

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ISSUE MANAGEMENT GROUP ON A “GREEN ECONOMY”

A. *Background*

1. The 15th senior officials meeting of the Environment Management Group (EMG) held in New York on 23 September 2009¹ considered how the United Nations system could more coherently support countries in making the transition to a “green economy” (see box 1).

Box 1. Excerpt from the report of the 15th senior officials meeting on a “green economy”:

“The senior officials acknowledged the concerns over unprecedented environmental changes and their potentially negative implications for economic and social development. They stressed that the United Nations system needed to be adaptive and coherent in its response to meeting member States’ needs in that regard.

The concept of making a transition to a “green economy” was seen as a response to environmental change and a pathway towards economic recovery and sustainable development, which needed to be integrated into various sectors of society, beyond the financial and economic sectors.

The senior officials welcomed the work of the United Nations Development Group in preparing a guidance note for United Nations country teams and implementing partners on mainstreaming environmental sustainability in country analysis and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

They recalled the United Nations inter-agency statement of 25 June 2009 entitled “Green economy: a transformation to address multiple crises”, which stated that a shift towards a “green economy” could create dynamic new industries, quality jobs and income growth while mitigating and adapting to climate change and arresting biodiversity decline. They were conscious of the joint crisis initiatives of the High-level Committee on Programmes and, in particular, cluster 4 on the “green economy”, in addition to the UNEP-proposed global green new deal.

The senior officials stressed that efforts to make the transition to a “green economy” should be extended beyond crisis response and involve longer-term development considerations. There was a need for clarity in the manner in which the United Nations communicated its messages and advice to countries on a “green economy” and on the relationship between the “green economy” concept and other environment and development initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals.

There was also a need to substantiate and broaden the economic case for short-term and long-term investment in the environment. Responses needed to be attuned to varying social and ecological contexts at the regional and national levels.

Continuing efforts by UNEP to work with partners on preparing a report that would make the economic case for a “green economy” and underscore the important role of Governments in the march towards such an economy were welcomed, as were efforts to prepare a series of reports on the economics of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Given that the United Nations system represented so many sectors, including finance, health and agriculture, the senior officials said that the system was uniquely placed to work cohesively to substantiate and implement the concept of a “green economy”.”

2. The concept of a “green economy” is also subject to consideration by intergovernmental processes, as amongst others reflected in:

- a) Resolution 63/303 of the United Nations General Assembly endorsing the outcome document adopted at the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, which concluded that the response to the global financial crisis presented an opportunity to promote green economy initiatives;

- b) The Presidents Summary of the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council /Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP which reflected a ministerial discussion amongst others on

¹ See report of the 15th Senior officials meeting of the Environment Management Group (EMG/SOM.15/02)

“moving towards a green economy”² and the ministerial consultations on the “green economy” scheduled for the eleventh special session of the Council in February 2010;

c) United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/236 which decides to organize in 2012 the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and agrees that the focus of the Conference will include the following theme to be discussed and refined during the preparatory process: green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

3. At the inter-agency level the green economy is being dealt with in:

a) Cluster 4 on the “green economy” of the joint crisis initiatives of the High Level Committee on Programmes;

b) The UN inter-agency statement of 25 June 2009 entitled “green economy: a transformation to address multiple crises”, which stated that a shift toward a green economy could create dynamic new industries, quality jobs and income growth while mitigating and adapting to climate change and arresting biodiversity decline;³

c) The Green Economy Report being prepared by UNEP in consultation with partners and due to be published late 2010 and which will be making the case for applying green economy policies to various sectors and for establishing the enabling conditions for the green economy.

4. The senior officials of the EMG in follow-up to its considerations:

a) Agreed, within the context of global environmental change, to assess how the United Nations system could more coherently support countries in making the transition to a “green economy”;

b) Also agreed to work on joint and consistent messaging on measures needed to support the transition to a “green economy”;

c) Furthermore, agreed to develop terms of reference, process, budget and time-frame for an issue management group to tackle that issue; and

d) Requested the Group secretariat to engage electronically with Group members over the coming three months to agree on the terms of reference for the establishment of the issue management group.

B. *Composition, function and responsibilities*

5. The issue management group (IMG) on a “green economy” is composed of focal points nominated by EMG members and is open to observers as agreed by the IMG.

6. The IMG shall organise its work to undertake the following main functions and responsibilities, taking into account relevant interagency and intergovernmental processes:

a) To prepare a focussed and forward-looking interagency assessment report on the UN system and the green economy building on and complementing relevant initiatives, reports and country studies for final approval by the 17th senior officials meeting of the EMG in the fall of 2011, including with a view to:

- i. presenting a UN system interagency perspective and vision on the “green economy” concept and how a transition to a “green economy” could contribute to addressing environmental change, achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty;
- ii. analyzing where and how the expertise of different agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system can contribute to supporting countries in the transition to a green low-carbon economy;
- iii. identifying operational instruments and tools with which the UN system and its individual entities can support countries in making such a transition; and
- iv. making recommendations including identifying opportunities for the implementation of these measures, including through the pooling of resources;

² <http://www.unep.org/gc/gc25/Docs/President-Summary.pdf>

³ Interagency statement of 25 June 2009 entitled “Green Economy: A Transformation to Address Multiple Crises”, http://www.unep.org/pdf/pressreleases/Green_Economy_Joint_Statement.pdf.

- b) To consider how to contribute to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012, where a discussion and refinement of the theme of “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” will take place;
- c) Based on a shared vision, develop and disseminate joint and consistent messaging on measures needed to support the transition to a “green economy”, for example through common communication material, knowledge sharing and information exchange; and
- d) To report to, and respond to any further requests from the senior officials meeting of the EMG.

C. *Timeframe and tentative process*

7. The IMG is constituted for a period of two years and shall in performing its functions and responsibilities set out in paragraph 4 above take into account the following tentative process and timeline:

January 2010	<i>Nomination</i> by EMG members of focal points for IMG on the “green economy” and <i>consultations</i> on draft agenda for the first meeting of the IMG.
March 2010	<i>First meeting of the IMG</i> (tentatively 10 – 11 March) to amongst others consider priorities, timeframe and process for its work including the outline and process for the preparation of the assessment report on the UN and the “green economy”.
April – August 2010	<i>First phase of the process for preparation of a UN system wide report</i> on the “green economy” (i.a. solicitation of information needs such as from UNDG and review of available information, analysis of the UN system capabilities for supporting countries in the transition to a green low-carbon economy).
August 2010	<i>Second meeting of IMG</i> (possibly electronic) to amongst others: a) report to the 16 th senior officials meeting of the EMG, including on how to contribute to the preparatory process for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 on the green economy; b) consider the second phase of the process for preparation of UN system wide assessment report on the “green economy”.
September - October 2010	<i>The 16th senior officials meeting of EMG</i> considers the report from the IMG and an outline of how to contribute to the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 on the “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”.
October 2010 – May 2011	<i>Second phase of the process for preparation of an assessment report</i> on the UN and the “green economy” (i.e. preparation of drafts and two rounds of internal reviews as well as clearance of the report by individual agencies).
June 2011 - August 2011	<i>Third meeting of IMG</i> to amongst others: a) sign off the final assessment report on the UN and the “green economy”; b) consider outreach, internal learning and information-exchange; and c) report to the 17 th senior officials meeting of the EMG. <i>Editing, lay out and printing</i> of the UN system wide assessment report on the “green economy” and preparation of communication and guidance material.
September - October 2011	<i>The 17th senior officials meeting of the EMG</i> to consider progress by the IMG on a “green economy” including the need for further work in the area.

D. *Budget*

8. The IMG shall in performing its functions and responsibilities set out in paragraph 4 do so with in-kind support from EMG members, including in the form of meeting participation, provision of information and other material, preparation and review of draft text for reports and outreach contributions. Secretariat support to the IMG is provided by UNEP, while costs relating to organisational arrangements of IMG meetings will be born by the host agency.

9. The operational budget includes the following main activities and estimated costs:

Activities	Estimated costs (in 1000 USD)
Technical support to preparation of the assessment report on the	125

UN and the “green economy” (including solicitation of expert contributions, coordination, operation of interactive web-site, compilation of drafts, editing and preparation of vital graphics)	
Lay-out, printing and distribution of the assessment report on the UN and the “green economy”	25
Preparation of external communication and guidance material and internal web-based and real-time learning and information exchange initiatives	50
Total estimated cost	200

10. The operational budget will be covered through voluntary contributions from IMG members.