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# **Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Country Analysis and the UNDAF**

**A Guidance Note for United Nations Country Teams  
and Implementing Partners**

**UNDG, 2009**

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## Introduction to the Guidance Note

Mainstreaming environmental sustainability will always be country-specific, depending on the challenges facing each country, and the capacities of partners and the UNCT. Successful mainstreaming will be based on continuous engagement and partnership. This guidance note will enable UNCTs to pick the right moments, and the right mix of actions and tools, to make it work.

Environmental sustainability is 1 of 5 inter-related principles for UN development cooperation<sup>1</sup>. The rationale for this is strong, with growing evidence about the unsustainable use of the world's environment and natural resources. Failure to act at country level will inflict irreversible damage on the ecosystems that support human livelihoods and wellbeing. But a more compelling point is the potential contribution of stronger environmental policy and management for the achievement of national development goals and the MDGs.

Environmental sustainability is about meeting human needs without undermining the capacity of the planet's ability to support life. However, there is no common guidance about what it means at an operational level. In a survey about the usefulness of the guidelines for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)<sup>2</sup>, over half of UNCTs felt they were not sufficient to better mainstream environmental issues. This guidance note will help. It outlines **15 entry points and related actions and tools** that will enable UNCTs and country partners to better mainstream environmental opportunities and concerns during efforts to strengthen country analysis and prepare and implement the UNDAF.

### Structure of the Guidance Note

Following this introduction is a **Quick Guide to Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability**. Using the main steps for UN country programming, it outlines the entry points, and related actions and tools, for mainstreaming environmental sustainability. These are described in more detail in the guidance note, which has 4 sections:

- Section 1 describes the purpose and scope of the note, its target audience, and options for organizing the work of the UNCT. It concludes with important performance and accountability matters;
- Section 2 offers a detailed rationale for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the work of the UNCT and country partners;
- Section 3 describes the elements of the country framework for environmental governance, providing the normative and political basis for UNCT cooperation; and
- Section 4 is the core of the guidance note. Using the main steps for UN country programming, it describes specific entry points, and related actions, tools & resources for mainstreaming environmental sustainability. The focus is on UNDAF preparation. But for countries that have just begun UNDAF implementation, or are mid-cycle, the UNDAF annual review (see section 4.6) is an important entry point.

Two icons are used in the margins of this note to highlight:



Entry Points



Important performance and accountability matters

<sup>1</sup> UNDG, [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009.

<sup>2</sup> UNDG, [Summary of Responses - Survey on the use and usefulness of the 2007 CCA/UNDAF Guidelines](#), September, 2008.

## Quick Guide to Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability

This guide uses the main steps for UN country programming to describe entry points, and related actions and tools, for mainstreaming environmental sustainability. These are described in more detail in section 4.0 of the guidance note. Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in country analysis and the UNDAF is a dynamic process, undertaken with country partners, to:

1. **Understand the linkages between environment and development**, including linkages with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);
2. Use this knowledge to **influence** the national development framework and UNDAF priorities;
3. **Anticipate environmental opportunities and constraints as early as possible** in UN supported programmes and projects; and
4. **Support country partners** to track progress towards their national environmental goals, MDG7 targets, and the goals and targets of ratified international environmental agreements.

Mainstreaming actions must be tailored to specific country needs and capacities. For this reason, this guidance note and quick guide should be used flexibly.

Step: Plan of Engagement (Section 4.1)	
<b>Entry Points</b>	<b>Actions &amp; Tools</b>
1. Positioning of environmental issues in the <b>review of country analytic work</b>	<b>Action:</b> Review country analytic work to identify environmental issue or problems in the country and their plausible links to national development priorities and the MDGs. <b>Tool:</b> Screening checklist for environment in country analysis ( <b>Annex A.1</b> )
2. Engagement of environmental stakeholders in the <b>mapping exercise</b>	<b>Action:</b> Be aware of current environmental policy processes and timelines, and key actors and stakeholders who can influence the use of information about environment-development linkages. <b>Tool:</b> Stakeholder consultations ( <b>Annex A.2</b> )
3. <b>Identification of UNCT comparative advantages and gaps</b> to help mainstream environmental sustainability	<b>Action:</b> Ensure that the exercise on comparative advantages includes UN staff who can speak to the opportunities for mainstreaming into national plans, policies, and programmes, and the related mandates, capacities and performance of the UNCT.
Step: Support Country Analysis (Section 4.2)	
<b>Entry Points</b>	<b>Actions &amp; Tools</b>
4. Participation in <b>government-led analysis</b>	<b>Action:</b> Provide qualified UN programme staff or external experts to support relevant government working bodies to highlight development-environment issues and linkages
5. Support for <b>targeted environmental studies, including economic and capacity assessments</b>	<b>Tool:</b> Assessment options ( <b>Annex A.3</b> ) – Complementary studies should highlight environment-development linkages and address key gaps in country analytic work. <b>Tool:</b> Considerations for mainstreaming environment in a Poverty Reduction Strategy ( <b>Annex A.4</b> )
6. A <b>Common Country Assessment</b> that mainstreams environmental sustainability	<b>Annex B</b> of guidance note describes key entry points, actions and tools for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the CCA.

<b>Step: Select Strategic Priorities for the UNDAF (Section 4.3)</b>	
<b>Entry Points</b> 7. Participation in the <b>prioritization exercise</b> for the UNDAF	<b>Actions &amp; Tools</b> <b>Action:</b> Ensure that background papers, briefing notes and presentations include the key findings about environment-development linkages, their contribution to national priorities and MDGs, and major capacity development needs
8. Environmental integration, <b>following the prioritization exercise</b>	<b>Action:</b> Following the prioritization exercise, hold an “environmental integration” meeting to review draft UNDAF results and identify areas where environmental action is important for success, or to mitigate negative impacts
<b>Step: UNDAF Preparation (Section 4.4)</b>	
<b>Entry Points</b> 9. <b>Review of draft UNDAF results</b>	<b>Actions &amp; Tools</b> <b>Tool:</b> Criteria and questions to appraise UNDAF results ( <b>Annex A.5</b> )
10. <b>Formulation of UNDAF results and indicators</b> regarding the environment	<b>Action:</b> Change or add results, indicators, and activities to strengthen the UNDAF results framework, and to better align results with the country’s environmental commitments.
<b>Step: Programme &amp; Project Preparation (Section 4.5)</b>	
<b>Entry Points</b> 11. <b>Environmental screening</b> of agency programmes and projects	<b>Actions &amp; Tools</b> <b>Tool:</b> Environmental screening checklist for agency programmes and projects ( <b>Annex A.6</b> )
12. <b>Environmental assessments</b>	Environmental assessments support informed decision-making and helps shape programmes and projects to improve the quality of outcomes. <b>Tool:</b> Planning an Environmental Impact Assessment – key steps and issues ( <b>Annex A.7</b> )
13. Environmental mitigation in the <b>Annual Work Plan</b> or other annual plan instrument.	<b>Action:</b> Summarise agreed mitigation measures, and budget activities related to environmental management in the Annual Work Plan.
<b>Step: UNDAF Monitoring and Evaluation (Section 4.6)</b>	
<b>Entry Points</b> 14. Inclusion of environment-development linkages during the <b>UNDAF Annual Review</b>	<b>Actions &amp; Tools</b> <b>Action:</b> Use the annual review to reflect on environmental changes in the programme environment, assumptions and risks, and consider changes to UNDAF results to take advantage of environmental opportunities or to mitigate against negative impacts.
15. Preparation of the <b>UNDAF Evaluation</b>	<b>Tool:</b> Environmental sustainability considerations for the UNDAF evaluation. A list of key environmental questions for consideration during the UNDAF evaluation, using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact ( <b>Annex A.8</b> ).

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<sup>3</sup> Annexes are contained in a separate volume.

## 1.0 Environmental Sustainability & UN Country Programming

Environmental sustainability is established as 1 of 5 inter-related principles for UN development cooperation at country level<sup>4</sup>. There are good reasons for this. The global environmental<sup>5</sup> situation is stark. The [Millennium Ecosystem Assessment](#) shows that nearly 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the ecosystems examined are being degraded or used unsustainably. The [Millennium Declaration](#) warns that if we do not act to contain environmental damage and prevent future harm, we will inflict irreversible damage on the ecosystems that support human livelihoods and wellbeing. It is now widely accepted that failure to integrate environmental sustainability into planning processes will compromise our ability to achieve the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs), particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.

But this can change. Efforts to integrate the policies and practices for environmental sustainability into the mainstream of development practice can help developing countries achieve their development goals. Opportunities for this are often overlooked when environment is not considered during development planning. While it is generally recognised that environmental sustainability is about meeting human needs without undermining the capacity of the planet's ecological systems to support life, there is no common operational guidance.

This guidance note is intended to address that situation. It will help UNCTs and country partners to better mainstream environmental concerns and opportunities during UN country programming, particularly during efforts to support country analysis and prepare the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

### 1.1 Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this guidance note is to:

- Clarify the concept of environmental sustainability and demonstrate its importance for the achievement of National development priorities;
- Describe how to mainstream environmental sustainability during UN country programming, with a focus on practical entry points and related actions that can help UNCTs engage more effectively with country partners; and
- Provide UNCTs and country partners with a practical set of performance expectations for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the UNDAF, along with tools for assuring quality and self assessment.

While the guidance is structured according to the steps for UNDAF preparation and implementation, it should not be used rigidly. Some entry points, actions, and tools for environmental mainstreaming may be used in parallel, or at different stages of the UNDAF cycle, depending on the needs and capacities of the UNCT and country partners.

<sup>4</sup> UNDG, [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009. p3. For more information about the history and underlying principles of environmental sustainability, and how environmental considerations strengthen the other 4 principles of UN country programming, see **Annex F**.

<sup>5</sup> Environment: All the living (biodiversity) and non-living things occurring naturally on earth, and the interactions between them. For more definitions, see the glossary in **Annex G**.

## 1.2 Target Audience

This guidance note is intended for:

- UN Resident Coordinators and staff in their coordination offices;
- UN Country Teams<sup>6</sup> and all programme staff; and
- Regional Directors Teams (RDTs) and UN staff in Peer Support Groups (PSGs) providing quality support and assurance.

## 1.3 Getting it done: Options for organizing the work of the UNCT

**Environmental sustainability is a concern for the entire UNCT and must be promoted in all efforts to support country analysis, and prepare and implement the UNDAF.** Each of the entry points, actions, and tools outlined in the quick guide and described in section 4 of this guidance note can be used by UN staff and implementing partners. Based on the country context, the UNCT and government coordinating body will decide how best to organize available resources to mainstream environmental sustainability in the process.

One option is to establish a distinct Theme Group responsible for environmental sustainability. This has pros and cons. A theme group can help to maintain the focus on environmental concerns during all stages of UNDAF preparation. It may also serve to influence national planning processes such as the PRS or national development plans or sectoral policies and plans. However, environmental sustainability may be seen as the responsibility of a sub-group of UN staff, and their partners in environment-related ministries. This could operate against the process of mainstreaming, which has been the experience with some gender theme groups.

Where a country is experiencing major environmental problems, or where a country has pinned its hopes to the development of just 1 or 2 sectors, there may be justification to form a theme group on environmental sustainability. This was the case in Botswana, with its singular reliance on diamond mining to spur national development. Here the environment theme group played an important role to better integrate environmental concerns into governance mechanisms and the macro-economic policy and poverty reduction frameworks.

## 1.4 Performance and Accountability

*“UNCT performance must be measurable and accountabilities clarified, so that the system can deliver effectively”<sup>7</sup>.* This is important, if environmental sustainability is to have a tangible influence on the national development dialogue and UNDAF results. It is also accepted that successful mainstreaming must be defined within a particular country context, and based on the capacities of the UNCT and country partners. The performance expectations and accountability mechanisms for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in country analysis and the UNDAF are **process-oriented**. They include:

<sup>6</sup> The UNCT refers to the totality of UN operations in a country, including **all resident and non-resident** agencies, funds and programmes. [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009. pV.

<sup>7</sup> UNDG, [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009. p3.

- **Two performance indicators** to show that a process of mainstreaming has been initiated;
- **A checklist of key questions** to help assess how well environmental sustainability concerns were addressed during country analysis and UNDAF preparation (see Annex E).



The performance indicators for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in country analysis and the UNDAF are:

- 1. Screening for environment during country analysis** (see 4.1, Annex A.1) to get a rapid understanding of any critical environmental issues, how they relate to national development priorities, and how well the country has been able to set and monitor context specific targets for environmental sustainability; and
- 2. Preliminary environmental review of draft UNDAF results** (see 4.4, Annex A.5) to:
  - Flag potential environmental opportunities or constraints and their implications for results in the UNDAF;
  - Stimulate additional dialogue with country partners; and
  - Indicate the need for a more detailed screening during agency programme and project formulation.

## 2.0 Rationale

### 1. What is the importance of environmental sustainability to human well-being?

Sustaining the provision of [ecosystem services](#)<sup>8</sup>, like the provision of food, water, fuel, and climate regulation, generates sustainable economic and social benefits. These are essential for the fulfillment of human rights and the achievement of National development priorities, especially MDGs<sup>9</sup>. Integrating environmental concerns in a human rights based approach can help governments to recognize the causal links between a healthy environment and human rights. It will also help rights holders to demand stronger environmental regulation and management from duty bearers<sup>10</sup>. This has special importance in developing countries where poor households are more dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, and where they are more vulnerable to natural disasters and the longer term effects of climate change. Likewise, natural resources make up a larger share of national wealth in developing economies, making them highly dependent on the health of their natural environments. But this contribution often goes un-recognised, making the protection of ecosystem services a lesser priority. The linkages between environment and national security have also been recognized<sup>11</sup>. Mismanagement of high-value resources such as timber, oil and diamonds can spark, or sustain, conflicts within a country or region. Similarly, scarcity of key resources, such as water, or extensive trans-boundary pollution of the environment from toxic waste can also trigger disputes among communities and between countries. The message is clear: People can lead productive resilient lives or not, depending on the way that they manage their environment<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> For a definition of *ecosystem services*, see **Annex. G**. See also the synthesis report of the 2005 [Millennium Ecosystem Assessment](#).

<sup>9</sup> See **Annex F** for a description of the contributions of the environment for achieving the MDGs.

<sup>10</sup> For more discussion about the links between environmental sustainability and a human rights based approach, see **Annex F**.

<sup>11</sup> The Secretary General's [High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change](#) (2004) highlighted "environmental degradation" as a threat to human security

<sup>12</sup> For a longer discussion of these points see: [Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into Development Planning: A handbook for practitioners](#), PEI (UNDP-UNEP), 2009. p6-12.

## 2. Why mainstream environmental sustainability in country analysis and the UNDAF?

UNCT support for country analysis should strengthen country analytical capacities. This should contribute to the articulation of high quality priorities within the national development framework. The UNDAF describes the collective and strategic contribution of the UNCT for achieving these priorities. In this, there is an urgent need to demonstrate to national development stakeholders the importance of environmental management as a strategy for sustainable human development. The UNCT is obligated to offer independent and impartial advice and support to integrate environmental concerns into country analytic work and influence national development priorities to reflect both national environmental challenges and international environmental agreements. Programme support through the UNDAF can help to develop new capacities across many sectors to integrate environmental concerns, strengthen environmental management and contribute to the achievement of national environmental goals, MDG7 targets, and other internationally agreed development goals and treaty obligations, particularly ratified international environmental agreements.

## 3. What does it mean to mainstream environmental sustainability in the UNDAF?

Mainstreaming is about country-specific engagement and partnership. Beyond the ministries of the environment, this must involve the ministries of finance and planning and other economic ministries to recognize the contribution of the environment to economic growth, human development and poverty reduction. It is not a one-size fits all set of results or activities. It asks the UNCT and partners to:

- **Understand critical development-environment linkages**, including linkages with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);
- Use this knowledge to **influence** the national development framework and priorities for the UNDAF;
- **Anticipate environmental opportunities and constraints as early as possible** in UN supported programmes and projects; and
- **Support country partners** to track progress towards their national environmental goals, MDG7 targets, and the goals and targets of ratified international environmental agreements.

It does not necessarily mean a specific environment UNDAF outcome. It does mean understanding environment-development linkages, the contribution of the environment to the achievement of national development priorities and MDGs, and the possible environmental dimensions of UNCT supported action.

### Key message:

The well-being and economic prosperity of poor people can be greatly improved through better management of environmental resources. The UNCT's support to strengthen country analysis and prepare and implement the UNDAF is an opportunity to place the environment and its contribution to national development at the centre of policy and programmatic work.

### 3.0 The Country Framework for Environmental Governance

The country framework for environmental governance comprises both international and national elements. These provide the normative basis for UNCT support to country-led efforts to promote environmental sustainability, and to meet their international and national obligations. The key elements are:

- **National laws and policies** related to environmental management and protection, as well as **national and local institutions and governance frameworks** for knowledge generation, accountability, and participation. Most country environmental laws and policies are influenced by their ratified MEAs. The Environment Ministry may play a clearing-house role to track the significance and level of implementation of these laws and policies, and identify perceived gaps in the country framework, and the possibilities for action. Just as likely, the UNCT will have to engage with individual stakeholders to do this analysis. Key laws, policies, and institutional actors to understand will be those in the economic ministries (agriculture, fisheries, industry, and trade).
- International treaties on the environment, known as **Multilateral Environmental Agreements**<sup>13</sup>. Once ratified, these [MEAs](#) establish country obligations, with national frameworks, laws and mechanisms for implementation and monitoring. However, the implementation of MEAs, and support through their financing mechanisms, often takes place in parallel with national development plans and priorities. There is a core group of MEAs to which most countries are a party, for example the conventions for, [Biological Diversity](#), [Climate Change](#), [Desertification](#), and [Hazardous Chemicals](#).
- Millennium Development Goal ([MDG7](#)) to Ensure Environmental Sustainability (see box)
- The [Rio Declaration](#) and [Agenda 21](#), and the [Declaration on Sustainable Development](#) and [Plan of Implementation](#) that emerged from the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (see box on next page)

Environmental governance is a work in progress. For UN-supported country programming, there are 3 important issues:

#### 1. Environment has been neglected in national development strategies

It has been noted that the environmental component of the fight against poverty is “*probably the most neglected of all the aspects of the MDGs*”<sup>14</sup>. The environment is also a deeply neglected factor in PRSs, and there is widespread recognition that “*we are not succeeding in integrating environmental thinking into national development strategies*”. Several problems have been identified, a main one being: “*the lack of mobilization of the best science to understand ecosystem dynamics*” and its links to national development. National bodies often do not have sufficient capacity to conduct this analysis, nor to present it systematically to the economic ministries that determine national development priorities. Countries with recurring natural hazards also miss opportunities at each disaster event to integrate environment into their recovery, reconstruction, and long-term development planning. This re-creates the same vulnerabilities which were present before the disaster event.

<sup>13</sup> There are over 700 MEAs, which are legally-binding international instruments through which national governments commit to achieving specific environmental goals. They are “multilateral” because they are between two or more countries. They may take different names, most commonly: “Treaty”, “Convention” and “Agreement”. Many MEAs have “Protocols”, which define standards, procedures and other requirements for effective implementation. [Manual on Compliance with and Enforcement of MEAs](#), UNEP, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> [Special Presentation on Reducing Poverty and Environmental Sustainability Millennium Development Goals: Why Is So Little Progress Being Made?](#), Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, Director, UN Millennium Project and Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on the MDGs, [Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands](#), 2006.

**Box: MDG7 Targets & Johannesburg Plan of Implementation**

Over the years the targets agreed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on biodiversity, fish stocks and sanitation have been incorporated into the targets or indicators of MDG7, except for the target on chemicals: “Minimizing the adverse effects of toxic chemicals by 2020”.

MDG7: Ensure environmental sustainability (*as of June 2009*)

Target 7a: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources (*no indicators*)

Target 7b: Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss, supported by indicators on:

- Land area covered by forest
- Co2 emissions
- Consumption on ozone-depleting substances
- Fish stocks within safe biological limits
- Water resources used
- Protected terrestrial and marine areas
- Species threatened with extinction

Target 7c: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation supported by indicators on:

- Improved drinking water sources
- Improved sanitation

Target 7d: Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020 supported by an indicator on: Urban population living in slums

The focus of the WSSD was the integration of environment with the social and economic aspects of sustainable development, including corporate responsibility and the role of trade, energy and aid.

**2. Country level implementation of MEAs is un-even**

Ratified MEAs are owned by National governments, and should be a part of the process for setting national development priorities and defining programmes of support, including support through the MEA financing mechanisms. However, they are often sidelined or exist in parallel with these plans. The MEAs have also not figured prominently in UN country programming processes. Successful implementation of MEAs requires the development of nationally owned platforms or mechanisms to ensure coordination and collaboration among stakeholders in national development planning.

**3. MDG7 does not offer a full picture of environmental sustainability**

The achievement of MDG7 is necessary to achieve the other MDGs (see **Annex F**). But the goal and targets for MDG7 are recognized as being weak. While MDG7 contains elements that contribute to environmental sustainability, they do not offer a full portrait and there are no standard quantitative targets. This weakness can be amplified if countries mechanically adopt the global set of targets and indicators without explicitly linking them to national priorities and policies, local context, and sub-national or ecosystem specifics<sup>15</sup>. When paired with often limited country capacity to address MDG7, this makes it extremely important to support a country specific framework for integrating and monitoring the components of environmental sustainability.

<sup>15</sup> For more discussion, see UNDP, Monitoring Country Progress towards MDG 7: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability, 2005.

**Key message:**

- The UNCT can help to develop national capacities to promote greater understanding among decision-takers, as well as the general public, about the links between ecosystem health, human development, and poverty reduction.
- The UNCT can support the development of a framework or approach for integrating different components of environmental sustainability into country plans, strategies, policies and programmes.
- There is a clear role and possible comparative advantage for the UNCT to mainstream the MEAs in country analysis and the UNDAF, and to support results that generate synergies between them.
- MEA secretariats should be engaged during UNDAF preparation and implementation. Some MEAs have focal points and working mechanisms at country level.

## 4.0 Entry Points, Actions & Tools

Using the main steps for UN country programming, this section describes specific entry points, and related actions and tools for mainstreaming environmental sustainability<sup>16</sup>. The steps are:

- 4.1 Plan of Engagement
- 4.2 Support to Strengthen Country Analysis
- 4.3 Select Strategic Priorities
- 4.4 UNDAF preparation
- 4.5 Agency Programme and Project preparation
- 4.6 UNDAF Monitoring and Evaluation.

Each section follows a similar structure:

- A brief description of the specific CCA-UNDAF step;
- The purpose of the section;
- A description of specific Entry points, Actions, Tools, and sources of information; and
- A bulleted list of key mainstreaming messages.

### 4.1 Plan of Engagement

#### Purpose

Preparation of the Plan of Engagement<sup>17</sup> is the first step in the UNCT's efforts to support and strengthen country analysis and prepare the UNDAF. The plan reports on 3 activities to:

- Map the national planning process, timelines, key actors and their agendas;
- Engage with country partners to assess the UNCT's comparative advantages;
- Review the quality country analytic work, in relation to the standards set in the Millennium Declaration and other internationally agreed development goals and treaty obligations.

<sup>16</sup> The overall structure of these guidelines owes much to the design and lessons-learned from the UNEP-UNSSC pilot training: [Environmental Sustainability & UN Country Programming](#), 2008. For more information about this training contact: [Nilvo.Silva@unep.org](mailto:Nilvo.Silva@unep.org) and [rcs@unssc.org](mailto:rcs@unssc.org)

<sup>17</sup> UNDG, [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009. p6-9. See also the **Road map** (pxii) and **Timeline** (p9).

On the basis of these activities, the UNCT and country partners will pursue options to strengthen country analytic work, normally in the lead-up to a new Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) or other national plan. This is addressed in section 4.2.

It is important that the UNCT integrate environmental issues and stakeholders during the preparation of the plan. This helps to mainstream environmental sustainability in 2 important ways: First, it helps to connect information about key environmental opportunities and challenges to ongoing country analytic work, thereby bringing some influence to the priorities of the PRS or other national development plan. Second, by influencing national priorities to better recognise important environment-development linkages, the door opens to mainstream environmental sustainability in the UNDAF. The more that environmental sustainability is mainstreamed in national development planning processes, the greater the possibilities for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the UNDAF<sup>18</sup>. Depending on the capacity of the UNCT, it may be necessary to seek expert assistance.

### Entry points

There are three entry points for mainstreaming environmental sustainability during the preparation of the plan of engagement:

1. Positioning of environmental issues in the **review of country analytic work**
2. Engagement of environmental stakeholders in the **mapping exercise**
3. **Identification of UNCT comparative advantages and gaps** to help mainstream environmental sustainability into national plans, policies, and programmes.



#### 1. Positioning of environmental issues in the review of country analytic work

The review of country analytic work is, by necessity, targeted and brief. Environmental issues and linkages can be quickly ignored unless there are clear arguments for including them in the review. It is important to get a preliminary understanding of any critical development-environmental linkages and issues, how these relate to national development priorities, and how well the country has been able to set and monitor context specific targets for environmental sustainability. With this information it will be possible to argue for their inclusion during the UNCTs review of country analysis.

**Action:** Screen country analytic work to identify the most critical environmental issue or problems in the country and their plausible links to national development priorities. Using secondary data sources, this action will attempt to answer the following key questions:

- What are the key environmental assets of the country, what is their importance to economic and social development, particularly poverty reduction?
- What are the key environmental issues in the country and their causes, and how do they contribute to major development problems, such as poverty and disease?
- Are there existing environmental targets and environmental information summaries with reference to MDG7 and JPOI targets
- What are the critical gaps in the existing data and analysis and how do these relate to standards and targets from national and international environmental obligations?

<sup>18</sup> Should the UNCT make a major effort to mainstream environmental sustainability in national development planning processes, the primary reference is [Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into Development Planning: A handbook for practitioners](#), PEI (UNDP-UNEP), 2009.

**Box: Recommended sources to screen for Environment-Development Linkages**

To generate a rapid understanding of environmental issues critical to the partner country:

- MDG Reports and National Human Development Reports
- [World Bank Country Environmental Analyses](#)
- Environmental analysis and assessments from regional development banks
- EC Country Environmental Profiles
- [UNEP State of the Environment Reports](#)

To generate a rapid understanding of national environmental obligations and priorities:

- National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD)
- National Environmental Action Plans (NEAP)
- National Strategies and Action Plans for the implementation of major MEAs
- National environmental legislation

To generate a rapid understanding of international environmental obligations

- National reports to the Governing bodies of major MEAs, particularly [Biological Diversity](#), [Climate Change](#), [Desertification](#), and [Hazardous Chemicals](#)

To understand how environmental issues relate to/are integrated into national development priorities

- National Development Plan or [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) (PRS)
- Sectoral Development Plans
- [UN Common Country Assessment](#) (CCA)

Many sources of information are available to help the UNCT scan for environment-development linkages and for their level of integration at country level (see box below for recommended sources).

**Tool: Screening checklist for environment in country analysis (see Annex A.1)**

Building on the questions above, this tool will help to catalyse discussions with country partners. It will generate a rapid understanding of environmental issues that are critical to the country, how they relate to national development priorities, how well the country has been able to set and monitor context-specific targets for environmental sustainability, and how well environmental issues have been addressed in the National Development Plan (NDP) or Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). The questions should be discussed by UN staff with environmental expertise, together with key government and donor stakeholders to screen existing country analytic work.



**Important:** This screening is the 1<sup>st</sup> accountability mechanism and performance indicator to show that the UNCT has initiated a process of mainstreaming environmental sustainability in country programming. For countries preparing their UNDAF, it is expected that this will be addressed in the UNRC's annual report.

**2. Engagement of environmental stakeholders in the mapping exercise**

**Action:** Include key environmental stakeholders and their planning and policy processes in the mapping exercise. Be aware of current planning and policy processes and timelines, and the roles and relative influence of key stakeholders. It is particularly important to engage with the ministries of finance and planning and economic ministries to understand their perception about

the linkages between environment and economic growth, human development and poverty reduction, and to be aware of prior and on-going initiatives and the progress made to mainstream environmental sustainability. The mapping exercise should include these stakeholders and their processes, in order to clarify:

- Who are the key government, donor and civil society actors that shape development priorities and influence environmental policy and natural resources management?
- Who amongst these actors would “*champion*” environmental mainstreaming in ongoing country analytic work and national development planning?
- What are their capacity assets and critical capacity development needs, including national and sub-national working arrangements?

**Tool: Stakeholder consultations (see Annex A.2)**

The mapping may require targeted discussions with a range of stakeholders. This tool offers a series of guiding questions to gauge the extent to which environmental considerations are used to influence national development priorities and plans.



**3. Identification of UNCT comparative advantages and gaps to help mainstream environmental sustainability into national plans, policies, and programmes**

The screening for environment in country analysis and the mapping exercise may suggest some opportunities to mainstream environmental sustainability in further country analytic work, and in the national development plan. But does the UNCT<sup>19</sup> have comparative advantage to act? This is defined as areas of cooperation where the UNCT has

- The mandate to act,
- The capacity to act (expertise and resources – or the potential for generating new resources), and
- Is seen objectively as performing better than other development actors.

**Action:** Ensure that the exercise on comparative advantages includes UNCT members who can speak to the opportunities for mainstreaming environmental sustainability in national plans, and who are aware of existing UNCT expertise and capacity. New capacities may be needed by the UNCT to effectively support mainstreaming efforts. If country partners are being consulted, include key environmental partners and stakeholders as key informants.

**Anticipating natural disasters and conflict in the Plan of Engagement**

Disasters and conflicts can occur at any time in a normal UNDAF cycle, and should be considered as early as possible in the UNDAF planning process. It is estimated that 9 out of every 10 disasters are now climate-related and that, over the past 60 years, at least 40 percent of all intrastate conflicts were linked to disputes over the control and use of natural resources. Timely and high quality information about their environmental causes and impacts, especially on livelihoods, is critical. But environmental considerations are often overlooked. Given the strong linkage between environmental sustainability, climate change, natural disasters and conflict, the UNCT should:

- Assess the quality of disaster risk and conflict analysis, particularly the understanding of links between environment and vulnerability to natural disasters and conflicts;

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<sup>19</sup> In this exercise it is important to consider the mandate and capacities **both** resident and non-resident agencies.

- Understand the important actors involved in disaster and conflict recovery planning, and how they relate to key environmental actors, such as the MoE, as well as the level of understanding about the links between environmental sustainability, disasters and conflicts;
- Identify whether the UNCT has comparative advantage to support country capacities for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and conflict prevention.

For additional information and guidelines, see **Annex C part I, table 5**.

### **Anticipating climate change in the Plan of Engagement**

Environmental sustainability is integrally linked with climate change. Healthy ecosystems and sustainably managed natural resources are important for adaptation to the effects of climate change and for establishing synergies between adaptation and mitigation in areas such as forestry and land management. Likewise, sound environmental practices and resource efficiency can help build the path to a low-carbon future. A Guidance Note for UNCTs and implementing partners on Mainstreaming Climate Change in Country Analysis and the UNDAF is forthcoming. Please check [www.undg.org](http://www.undg.org) for updates.

#### **Key messages: Mainstreaming in the Plan of Engagement**

The preparation of the Plan of Engagement is an opportunity to:

- Understand how well critical development-environment linkages have been covered in country analytic work, and their relevance to national development priorities and strategies.
- Raise awareness about these challenges within the UNCT and identify where the UNCT may have comparative advantage to act
- Seek out country partners that can carry-out further analysis and to help make the economic and social case for mainstreaming environmental concerns into national planning processes, particularly for poverty reduction.
- Ensure these actors are included in the mapping exercise and on any National steering committee or advisory body for UNDAF preparation
- Engage with the executive office, with legislative bodies, with the economic ministries (finance and planning, agriculture, fisheries, industry, trade) to raise issues and argue for the integration of environmental concerns into national development planning and priorities.  
This engagement is indispensable.

## **4.2 Support Country Analysis**

### **Purpose**

The UNCT's support for country analysis<sup>20</sup> strengthens national analytical processes and products by generating consensus about priority problems and their causes, and the capacity development needs at all levels to generate action. This should bring some influence to the priorities of the PRS or other national development plan. The aim is to make complex problems more understandable. The UNCT and country partners may choose any or all of 3 options:

- A.** UNCT participation in government-led and harmonized donor analytical work and use of government analysis;

<sup>20</sup> UNDG, [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009. Part 2.

- B.** Complementary UN-supported analytical work, with a focus on gaps in the existing analysis;
- C.** A full Common Country Assessment (CCA) process.

Environmental sustainability must be an element of high quality analysis. The UNCT's efforts to mainstream environmental sustainability in any of these options will build on the understanding gained through the screening and stakeholder consultations during preparation of the plan (see section 4.1). The unsustainable use of the environment and natural resources is nearly always an underlying cause of major development problems, which are manifested in the non-fulfillment of human rights. These can worsen the environmental situation, creating a downward spiral of effects. With the entry points, actions, and tools described below, the UNCT and country partners can :

- Better understand the environmental causes of major national development problems and the repercussions of in-action;
- Identify capacity assets and development needs for action on linked environment-development issues, including data collection and analysis;
- Highlight the environmental factors that contribute to risks of natural disasters and conflicts.

### Entry points

There are three possible entry points for mainstreaming environmental sustainability during the UNCT's support for country analysis<sup>21</sup>:

4. Participation in **government-led analysis** to highlight development-environment issues and linkages; and/or
5. Support for **targeted environmental studies, including economic and capacity assessments**; and/or
6. A **Common Country Assessment (CCA)** that mainstreams environmental sustainability.



#### 4. Participation in government-led analysis to highlight development-environment issues and linkages

Where country analytic work is of high quality<sup>22</sup>, UNCT staff may participate in government-led working groups, possibly in the lead-up to the development of a PRS or other national plan. It is vital that they connect information about key environmental challenges and opportunities to the analysis and prioritizing of major development problems. The aim is to bring some influence to these priorities, thereby also opening the door for UNCT-support through the UNDAF.

**Action:** Provide qualified UN programme staff or external experts to support relevant government working bodies. They would introduce information about environment-development linkages and identify un-recognised environmental factors in the sector or thematic analysis. They can help conduct more detailed analysis to identify the environmental roots of major development problems. Depending on time available, this may include support to develop a country analytical framework with indicators for environmental sustainability. It is also important to help synthesise and package key findings, for effective presentation to the economic ministries that make decisions about national priorities. To guide this participation, see the box of sources above in section 4.1 and **Annex C Part I** which highlights environmental issues related to typical country problems and UNDAF cooperation areas.

<sup>21</sup> The numbering of the entry points is sequential for the whole guidance note.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., See Annex 2 of CCA-UNDAF guidelines for a checklist to assess the quality of country analysis



## **5. Support for targeted environmental studies, including economic and capacity**

**assessments.** The environmental screening and mapping exercises conducted for the Plan of Engagement may have highlighted the need for more detailed environmental studies, as well as economic and capacity assessments. These complementary studies should highlight environment-development linkages and address environmental gaps in country analytic work.

They should help to answer the following questions:

- What are the environmental contributions for the achievement of the NDP/PRS and what negative impacts are anticipated?
- What groups will be affected and what are their environmental concerns?
- How can adverse impacts be mitigated?
- Can the legal, institutional and policy framework effectively respond to these environmental impacts?
- How can the NDP/PRS be formulated to address weaknesses in the policy, legal and institutional framework for environmental sustainability (including ratified MEAs)?
- How can sustainable management of natural resources be built in sector programmes (e.g. agriculture, water, mining, transport, health, education, rural development, energy)?
- How might action help to achieve national development priorities/MDGs?

### **Tool: Assessment options (see Annex A.3)**

A range of possible environmental studies and other assessments can be tailored to the capacities and needs of the UNCT and country partners. Tool A.3 describes some typical environmental studies, including economic and capacity assessment assessments, and offers hyper-links to technical guidance. Before undertaking complementary studies, the UNCT should be fully aware of analytic work planned or being undertaken by other development actors.



## **6. A Common Country Assessment (CCA) that mainstreams environmental sustainability**

Where the UNCT and country partners decide there are major gaps in country analytic work, they may opt for a full CCA. This offers an important opportunity to analyse environment-development linkages and better understand their contribution to the achievement of national development priorities and MDGs. Actions to mainstream environmental sustainability in the CCA are presented in **Annex B**.

### **Links with the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS)**

Normally, the whole of the UNCT's support to country analysis will be timed to coincide with, and influence, the development the Poverty Reduction Strategy. If environmental opportunities and constraints have been addressed in the PRS, they can be incorporated more easily in the UNDAF. It is important to understand the process and stakeholders involved in PRS preparation and to seek entry points where information resulting from UNCT supported analysis about environment-development linkages can be integrated.

### **Tool: Considerations for mainstreaming environment in a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process (see Annex A.4)**

**Key messages: Mainstreaming during support for Country Analysis**

Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the UNCT's support for country analysis will help to:

- Align environmental sustainability concerns within ongoing country analytic work by different sectors and generate new information about environmental-development linkages
- Reach agreement with country partners about how the unsustainable use of the environment and natural resources affects development, the potential impacts of in-action, and the potential opportunities for taking a proactive approach;
- Understand the environmental factors that contribute to the risks and exposure of natural disasters and conflicts;
- Use country-specific evidence and champions to influence national development priorities (including the PRS, where relevant)
- Identify urgent capacity development needs for action on environmental issues for development cooperation in the UNDAF.

**4.3 Select Strategic Priorities for the UNDAF****Purpose**

The UNCT and country partners will undertake a prioritization exercise. This begins the process of formulating the **United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)**<sup>23</sup>, which is the strategic programme framework for Government-UNCT cooperation. This often involves a **Strategic Prioritization Retreat (SPR)** which is a high level, multi-day workshop in which the UNCT and country partners. It involves the Heads of Agencies, the Government coordinating authority and other national and international partners. Normally, the prioritization exercise takes place in the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the current UNDAF cycle. As far as possible it is linked with key milestones in the national development planning process. This is a key opportunity to mainstream environmental sustainability in the UNDAF, by connecting new information about environment-development linkages and their contribution to the achievement of national development priorities, to discussions about the priorities for UN development assistance.

**Entry points**

There are two entry points for mainstreaming in the prioritization exercise:

7. Participation in the **prioritization exercise** for the UNDAF;
8. Environmental integration, **following the prioritization exercise**

**7. Participation in the prioritization exercise for the UNDAF**

Where the results from UNCT-supported country analysis reveal important environment-development linkages, it is critical that these are included and addressed during the prioritization exercise. This process will **not** necessarily result in an environment UNDAF outcome. Rather, **the aim should be to identify where environmental action contributes to the achievement of UNDAF results or where in-action may result in negative environmental impacts that could become obstacles to success.**

<sup>23</sup> UNDG, [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009. Part 3.

**Action:**

Preparations for the prioritization exercise, including background papers and briefing notes, should include the key findings from country analysis that point to important environment-development linkages, their potential contribution to the achievement of national priorities and MDGs, and any major capacity development needs. Participants should include UNCT members who can speak to the importance of mainstreaming environmental sustainability in development cooperation, and who are aware of existing UN expertise and capacity. Likewise it is important that key country partners are involved.

**8. Environmental integration, following the prioritization exercise**

Despite the best of intentions, it is possible that environment-development linkages are not communicated clearly enough during the prioritization exercise. But UNDAF preparation is a process. This offers the opportunity to engage further within the UNCT and with country partners to address environmental concerns.

**Action:** Immediately following the prioritization exercise, hold an “environmental integration” meeting of concerned programme staff and implementing partners. Review the draft UNDAF results and identify areas where environmental action will be important for success, or to mitigate negative impacts. The meeting should result in concrete arguments to convince the UNRC and UNCT to engage further with government to incorporate environmental action in the draft UNDAF results matrix.

**Key messages: Mainstreaming in the prioritization exercise means:**

- The environmental dimensions of development problems are highlighted in background papers and during presentations, particularly environmental issue which are common to one or more national development problems
- Key actors from government are briefed about major environment-development linkages and take part in the prioritization exercise to identify and formulate potential results for Government-UNCT cooperation
- Capacity development needs for action on environmental issues, including data collection and analysis, assessment and planning, are highlighted.

## 4.4 UNDAF Preparation

**Purpose**

Until this point, mainstreaming efforts have focused on highlighting environment-development linkages and their contribution for the achievement of national development priorities and MDGs. Following the prioritization exercise (see section 4.3), the broad outlines of the UNDAF have been agreed and the focus shifts fully to programming. Inter-agency groups will work with country partners to prepare the draft results matrix and monitoring and evaluation plan for each UNDAF outcome. A UNDAF action plan or “one plan” may also be prepared. These will guide the development of more detailed agency programmes and projects.

There may or may not be an UNDAF outcome related to environmental sustainability. UNDAF outcomes for other sectors or themes may or may not have addressed the environmental

causes of the problems they are meant to solve, or considered possible environmental opportunities. Whatever the situation, it is not too late to consider:

- Environmental results that will contribute to the achievement of UNDAF outcomes;
- The environmental implications of planned UNDAF strategy and results.

## Entry points

There are two entry points for mainstreaming during UNDAF preparation:

9. **Review of draft UNDAF results;** and
10. **Formulation of UNDAF results and indicators** regarding the environment



### 9. Review of draft UNDAF results

Country programming is iterative, by nature. This means that a detailed environmental review of proposed development activities and results is only appropriate after the UNDAF has been signed-off and agencies are preparing their country programmes or projects of cooperation. However, it is sensible to carry-out a preliminary environmental review of draft UNDAF results, before it is finalized. The review could be prepared for, or timed to coincide with, the [Joint Strategy Meeting](#). This is a key opportunity to highlight potential environmental contributions for the achievement of UNDAF results and strategy. The purpose of the environmental review is to:

- Flag potential environmental opportunities or constraints and their implications for results in the UNDAF;
- Stimulate additional dialogue with country partners, and
- Indicate the need for a more detailed environmental screening during agency programme and project preparation.

#### **Tool: Criteria and questions to appraise UNDAF results (see Annex A.5)**

This tool offers some criteria and questions to guide the environmental review of draft UNDAF results. It should be used by UNDAF outcome groups, with the assistance of UN staff or external experts with expertise in environmental assessment and management. The results of the review and recommended actions should be reported to the UNRC and UNCT.



**Important: The environmental review constitutes the 2<sup>nd</sup> main accountability mechanism and performance indicator to show that the UNCT has initiated a process of mainstreaming in country programming. For countries preparing their UNDAF, it is expected that this will be addressed in the UN Resident Coordinator's annual report.**



### 10. Formulation of UNDAF results and indicators regarding the environment<sup>24</sup>

#### **Action:**

On the basis of the review, it may be necessary to change or add results and indicators, and activities in order to strengthen the UNDAF results framework and M&E plan, and to better align results with the country's environmental commitments. Changes should take advantage of environment-development linkages and better align UNDAF results with the country's international environmental commitments. In particular, the UNCT may want to help strengthen country capacity to integrate environmental sustainability indicators into sectoral policies and

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of results-based management, see: UNDG, [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009. Part 3.5.

plans, and monitor and report on international environmental commitments and progress towards MDG7<sup>25</sup>. This could include:

- A country analytical framework and strategy for environmental sustainability;
- A set of indicators that capture the highest-priority environmental issues and challenges in a country, drawing from the global MDG7 indicators as appropriate;
- Support to prepare and review MDG report and National Human Development Reports; and
- Capacity strengthening to integrate environmental indicators into sectoral plans, conduct monitoring and reporting, and use results for sectoral and regional planning.

**Annex C, part II** offers examples of environmental results and indicators from current UNDAFs that make an important contribution to the achievement of UNDAF outcomes and national priorities for different areas of cooperation.

**Key messages: Mainstreaming in the UNDAF**, means:

- Anticipating environmental issues as early as possible during UNDAF formulation;
- Considering changes to outcomes and outputs that take advantage of environmental opportunities and that can help avoid or mitigate negative environmental impacts

## 4.5 Agency Programme and Project Preparation

### Purpose

Following the approval of the UNDAF, and based on the results for which they are accountable, agencies prepare their detailed programmes and projects of cooperation. This is another opportunity to mainstream environmental sustainability, particularly where the preliminary review of UNDAF results identified environmental opportunities for the achievement of results, or suggested the possibility of negative environmental impacts.

### Entry points

There are three entry points for mainstreaming during the formulation of agency country programmes and projects:

11. **Environmental screening** of agency programmes and projects;
12. **Environmental assessments**; and
13. Environmental mitigation in the **Annual Work Plan** or other annual work instrument.



#### 11. Environmental Screening of agency programmes and projects

The formulation of agency programmes and projects is an important juncture to identify environmental opportunities, consider alternative strategies and results, and mitigate against negative environmental impacts. The environmental screening will indicate whether more detailed environmental assessments are necessary. Agencies will use their own environmental screening procedures, where available. Accountability for completion of the programme or project screening is with the Agency head. Where agencies do not have established screening procedures, a simplified screening tool is provided:

**Tool: Environmental screening checklist for agency programmes and projects (Annex A.6)**

<sup>25</sup> For more ideas, see: UNDP, *Monitoring Country Progress towards MDG 7: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability*, 2005.

In the context of a [Joint Programme](#), the programme partners may opt to use this simplified screening tool or, depending on country context and the experience of UN staff, they may opt to use one of the contributing agency's tools. In a pooled or pass-through modality, the programme partners should use the environmental screening procedures of the agency that serves as the Managing Agent or Administrative Agent.



## 12. Environmental assessments

Environmental assessment supports informed decision-making and helps shape programmes and projects to improve the quality of outcomes. It includes the analysis and reporting of environmental risks and opportunities, and encourages public engagement throughout the process. At a minimum national and local laws and regulations for environmental assessment will be followed. In the absence of national legal frameworks, agency assessment procedures will be applied. Where there are none, agencies should consider a **Strategic Environmental Assessment** for programmes, and an **Environmental Impact Assessment** for projects. The conduct of either is a complex endeavour that will normally require the services of an external consulting firm<sup>26</sup>.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** addresses the upstream, strategic levels of decision making. It provides a range of analytical and participatory approaches that aim to integrate environmental considerations into policies, plans, or programmes and evaluate the linkages and trade-offs between environmental, economic and social considerations. Ideally, the approach is applied at the earliest stages of decision making. For more guidance, see:

[Applying Strategic Environmental Assessment – Good practice guidance for development cooperation](#) (OECD, 2006) and associated [Advisory Notes](#) (OECD 2008).

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** is more narrowly focused on a specific project and its potential environmental effects. Given the focus of UNCT cooperation on policy, advocacy, and capacity development, the conduct of a project-level Environmental Impact Assessment will be infrequent. The following tool describes key steps for conducting an EIA, when required, and offers some issues for consideration.

**Tool: Planning an Environmental Impact Assessment – key steps and issues (Annex A.7)**



## 13. Environmental mitigation in the Annual Work Plan or other annual plan instrument

Where an EIA has been conducted, it will recommend a range of measures necessary for the programme or project to proceed. These will include: mitigation and monitoring measures, as well as ongoing engagement with, and reporting to, relevant stakeholders.

**Action:** Agreed measures should be summarized in the covering note to the [Annual Work Plan](#). Specific activities related to environmental management should be included and budgeted in the work plan table. During implementation, periodic field visits are necessary to review environmental risks and impacts. Specialised Agencies and Non-Resident Agencies (SAs & NRAs) not using the Annual Work Plan format should include mitigation measures in their own annual plan instrument. This will promote regular monitoring and reporting. Accountability for these remains with agencies, per agency guidelines.

<sup>26</sup> For additional comparison of SEA and EIA approaches, see [Applying Strategic Environmental Assessment – Good practice guidance for development cooperation](#), OECD, 2006. p32.

**Key messages: Mainstreaming in Agency Programmes and Projects**

Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in the formulation of agency programmes and agency projects means anticipating environmental issues as early as possible, in order to:

- Identify potential environmental opportunities for success; and
- Avoid or mitigate negative environmental impacts.

## 4.6 UNDAF Monitoring and Evaluation

### Purpose

UNDAF monitoring and evaluation<sup>27</sup> (M&E) are linked but distinct processes. Monitoring tracks progress towards the results agreed in the UNDAF, and helps the UNCT and implementing partners to make mid-course corrections. It checks that the indicators are still sound, that the assumptions made at the design stage are still valid, and whether the risks identified are still present or not. Because it makes an essential contribution to managing for results, monitoring provides an important entry point for mainstreaming, such as:

- Environmental changes in the programme environment, climate-related or otherwise, that may enhance or impede the achievement of results;
- Any negative environmental impacts from UNCT-supported programmes and projects, particularly those that increase the vulnerability of poor households; and
- New capacity development needs of implementing partners to successfully mainstream environmental concerns into national or sectoral plans and policies.

The UNDAF evaluation will assess the relevance of the UNDAF outcomes, the effectiveness by which UNDAF and agency outcomes are being achieved, their sustainability and contribution to national priorities and goals. While it feeds into decision-making processes for the next UNDAF cycle, it is an external function that should be separate from programme management. The UNDAF evaluation is an important opportunity to assess whether, and how well, information about environment-development linkages were used in the planning process and integrated into UNDAF cooperation areas.

### Entry points

There are two entry points for mainstreaming during UNDAF monitoring and evaluation:

14. Inclusion of environment-development linkages during the **UNDAF Annual Review**
15. Preparation of the **UNDAF Evaluation**



#### 14. Inclusion of environment-development linkages during the UNDAF Annual Review

Changes to the UNDAF results matrix and M&E plan are most likely following the [UNDAF Annual Review](#) or from the findings of specific surveys or studies conducted.

**Action:** To prepare for the annual review, UNDAF outcome groups can use the UNDAF appraisal tool (see **Annex A.5**) to reflect on environmental changes in the programme environment, assumptions and risks, and consider changes to UNDAF results to take

<sup>27</sup> UNDG, [Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework, Guidelines for UN Country Teams on preparing a CCA and UNDAF](#), UN, Feb 2009. Part 4.

advantage of environmental opportunities or to mitigate against negative impacts. This should result in proposed changes to UNDAF results and indicators to better integrate environmental opportunities, anticipate negative environmental impacts, and address national environmental priorities and commitments.



### 15. Preparation of the UNDAF Evaluation

The UNDAF evaluation is an important opportunity to assess whether, and how well, information about environment-development linkages was used in the planning process and integrated into UNDAF results, and if UNCT cooperation strengthened national capacities to address major environmental problems. The evaluation will normally take place in year 4 of the current cycle, which is also the preparation year for the new UNDAF. Findings from the evaluation can help to position environmental issues more prominently during country analysis and UNDAF preparation.

#### **Tool: Environmental sustainability considerations for the UNDAF evaluation (Annex A.8)**

The UNDG guidelines for [UNDAF evaluation](#) do not include elements related to environmental sustainability. And while the objectives and methodology of the evaluation will always be determined by the planned UNDAF results and strategy, environmental issues should be considered before preparing the TOR. This tool offers questions related to the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria used by the UNDG.

#### **Key messages: Mainstreaming during UNDAF monitoring & evaluation**

- Monitoring should help to recognise environmental changes in the programme environment that may enhance or impede the achievement of results, and any new capacity development needs of partners to mainstream environmental sustainability concerns into national or sectoral plans and policies.
- The UNDAF annual review is an opportunity to consider changes to UNDAF results to take advantage of environmental opportunities or to mitigate against negative impacts.
- During the UNDAF evaluation assess whether, and how well, the UNDAF strengthened national capacities to address major environmental challenges, and how well environmental opportunities and constraints were integrated into planned UNDAF results and strategy.

## Tools for Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability

*Note: Once endorsed, this list to be hyperlinked to the tools at [www.undg.org](http://www.undg.org)*

This is a hyper-linked list of the 8 tools introduced in section 4 of this Guidance Note. Environmental sustainability is a concern for all actors and stakeholders during support for country analysis, and UNDAF preparation and implementation. Each of these tools can be used by UN staff and country partners. The steps, and related tools, for UN country programming are:

### Plan of Engagement (section 4.1)

- A.1 Tool: Screening checklist for environment in country analysis
- A.2 Tool: Stakeholder consultations

### Support Country Analysis (section 4.2)

- A.3 Tool: Assessment options
- A.4 Tool: Considerations for mainstreaming environment in a Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process

### Select Strategic Priorities for the UNDAF (section 4.3)

*No tools for this step. Please see important actions in the guidance note.*

### UNDAF Preparation (section 4.4)

- A.5 Tool: Criteria and questions to appraise UNDAF results

### Agency Programme and Project Preparation (section 4.5)

- A.6 Tool: Environmental screening checklist for agency programmes and projects
- A.7 Tool: Planning an Environmental Impact Assessment – key steps and issues

### UNDAF Monitoring and Evaluation (section 4.6)

- A.8 Tool: Environmental sustainability considerations for the UNDAF evaluation

The use of **Tools A.1 and A.5** is important to show that the UNCT has initiated a process of mainstreaming in country programming. For more information see Section 1.4 and Annex E in the guidance note about performance expectations and accountability mechanisms.