Options for a common approach to Environmental and Social Safeguards in the UN

Progress Report on the Consultative Process
Background

The 15th Senior Officials meeting of the EMG requested the Chair of the Group to prepare:

– A report on options for the development of a possible United Nations system-wide approach to environmental and social safeguards based on a review of existing polices and guidelines
Why Safeguards

• Better decision-making through shared principles, precautionary planning and participatory approaches
  – Reduce and manage risk of adverse impacts on the environment and people
  – Increase results on the ground both short and long term
  – Demonstrate credibility through actions and increased transparency
Safeguards are

• Systematic procedures to integrate environmental and social issues into decision making processes

• Instruments to
  – prevent single minded implementation
  – balance environmental and social trade-offs
  – support sustainable development
Consultative process

### Phase I – Design consultative process

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Conduct a desk study and initial consultations</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hold a 1\textsuperscript{st} workshop to consider the rationale for a common approach to safeguards</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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<td>- Agree on a terms of reference and establish a drafting group</td>
<td>Completed</td>
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### Phase II – Identify options

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<th>Task</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Prepare a background report that identifies options for safeguards in the UN</td>
<td>In progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hold an open ended drafting group meeting in October 2010 to finalize methodology</td>
<td>In progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hold an online information session for the consultative group in October 2010</td>
<td>In progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hold a 2\textsuperscript{n} consultative workshop in January 2011 to consider options for a common approach to environmental and social safeguards in the UN</td>
<td>To be confirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Propose options for the extraordinary senior officials meeting of the EMG in spring 2011</td>
<td>To be confirmed</td>
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Challenges

Principles
• How to choose and structure environmental and social priorities?
• How to talk the same language?

Processes
• How to integrate environmental and social priorities into decision-making and operations?
• How to guide decisions on environmental and social trade-offs?
• How to assess risk in a consistent way?
• How to combine with national systems?

Compliance and accountability
• How to balance flexibility and accountability?
• How best to establish a common safeguard system across agencies with different mandates and modes of operation?
Gap-Analysis

- Will build on existing UN practices and tools
- Will identify agency needs for support and possible EMG contributions
- Will identify possible options
  - Scope
  - Accountability and compliance
  - Capacity building
  - Roll-out plan
Baseline Framework

- System-wide Value based principles
- System-wide Minimum procedures
- Strategy and policy management
- Project management
- Facility & operations management
- Adaptation and integration into agency specific decision making processes
- Resource Centre/Help Desk for agencies
  - Environmental and Social Safeguards Handbook
  - Thematic Guidelines
  - Templates
  - Checklists

Environment Management Group