



United Nations Environment Management Group



EMG SECRETARIAT

EMG STOCKTAKING QUESTIONNAIRE ¹

(7 DECEMBER 2006)

BACKGROUND

- 1) The EMG High Level Forum on the UN Reform Initiatives (Geneva 3 – 4 July, 2006), agreed to undertake a stock-taking exercise, which will generate a comprehensive overview of activities, co-ordination mechanisms, and major collaborative initiatives of the Organizations of the UN System in the area of the environment at the global, regional and national levels.
- 2) The Executive Director of UNEP, and Chairman of the EMG summarized the essence of the conclusions and recommendations of the Forum regarding the purpose and parameters of the stocktaking exercise i.e.:
 - a) That a stocktaking exercise was needed to identify the core activities and areas of EMG members and to identify the key areas in which agencies and organizations were working;
 - b) That the exercise should also identify topics which interface with the environmental agenda;
 - c) That EMG should ensure that its work contributed to adding value to the work of each agency or organization;
 - d) That a conceptual framework for working together in a more proactive manner was needed;
 - e) That EMG should ensure that what it did was relevant at both the global, regional and country levels;
 - f) That EMG could add value by focusing on major current and emerging issues;
 - g) That the members of EMG, with the assistance of the secretariat, should generate a menu of options outlining the issues on which EMG wanted to focus, particularly those issues where the greatest number of EMG members had a key interest and where there was need for further attention;
 - h) That EMG should establish a few issue-oriented task forces and agree on their terms of reference and on the specific activities to be undertaken;
 - i) That those task forces should be led by interested agencies and secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements;
- 3) The stock-taking will take into account the recommendations contained in the summary report of the co-chairs of the UNGA Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the UN's

¹ The questionnaire was prepared by the Secretariat of the Environmental Management Group in collaboration with members of the Task Force for the EMG Stocktaking Exercise and with technical and methodological support provided by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

Environmental Activities as well as the report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence in the areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment.

- 4) The EMG Task Force overseeing the exercise will draw on information gathered through similar stock-taking exercises conducted by the respective co-ordination mechanisms of the UN system. For example, the Secretariat of the Chief Executives Board, in its publications titled "One United Nations, Catalyst for Progress and Change" included an annex containing a matrix of selected coordination mechanisms for thematic areas. In this context, it will be helpful if you can submit a copy of the completed JIU questionnaire (i.e. the questionnaire circulated a few months ago, by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit on the management review of environmental governance within the UN) of your organization together with your response to this questionnaire.

EXPLANATORY NOTE ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- 5) The Questionnaire is divided into three parts and three annexes. Part 1 focuses on activities of EMG members in the area of environmental management. Annex 1 and 2 are linked to Part I and provide an opportunity to indicate specific involvement of EMG members in thematic programme areas (e.g. biodiversity)² and cross-cutting issues (e.g. trade and the environment). Part 2 addresses participation in and effectiveness of existing co-ordinating mechanisms in the area of environmental management in the UN System. Part 3 focuses on general co-ordinating issues and the potential future role of the EMG. Annex 3 provides some background thoughts to inform responses in Part 3.
- 6) Once the compilation of responses is completed, an initial analysis will be carried out followed by selective interviews, as appropriate. Please indicate in the response box in section 1.3, if you are available for a follow-up discussion.
- 7) Please send the completed EMG questionnaire and the completed JIU questionnaire to the EMG Secretariat (Hossein.Fadaei@unep.ch) by 8 January 2006.
- 8) Your assistance in providing responses to the questions in the sections which follow will be highly appreciated.

² The titles of the thematic programme areas have been identified taking into account existing programmes of EMG member organizations and relevant international agreements. The authors of the questionnaire are aware that this might result in some possible overlap. Further work on defining more precisely and getting agreement on the various thematic programme areas may be warranted in the future.

PART 1: ORGANIZATION PROFILE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

1.1 Name of Organization/MEA Secretariat

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1.2 Name of EMG Focal Point

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1.3 Contact Details of Person Who Completed this Questionnaire

Name	
Position	
Address	
Email	
Telephone	
Fax	

I would be available for a one-on-one follow-up discussion to discuss the response of my organization in more detail, as appropriate.

Yes
No

1.4 Overview of Environmental Programmes and Activities

Core Activities

Please summarize your Organization's core programmes and activities in the area of environment. Please distinguish between normative and operational/capacity building activities. As appropriate, provide details in terms of expected outcomes (e.g., guideline development, other implementation support tools, capacity building, research).

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Thematic Activities

In order to be able to obtain a *summary* overview of UN organization's activities related to key thematic environmental programme areas, please complete the Table in **Annex 1**, by filling in "+", as appropriate.

Cross-cutting Activities

Please indicate your organizations involvement in cross-cutting environmental activities (e.g. trade and the environment) by marking "+" as appropriate in **Annex 2**.

PART 2: PARTICIPATION IN CO-ORDINATING MECHANISMS AND JOINT PROGRAMS

2.1 Membership in and Effectiveness of Co-ordinating Mechanisms

Please list main inter-agency co-coordinating mechanisms in the area of environmental management in which your organization participates. Please provide also a general assessment of the effectiveness of the mechanism. Please expand table, if needed.

Name of Co-ordinating Mechanism	Thematic Programme Area (s) Covered	Is the Mechanism Effective? Please use scale of 1– 5 (1= highly effective, 2=effective, 3=neutral,4=ineffective and 5 = highly ineffective)	Short Comment Explaining Judgment

2.2 Participation in Joint Programmes

Please list major programmes in the area of environmental management conducted jointly with UN partner organizations. Please expand table, if needed.

Name of Programme	Thematic Programme Area (s) Covered	UN Partners

PART 3: ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE EMG IN PROVIDING COORDINATION IN THE FIELD OF ENVIRONMENT

3.1 In the perspective of your organization, is there a co-ordination problem in the UN system with regard to environmental activities? Are specific thematic programme areas particularly well (or not well) coordinated?

3.2 What specific role should the EMG play in the coordination of environmental activities in the UN system?

3.3 What practical activities should the EMG undertake to implement its mandate effectively and efficiently?

3.4 Are there any issues you would like to see addressed by the EMG in the future? Please list these priority issues.

3.5 Which criteria should be used to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the EMG in a future evaluation?

3.6 Given the recommendation of the Secretary General's High Level Panel on Coherence to better utilize the EMG and to link it to the overall UN coordinating mechanism on sustainable development, what could the overall architecture of such a system be (e.g. EMG linkage with the CEB, UNDG, relevant inter-governmental mechanisms, etc.)

3.7 The High Level EMG Forum initiated deliberations on a number of general discussion issues (Annex 3). Please provide, as appropriate, the views and suggestions of your organization, if not already covered above.

Annex 1: Summary of Activities by Thematic Programme Areas
Organization: _____

<i>Please fill in a “+” in the appropriate cell, if your organization is active in the respective area</i>	International Normative & Assessment Activities		Operational & Capacity Building Activities			
	International Knowledge Generation and Assessment	Development of Conventions, International Guidelines, etc	Support of National Legislation, Governance, Institution and Programme Development	Support of National Research & Education	Technical Support & Training	Technology Transfer
Biodiversity						
Chemicals						
Coastal Zone Management						
Climate Change						
Desertification						
Energy						
Cleaner Production						
Environmental Health						
Ocean Fisheries						
Forests						
Fresh-water						
Hazard Waste						
Non-Hazardous Waste						
Ozone Depletion						
Pollution Control (air and water)						
Sustainable Agriculture						
Sustainable Consumption						
Wetlands						

Annex 2: Cross-cutting Activities

Please indicate your organizations involvement in cross-cutting environmental activities (e.g. trade and the environment) by marking “+” in the respective cell, as appropriate.

CROSS-CUTTING AREA	[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]
Mainstreaming environmental sustainability in national development policy planning	
Synergizing environment and other MDG goals: general	
Poverty	
Gender	
Health	
Other	[PLEASES SPECIFY]
Synergy development under international environmental MEAs	
Economic globalization/trade and environment	
Environmental information systems	
Strengthening civil society participation in environmental governance	
Public private partnerships for environmental management	
Decentralized collaboration for environmental management	
Local authorities	
Provinces/regions	
Other	[PLEASES SPECIFY]

ANNEX 3: EMG DISCUSSION ISSUES

1. **How best to revitalize and strengthen the EMG?**

Member States have placed the onus on the United Nations to improve significantly system-wide coherence in the field of the environment. The EMG has the potential to fill the void in terms of coordination if it is able to address the key challenges and if its members can commit to its revitalization in a concerted and targeted manner. What opportunities could the Group embrace as it seeks to fulfill its objectives and functions as originally conceived?

2. **EMG terms of reference: Do they need to be revisited? How should the EMG take into account the implications of the UN reform initiatives?**

The EMG's terms of reference, which were agreed through a process of inter-agency consultations, may be considered to be broad enough in nature to allow for a strategic reorientation or refocusing on specific elements or functions.

3. **Working methods: Is issue-management a useful approach?**

The issue-management approach can broadly be considered to have been useful, particularly considering the areas in which the Group has had some success in the past, namely, harmonization of biodiversity-related reporting and capacity-building in the field of chemicals management. There continue to be specific issues on the environment agenda that are neglected in terms of coordination, with a sub-optimal division of labour, an inefficient use of limited resources and significant areas of duplication. What is your assessment of the Issue Management Group?

4. **Is there a need for the EMG to move beyond issue-management: broader policy coherence?**

In addressing the future of the EMG, members may consider that its work in the future should go beyond the issue-management approach as the sole or even main functional modality. It is important that the Group's members be able to come together to obtain a clearer sense of the evolution of the broader environmental agenda. Thus, the Group's agenda would include contributing to broad environmental policy development in areas such as integrating environmental issues into development planning at the country-level (see next section on links with the United Nations Development Group); the poverty and environment nexus; and emerging issues such as the linkages between the environment, development and humanitarian agendas of the United Nations; as well as ensuring that the planned programme activities of the members could be discussed and could benefit from a coherent and strategic approach. What is your own assessment?

5. Working methods: How can the EMG’s operational links with other relevant United Nations inter-agency and issue-based coordination mechanisms be improved?

To enhance its effectiveness, the EMG must establish solid working relationships with other relevant inter-agency mechanisms and draw from and contribute to their work as appropriate.

6. Membership: How best to engender ownership and deliver returns on investment to members?

A sense of ownership among members can best be achieved if members feel that they are getting significant returns on their investment of human and financial resources. Discussing and agreeing on the way forward for the Group will be an essential first step in building confidence among its members, allowing for the discussion of important proposals such as strengthening EMG interactions with inter-governmental bodies, especially those of its members. The efficient functioning of the Group requires that it have a clear relation with inter-governmental processes, while retaining its inter-agency nature, and that it enjoy a clearly-defined reporting relationship with the Global Ministerial Environment Forum, the Commission on Sustainable Development and other forums in the United Nations system.

7. In your view what type of support structure will best serve the EMG? How can the EMG secure adequate and predictable resources as well as an appropriate support structure, including efficient secretariat arrangements?

Shared responsibility in the running and management of the secretariat, including seconding of staff, could be an important mark of commitment by the membership.

8. How best can your Organization contribute to the resource base of EMG?

The expectation of predictability and sustainability in the financing of the EMG expressed in United Nations General Assembly resolution 53/242 has yet to be realized and should be considered in the context of the current zero growth provision in the United Nations regular budget.