**Management Group (MG) of the UN-REDD Programme**

**Minutes of the MG Planning Retreat 15-17 September 2015**

**UNEP, Nairobi**

**Participants:**

MG members and alternates

FAO: Maria Sanz Sanchez (remote)

UNDP: Tim Clairs, Josep Gari

UNEP: Tim Christophersen, Edoardo Zandri

Secretariat: Mario Boccucci, Mirey Atallah

Others

Secretariat: Mike Speirs, Jessica Holterhof, Tom Blomley

*The main objectives of this MG planning retreat was to discuss the transition arrangements and strategic staffing, clarify the comparative advantages of all three UN agencies for the next Programme cycle 2016-2020, as well as finalize the 2016-2020 results framework and results-based management arrangements. Feedback from the main donor countries on the transition document package did provide additional support to the discussion. Taking advantage of the location, the MG met with the Africa Regional Team to discuss current gaps and needs for implementation at regional and country level, ensuring that suggestions from them can further inform the MG discussion. Additionally, as this was the last MG planning retreat before PB15 in November, the PB15 agenda, preparation and any MG supporting action were also discussed.*

**1. Decisions**

**a. Approval of agenda**

Decisions and Actions:

* + The Secretariat will provide an overview of decisions and actions to be taken at the end of the meeting.
	+ The Secretariat will provide a report on the planning retreat as soon as possible.
	+ MG will provide written comments as soon as possible, if necessary.

**b. Governance arrangements**

Decisions and Actions:

* The Secretariat will provide a first draft TOR for the UN representative at the Executive Board, as consultations with the MPTF and the legal departments of all three UN agencies have identified the need to provide further clarification on liabilities and responsibilities. In case it is not legally possible for UNEP and/or FAO to approve of one UN agency representing the other two, it will need to be proposed that all three agencies will participate in the EB decision-making process with one ‘UN-REDD agencies’ voice, and rotate during the EB meeting, if necessary.
* After internal discussion with LAC partner countries, the MG agreed that in regard to donor representation at NSC level, the text in the current governance arrangements will be changed from ‘donors’ to ‘donor constituency’.

**c. Fund Terms of Reference**

Decisions and Actions:

* *Earmarked funds for PAM programmes -* The MG identified the following sequencing once countries have been selected for earmarked funding by donors:
1. Internal funds earmarked by UN-REDD and donors
2. Scoping mission
3. Establishment of NSC
4. Design of PAM programme
5. Validation by stakeholders
6. Internal review by UN agencies
7. Technical review by independent experts
8. MG letter triggering approval of the NSC
9. Submission to NSC for approval

Prior to the establishment of the PAM programme, estimated costs to cover both quality assurance and preparatory technical support will be decided on together with the donor, the MPTF and the UN agencies.

* *Earmarked funds for PAM programmes -* The MG agreed that in addition to pledges for up-front cost of staff, which is to be approved by the EB, the UN-REDD Programme will ask for a companion coefficient (approximately 12%) to the PAM programme budget that will be transferred directly to the agencies without approval of the NSC or EB. A breakdown of such additional costs will be discussed internally with the donor, and will depend on the overall size of the PAM programme.
* *Earmarked funds for PAM programmes –* The EB will be informed of the status of the PAM programme by the NSC, and will be able to acknowledge the progress.
* *Earmarked funds for PAM programmes –* The Secretariat will update the associated workflows, which will be circulated to the MG for comment as soon as possible.
* *Non-earmarked funds for readiness programmes –* The MG identified the following sequencing for non-earmarked readiness programmes:
1. Prioritization and selection of countries
2. Draft submission of shortened Joint Programme Document for comment to the EB
3. First hearing at EB meeting
4. Approval of fund allocations by EB
5. Final submission of the Joint Programme Document
6. Second hearing at EB meeting and endorsement of the Joint Programme Document
7. Establishment of NSC

The MG agreed that the UN-REDD Programme will remain having one Joint Programme document that will identify the Programme support at country level in a coherent way.

* *Targeted Support –* The MG agreed that the EB will approve of the annual budget envelope, whereas the MG will have the decision-making power to agree on who will receive such multi- and/or single-agency support. The MG will provide detailed information to the EB as to ensure a transparent and more informal decision-making process.
* *Targeted Support –* The MG agreed that individual evaluation for Targeted Support projects will be done if the budget exceeds 500,000 USD. Otherwise, clustered evaluation is fine.

**d. Criteria for country selection**

Decisions and Actions:

* The MG identified the following sequencing for the approval of criteria for country selection of non-earmarked programmes:
1. Establishment of criteria for country selection by the UN-REDD Programme
2. Informal consultation at PB15 (without endorsement)
3. Consultation and approval by the EB at first meeting in March 2016
4. Call for Expression of Interest (on annual basis)
5. Submission of Expression of Interest by countries
6. Internal review by UN agencies
7. Approval by the EB at second meeting in June 2016
* Based on the MG discussions, UNDP will update its list on country criteria. The Secretariat will then double-check such list with the current template for EOIs as well as the country scorecards to avoid duplication, and will provide an updated draft for comment to the MG. The Secretariat will then prepare a criteria list for readiness countries that will be aligned with the criteria for PAM countries. Once internal review by the UN agencies has been done, the set of criteria will be circulated to PB members (deadline: 25 October 2015).

**e. 2016-2020 Results Framework – Sessions 1 and 2**

Decisions and Actions:

* The results framework matrix will be finalized without specifying indicators for the outputs.
* A first draft two-by-two matrix in order to identify appropriate baselines and targets will be prepared. The current 62 UN-REDD partner countries will be used as the baseline pool for now, and targets will be identified for countries regardless if the outcomes have been achieved with or without the direct support of the UN-REDD Programme.
* The MG will provide written comments on the updated draft results framework by Wednesday, 23 September. The Secretariat will provide the updated draft by latest Friday, 25 September 2015.
* The Secretariat will prepare an answer to the Norwegian government, addressing the comments that have been received on Monday, 14 September.
* The Secretariat will provide a companion document/narrative to the results framework that will capture the essence of the reasoning behind the impacts, outcomes, and the baseline/targets, and circulate with the latest draft of the results framework.

**g. PB15 agenda**

Decisions and Actions:

* The MG acknowledged the timeframe for consultation on the PB agenda, and agreed to provide final written comments by Monday, 21 September.

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| 21 Sept | Deadline to receive comments from MG (2 weeks)(*In parallel, MG shares with their respective SG*) |
| 22 Sept | Send draft to country Co-chair for information (*In parallel, begin draft annotations*) |
| 29 Sept | Deadline to receive comments from SG/Co-chairs |
| 29 Sept | Send draft agenda for translation |
| 9 October | Circulate draft to PB (4 weeks before PB meeting) |
| 26 October | Post draft Agenda on workspace-website (10-day rule) |
|  |
| \*21 Sept- 26 October - Refine Annotated agenda, finalize content, identify leads for sessions, identify and invite panel speakers, etc.27 October – Send Annotated agenda for translation3 November – Post Annotated agenda on workspace |

* The MG agreed that the following changes will be made to the agenda (based on first round of comments):
* The discussion on the results framework should precede the presentation of criteria for country selection, which will additionally be separated from the needs and readiness assessment discussion.
* The presentation on final NP evaluations will be shifted under Session 3 for National Programmes.
* Session 5 on nomination of stakeholder representatives for the interim EB will be moved to the end of Day 1. The first session will provide a platform for discussion, and potential problems will be discovered soon enough. It will give the different PB members to further discuss, if necessary. Final nominations will be done during wrap-up.
* The panel discussions will be simplified, and should focus on presentations to underline the positive lessons learned of the Programme. The Secretariat will identify the most suitable panel speakers.

The Secretariat will circulate the updated draft to the MG and SG for final comment by the beginning of next week.

* The MG will provide written comments on the concept note for the Knowledge Exchange day together with the FCPF by Monday, 21 September. Focus of discussion will be set on SIS, PAMs, FRELs, and social inclusion, whereas the following focal points will take on further discussion with the FCPF: PAMs – Bruno, Ivo; SIS – Steve; Social inclusion – Josep; FRELs – Maria.

 **g. Transition phase**

Decisions and Actions:

* The MG will provide a final draft budget for staff cost in the transition phase 2016 as soon as possible. The Secretariat will then communicate the overall sum to the Government of Norway.
* The Secretariat will further look into a potential pledging session at the UN-REDD Assembly during the Oslo Exchange, and will check with donors if they envisage any other opportunity to announce their pledge.

**h. Meeting with the Regional Africa Team**

Decisions and Actions:

* The Regional Africa Team will provide information on the following aspects: (i) the business case for Africa, and (ii) a rationale for the five proposed PAM countries – Cote d’Ivoire, DRC, Republic of Congo, Uganda and Zambia.

**2. Minutes**

Minutes of the discussion listed below are presented in line with the circulated agenda, including a short summary of each session, and synthesis of the main discussion points where there was either convergence and/or disagreement, followed by any actions and decisions to be taken.

The meeting was opened by Mr Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, and Ms Mette Wilkie, Director of the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (UNEP/DEPI) and UN-REDD SG member.

**Session 2 – Developing the 2016-2020 Results Framework**

*The ability to aggregate and generate the necessary information for tracking progress and reporting results is a critical dimension of the next phase of the Programme as it has been raised both by the constituency and by different evaluations/audits, etc. At the last MG planning retreat, a two-day session with experts from the three UN-REDD Programme agencies was held in parallel to discuss and comment on the current draft of the 2016-2020 results framework, and to do a review of proposals for development goals, impact and outcome indicators. The Secretariat and consultant Tom Blomley have flagged several outstanding issues that need further consideration by the MG, which were presented during the first day of the meeting. In parallel to the MG retreat, the Secretariat then developed a revised version of the results framework, and presented a revised version to the MG for further discussion on the third day of the meeting.*

*Session 2.1*

The Secretariat introduced the latest draft of the results framework, and presented the comments from the Norwegian government, received on 14 September. Once finalized and agreed on by the donors and the MPTF, the results framework will be annexed to the Fund TOR. Additionally, consultative feedback will be received by PB15 participants, followed by a final approval of the new UN-REDD governing institution (Executive Board).

Notes in this paragraph only reflect the key issues discussed at the retreat. Main results of the discussion are reflected in the updated draft of the results framework, and therefore not further mentioned here.

* A comprehensive RBM system for 2016-2020 is needed, and the results framework will need to fully capture the SDGs and address the most critical issues of the Programme that have been identified during the last Programme phase. Main aspects to be worked on will be the following: (i) impact indicators, (ii) indicators on outcomes 1, 2 (based on scorecards) and 3, (iii) address comments from Norway.
* The MG agreed that a stronger connection between the Theory of Change and the results framework is needed. The structure of the framework should better reflect the catalytic role of the UN-REDD partnership, as well as the important role of the Warsaw Framework.
* The MG agreed that the results framework will be the most important document for the next Programme phase. It will be the chance to show how the Programme will work and what it aims to achieve. A narrative, going along with the results framework and prepared by the Secretariat, will allow for the Programme to explain in detail the impacts and outcomes.
* All three UN agencies mentioned that currently, indicators and outcomes seem to overlap, and some of the indicators at impact level are not focusing as much on the associated impact. What are the benefits towards emission reduction? It was decided that the Secretariat will reformulate the impact level defining the right balance between emission reduction and development aid.

*Outcomes 1 and 2*

* The MG discussed how the number of indicators at outcome level should be reduced. Outcome reporting can be based on the RADAR tool, as it is a very comprehensive database that provides the future basis to monitor progress of the Programme at country level.
* The results framework will need to be aligned with the RADAR, as well as the scorecards that are currently being tested by the Secretariat. Scorecards do not include reporting on SIS and are tailor-made to NPs, and therefore might not necessarily be comparable. The scorecard/RADAR Working Group will meet face-to-face, and discuss how to best align with the results framework in the future.

*Outcome 3*

* The Secretariat mentioned that further work has to be done for outcome 3, and guidance by the MG is welcomed. Outcome 3 should focus on a limited number of countries that will receive scaled-up support for PAM programmes to be able to complete the requirements of the UNFCCC framework, and outcomes should entail technical support to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and promote sustainable development.
* The MG agreed that outcome 3 is currently less defined than outcomes 1 and 2, also in regard to the definition and terminology of a PAM programme – what is the relation between a PAM and national actions? The narrative is needed to clarify such issues for partner countries.

*Baseline/targets*

* It was agreed that baseline figures will need to be collected across all indicators (goals, impacts and outcomes). However, questions were raised regarding the number of countries that should be identified for baseline data collection, as well as the number of countries that will be tracked for progress monitoring. Two options where discussed: (i) include the total number of UN-REDD partner countries, or (ii) choose only those countries where a significant investment from UN-REDD will take place. Further guidance from the MG is needed, and next steps will be the following: the Secretariat will develop of two-by-two value matrix, providing different targets and baselines to identify the potential best fit.

*Session 2.2*

* The Secretariat presented the updated results framework and briefly introduced the key changes made. Based on the discussion during session 2.1, the overall development goal has been maintained, whereas impacts 1 and 2 have been merged to one, displaying an additional three impact indicators. Additionally, the three outcomes remain, having five outcome indicators each.
* Two fundamental issues will need further guidance by the MG – (i) methodological: identification and definition of baseline/targets, (ii) the scope of the results framework in relation to the 62 partner countries, (iii) the relationship between reporting and/or the scorecard system, and (iv) next steps in the consultation process, and what should be presented during the lessons learnt session at PB15. The MG will provide written comment on these issues by the end of September latest.
* Next steps to finalize the results framework are the following: (i) expand the baseline assessment to all 62 partner countries (if decided as baseline number), (ii) ensure alignment of scorecard/RADAR system with approved results framework indicators for outcomes 1 and 2, (iii) prepare a methodological guidance note for each of the 20 indicators defined in the results framework.

**Session 3 – Key documents for the next Programme phase**

The Terms of Reference and governance arrangements for the next phase of the UN-REDD Programme have been discussed in detail over the past few months. The Secretariat presented the latest draft that will be sent to existing and potential new donor countries, and flag any issues that will need to be discussed before finalizing.

*Session 3.1 – Governance arrangements*

The Secretariat summarized the latest steps and developments in the consultation process, and highlighted the main issues to be discussed as (i) UN representation at EB, (ii) donor presence at the NSC, and (iii) the PB15 discussion on the results framework and criteria for country selection.

*UN representation at EB*

* An updated draft MOU has been sent to the agencies for legal clearance, including a paragraph on UN representation at the EB. While the legal department of UNDP does not have any legal concerns to use the draft MOU as long as MPTF agrees, whereas UNEP’s and FAO’s legal units are concerned about potential liabilities. The Programme will need to provide more detailed information/TOR for the UN representative, and clearly define the role, ensuring that all three UN agencies have a say in the decision-making process. The Secretariat will clarify with the MPTF if it is possible for all three UN agencies to sit at the EB table, and are being defined as ‘UN-REDD agencies’, and if not what liabilities and responsibilities the representing agency would have.

*Donor representation at NSC*

* Internal consultations with donors and partner countries have shown that they would prefer using the term ‘donor constituency’ rather than ‘donors’ in the text for governance arrangements that focusses on donor representation at the NSC. It will provide the opportunity for more than one donor to participate, if necessary.

*PB15 discussion of documents*

* The consultation process for country selection criteria as well as the results framework should stronger include IPs and CSOs. Therefore, a short information note on the main bullet points for those documents will be provided to the IPs/CSOs. All partners and participants of PB15 will receive the governance arrangements document well in advance to be fully prepared for the discussion.

*Session 3.2 – Fund TOR*

The Secretariat updated the MG on the latest draft of the TOR, and mentioned that identifying the programming cycle for the different funding mechanisms is the most difficult section. The Secretariat then provided a first draft workflow overview of the programming cycle, going through the different steps in more detail. Throughout the session it became obvious that further discussion is needed. The Secretariat will provide updated workflows based on the discussion, and will furthermore provide a detailed narrative that will go along with the different aspects of the programming cycle.

* The MG agreed that workflows should focus on the following three options: (i) non-earmarked funding for PAMs/NPs, (ii) earmarked funding for PAMs/NPs, and (iii) Targeted Support. The narrative will need to clarify the roles of involved constituencies, as well as identify the associated key documents. The session also underlined the importance of having a clear set of criteria for country selection, based on different factors such as emission reduction potential, status on readiness process, risk exposure of the country, and likelihood for delivering emission reduction in regard to governance and institutional arrangements (please see Session 5).
* The MG discussed whether there should be a cut-off date for donors to provide funding. This will allow for front-loading of programmes in the beginning of the next Programme phase, and associated funding allocations.

*Earmarked funding for PAMs/NPs*

* The MG agreed that in the first year of the next Programme phase, UN-REDD should focus on earmarked PAM countries. Therefore, it is of importance to identify the different steps of the programmatic cycle in regard to earmarked funding as follows:
1. Internal funds earmarked by UN-REDD and donors
2. Scoping mission
3. Establishment of NSC
4. Design of PAM programme
5. Validation by stakeholders
6. Internal review by UN agencies
7. Technical review by independent experts
8. MG letter triggering approval of the NSC
9. Submission to NSC for approval
* The MG agreed that prior to the establishment of the PAM programme, estimated costs to cover both quality assurance and preparatory technical support will be decided on together with the donor and the UN agencies. In addition, the Secretariat will clarify with the MPTF that in addition to pledges for up-front cost of staff, which is to be approved by the EB, the UN-REDD Programme will ask for a companion coefficient (approximately 12%) to the PAM programme budget that will be transferred directly to the agencies without approval of the NSC or EB. A breakdown of such additional costs will be discussed internally with the donor, and will depend on the overall size of the PAM programme.
* The MG raised their concern that main decisions will always lie with the donor. The new programming cycle needs to display an inclusion of the EB somehow, and therefore agreed that the EB will be informed of the status of the PAM programme by the NSC, and therefore be updated on the status of progress at country level.
* The MG agreed that the Joint Programme Document (JPD) will remain the main document for the country programme, and is to identify the coherent way of support of the UN-REDD Programme for all different projects. This eliminates the discussion whether individual reporting should be done for different individual (one agency, one national implementing partner, one outcome) rather than focusing on one joint programme modality.

*Non-earmarked funding for PAMs/NPs*

* In line what has been decided for earmarked funding, the main document will be the JPD. In contrast to the earmarked funding process, the EB will have a stronger role as it approves the budget at outcome level, and will decide on the countries being selected.
* The MG identified the following sequencing for non-earmarked readiness programmes:
1. Prioritization and selection of countries
2. Draft submission of shortened Joint Programme Document for comment to the EB
3. First hearing at EB meeting
4. Approval of fund allocations by EB
5. Final submission of the Joint Programme Document
6. Second hearing at EB meeting and endorsement of the Joint Programme Document
7. Establishment of NSC

**Session 4 – Transition process – Support to National REDD+ Action, cost estimates for 2016**

*Following the decisions made at the last MG planning retreat, and having received comments and edits made by the donor countries as well as the MPTF concerning the transition, final decisions need to be made by the MG on SNA, etc. Next steps will need to be agreed upon by the MG, including what is brought to the PB, take stock of where the UN-REDD Programme stands in the process and agree on remaining practical steps to set up in the second phase.*

*Cost estimates for 2016*

* All three UN agencies confirmed that presented costs only include those for staff, and identified approximate costs for additional travel expenditure – UNDP: US$ 600,000, FAO: US$ 500,000, and UNEP: US$ 500,000. In regard to transferring such funds to cover the estimates, the Secretariat will clarify with the MPTF whether such funding provided by Norway can be transferred without further approval by the PB.
* In addition to Norway providing additional financial support to cover the costs of the Programme during its transition phase by October 2015, they will pledge for the next phase during the first UN-REDD Programme Assembly in June 2016.

*Timeline for finalization*

* The Secretariat mentioned that signature of the MOU and SAA is envisaged by 30 October, and therefore finalized before PB15. In line with the Fund documents, the final draft results framework will be approved by the EB during its first session. An official announcement of the next Programme phase will then be made at COP21 in December 2015. It is expected that donors will pledge their support at the first UN-REDD Programme Assembly.
* The MG expressed their concern that donors might need to have other opportunities to pledge their support to the Programme, as Assemblies are currently planned to being held every second year. It has been proposed that the first UN-REDD Programme Assembly should be held during the Oslo Exchange, but it needs to be double-checked with the donors if they would prefer a wider audience when announcing their pledges. The Secretariat will seek advice from the resource mobilization units of all three UN agencies on what might be the best platform.

**Session 5 – Criteria for country selection**

*As it has been agreed during the June MG retreat, criteria for country selection for PAM, as well as CP and TS/SF countries will need to be identified in order to support the EB in this task. The objective of this session was to clarify the programming cycle for partner and donor countries, and to also further define the differences for earmarked and non-earmarked funding, refine the way programmes will operate and finalize the approach on country support teams and national implementation modalities/coordination.*

Prior to the session, the UNDP provided a first draft list of potential factors and criteria for PAM country selection. Main factors include (i) commitment, (ii) strategic thinking, (iii) coordination and inclusion, (iv) readiness progress, (v) financing, and (vi) UN complementary.

* The MG identified two potential bottlenecks – commitment, and coordination and inclusion. The involvement of a big number of ministries and/or stakeholders at country level might cause delays and overlapping. The whole list of potential is very demanding. It was furthermore agreed that the section on UN complementary/experience may be excluded, as listed criteria can be managed and reviewed UN-internally.
* The MG agreed that it will need to be clarified how the set of country criteria can be aligned to the scorecards, RADAR and/or the current Expression of Interest template and vice versa, as duplication should be avoided.
* UNDP and the Secretariat will update the list of proposed criteria based on the outcomes of the discussion, and will additionally develop a list for countries being eligible for NPs and TS.
* The MG will furthermore need to decide what kind of information will be submitted to the PB members – macro- or micro-level? The MG preferred to provide a list of criteria, whereas the associated list of indicators will remain internal. The deadline for submission of information to the PB is 25 October.

*EB approval of non-earmarked programmes based on country selection criteria*

* Identifying a set of criteria for country selection will provide the EB to prioritize the use of non-earmarked funds so that they can be directed in the most sufficient way to countries that need to deliver on (i) PAMs, (ii) readiness, (iii) Targeted Support, or (iv) knowledge management.
* The MG agreed that TS should not be used as a top-up option in parallel with NPs or PAM programmes. If countries are already receiving financial support for implementation or readiness, they won’t be eligible to apply for TS funding.
* All three UN agencies agreed that a criteria approach is needed to help countries figure out which kind of support they would like to receive and how to best identify their status, but also mentioned concerns that a balance will need to be found to consider different countries, i.e. what will happen to a country that might not be ready for application just yet, and therefore might be too late for applications if there is only one round of applications for PAM and NPs within the next Programme phase, etc.
* Next steps: The Secretariat and UNDP will update the list of criteria for PAM countries, and develop additional criteria for NPs, TS and knowledge management. Countries will have the opportunity to apply for NP or PAM support before the first EB meeting in March 2016, whereas it still need to be decided whether there will be application deadlines for TS support, or if requests can be done on an open-termed basis.

**Session 6 – Comparative advantages of the UN agencies**

*Following the discussion during the MG call on 10 July 2015, it has become obvious that further discussion and agreement is needed on the roles and involvement of each agency, their complementarities and how the programme will operate at country level. This discussion was scoped with a focus on how best to support partner countries in their efforts and with the intention to simplify the overall structure of the Programme, making it more accessible to partner countries.*

* To identify the comparative advantages of the UN agencies in the next Programme phase, it will be beneficial to look at lessons learned and countries where the UN-REDD Programme has been particularly successful in working together.
* The Secretariat also reminded the MG that UN agencies will need to determine what level of cohesiveness and decision-making they want to display in the future, especially in regard to delivering the Programme at country level. UNDP has a unique presence in countries, allowing them to develop relations that are going well beyond the forestry sector, and those connections are of huge benefit to FAO and UNEP as well thank to the UN-REDD Programme.
* UNDP answered that as the Programme is moving in its next phase it is worth looking into the past and identify the added value of all three UN agencies. There have been times when the UN-REDD Programme displayed limited partnerships, and although those have evolved immensely there is still a lot of work to be done. Supporting countries has to be done on case-by-case level, and the Programme will need to display the necessary flexibility to adjust to those different circumstances in the countries. There is more than enough work for all three UN agencies in their areas of expertise, and the Programme should focus on identifying future demands and advantages rather than trying to fix everything solemnly at country level. The different comparative advantages of the UN agencies are tying the UN agencies together, and have strengthened the Programme immensely.
* UNEP agreed that the real strength of the UN-REDD Programme is having three UN agencies that work together and jointly build on their different technical specializations. This allows the UN agencies to move out of their comfort zones and increase expertise on additional themes and topics. UNEP furthermore mentioned that the current draft of the framework strategy does not mention what comparative advantages and technical skills each UN agency has. If this will not be formulated in the framework, the MG should at least develop an internal framework that will clarify the role of the UN agencies, as well as the regional teams. FAO would prefer to not have such comparative advantages and tasks written down, as this has caused problems and confusion in the past. UNDP agreed with FAO, as splitting work areas has caused further fracturing at country level as well. Each UN agency has different ways of communicating with a country, and one of the strengths of the UN-REDD Programme is to connect the national and regional counterparts of all three UN agencies to work together rather than working in parallel.

*Programme delivery at country level*

* The MG agreed that joint Programme delivery at country level can be challenging, as UNEP does not have presence in the countries. Strong guidance and the identification of requirements such as the Warsaw Framework has made it clearer what needs to be done, and all three UN agencies have been able to jointly strengthen regional offices and empower regional staff to make calculated and thought-through decisions. Although UNEP might not be present at country level, the example of Myanmar has shown that the involvement of UNEP in the identification of drivers, ensure safeguards, etc. is of huge importance to the country teams of FAO and UNDP. The MG raised their concern that UN agencies still need to compete for funding way too often.
* UNEP noted that in the current draft of the framework strategy it is not mentioned what comparative advantages and technical skills each UN agency has. If this will not be formulated in the framework, the MG should at least develop an internal framework that will clarify the role of the UN agencies, as well as the regional teams.
* FAO agreed that presence in the country has been a huge advantage, and expertise has been built on lessons learnt. FAO and UNDP are now able to work well together at country level, which is of fundamental importance. Rather than having inter-agency problems, current implementation issues lie with other matters. Solving those issues should be further assessed when identifying the comparative advantages.
* It has been mentioned in the past whether all staff should have a joint corporate identity. FAO and UNDP agreed that although the UN-REDD Programme is a joint initiative, the three UN agency teams are not trying to become one agency team. Remaining agency identities will further underline that the different UN agencies are able to work well together.

**Session 7 – Green Climate Fund**

*Following the initial discussion at the last MG planning retreat in June 2015 in Rome and the accreditation of UNEP by the GCF, this session intended to further refine the understanding and position of the programme vis a vis coordination and engagement with the GCF. By this time, the issue should have been discussed also by the SG, which would provide further clearance on the future engagement strategy of the UN-REDD Programme.*

Due to time constraints and the need to find solutions for more pressing issues on the agenda, the discussion on the GCF has been postponed to future MG discussions.

**Session 8 – Strategic staffing**

*This discussion followed first arrangements and options presented at the last MG planning retreat in June. Additionally, in-depth consultations with donor countries have shed light on the budget necessary and available to deliver the Programme, which will provide the financial basis for future strategic staffing of the UN-REDD Programme.*

The session has been held in-camera, and decisions are kept internal.

**Session 9 – PB15 preparation**

*The Secretariat updated the MG on locations, draft agenda, and preparatory steps for the 15th Policy Board meeting, which will take place from 9-10 November 2015 in Costa Rica, following a joint field visit with FCPF and/or Knowledge Management day on 7-8 November 2015. The FCPF will hold its PC20/PA9 from 4-6 November 2015. The MG has received a roadmap for the PB15 preparation, as well as a first outline of the agenda. Current focus of PB15 is set on the semi-annual update of the Programme, and what is needed to finalize the transition phase.*

The Secretariat has identified the following deadline for PB15 preparation, whereas the final draft agenda will be sent to PB members on 9 October 2015.

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| 21 September | Deadline to receive comments from MG (2 weeks)(*In parallel, MG shares with their respective SG*) |
| 22 September | Send draft to country Co-chair for information (*In parallel, begin draft annotations*) |
| 29 September | Deadline to receive comments from SG/Co-chairs |
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| \*21 September - 26 October - Refine Annotated agenda, finalize content, identify leads for sessions, identify and invite panel speakers, etc.27 October – Send Annotated agenda for translation3 November – Post Annotated agenda on workspace |

*PB15 agenda*

* The Secretariat introduced the latest draft of the agenda for PB15. As it will be the last PB meeting, the overall theme should be celebration of what has been achieved rather than discussing new emerging issues that should be decided by the EB during the next Programme phase. New NPs as well as final NP evaluations will be presented, and the criteria for country selection and the new results framework will be introduced. The most important issue will be the nomination of constituency representatives for the interim EB. The MG will provide written comments by Monday, 21 September if necessary.
* SNA activities that are being taken over into 2016 have not been discussed within the MG for the past months, and should therefore not be a major point to discuss at PB15. The MG and the Secretariat will need to ensure that information presented during that session will have to be clearly agreed on before.
* The MG raised concerns with regard to the overall structure of the agenda, and asked for the following changes to be made:
1. The discussion on the results framework should precede the presentation of criteria for country selection, which will additionally be separated from the needs and readiness assessment discussion.
2. The presentation on final NP evaluations will be shifted under Session 3 for National Programmes.
3. Session 5 on nomination of stakeholder representatives for the interim EB will be moved to the end of Day 1. The first session will provide a platform for discussion, and potential problems will be discovered soon enough. It will give the different PB members to further discuss, if necessary. Final nominations will be done during wrap-up.
4. The panel discussions will be simplified, and should focus on presentations to underline the positive lessons learned of the Programme. The Secretariat will identify the most suitable panel speakers.

*Knowledge Management Day*

* The MG agreed that the Knowledge Management day should focus on facilitation discussions in regard to the following items: (i) safeguards, (ii) PAMs, (iii) social inclusion, and (iv) FRELs. As the discussion will be organized in joint cooperation with the FCPF, the following experts from the UN agencies will get in contact with their FCPF counterparts: safeguards/SIS – Steven Swan, PAMs – Bruno Hugel/Ivo Muelder, Social inclusion – Josep Gari, and FRELs – Maria Sanz Sanchez.
* Further updates on the current status of discussions will be given throughout one of the upcoming MG calls. It will furthermore need to be decided whether the documents should be provided to the IPs/CSOs well in advance before the PB15 meeting to allow for proper preparation.

**Session 10 – Meeting with the Regional Africa Team**

*As requested by UNEP, the Secretariat arranged a session to meet with the Africa Regional Team of the UN-REDD Programme. This helped the MG to understand what the main challenges and obstacles are with respect to Programme implementation, both on regional as well as country level. It furthermore supported the discussion on determining future funding modalities; identify what is realistic and which issues might cause problems. The session has been moderated by the Regional Africa team themselves, and notes have been agreed on within the whole team.*

* The MG commended the Regional Africa Team for the good spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm exhibited; the teams’ preparation for the MG meeting, and for taking a broader and strategic look at the work in the region. Efforts by the team to conduct a comparative analysis with the other regions in order to generate and/or question trends and patterns were also acknowledged.
* The MG suggested that the Africa Team should continue to deepen discussions on issues of strategic nature in the region, and build common ground on the way forward. The MG also stressed that there is a need for the regional team to keep the good coordination amongst the team. The MG acknowledged that the regional team would like to maintain its current staff, especially when an increased workload is expected due to the nomination of PAM countries under the next Programme phase.

*Vision of the MG for the region Africa*

* The Africa Team expressed their concern that there is no clear specific vision from the MG regarding the future work of the regional team in the upcoming five years. The MG noted the following issues: (i) the vision of the UN-REDD Programme is not a sustainable development vision, (ii) a strong focus of main donor Norway will be the potential to receive RBPs, (iii) the future country selection will focus on a limited number of countries that are most likely to deliver on RBA, and (iv) regional balance will not be a future criteria for resource allocations.
* In line with the issues above, the African Team expressed its concerns to be hampered and left behind. However, there is space to build a differentiated yet good case for REDD+ in Africa in the future. Notably:

- Current modalities to keep supporting countries for the readiness stage will be maintained, and this would keep Africa active and help the region transition to second or third set of potential Policies and Measures (PAM) countries.

- There are opportunities for limited but consistent African flagship countries to be considered as potential PAM countries.

- The strategic/result framework for next phase of the Programme can be a good starting point to frame this Africa business case in a way that contributes to the Programme, aligns with its strategic objectives, and makes sense for donors.

- The Africa group is invited to elaborate a “business case” for REDD+ in Africa, which is not necessarily focusing on RBP (which will remain the main focus of the Programme in the next five years) but which creates enough space for a thriving regional process, building on:

1. The attractiveness of the link between REDD+, climate change and poverty alleviation, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and potential new donors interested in multiple benefits of REDD+.
2. The case for Africa could even be an opportunity for the Programme to attract new donors through SDG perspective.
3. The Africa group could elaborate a narrative that would help donor countries “not to fail again in Africa” through an alternate, more open-minded way (vs. RBP-only). The fast-changing nature of drivers in Africa specifically should be taken into account when designing the African narrative.
* Against initial prognostics, the Africa team has been able to keep Africa at honorable place on the global REDD+ map so far, and it should keep walking that path. Finally, the Africa Team voiced that the MG should support them in advocating for the Africa case for REDD+ - not limited to quick RBP.

*Selection of PAM countries*

* The MG was pleased to see that the Africa Team has already started thinking of potential countries in Africa to qualify for PAM support. This will be of help once the selection process has been started. The same goes for the ideas that have been voiced by the Africa Team in identifying criteria for country selection. The MG voiced interest in getting more detailed information from the Regional Africa Team on why the countries have been chosen.
* The MG noted that in terms of prioritizing criteria, it looks like political commitment, RBP potential and the capacity to align REDD+ with the national development process will be given more weight in the future. Norway as the main donor particularly insists that countries the UN-REDD Programme will support should deliver results within the next Programme phase.

**Session 11 – Wrap Up, next steps**

* The Secretariat will provide a consolidated report of the retreat notes, including all decisions taken during the meeting for comment by the MG as soon as possible. Next steps and timelines for those actions have been identified, and are summarized in the beginning of the minutes.