

Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System

Version 8 (23 August 2011)

INDEX

Summary	2
Vision	3
Overall Objective	3
Definitions of Sustainability Management	4
Rationale for sustainability management in the United Nations	4
Current status of sustainability efforts in the United Nations	9
Elements of a strategic plan for sustainable management in the United Nations	10
➤ Formal Mandate	10
➤ Implementation of sustainable management systems in the United Nations system organizations	12
➤ Common functions	16
➤ Funding arrangements in individual organizations	18
Conclusions	20
Annex 1: Summary of JIU and OIOS reports	22
Annex 2: Some examples of member states that have adopted SMS in their own operations or are using SMS as a tool for quality control in relations with cooperation with stakeholders	27
Annex 3: Current status of sustainability efforts in the UN system	28
Annex 4: List of voluntary indicators	31

SUMMARY

This proposal for a Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System provides the rationale for, and a step-by-step approach to the implementation of a sustainability management system in the United Nations System. This Strategic Plan was requested by the Senior Officials Meeting of the UN Environmental Management Group at their 16th meeting in September 2010. It has been developed by the Issue Management Group on Sustainability Management in the UN (IMG), supported by the Sustainable United Nations facility (SUN).

First, this Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN System provides a definition of a Sustainability Management System. It suggests practical ways to integrate sustainability management into the internal operations of individual UN organizations.. It highlights the importance of moving away from current ad-hoc and project-based approaches to sustainability management, towards an integrated, permanent and coordinated approach based on a clear mandate from governing bodies.

Secondly, this Strategic Plan reviews how sustainability management relates to current mandates and reform efforts in the UN system. It identifies areas where sustainability management directly contributes to the UN's core mandates. It also recognizes that sustainability management systems are today a common approach in other international organizations, as well as in the corporate and NGO sectors worldwide.

Thirdly, this Strategic Plan identifies enabling conditions for the successful implementation of a sustainability management approach to UN system-wide operations. The conditions are as follows:

1. A formal mandate for implementing a sustainability management system (SMS) has to be clarified at the appropriate level in each organization.
2. The sustainability management systems in United Nations organizations should be based on a common model. This will ensure comparability and economies of scale by having multiple organizations use the same definitions and tools.
3. Establishment of common support functions to maintain essential joint activities (supplementing agency-specific ones), such as communication, reporting, training, provision of technical support, etc. There is also a need to fund the common support functions.
4. Funding for individual organizations. The costs related to the implementation of the SMS and associated staff time should be identified and funds should be provided accordingly in each organization.

Finally, the plan suggests a path for obtaining approval of this Strategic Plan and for its implementation as a common approach across the UN system.

VISION

The vision to which this Strategic Plan contributes is to enhance the environmental and social sustainability of the UN, thereby contributing to our mission to promote and protect human well-being in line with internationally agreed declarations, conventions and covenants.

The UN system has a long history of promoting positive environmental and social outcomes. While many parts of the organization have individually internalized such sustainability goals, the UN acting as one can do even more.

This Strategic Plan contributes to the development of a common environmental and social sustainability framework in the UN. The intention of such a framework is to strengthen UN's leadership role and better support Member States to further the global sustainability agenda. Specifically, the framework allows the organization to:

- ***Lead by example***: by enhancing institutional capabilities and credibility through strengthening the internalization of the environmental and social principles it advocates, thereby contributing more effectively to the achievement of internationally agreed goals and targets;
- ***Work safer and smarter***: by reducing risks and maximizing benefits through an integrated approach to informed decision-making;
- ***Respond more effectively***: by better addressing emerging issues and stakeholder needs in a timely manner, and by being an attractive and trusted implementing partner;
- ***Leverage knowledge and experience***: by improved information sharing and working in a more efficient, coherent, accountable and transparent manner.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Taking into account that all UN organizations share a need to walk the talk on sustainability, this proposal for a Strategic Plan offers a way to meet this need in a collective manner that would minimize costs and enhance efficiency in UN organizations individually and across the UN system collectively.

The objective of this Strategic Proposal for Sustainability Management in the United Nations System is to provide a model for how the UN system can move towards realizing the above vision with regard to its in-house operations and practices. By suggesting a consistent and practical way to integrate sustainability management into individual UN organizations and into common functions in the UN system, it identifies key success factors that should be considered in each UN organization and in the UN system as a whole, to realize this vision.

DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT

The proposed model for a Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN system responds to a range of needs, as discussed below. Its immediate field of application lies within the mandate given to the Environmental Management Group (EMG) by the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to implement a UN Climate Neutral Strategy in the context of moving the UN system towards improved sustainability in its operations. In general usage, the term “Sustainable Development” encompasses three pillars: environmental, economic and socially sustainable development. “Sustainability management”¹ similarly implies that all three of these aspects are taken into consideration. Recognizing that the EMG mandate relates first and foremost to environmental sustainability, however, the following clarification is necessary:

For the purposes of this Strategic Plan, the term “Sustainable Development” refers primarily to the environmental sustainability aspects of the UN system’s work. In this context, “Sustainability Management” is the management of the operations of UN organizations in a way that minimizes the negative impact on the environment.

The term “Sustainability Management System” (SMS) refers to a systematic approach to managing the sustainability aspects of the organization. In this proposal this has a focus on environmental sustainability issues. The SMS proposed in this Plan is largely based on the ISO 14.001 standard for environmental management systems, but is simplified for ease of implementation across the many diverse organizations in the UN system. The SMS provides the basis for systematic and rational management of environmental sustainability issues in the UN system. The processes established in the SMS could also serve to support the management of other (social-economic) sustainability issues by functioning as a framework or inspiration for organizations that wish to address a wider range of sustainability issues. This Strategic Plan has been drafted with the potential for such cross-sectoral compatibility in mind.

RATIONALE FOR SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Sustainable development is a core objective for the United Nations family. Through their activities, all UN organizations contribute to different aspects of sustainable development, be it economic development, poverty alleviation, health care, peace-building, infrastructure support, or environmental protection. The definition of “Sustainable Development”, provided by the Brundtland Commission in 1987, was the basis for Agenda 21 in 1992 and later the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JoI) in 2002. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) translate the principles of sustainable development into concrete objectives for UN system organizations to strive towards. The upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (“Rio+20”) in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 will review and renew the sustainable development plan for the world. It is important that the UN system is able to

¹ In this report, the term “Sustainability Management” was chosen to be used instead of “Sustainable Management” so as to emphasize that it focuses on how to manage sustainability issues.

demonstrate to the world that UN organizations seek to practice what they preach on sustainability.

In addition to the above overarching mandates and objectives, most UN organizations are provided with specific mandates by their governing bodies/member states to support and advance the sustainable development agenda. For example, almost all UN organizations have been requested to develop strategies to address the effects of climate change within their areas of specialization. For most organizations, sustainable development references are even inscribed in their basic mandates, either implicitly or directly. This is the case e.g. for UNEP (environment), WHO (health), ILO (labour practices), UN Habitat (livelihoods), UNDP (development assistance), OCHA (human rights), UN regional commissions (regional social-economic development), FAO (sustainable agriculture), UNFPA (population development), DPKO and PBSO (peacekeeping and peace-building) and so on.

Most of these mandates and actions address the needs of the global community and in particular of developing countries. However, a number of decisions also directly address the internal sustainability of the UN system. Among these can be noted:

- The mandate of the UN Secretary General to act as UN's Chief Administrative Officer, thereby carrying out the functions of the UN in as efficient and effective a manner as possible. Under this mandate, the Secretary General in 2007 called on the UN system to move towards a greener and more sustainable UN.
- UN reform, which seeks to improve efficiency in delivery of the UN's mandates. One way of achieving enhanced synergies and efficiencies across the UN system is to systematically address wasteful practices, to minimize resource use by improving efficiency, and by mitigating risks for negative environmental impacts from UN operations.
- Agenda 21 recognized the need for the UN to work on the inclusion of sustainable development considerations (chapter 4.23). This was subsequently reiterated in the expanded 1999 UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection. While Agenda 21 focuses on policies of governments, paragraph 54 of the Guidelines states that "Governments and international agencies should take the lead in introducing sustainable practices in their own operations..."
- Following the Secretary General's urging to lead by example, the CEB decided in October 2007 to move the UN system towards climate neutrality and adopted a Climate Neutral Strategy for the UN System. The Strategy commits all CEB members to measure greenhouse gas emissions, reduce them as far as possible, and to consider the budget implications of purchasing offsets to compensate for remaining emissions.
- UNEP's Governing Council, established by the General Assembly, stated in its 2011 Decision 26/11, entitled "*Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group*", that the Governing Council, inter alia:

- Supports the continued efforts by the Group (EMG) to mainstream environmental considerations in activities at the programme, management and operational levels in close cooperation with the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its subsidiary bodies;
- Also encourages the Group to continue supporting the implementation of the United Nations Climate Neutral Strategy, by promoting sustainability policies, management practices and operations in the United Nations system, including sustainable procurement, and the establishment and implementation of a process for environmental impact assessment and the use of environmental and social safeguards in relation to United Nations projects;
- The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) have both evaluated different aspects of the UN system’s efforts to integrate sustainability management into its operations:
 - OIOS: IED-09-002 *“Implementation by the Environmental Management Group (EMG) Secretariat of the Secretary-General’s Commitment to Move the United Nations Towards Climate-Neutrality”*
 - JIU/REP/2010/1: *“Environmental Profile of the United Nations System Organizations”*.

Both reports recommend that the UN system organizations actively and urgently move towards more systematic approaches to sustainability management; and provide specific recommendations to the Secretary General and the UN General Assembly on how to strengthen this effort (Annex 1).

There are also several practical considerations underpinning this move towards sustainability in the UN system:

Walking the Talk

A key asset for UN organizations is their credibility. Demonstration that UN organizations adhere to the same principles as those they promote is a fundamental requirement for preserving and reinforcing that credibility. The UN needs to walk the talk of its plans and declarations in the area of sustainable development (Agenda 21, JoI, MDG, etc.), to practice the sustainable development principles promoted by voluntary mechanisms such as the Global Compact (human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption), and to live up to the ideals of the many Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements that the UN hosts, such as the Basel Convention, the Montreal Protocol, the Ramsar Convention and CITES.

Possibly the most prominent global sustainability issue today is adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. The UN, through the UNFCCC and also through the activities of many other UN organizations, is playing a leadership role in enabling the international cooperation necessary to address climate change. The Secretary General has stated that the UN’s credibility will be seriously harmed if we are not able to lead by example on the climate change agenda. Failure to walk the talk on climate change would undermine the UN’s leadership.

Efficiency and cost savings

SMS in service organizations like the UN typically concern key functions such as facilities management, travel, communications, staff training, and meetings. SMS set out to reduce the environmental impact of these functions by improving efficiency and avoiding waste, be it in the form of energy, materials, or staff time. Reducing waste, improving efficiency, and reducing costs are one and the same thing. In times of economic stringency across the UN system, sustainability management is an important tool for controlling costs. An additional benefit is that health hazards to staff, often directly related to environmental issues, are usually also addressed through SMS, resulting in reduced sick leave and improved staff satisfaction and productivity.

Examples of cost-savings from implementation of Sustainability Actions

Costs for the UN system

Air travel constitutes one of the major sources of the UN system's climate footprint. In 2009, air travel contributed approximately 850.000 tons CO₂ eqv or 50%, of the UN's climate footprint. At the same time, the UN system spends well over US\$ 1 billion a year on air travel (JIU report A340 "Review of Travel Arrangements in the UN system"). In 2011, the UN Secretary General requested that all UN organizations reduce their annual budgets by 3%.

A 3% reduction in UN system air travel, which could be achieved by, e.g., increased use of on-line conferencing, bundling of travel, use of staff in regional offices. etc, would result in a reduced climate footprint of 25.500 tons CO₂ eqv and reduced costs of some US\$ 30 million. Even if the entire saving were re-invested in, e.g., improved access to e-communication for staff, such a measure would have a very short pay-back period. While this example may not be representative for all situations, it shows that sustainability and cost reductions are often mutually supportive.

UN reform

The UN reform effort can best be described as an effort to improve delivery of the UN's mandates by doing more with what we have and by strengthening accountability. UN reform is often referred to as "One UN" or "Delivering as One"². Sustainability management directly supports this effort by providing a systematic approach to improved control, efficiency and reporting.

Learning and sharing

Improving sustainability in the UN will not only serve the UN and its stakeholders, but will also build knowledge and tools that can be shared with other public organizations. Already, the UN climate neutral effort has received significant attention through the Greening the Blue website (www.greeningtheblue.org) and SUN is now advising a number of organizations outside the UN system.

Adopting good business practices

Sustainability management is today widely recognized as good practice by companies and civil society organizations around the world. Two major standards support environmental sustainability management systems: ISO 14.001 (globally) and EMAS

² "Delivering as one" (A/61/583) to Secretary-General Kofi Annan in November 2006

(Europe). In 2009, more than 223,000 operations had been ISO 14.001 certified, with a significant share in developing countries (the largest single country in terms of numbers is China, with more than 55,000 ISO 14.001 certifications). EMAS, which is an SMS certification scheme for Europe, has issued certifications for over 8,000 operations. Many civil society organizations have adopted sustainability management as a standard operating procedure: the World Wildlife Fund, International Red Cross, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature . A number of multilateral institutions have also adopted, or are on the way to adopting, SMS for parts or the whole of their operations, eg, the World Bank Group, the European Commission and the Asian Development Bank.

Keeping pace with member states

Not only the corporate world has adopted sustainability management as a business-as-usual practice, but increasing numbers of governments have also adopted sustainability management strategies or systems. The rationale for doing so is usually a combination of:

- Stepping up to the leadership role of national government, not only through policy and legislation, but also as a role model for the rest of society (walking the talk).
- Achieving economic savings by improved efficiency through an SMS.
- Reducing liability by systematically controlling processes that pose risks to the environment.

Some examples of member states which have adopted SMS include Australia, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States of America (refer to Annex 2). A number of other governments require ISO 14.001 certification to ensure quality control and reduce risks when engaging with partners and suppliers, e.g. Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Thailand.

Responding to OIOS and JIU recommendations

Both OIOS and JIU have recommended that the UN system organizations pursue sustainability management approaches and have provided specific recommendations to the Secretary General and the UN General Assembly to this end (refer to Annex 1). Given that both OIOS and JIU draw their mandates from the General Assembly³, their recommendations carry significant weight.

³ OIOS is mandated by the UN General Assembly to “...assist Member States and the Organization in protecting its assets and in ensuring the compliance of programme activities with resolutions, regulations, rules and policies as well as the more efficient and effective delivery of the Organization’s activities; preventing and detecting fraud, waste, abuse, malfeasance or mismanagement; and improving the delivery of the Organization’s programmes and activities to enable it to achieve better results by determining all factors affecting the efficient and effective implementation of programmes.”

JIU is mandated by the UN General Assembly to: “...provide an independent view through inspection and evaluation aimed at improving management and methods and at achieving greater coordination between organizations.”

CURRENT STATUS OF SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Currently, the in-house sustainability effort in the UN system is carried out primarily as part of the implementation of the UN Climate Neutral Strategy, supported by EMG, SUN and IMG. Significant progress has been made in implementation of this strategy over the past three years. The following table provides an overview of main activities, which are described in more detail in Annex 3.

Examples of ongoing sustainability activities in the UN
❖ Greenhouse gas inventories for 52 UN organizations reported annually
❖ Interagency networks working to facilitate sustainability in their areas of expertise
❖ Guidelines for sustainability in buildings, meetings, procurement, travel, etc.
❖ Emission reduction strategies being developed in most UN organizations
❖ Technical helpdesk set up to assist sustainability work of UN organizations
❖ Establishment of common website and UN sustainability news service(www.greeningtheblue.org)
❖ 50+ case studies on sustainability in the UN
❖ Sustainability introduced into UN building projects, including UNHQ renovation
❖ Rules and indicators for green events
❖ Recommendations on how to procure offsets in the UN system
❖ Best practice Sustainable Procurement guidelines for common products/services
❖ Sustainable travel measures piloted in several organizations
❖ E-communication studies carried out to support better on-line communications
❖ Study initiated to support better environmental management of UN field operations
❖ Proposal for common staff training on sustainability submitted to LAB
❖ Sustainability a core feature in Umoja project for new ERP system for Secretariat
❖ Local green teams connected and sharing tools and resources enabled
❖ Annual report on emission reduction and sustainability work in the UN system
❖ Awareness raising materials and campaigns developed and shared in IMG.

Important lessons have emerged from this effort. Among these lessons are:

- Implementation requires sufficient dedicated staff time and senior management support.
- A formal mandate for practicing sustainability in the UN is ultimately essential in order to gain the support of concerned UN bodies and networks and to be able to use funds for this purpose.
- Sustained implementation requires integration of activities into daily management and administrative functions by instilling ownership in appropriate departments. Climate neutrality, and overall environmental sustainability, should not be seen as a time-bound project but as a permanent management function.
- There is great value in cooperation among UN organizations for the purposes of generating learning, sharing of resources, and comparability of approaches.

- There are significant cost savings associated with sustainability management, but also some upfront implementation costs with relatively short/medium payback periods.

Unless most of the above lessons are addressed, the UN's climate neutral effort risks failure, principally because of lack of dedicated staff resources and funds in each organization. If the UN system is to avoid that fate, current efforts need to be transformed into a systematic and integrated approach that is fully supported by all organizations. This Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN System proposes how such a transformation can be realized.

ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Based on the above considerations and lessons learned, it is possible to envisage implementation of an integrated sustainability management approach in the UN system that would require four pillars to be addressed:

1. A formal mandate
2. Implementation of sustainability management systems in UN system organizations based on a common model
3. Common support functions for the UN system and associated funding
4. Funding for implementation of SMS in individual organizations

These are elaborated in more detail below.

1. FORMAL MANDATE

The introduction of any significant new element in the set-up, function or operation of UN organizations normally requires a sound formal basis or mandate. It could be argued that the mandate to improve management efficiencies and reduce (environmental) risk for UN organizations is already provided under resolutions defining the mandate of the UN Secretary General and of heads of UN agencies, funds, and programmes. However, measures that require additional start-up investments (even if aimed at reducing long-term operational costs) need to be approved by the relevant governing bodies. Experience to date in trying to implement the UN climate neutral strategy across the UN system speaks loudly of organizations' difficulty in assigning sufficient staff resources to this issue, let alone earmarking funds for in-house sustainability or climate mitigation measures. Experience has also shown that the cooperation and support of an organization's staff and formal bodies can be hampered if there is not an explicit mandate from the governing body.

It is therefore strongly recommended that each UN organization seek an explicit and formal mandate, from an appropriate level, to implement a sustainability management system.

Such a mandate needs to be proposed by the head of the organization⁴, based on:

1. The formally approved role of the head of the organization to implement the organization's mandated programme of work in as efficient a manner as possible, within the resources provided
2. Existing policies of the organization, which may either support or be supported by the adoption of an organizational SMS. Examples include policies aimed at reducing costs, improving efficiencies, , enhancing transparency and improving delivery of mandates related to sustainable development
3. The Secretary-General's "Greening the UN" initiative and the Strategy for a Climate Neutral United Nations adopted by the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)
4. The UNCSD "Agenda 21", the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, MDGs, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UNEP Governing Council decision 26/11, "*Enhanced coordination across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group* (refer above for details), and other policy decisions adopted by member states pertaining to the need for all sectors in society (including UN organizations), to move towards improved sustainability
5. An analysis of how the specific mandate of each organization would benefit from the organization "walking the talk" on sustainability.
6. A detailed description of what a sustainability management system would entail. This would essentially consist of the model for a Sustainability Management System and the proposed common Sustainability Office for the UN system (refer below). These are outlined in more detail below.
7. A cost-benefit analysis of adopting and implementing an organizational sustainability management mandate.

Assuming that the EMG Senior Officials Meeting approves the proposed Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN System at its 17th meeting in September 2011, and that each organization is able to prepare a proposal in 2012 for an organizational SMS, it should be possible to seek a mandate from the appropriate level /governing body (depending on the latter's meeting cycles) in 2013 or 2014.

Success requires that each organization formally assign responsibility for implementation to a dedicated staff member ("sustainability coordinator"). Depending on the type and size of the organization, this may be a part-time or full-time staff member, or a staff team. Most organizations, however, will require

⁴ In this context the "head of organization" refers to the senior most decision maker within the organization to which the SMS will apply. For a specialized agency, this would be the Executive Director, for the UN secretariat in New York, this would be the Secretary General, and for a regional commission, this would be the Executive Secretary.

a full-time dedicated staff member at least for an initial year, in order to get their sustainability management system up and running. Sustainability management responsibilities should not be in addition to other tasks, but be recognized as requiring the coordinator's full attention.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS

Basic principles for SMS are as follows:

- The immediate purpose of the SMS is to allow the organization to manage its sustainability impact in a planned and organized manner, to minimize associated resource use, to improve efficiency, and to reduce associated risks (negative environmental impacts, workplace accidents, health hazards and reputational risks).
- The SMS should meet the needs of the organization, i.e., allow the organization to conduct systematic sustainability management within its mandates and operational parameters.
- The SMS should be based on internationally proven systems/approaches so as to allow comparability and consistency, and to minimize the need for reinventing the wheel. The proposed SMS is consistent with the principles of the ISO 14.001 standard for environmental management systems, but is a simplified version that would not in itself qualify the organization for ISO 14.001 certification. The proposed model would nonetheless provide a basis for organizations to grow their SMS into a system that could eventually be certified.
- The SMS needs to recognize the diversity of character, set-up and resources across UN organizations and should be designed to permit adaptation and adoption by all UN organizations.
- The SMS should as far as possible be supported by the organization's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems.
- The SMS should in no way jeopardize the independence or security of the organization, its assets or its staff.
- The introduction of the SMS should allow for a gradual process, starting with the inclusion of only core organizational functions or work areas, but with the scope for extension to other functions/areas as experience is gained and lessons learned.
- Boundaries of the SMS: The *physical boundaries* of the SMS will include, as a minimum, headquarters and larger UN hubs/regional offices. Over time, these boundaries should expand to include the whole organization. The *functional boundaries* will include, as a minimum, the environmental impacts of internal administrative and operational processes (day-to-day decision-making) over

which UN organizations have direct management control or significant influence. Internal administrative processes supporting field activities (eg., travel) are included, but field projects per se are not.

In order to guarantee comparability and consistency across organizations, the SMS should be based on a common model where common minimum requirements are defined and to which additional functions or parameters can be added as required by each organization. The following elements are proposed for inclusion in the **Model for a Sustainability Management System (SMS) in United Nations organizations** (please refer to Figure 1). The Model will be further elaborated by SUN and the IMG if this proposed Strategic Plan is adopted by EMG Senior Officials Meeting.

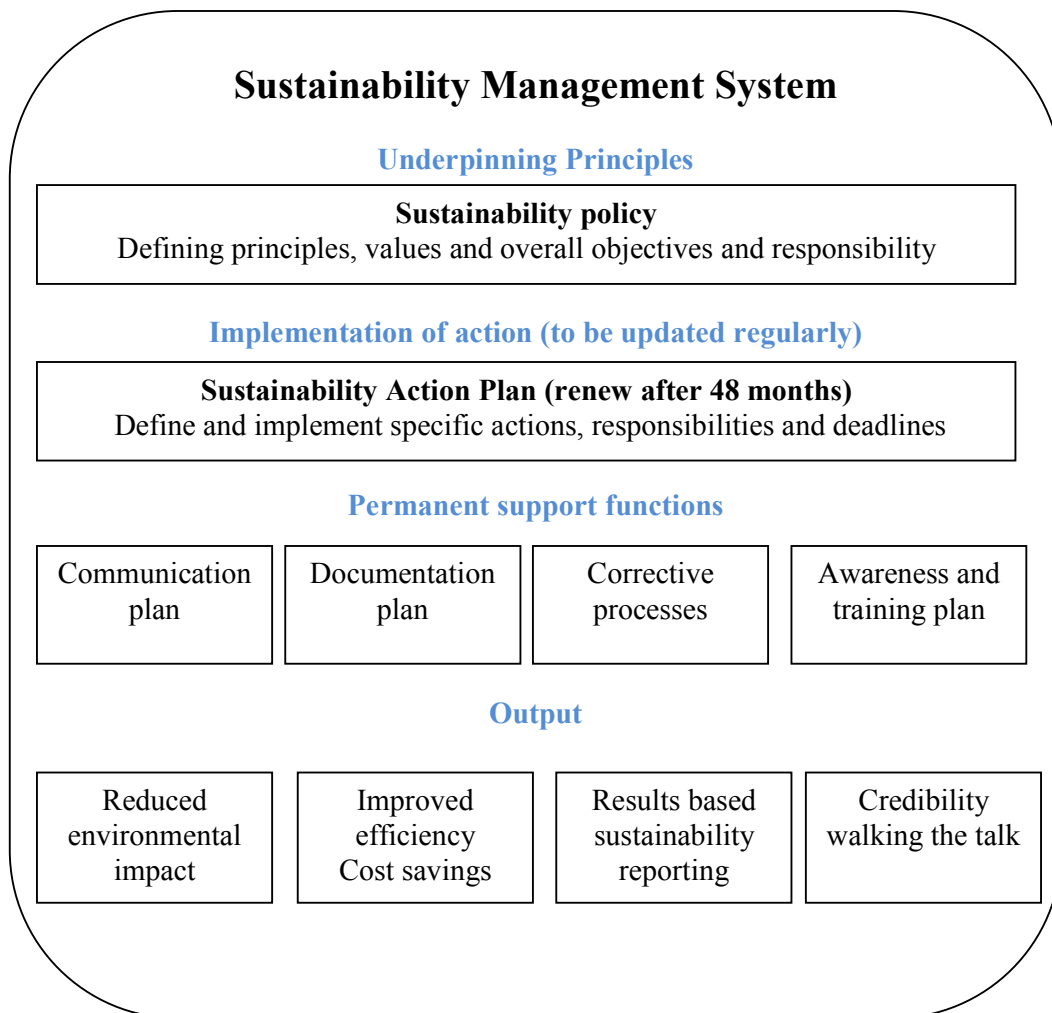


Figure 1: Elements of the Sustainability Management System

Underpinning principles

Develop a draft sustainability policy defining the sustainability values and objectives of the organization to be adopted by the organization's senior management. This policy/statement will express the values and objectives of the organization with regard to sustainability.

In order to ensure that the SMS is anchored in the senior management structure and is recognized as an integrated and long-term function of the organization, the ultimate responsibility for implementation of the SMS will rest with a high-level position (eg, Chief Operational Officer or Head of Administration).

Implementation of action

The SMS will translate the organization's sustainability policy/intentions into action by means of a regularly updated Sustainability Action Plan.

As mentioned above, the day-to-day responsibility for development and implementation of the SMS and its Sustainability Action Plan should be assigned to a dedicated Sustainability Coordinator. Relevant departments and networks such as IT, facilities management, travel unit, etc, should be informed about the role of the Sustainability Coordinator and requested to extend full support within their areas of expertise.

Developing the Sustainability Action Plan would normally entail:

1. Conduct an initial review/identification of the organization's sustainability impact. The greenhouse gas emission reduction strategy that most UN organizations are developing in 2011 may provide a basis for this initial review, complemented by additional information as required.
2. Based on the initial review, select the sustainability priorities for the organization. Define concrete and measurable goals for each priority.
3. Define indicators that will be used for monitoring implementation of the goals. Implementation will be monitored and reported annually.

The following sustainability indicators will be compulsory for all UN organizations to report on:

- a. Emission of greenhouse gases (tons CO₂ eqv/year and /staff member)
- b. Fresh water use (indication of source and amount in m³/year and /staff member)
- c. Generation and management of waste (tons and type of waste generated/year and /staff member, and waste disposal methods used)
- d. Qualitative description of awareness-raising or training of staff members on environmental sustainability related to the organization's functions and operations.

Although not an indicator per se, all UN organizations should also provide a narrative of other measures undertaken to improve the organization's environmental sustainability.

Additional voluntary sustainability indicators, including indicators outside the area of environmental sustainability, may be reported as decided by each organization. A list of standard voluntary indicators, in line with the UN Global Compact principles and the Global Reporting Initiative, is provided in Annex 4. The list in Annex 4 is not exhaustive and organizations may decide to report other indicators as well.

4. Define how (what/when/by whom) key indicators will be monitored, documented and reported.
5. Based on previous steps, finalize the Sustainability Action Plan by defining specific actions to reach the goals. Also identify responsible staff, deadlines, and resource needs required to achieve the goals.

The sustainability action plan will cover an implementation period of four years. At the end of this period, senior management will review progress and, based on lessons learned, adopt a new/updated sustainability action plan for the next 48 month period. The funding required for each action plan will be requested and allocated in accordance with organizational practice.

The adoption of the SMS in general, and of the sustainability action plan in particular, needs to be appropriately resourced with staff and funding. The specific resource needs and potential cost savings will be calculated for each sustainability action plan. Additional benefits, which may be difficult to quantify in monetary terms, e.g., reduced risks for accidents, may also be highlighted in this context.

After review of the plan, the proposal, including the associated budget, needs to be approved by the senior management and, if necessary, by the governing body.

After approval of the plan (including modifications as required), start implementation of the SMS.

Permanent support functions

A documentation plan will describe how SMS implementation decisions, actions, responsibilities and means for carrying them out have to be documented and communicated.

The SMS will stipulate how the organization will take corrective action if objectives/targets are not met.

The SMS will include a communication plan for disseminating the organization's sustainability efforts internally and externally. Responsibilities and means of communication will be clearly stated.

The SMS will include a staff awareness and training plan on environmental sustainability in the workplace.

3. COMMON FUNCTIONS

The responsibility for implementing an SMS in any organization rests with its senior management. In order to streamline and coordinate efforts across the UN system, and also to avoid duplication of costs, it is strongly recommended that certain core functions be managed on a common, UN-wide basis. The OIOS and JIU reports⁵ highlighted the need for a common approach, supported by a joint sustainability office/network, and recommended that the UN system provide this service.

There are three principle advantages to such an approach:

1. In the spirit of One UN reform, it is important that UN system organizations follow a common standard and approach to their sustainability work. This Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN system provides the basis for such coherence. Over time, however, the sustainability agenda is likely to evolve and present new challenges. A “sustainability office”, responsible for providing common functions /services to all UN organizations, would enable long-term coherence and comparability of the UN’s sustainability efforts.
2. Many administrative functions/issues that are shared by UN organizations are coordinated through common UN networks and bodies. Examples include the HLCM networks for procurement, ICT, budgeting and human resources management, as well as the UN networks on facility management, travel, meetings, translation and documentation services. A “sustainability office” would be a natural fit with these inter-agency bodies. The tasks for which it would be responsible are outlined below.
3. Economies of scale mean it would be cheaper for the UN system if certain functions were shared in one place, rather than managed individually.

The nature of tasks that a common “sustainability office” would fulfil include:

1. Prepare an annual sustainability report for the UN system, providing UN agencies and external stakeholders the opportunity to take stock of plans, progress and challenges for the UN system’s sustainability work.
2. Coordinate a network of designated focal points representing each UN organization, act as a forum for discussion, facilitate joint action and problem-solving regarding the UN system’s sustainability efforts.
3. Operate a technical helpdesk to provide direct advisory and support services to the sustainability focal points in each UN organization.

⁵ Please refer to discussions under “Background” above

4. Support cooperation on specific issues related to sustainability management in duty stations where several UN offices are co-located
5. Maintain a shared web platform where all UN organizations can share tools, resources and information, both with each other and with internal and external stakeholders. Today, the Greening the Blue website (www.greeningtheblue.org), supported by SUN, fills this function. The objective of this shared web platform is not to replace individual organizations' sustainability websites, but to complement and link them.
6. Prepare awareness and training materials for sharing and use by all UN organizations.
7. Function as the contact point for interaction on sustainability issues with other interagency bodies and networks. Cooperate with these to develop and maintain a toolbox of guides that address sustainability issues within specific focus areas, such as facilities management, travel and meetings.
8. Operate a service for sharing the UN's sustainability management experiences with outside organizations/sectors that may want to adopt similar approaches.

Many of the common functions described above are today provided by the Issue Management Group on Sustainability Management in the UN system (IMG) and by UNEP's Sustainable UN facility (SUN). The cost of the IMG is shared, in that each organization covers the cost of its staff time and any travel related to the IMG's work. SUN is currently being funded by UNEP, thanks to generous but time-limited support from the Government of Norway.

The current mandates for SUN and the IMG are also time-bound and do not foresee that either will function as long-term coordination mechanisms for sustainability in the UN. There is therefore a need for a formal mandate from a high-level body in the UN system for establishing this common sustainability support function.

It is recommended that Senior Officials of the EMG, at their next meeting in September 2011, decide to seek from the appropriate high-level UN body a decision to establish an interagency support function for sustainability management in the UN system. EMG Senior Officials are requested to consider the following options for the set-up and funding of such a "Sustainability Office".

Organizational set-up of common functions

Based on the precedents of other interagency mechanisms and networks, there are three possible models for a "sustainability office. These, in IMG priority order, are:

1. The Sustainability Office could be established as a formal permanent function under EMG and be administered by UNEP. This set-up would be consistent with EMG's mandate and with UNEP's hosting of the EMG secretariat. It would also align with UNEP's mandate to support sustainability in the UN system, as per the Governing Council decision 26/11, "*Enhanced coordination*

across the United Nations system, including the Environment Management Group”.

2. The Sustainability Office could be established under the HLCM, recognizing sustainability management as an integrated core function in the UN and providing a high level of visibility within the UN system.
3. The Sustainability Office could be established in the Executive Office of the Secretary General, thereby providing concrete substance to the Secretary General’s Greening UN effort. Location in the UN Secretariat in New York would also facilitate recognition of this function as common to the whole UN system.

Funding arrangements of common functions

The Sustainability Office, regardless of its organizational set-up, would need to be financed. Assuming three staff, plus temporary staff/consultants, estimated annual costs, including operational costs, would be in the range of US\$ 1 million.

Possible options for funding the office, in IMG priority order, include:

1. Cost sharing among UN organizations. Given that the sustainability office would serve all UN organizations, it seems reasonable that all UN organizations contribute to its costs. If all UN organizations contributed in equal amounts, the cost would be less than US\$ 20,000 per year for each organization. The purpose and amount could most likely be justified as administrative expenses, which are under the authority of the head of the organization.
2. Funding through the regular budget for the UN Secretariat. This would be relevant in particular if the Sustainability Office were hosted by the UN Secretariat. However, it would require approval by the UN General Assembly, which could be difficult to secure in current financial circumstances.
3. Funding supported by external donors. This is the current set-up of SUN but is not considered to be a viable long-term option. Nonetheless, it might be worth exploring the willingness of donors to support the first few years of the office, as a bridging measure pending confirmation of other internal arrangements.

Some of the office costs could be offset by UN organizations seconding staff to it.

4. FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS IN INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS

Most UN organizations that have started to address their sustainability consider the related costs to be part of the overall administrative costs of the organization. Consequently, the funds required for maintaining their SMS are likely to be charged as administrative costs to the organization’s regular budget. These costs are typically minor compared to those for an organization’s human resources, budgeting,

procurement, or ICT administration. They include:

- Cost of dedicated staff member (sustainability management coordinator)
- One-off costs for external support, if/as needed, for undertaking the initial environmental review
- Communication costs
- Training costs for staff involved in implementation of the SMS

In addition to these running costs, each sustainability action plan will require an implementation budget. Costs, savings and estimated pay-back periods for each proposed action will be part of the plan submitted for senior management approval. These calculations will naturally differ according to the organization's circumstances and ambitions.

Examples of costs/savings for implementation of sustainability actions

UNEP adopted in 2010 its Climate Neutral Strategy, setting out specific activities and deadlines to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions of 3% per year in the period 2010-2012. The estimated budget is as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| - One time investment costs: | US\$ 510.000 |
| - Operating costs (annual): | US\$ 345.000 |
| - Annual savings: | US\$ 773.100* |

Payback period: 19 months

Although not an SMS in itself, UNEP's Climate Neutral Strategy includes many elements that would also be part of an SMS. This example serves to provide an indication of what costs and savings could look like for an SMS.

*) Savings are primarily sourced from reduced travel costs, but also reduced paper consumption. Reduced energy costs were not calculated.

There are several possible models for funding individual organizations' SMS and the implementation of their action plans:

1. The most transparent and straight-forward model would be to recognize the costs for sustainability management as costs for efficiency improvements and therefore charge them directly to the regular budget. In order to ensure continuity of the core functions of the SMS, at least the running costs of the SMS should be charged in this way.
2. Sustainability management costs could also be financed from economic savings generated by sustainability management. Over time, an SMS normally results in reduced costs for the organization. These savings can be significant, e.g., where the SMS contributes to increased use of on-line communication and reduces the need for travel. Existing rules for UN budget administration provide for the establishment of trust funds to which all parts of the organization contribute a portion of their budget. This mechanism could be

used to support the SMS. Once the SMS started to generate savings, some of those savings could be used to replenish the trust fund, thus establishing a revolving fund. A prerequisite for this approach would be that the rules and regulations for charging trust fund costs to other budget lines, and for transferring savings to the trust fund (as compared to a business as usual scenario), be clearly established from the outset.

3. Costs could also be charged to extra-budgetary financing, by levying a fee on externally received funds. This is common practice across the UN system in the form of “project support costs” (PSC). The use of PSC for sustainability management is in principle logical, but it would add costs to a fee that many donors already perceive as too high.
4. In some cases there may be a donor or host government willing to contribute financially to the organization’s SMS implementation. Such contributions are normally time-limited and could be tied to specific projects within the sustainability action plan.
5. Capital budgeting is not common practice in the UN system, but there are examples where the life cycle costs and savings have been considered in investment decisions. While, realistically, the running costs for an SMS could not be met by life cycle accounting, the costs for individual sustainability actions might be treated in this way. As with the trust fund option, life cycle budgeting would require careful consideration of the rules to be applied and their coherence with overarching UN system budgeting rules.

In the preparation of this proposal for a Strategic Plan, several UN organizations have emphasized that while they support to the Plan overall, the access to funding, including dedicated staff time, is a crucial issue for the success of the Plan. Any decision to adopt the Strategic Plan therefore needs to be accompanied with an appropriate funding model.

CONCLUSION

This proposal for a Strategic Plan for Sustainability Management in the UN System suggests practical ways to integrate sustainability management into individual UN organizations, supported by a common support function. The Strategic Plan offers a practical way to meet common needs among UN organizations to “walk the talk” on sustainability, while minimizing costs and maximizing benefits through a “One UN” approach.

The proposal highlights the importance of moving away from current ad-hoc and project-based approaches to sustainability management, towards an integrated, permanent and coordinated approach based on a clear mandate from governing bodies.

The proposal takes stock of, and builds on, current efforts to develop emission reduction plans for each organization, essentially upgrading them to sustainability action plans, which will serve as a core element of the UN Sustainability Management System.

Finally, the proposal provides a menu of options for how to organize and fund a common sustainability function/office that will provide common services to all UN organizations in relation to their sustainability work.

In order to realize this proposal, IMG recommends the following course of action:

- 1. EMG-SOM to seek a decision from the appropriate senior level UN body to support the establishment of Sustainability Management Systems in all UN organizations, as outlined in this proposal.**
- 2. EMG-SOM to request that this decision, while recognizing the potential for long-term net savings from sustainability management, also reflect that implementation will require access to funding resources.**
- 3. EMG-SOM to propose that this decision emphasize the need for each UN organization to:**
 - Assign responsibility for developing the organization-specific SMS to a senior staff member**
 - Dedicate staff to develop documents and processes required to implement the organization specific SMS**
 - Seek a mandate from the relevant governing body, or from an appropriate level within the organization, to provide the formal basis for the adoption of the SMS**
 - Report progress on implementation of the decision to EMG on an annual basis.**
- 4. EMG-SOM to further seek a decision from the appropriate senior level UN body to establish a Sustainability Office to provide long-term support to all organizations for implementation of their sustainability work, accompanied by an agreed funding model to support the same.**

This proposal has been developed by the Issue Management Group for Sustainability management in the UN System, in response to a request to this end from the 16th Senior Officials Meeting of EMG (EMG-SOM). This proposal is submitted to the 17th EMG-SOM for consideration and action.

Annex 1: Summary of JIU and OIOS reports

Joint Inspection Unit Report “Environmental profile of the United Nations System organizations – review of their in-house environmental management policies and practices” (JIU/REP/2010/1)

The full report can be downloaded at:

http://www.unjiu.org/data/reports/2010/en2010_1.pdf

Executive Summary

Objective: the objective of this report is to assess the environmental policies and practices of the secretariats of the United Nations system organizations on their sustainable use of resources, including energy consumption, in light of their mission to promote relevant internationally accepted environmental conventions. The report highlights best practices and identifies norms and benchmarks of the business policies and measures to be promoted throughout these organizations and their partner entities and organs.

Main findings and conclusions

The report contains twelve recommendations, three addressed to the General Assembly, four to the Secretary-General, and five to executive heads of United Nations system organizations, the implementation of which should contribute to an enhanced role for the United Nations system to lead by example in improving its internal in-house environmental management.

- This report has taken into consideration the lessons learned and good practices developed not only within the United Nations system, but also in other international organizations that have been achieving climate neutrality and enhancing their environmental profile through greening initiatives which encompass reduction of CO₂ emissions, sustainable procurement, building management, water and waste management, and moving towards environmental management systems (EMSs).
- Overall, the report reveals that a variety of viable means and initiatives already exist within the system which will improve environmental performance, drawing on technological progress in energy use and production, and environmental protection and sustainability, leading to considerable cost savings.
- However, these actions are being developed in a piecemeal manner as the organizations of the United Nations system lack a formal and systematic framework for an integrated in-house environmental management system based on explicit legislative mandates and applicable environmental norms and standards, as well as administrative and managerial leadership at the senior level. Many secretariats of United Nations system organizations are still far from their commitment to “practice what you preach” as they are not sure

whether and how they should apply the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) which their Member States have adopted.

- Coordination between the organizations of the United Nations system on the climate-neutral initiative has produced a system-wide accounting framework for CO₂ emissions and a critical mass of networked environment managers across the system. This is a landmark asset for a seminal contribution by the United Nations system towards the adoption of broader in-house environmental management policies to improve its environmental profile, and thus motivate by example Member States and other stakeholders to undertake more sustainable environmental management.

Recommendations for consideration by legislative organs

- **Recommendations 2, 3 and 11** which are directly addressed to legislative organs for action, call for the General Assembly to monitor and support the efforts of the Secretary-General to enact, develop and implement in-house sustainable policies through e.g. implementation of EMSs along the lines of the ISO 14001 standard, climate neutrality, energy savings and use of new sources of energy, sustainable procurement, and waste and other resources management, inter alia, and to increase the accountability of the organizations vis-à-vis Member States in this area. The General Assembly should also periodically review the application of principles and policies on in-house environmental management.
- Regular reporting to the General Assembly on the state of implementation of the climate neutral initiative is recommended to identify further administrative and budgetary implications of such environmental measures, and in particular carbon offsetting, in order for the General Assembly to support their implementation with the concurrence of Member States (**Recommendation 3**). The General Assembly should also request the Secretary-General as Chairman of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), to promote sharing of information on experience and best practices for enhancing the environmental management and performance of their organizations through a peer-review process among the members of the Environment Management Group (EMG) (**Recommendation 11**).

Other findings and recommendations

- A key finding of the report is the pivotal role to be played by the Secretary-General as Chairman of the CEB, as reflected in **Recommendations 1, 5 and 7** of the report. These recommendations call on him to take initiatives within the United Nations system to (a) compile and streamline existing instruments and guidelines on in-house environmental management, (b) launch an internal carbon offsetting mechanism to save brokerage and other costs for the purchase of certified emission reductions (CERs) issued by the Clean Development Mechanism, and (c) issue a CEB statement designed to promote not only achieving climate neutrality, but also the implementation of all MEAs by the secretariats of the organizations. This would consist in the adoption by

CEB member organizations of overall environmental management policies and EMSs adapted to their respective needs.

- In order to consolidate the impact resulting from the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations to the Secretary-General, **Recommendation 12** calls for him to inform Member States, staff and the public, with the support of the Department of Public Information (DPI), of the results of the strategies adopted, developed and implemented.
- Last but not least, the coordinated effort across the system to strengthen the environmental strategy, and the resulting improvement in environmental performance, undoubtedly requires the participation and endorsement of the executive heads of all the organizations, with respect to applicable environmental norms and standards and administrative and financial procedures. In particular it will be important for the executive heads to endorse and abide by those standards and procedures applicable to sustainable procurement and to improve interaction with host countries (**Recommendations 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10**). A set of proposed actions is identified as follows:
 - Facilitate the carbon offsets of organizations for air travel and improve the monitoring, accounting and reporting on these actions by using the existing environmental management accounting (EMA) guidelines developed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (**Recommendation 4**).
 - Promote the greening of United Nations premises in line with the local conditions of the host countries. To this end, host country agreements with United Nations system organizations could include voluntary annexes to help improve environmental performance in their offices in line with the best local environmental practices. They should also encourage sustainable procurement of goods and services integrated with local supply chains in the host countries, in order to avoid adversely affecting the interests of particular stakeholders or specific country groups (**Recommendations 6, 8 and 10**).
 - Identify common norms and standards applicable to in-house environmental management based on best practices identified in United Nations system organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations/Department of Field Support, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Environment Programme and make staff members fully aware of and responsible for such a policy to ensure its effective implementation (**Recommendation 9**).

Office of Internal Oversight Services report “Implementation by the Environmental Management Group (EMG) Secretariat of the Secretary-General’s Commitment to Move the United Nations Towards Climate-Neutrality” (IED-09-002)

Executive Summary

On World Environment Day in June 2007, the Secretary-General of the United Nations announced that the United Nations would lead by example in responding to threat of climate change. In October 2007, each chief executive of a UN programme or agency pledged to move their organisation towards climate-neutrality and committed to, by the end of 2009:

- estimating their greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with international standards;
- undertaking efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the extent possible; and
- analysing the cost implications and budgetary modalities of purchasing carbon offsets to eventually reach climate-neutrality.

The United Nations Environment Programme was tasked with providing UN organisations with support in managing the process of moving towards climate-neutrality, with the United Nations Environment Management Group (EMG) reporting to the UN system Chief Executives Board for Coordination on progress.

OIOS found that, despite a slow start, agency awareness of the climate-neutral commitment has begun to increase. Initial steps to address the commitment have been taken by most UN system agencies and common approaches and joint actions are being developed within the framework of EMG. However, there remain a number of critical issues that must be addressed in order that the UN can credibly claim to be moving towards climate-neutrality.

Firstly, UN agencies, under the leadership of EMG, must resolve remaining issues on the methodology for preparing the inventories of greenhouse gas emissions, especially the methods for estimating the full climate- impacts of official air travel.

Secondly, focus must begin to be placed on implementing concrete measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, especially those emissions arising from official travel—a major contributor to total UN greenhouse gas emissions. With regard to the possibility that more travel is undertaken than truly necessary and appropriate, OIOS expresses strong concern with the potential for conflict-of- interest posed by personal accrual of ‘frequent flyer air miles’.

Finally, agencies must begin to resolve the outstanding questions of policy surrounding any investment in offsets required to achieve climate-neutrality, the mechanisms for doing so, and the opportunity cost associated with the purchase by UN agencies of offsets.

UNEP, through both the EMG secretariat and the SUN Facility, have thus far provided good support for the climate-neutral commitment. However, especially given the limited resources available to both areas, there is a risk that not all the support needs of UN agencies will be able to be met, especially in time for the end of 2009 CEB target timeframe for action.

Within the UN Secretariat, although there have been some actions taken that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions (most notably the energy efficiency measures associated with the Capital Master Plan renovation), these have been ad hoc and uncoordinated. The Secretariat must develop a formal strategy for achieving climate-neutrality and identify the appropriate areas for action and assign responsibility for achieving results.

OIOS has made nine recommendations (variously directed to UNEP, the UN Secretariat, or to the Secretary-General) aimed at improving support for the climate-neutral commitment and implementation of the commitment within the UN Secretariat.

Annex 2: Examples of member states that have adopted SMS in their own operations or are using SMS as a tool for quality control in context of stakeholder cooperation

- Australia: Mandated by S516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, Australian Government departments and agencies are required to report on their sustainability performance as part of their Annual Reports. This effort is further supported through a number of tools including environmental management systems, the use of water intensity benchmarks for public buildings, and adoption of an ICT sustainability plan.
- Sweden: Since 2006, all public organizations in Sweden are required to implement SMS based on the ISO 14.001 standard, and to publicly report implementation annually to the Government. Currently 178 public authorities and organizations in Sweden are reporting on their sustainability performance.
- United Kingdom: The Environment Agency has adopted an Environment Accounting System which seeks to *“support the integration of environmental performance measures into our core financial processes and to track internal environmentally significant expenditure”*. The Agency further states that *“We believe that environmental accounting is a vital tool to assist in the management of our environmental risks, and operational costs. To ensure good corporate governance we believe a business should publish environmental accounting disclosures in corporate documents. Our accounts direction requires us to disclose ‘a policy and financial statement on the Environment Agency’s internally significant environmental issues including conserving energy, reducing waste and greenhouse gases from its own operations’*.”
- United States of America: Executive order 13514, *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*, requires all parts of the federal government to undertake action with regard to: Accountability and Transparency; Strategic Sustainability Performance Planning; Greenhouse Gas Management ; Sustainable Buildings and Communities; Water Efficiency; Electronic Products and Services; Fleet and Transportation Management ; Pollution Prevention and Waste Reduction.
- A number of Governments also use ISO 14.001 as a management tool to ensure quality control and reduce risks when engaging with partners and suppliers by requiring certification. This is used e.g. in Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Thailand.⁶

⁶ “A Decade of ISO 14.001 – A Special Report (ISO 2007)

Annex 3: CURRENT STATUS OF SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS IN THE UN SYSTEM

Currently the in-house sustainability effort in the UN system is carried out mainly as part of the implementation of the UN Climate Neutral Strategy, supported by the EMG, SUN and IMG. Significant progress has been made in implementation of the UN Climate Neutral Strategy over the past three years.

- The second **common greenhouse gas inventory** for the UN system was released in early 2011 in the report “*Moving Towards a Climate Neutral UN*”. The report includes inventories from 52 UN organizations and describes their emission reduction efforts so far. The total climate footprint of the UN system in 2008 was 1.7 million tons CO₂ eqv. The report is available on-line at <http://www.greeningtheblue.org/resources/climate-neutrality>.
- An improved system for **on-line reporting of greenhouse gas emission inventories** has been developed, with valuable support by UN DFS and ICAO.
- Work has been initiated in the **HLCM networks and other common UN networks** to develop recommendations on how to reduce the climate footprint within respective focus areas. This includes, amongst others, the networks for Communications (UNCG), Facilities Management (INFM), Travel (IATN), Procurement, and Information and Communication Technologies
- UN organizations represented in the IMG have initiated work to develop specific **emission reduction strategies** with defined targets and timelines for specific emission reduction activities. As of May 2011, 21 UN organizations had reported their draft emission reduction strategies.
- **Guidelines** for sustainable travel, climate friendly building and offices, energy efficient buildings, distance work, sustainable procurement, as well as an overview Guide to Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions in UN organizations were prepared by SUN with input from IMG and relevant HLCM networks. To further support UN organizations to prepare their annual greenhouse gas inventories and emission reduction plans, SUN has set up a hands-on Help Desk. The Help Desk provides training through online seminar and responds to questions related to data collection and emission reduction plans.
- Communication is key to implementing the UN climate neutral strategy, which is why SUN, with support from EMG and the UN communications group, has established a **new common communication platform** – *Greening the Blue* - for internal and external communications on climate neutrality and sustainability management in the UN. The platform, which was launched on World Environment Day 2010 at www.greeningtheblue.org, is supported by social network applications, such as Facebook and Twitter. To further disseminate the resources and lessons learnt from the UN Climate Neutral Strategy and to **provide support to organizations outside the UN**, SUN has also established an advisory service under the UNEP-hosted Climate Neutral Network.
- Forty case studies have been compiled and posted on Greening the Blue, showcasing different projects in various UN organizations aimed at reducing

the UN's climate footprint and improving its sustainability. Within the work on UN buildings, this includes a number of **demonstration projects with strong sustainability features**, such as the Capital Master Plan in New York, the construction of a Green One UN House in Hanoi, and of a New Office Facility at UNON in Nairobi.

- IAMDLAP (International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications) has established a Task force on Sustainable Meetings. The Network, which includes UN and all other international organizations, has embarked on the development of a set of common rules and indicators to make events and conference services more sustainable and to report on the results in a comparable way.
- The IMG has developed a Guide for the **Procurement of Offsets in UN Organizations**, which provides technical guidance on how offsets may be procured in the UN. In addition, the IMG has finalized a policy recommendation to the EMG, to be presented at its next meeting, on how to implement offsetting in each UN organization, if possible, in line with the recommendations of the UN Climate Neutral Strategy.
- The issue of **Sustainable Procurement (SP)** in the UN is being deliberated in the General Assembly, with input provided by the IMG and the HLCM procurement network. Nine guidelines for sustainable procurement of specific products/services have been released at www.greeningtheblue.org/resources/procurement (IT, cleaning, stationary, furniture, toner cartridges, vehicles, canteens, generators and batteries, freight forwarding services). Another two will be developed in 2011-2012 (heating/cooling and alternative energies). In addition, over 250 staff have been trained in sustainable procurement in nine duty stations (Nairobi, Rome, Copenhagen, Bangkok, Panama, Lima, Berne, Geneva and Brindisi). An on-line tutorial on Sustainable procurement will be published in fall 2011.
- The Umoja project, which is charged with **implementing a modern Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system** in the UN Secretariat, has initiated, together with the IMG and SUN, a “community of practice” so as to ensure that the new ERP system will be designed to fully support sustainability in the UN.
- Greenhouse gas emissions from the official travel of staff, meeting participants, experts and others contributes to approximately 50% of the UN system's climate footprint. SUN, with support from the IMG and ICAO, has released a guide to **sustainable travel in the UN** and has launched a review of how UN travel policies affect the potential for practising sustainable travel.
- The Interagency Network for Facility managers (INFM) has established a working group to develop **best practice guidance for sustainability management of UN buildings**. This will apply to all UN facilities in more than 500 duty stations around the world.

The work of IMG has also connected **local “Green teams”** in many UN duty stations with each other. These Green Teams are voluntary staff initiatives to improve the sustainability of their workplace or operations. They are now sharing tools and ideas to support each other through e.g. the Greening the Blue website.

Annex 4: List of voluntary indicators

Note – this list is based in GRI indicators and Global Compact principles. It is not exhaustive and other indicators may be chosen by the reporting organizations as they see suitable for their circumstances

ENVIRONMENT

1. Materials used by weight or volume
2. Percentage of **m**aterials used that are recycled input materials
3. Direct energy consumption by primary energy source
4. Indirect energy consumption by primary source
5. Energy saved due to conservation and efficiency improvements
6. Initiatives to provide energy-efficient or renewable energy based products and services, and reductions in energy requirements as a result of these initiatives
7. Initiatives to reduce indirect energy consumption and reductions achieved
8. Total water withdrawal by source
9. Water sources significantly affected by withdrawal of water
10. Percentage and total volume of water recycled and reused
11. Location and size of land owned, leased, managed in, or adjacent to, protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value outside protected areas
12. Description of significant impacts of activities, products, and services on biodiversity in protected areas and areas of high biodiversity value outside protected areas
13. Habitats protected or restored
14. Strategies, current actions, and future plans for managing impacts on biodiversity
15. Number of IUCN Red List species and national conservation list species with habitats in areas affected by operations, by level of extinction risk
16. Total direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions by weight
17. Other relevant indirect greenhouse gas emissions by weight
18. Initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reductions achieved
19. Emissions of ozone-depleting substances by weight
20. NO, SO, and other significant air emissions by type and weight
21. Total water discharge by quality and destination
22. Total weight of waste by type and disposal method

23. Total number and volume of significant spills
24. Weight of transported, imported, exported, or treated waste deemed hazardous under the terms of the Basel Convention Annex I, II, III, and VIII, and percentage of transported waste shipped internationally
25. Identity, size, protected status, and biodiversity value of water bodies and related habitats significantly affected by the reporting organization's discharges of water and runoff
26. Initiatives to mitigate environmental impacts of products and services, and extent of impact mitigation
27. Percentage of products sold and their packaging materials that are reclaimed by category
28. Monetary value of significant fines and total number of nonmonetary sanctions for non-compliance with environmental laws and regulations
29. Significant environmental impacts of transporting products and other goods and materials used for the organization's operations, and transporting members of the workforce
30. Total environmental protection expenditures and investments by type

LABOUR

31. Total workforce by employment type, employment contract, and region
32. Total number and rate of employee turnover by age group, gender, and region
33. Benefits provided to full-time employees that are not provided to temporary or part-time employees, by major operations
34. Percentage of employees covered by collective bargaining agreements
35. Minimum notice period(s) regarding operational changes, including whether it is specified in collective agreements
36. Percentage of total workforce represented in formal joint management-worker health and safety committees that help monitor and advise on occupational health and safety programs
37. Rates of injury, occupational diseases, lost days, and absenteeism, and number of work-related fatalities by region
38. Education, training, counseling, prevention, and risk-control programs in place to assist workforce members, their families, or community members regarding serious diseases
39. Health and safety topics covered in formal agreements with trade unions
40. Average hours of training per year per employee by employee category
41. Programs for skills management and lifelong learning that support the continued employability of employees and assist them in managing career endings

42. Percentage of employees receiving regular performance and career development reviews
43. Composition of governance bodies and breakdown of employees per category according to gender, age group, minority group membership, and other indicators of diversity
44. Ratio of basic salary of men to women by employee category

HUMAN RIGHTS

45. Percentage and total number of significant investment agreements that include human rights clauses or that have undergone human rights screening
46. Percentage of significant suppliers and contractors that have undergone screening on human rights and actions taken
47. Total hours of employee training on policies and procedures concerning aspects of human rights that are relevant to operations, including the percentage of employees trained
48. Total number of incidents of discrimination and actions taken
49. Operations identified in which the right to exercise freedom of association and collective bargaining may be at significant risk, and actions taken to support these rights
50. Operations identified as having significant risk for incidents of child labor, and measures taken to contribute to the elimination of child labor
51. Operations identified as having significant risk for incidents of forced or compulsory labor, and measures to contribute to the elimination of forced or compulsory labor
52. Percentage of security personnel trained in the organization's policies or procedures concerning aspects of human rights that are relevant to operations
53. Total number of incidents of violations involving rights of indigenous people and actions taken

SOCIETY

54. Nature, scope, and effectiveness of any programs and practices that assess and manage the impacts of operations on communities, including entering, operating, and exiting
55. Percentage and total number of business units analyzed for risks related to corruption
56. Percentage of employees trained in organization's anti-corruption policies and procedures
57. Actions taken in response to incidents of corruption

58. Public policy positions and participation in public policy development and lobbying
59. Total value of financial and in-kind contributions to political parties, politicians, and related institutions by country
60. Experience in inclusion of sustainability criteria in procurement policies or procedures,
61. Total number of legal actions for anti-competitive behavior, anti-trust, and monopoly practices and their outcomes
62. Monetary value of significant fines and total number of non-monetary sanctions for non-compliance with laws and regulations