

The UN Sustainability Framework

- do no harm and do good

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Sustainable Development in the UN system
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Overview of presentation

- I. Background and context
- II. The Sustainability Framework
- III. Ensuring wider uptake of the SF in the UN system: The Interim Guide and the Options Paper
- IV. Considerations for the future

Part I

BACKGROUND

Substantive context

- **UN norms and conventions** setting standards for *Member States* since
- **The UN Global Compact (2000)** inviting the *private sector* to align themselves with 10 principles (human rights, labour, environment, anti-corruption)
- **A Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability in the UN System (2011)** - looking inwards, inviting *UN entities* to ‘taste their own medicine’

Process context

- **UN Summit on System-wide Coherence** (2005) – strengthen linkages between normative and operational work of the UN
- **EMG SOM (2009)** decides to ‘explore options for a common UN system approach for environmental and social safeguards’ leading to the development of the **UN Sustainability Framework (2011)**
- **GEF Council (2011-)** agrees on GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards and requests GEF Agencies to ensure that M&E systems for environmental and socioeconomic impact are in place
- **Rio+20 (2012)** asks for system-wide coherence in support of SD, including operational activities and management of facilities (para 93-96)

Internal UN process

- **EMG consultative process** (2010-) co-chaired by UNDP and UNEP provided guidance to smaller working group (UNDP, UNEP, WFP, WHO) who drafted the SF report supported by a consultant based i.a. on mapping exercise
- SF report presented to **HLCM and CEB** (spring 2012)
- The SF included as key building block in **SG's report on mainstreaming SD in the UN system** (2013)
- **Interim Guide** to support entities in implementation of the SF (EMG draft 2013)
- **Options paper** (EMG 2013) to further wider uptake of the SF in all its dimensions through UN inter-agency mechanisms

Part II

THE SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

From Safeguards Approach to Sustainability Framework (SF)

- Safeguards approach found to be too narrow for the UN system
- The SF encompasses the normative, operational (safeguards) and management and aims at:
 - Balancing flexibility and accountability
 - Adding value to existing procedures and policies
 - Applying to all types of UN activities
 - Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and transparency
 - Advancing internal systemic approaches (not mainstreaming of one issue or the other, or new strategies)

“The SF is an empty shell”

... with three shelves to be filled by entities adapted to their specific circumstances:

1. Planning/policy

- Strategic Plans, UNDAFs etc.

2. Programmes/projects

- Quality assurance, safeguards

3. Facilities/operations (“management”)

- GHG emissions, procurement, buildings etc.

Environmental and social sustainability

Examples of ES include:

- Impacts on and management of ecosystems including
 - Air and atmosphere including climate
 - Biodiversity
 - Forests
 - Land and soil
 - Water
 - Impacts on and management of non-renewable resources
- (cont.)

Examples of SS include:

- Access and equity in delivery of benefits
 - Access to basic health, clean water, water resources, energy, education, housing, employment, land rights and other rights (such as political association, information and justice)
 - Exposure to pollution of air, land, and water and to consequences of climate change
- (cont.)

Environmental and social sustainability (cont.)

Examples of ES include:

- Management of hazardous waste (including production, storage, transport, treatment and disposal)
- Management of chemicals (including use and disposal)

Examples of SS include:

- Absence of involuntary displacement of individuals, groups or communities and disruption of livelihoods
- Access to safe and decent working conditions
- Absence of use of forced or child labour

Economic sustainability?

- Why is economic sustainability not part of the framework?
- Could this third dimension be added in a meaningful way?
- What is the difference between sustainability and sustainable development?

The Interim Guide (draft) targetting individual entities

I. Getting started:

- Identify **drivers of action** on environmental and social sustainability, both internal and external, to help effect sustainability changes.
- Perform a **self-assessment** to determine the status of sustainability and identify opportunities for adopting sustainability measures
- Develop an **action plan** for effecting environmental and social sustainability changes

II. Identify and assemble the building blocks

Part III

ENSURING WIDER UPTAKE OF THE SF IN THE UN SYSTEM

The Options Paper

- Targets IA-mechanisms (CEB, HLCP, HLCM, UNDG, ECESA+, EMG), evaluation (UNEG) and inspection, (JIU) suggesting potential roles for their consideration
- Invites discussion about the affiliation of a future ‘hub’ for the SF to better reflect its full scope (environmental and social sustainability)
- Invites discussion about future reporting on the SF to Member States

The Options Paper (cont.)

Examples:

UNDG could decide that it will take the Sustainability Framework into account in the following contexts:

- When revising its **Guidance on Joint Programming** (whose safeguards will apply when and where?)
- If revising the **UNDAF guidelines** (how to enhance the environmental and social sustainability of UNDAFs)
- In the context of **Delivering as One**
- With regard to the **use of country systems**, particularly impact assessments and supporting capacity building

UNEG could be invited to play a role with regard to **monitoring and evaluation** of the progress made for individual agencies or the system as a whole.

Part IV

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

What next?

- Take the Options Paper through the planned consultations
- Continue and upscale efforts in individual entities
- Develop common principles and indicators for the SF
- Include the SF in roadmap for accelerating the integration of the three dimensions of SD in the UN
- Include the SF in considerations about making the UN ‘fit for purpose’ to support an integrated post-2015 and SDG development framework