMG's GHG inventory exercise. The IMG needs to decide on a policy for such requests. Options listed for consideration included selling the SUN/IMG tools or allowing external entities to use them, either for a fee or for gratis.

Planning for Moving towards report

Imogen Martineau, Communications consultant from SUN announced that the fourth edition of *Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN* will be published in 2013. It was proposed that a similar process to last year's is used, and with a similar format. These will include a full report with details of emissions by agency and an analysis by sector, a four-page summary report and updated agency pages on the website. The launch will also be similar to previous years i.e. a press release and lots of activity on social media. The agency pages on the *Greening the Blue website* represent the most popular section of the website. A more detailed timetable and list of outputs will be sent to Focal Points in November 2012.

Conclusions, IMG10 and wrap up

Isabella Marras concluded the meeting thanking participants for their active and positive involvement. She promised that the meeting minutes would be ready within two weeks and that revisited drafts of the CSO paper and the CEB statement will be circulated.

She also proposed that the IMG10 be held in New York City between 20 -25 January 2013. A doodle survey will be sent around to find out the most suitable dates. NYC based agencies were asked to consider the possibility of hosting.

To conclude Isabella Marras also reminded the group that John Miller from UNESCO, one of the most pleasant, constructive and valuable focal points, is retiring. On behalf of the IMG and SUN, she conveyed best wishes for John's future.