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

**Meeting 24-25 January, Geneva**

**Summary report DRAFT**

**Attendance:**

MG members and alternates

FAO: Tiina Vahanen, Margo BuszkoBriggs

UNDP: Tim Clairs, Josep Gari, Elspeth Halverson

UNEP: Gabriel Labbate (and Florian Eisele for KM/Comms discussion)

Secretariat: Mario Boccucci, Onye Ikwu, Mihaela Secrieru

1. **2019 programming**

*Decisions and Actions*

1. It was reinforced that this exercise is not a new “programming” but an update of the multi-year 2018-20 TA Workplan and Budget endorsed by EB1 and the related 2018-20 Integrated Results & Monitoring Framework (October 2017). The ultimate goal is to develop the 2019 output-based budget and indicative activities (for both the country and global KM components) to be submitted for approval at EB2. This 2019 exercise can be best conducted in the context of the 2018 inception.
2. On the country component:
   1. Lead Advisors – to proactively lead the TA/2019 design, ensuring:

- collegiality: engaging the 3 agencies and honouring their respective themes/outputs/milestones;

- inclusiveness: engaging CSO/IPs reps in the country, as well as donor reps (especially Norway and EU); and

- transparency: collecting minutes, notes-to-the-file and other evidence of sound planning.

In essence, as they consult with countries on 2018 TA activities, they will also inform stakeholders about the availability of the same nature and level of support (i.e. TA) in 2019, and inquire about countries’ interest in such assistance:

* + - If a country shows interest, then an annual output-level plan and indicative activities shall be developed in consultation with the country (the cost of the TA should also be estimated, whether on staff time + missions, or in US equivalent)
    - TA-2019 in the countries should be planned with the relevant government counterparts and with IP/CSO representatives; donors (particularly Norway and EU embassy reps) should be also informed and engaged as appropriated.
    - If there is no interest from a country, TA budget can be reallocated to other countries.
  1. MG members will brief their respective Lead Advisors to ensure their work is collegial (i.e. representing the 3 agencies) and there is correct messaging to countries.

1. On the global KM component:
   1. Agencies will individually undertake to determine what consultation process is most suitable for the thematic area each agency is responsible for.
   2. The Comms/KM strategy will provide the *chapeau* of this approach, with the seven thematic areas linked to the overall Comms/KM strategy. A “sanitised” version of the KM strategy will be circulated to the wider REDD+ community through the UN-REDD Newsletter, so to present the full picture of what the Programme is offering.
2. The Secretariat will revise the “protocol” and prepare a simplified guidance document [done and attached]. The MG members will review and discuss with their LAs and pass any comment to the Secretariat.

*Additional elements of the discussion*

* On the global KM component: It was clarified that, while there is a need to submit output-based budgets with indicative activities for each of the seven thematic areas, there is no formal request from the EB for documentation of consultations, which is in any case important to be able to demonstrate demand. It was agreed that, due to the different nature of the seven work areas, there will not be one common consultative approach for all. The main goal is to demonstrate activities are grounded on demand and actual needs, and not a supply-driven exercise. Each agency will do the needed based on their assessment of what is required to demonstrate demand and legitimacy for the proposed activities/budget.

1. **KM/Comms strategy and plans**

*Decisions and Actions*

1. MG members will provide written comments on the draft Comms/KM strategy provided by UN Environment – by 2nd February.
2. UN Environment will update and/or finalise both Section 4 of the Comms/KM Strategy (on Roles and responsibilities of (i) UN Environment’s comms and KM team and of (ii) participating UN agencies), as well as the ToRs of the Comms&KM global Working Group, taking into consideration the comments received during the MG retreat meeting.
3. A detailed KM/Comms work plan for 2018 is required to map the key activities, products and deliverables of the year. The planning process will be undertaken during the first quarter (Q1), and the global comms/KM working group will report to the MG with the filled-out matrix of activities (annual work plan) by 23rd February.

*Additional elements of the discussion*

* On the development of the 2018 KM/Comms workplan:
* Both comms and KM deliverables will be mapped, including those related to the 6 thematic areas of the global KM component, so that the comms/KM coordination component can act as the “glue” and as an effective platform for knowledge dissemination. For this purpose, agencies will nominate regional focal points who will interact on a demand basis with the regional UN Environment officers for KM/Comms to ensure the planning exercise is plugged to country-level needs. The global Comms/KM Working Group will work with UN Environment regional focal points to fine-tune, address overlaps, synergies and feasibility of proposed activities, ensuring resulting matrix of activities and/or products falls within the parameters of the 2018-20 Results Framework and related 2018 output-based budget.
* The work plan will also clearly indicate what level of support and/or services will be provided by UN Environment. Similarly, requested clarification from UNDP and FAO on the same issues (e.g. the commitment in time from agencies teams to the different outputs and activities of the comms/KM workplan).
* MG members will be kept informed of ongoing progress carried out by comms&KM Working Group and will step in earlier (before 23rd February deadline) if there are bottlenecks in the process.
* MG will review the workplan in its call the week of 23rd Feb. and further prioritise or arbitrate among proposed deliverables as needed.
* Draft key messages presented in the Strategy were considered briefly. Moreover, a strategic issue for further consideration was whether the Programme wants to communicate on its key impacts and achievements, or to become a knowledge “hub”, “power house”, “bank”, “clearing house”, or “help desk” where countries can request for UN-REDD advice, etc.
* UN Environment’s coordination role was discussed, and ways the global KM component will be deployed under UN Environment’s leadership, in a way that provides the infrastructure for the knowledge of the Programme to be exploited. The KM/Comms coordination component is meant to service the entire UN-REDD “fabric”, particularly through managing and financing as follows: the website, the newsletter, social media, a webinar platform/service, a selected number of regional and global events, and the edition/release of a number of key knowledge products.
* Further clarification was requested on the cross-agency roles and responsibilities of, and services provided by the UN Environment’s Comms/KM team members (e.g. how will this team interact with agencies, where are members based, expectations on KM focal points, coordination with MG and, what support in providing tools and/or logistics e.g. producing/facilitating webinars, editing knowledge products, etc.). – these elements will be clarified in the KM/Comms Strategy.
* The need for motivating technical colleagues to contribute to knowledge creation was noted.
* It was recognised there is a real differentiation between comms and KM in terms of deployment plans.
* Refreshing the branding of the Programme and developing a powerful comms message to strengthen the Programme’s value proposition as provider of TA and knowledge to the countries.

1. **Future of the Programme**

*Decisions and Actions*

1. Agencies recognised the timeliness of a discussion on the long-term future of the Programme and its value proposition. While the next three years are about delivering at highest standards, and consolidating UN-REDD as a knowledge hub on REDD+, the Programme should commence reflecting and strategizing about its future already in 2018.
2. There was general agreement on the value of continuing, strengthening and enhancing the partnership beyond 2020, while also ensuring it is fit for purpose in its future form.
3. The deliberations to be continued and concretised in coming MG meetings.

*Additional elements of the discussion*

* Among the issues which would need to be addressed in order to make the Programme better fit for purpose in the future, UNDP and FAO mentioned a heavy underlying structure of the Programme and excessive focus on processes, while UNEP pointed at challenges to efficient interagency cooperation and delivery at the agencies’ level, more than at the UN-REDD programme level.
* The brainstorming and visioning exercise resulted in an initial list of opportunities and challenges:
  + Opportunities:
    - The explicit determination of the international climate community to make the Paris Agreement a success. Thus, for Article 5 to succeed, forests need to succeed;
    - The UN Secretary-General’s reform calling for “thought leadership”, multilateralism, increased coordination among UN agencies, SG’s focus on climate change, his commitment to KM and South-South cooperation;
    - Leadership in UNDP and UN Environment who believe in REDD+;
    - Availability of resources, REDD+ being the best resourced domain in development. As the UN-REDD Programme is already established, it would not be very costly; Moreover, UN-REDD referred to as an example of interagency partnership;
    - Strong demand for/from? countries and stakeholders
  + Challenges
    - External:
      * Appetite for REDD+ rapidly decreasing, focus no longer on readiness and capacity building but on implementation;
      * Big discontent with the UN and multilateral system at large, and donors less interest in putting funds into the UN system (rather WB, NGOs, bilateral)
    - Internal:
      * Difficulty to demonstrate value for money
      * Suboptimal structures of the Programme
      * Agencies’ tendency to go it alone in times of funding crunch
* The UN-REDD trademark/label should not be abandoned, but refresh and build on it.
* To be able to draw more on each other’s comparative advantages, each agency should better mainstream UN-REDD at internal corporate level, to leverage the non-core business of the agencies.
* The need to find more innovative funding solutions was noted.
* The role of the Secretariat in this transition period was noted, with a suggestion to consider what set of skills could be added to enable new thinking on the future of the Programme.
* The idea of an open-source platform was discussed to bring together other UN agencies’ and partners’ core competencies, a space where countries can come to get all of the support not only on REDD+ but climate and forests at large. It should not create a new institutional architecture, nor have a political leadership or organisational structure.
* The Programme’s 10 years anniversary this year is an opportunity for reflection on achievements, e.g. through an evaluation/assessment. Also an opportunity for a “big and bold” demonstration of the Programme’s achievements, e.g. at General Assembly session (18-30 September 2018), or the Climate Summit in 2019.

1. **Interagency arrangements**

*Decisions and Actions*

1. The MG should dedicate limited but quality time on portfolio management, addressing selected, pre-identified issues (in countries or on KM components) through the bimonthly calls.
2. Continue strengthening the model of Lead Advisor and country teams, and further empower Lead Advisors (e.g. 2018 inception and 2019 planning). At the same time, agencies should communicate accurately with, and coach Lead Advisors so they play their inter-agency roles finely and collegially. Also, there is need to encourage regular regional and country teams meetings.
3. More efficient implementation arrangements are needed, with lowest transaction costs for the country. Lead Advisors should reflect on this issue and propose solutions.
4. UN Environment will make available a space on the UN-REDD Workspace for staff to suggest concrete ideas on how to make interagency arrangements work better. Results will be discussed at MG meetings.

*Additional elements of the discussion*

The following additional elements resulted from a brainstorming exercise on strengths and weaknesses of current interagency arrangements, with a view to improve delivery in 2018 as crucial year to demonstrate efficiency:

* Critical to achieve collectively on all portfolio elements in 2018;
* Reduce procedural issues so not to overload the Programme with guidance;

1. **GCF Engagement**

*Decisions and Actions*

1. On Phase 1:
   1. Secretariat will recirculate the concept note prepared for the EB meeting in 2017 for agencies to review and send written comments;
   2. Secretariat will reach out to the GCF and consult them on the elements contained in the concept note mentioned above;
2. On Phases 2 and 3: Agencies will follow the evolution of the GCF and reassess what this means for UN-REDD in six months from now. If in the meantime agencies want to appoint someone to think about evolution in this space, this will provide a basis to the discussion.
3. **ICAO Seminar**

*Decisions and Actions*

1. Agencies will provide inputs on key messages by Wed 31st January – including by their technical staff – to ensure messages which will be conveyed by the Programme at the ICAO seminar are nuanced in such a way to avoid controversial statements.
2. Secretariat will consolidate inputs with UN Environment and send back the final messages on Friday 2nd February for a final review by the agencies.
3. **2017 Annual report**

*Decisions and Actions*

Agencies reconfirmed the process is on track with minor delays (7-10 days maximum) in anticipation of release date of 15 March.

1. **2018 Inception**

*Decisions and Actions*

1. Agencies will provide input by Friday 2nd Feb. containing basic information (not a report) on where they stand on launching the 2018 work.
2. The information is for the MG’s internal consumption, and it will be packaged by the Secretariat and discussed at next MG call. Eventually it will be repackaged to inform the EB.
3. **Portfolio Management**

*Decisions and Actions*

1. On NPs related issues: UNDP will follow up on the pending final project report for Zambia’s National Programme operationally closed in December 2014; [done -thank you]
2. On Portfolio Management: Specific country issues that require management intervention/discussion can be brought to the attention of the MG for inclusion in their meetings agenda;
3. On the “value for money” concept and validation of agency expenditure discussions:
   1. Agencies to be ready to provide detailed expenditures for 2017 in line with detailed budget submitted, in anticipation of request by Norway/EB;
   2. Agencies may need to provide print outs from financial systems if required to validate expenditures

*Additional elements of the discussion*

* On NPs related issues:
  + Honduras ongoing NP is likely to be extended to mid-2019;
  + Bangladesh will be extended to 31 December 2018.
* On the “value for money” concept:
  + Need to emphasize that the UN-REDD TA is unique and provides catalytic support to countries that have weak capacities;
  + Review/compare if possible with the FCPF, FIP and Carbon Fund;
  + Not beneficial to compare the Programme with consultants as that will be an unfair comparison;
  + Need to demonstrate how much the Programme has been able to leverage;
  + Very important to discuss on the qualitative elements of what is being delivered to countries.
  + Important to show also leveraging of other resources within the agencies
* On Programme evaluation: There is no specific requirement for the Programme to have a mid-term evaluation, however internal UN agency procedures may require one as is the case with FAO.