



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente
Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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UNEP Policy on Partnerships and Guidelines for Implementation

Approved by UNEP Senior Management Team (August 2009)

The present document contains the overall UNEP policy guidance for partnerships, which staff members in UNEP are expected to adhere to. Any alterations are to be submitted to the SMT for consideration.

The rationale for a policy on partnerships is to ensure that UNEP pays special attention to how it will use partnerships to create more impact in its six areas of focus¹ than by working on its own. The Policy defines the key principles that should sustain partnerships where UNEP is involved, and provides a consistent approach to more strategic partnerships, capitalizing on UNEP's established relations with various partners. UNEP needs to ensure that it selects partners – and works with them in the most strategic manner – to achieve the organization's objectives at a broader programmatic level² than solely for the benefits partnerships bring to individual projects.

The objective of the policy is to institutionalize and enhance practices in UNEP for making the best use of partnerships to improve UNEP's implementation and delivery of its 2010-2011 and subsequent Programmes of Work (PoW).

The paper is divided into two sections. Section one presents UNEP's policy on partnerships. Section two presents guidelines for implementation. The paper focuses on all partnerships across UNEP with the exception of MEA Secretariat partnerships, UNEP Collaborating Centres and the National Committees. Separate papers on the MEA Secretariat partnerships, UNEP Collaborating Centres and the National Committees will be prepared for discussion and integrated into this policy once approved by SMT.

It should also be noted that when it comes to partnerships with UN system organizations the main guidance comes from the General Assembly, the Secretary General, the Chief Executives Board (CEB), and in particular from the UN Development Group (UNDG).

SMT decisions:

1. Approval of the Policy on Partnerships.
2. Integration of a partnerships dimension into the UNEP project database currently under development. The database would include a module providing information on partners and capture UNEP's experiences in working with the relevant partners. This information will support the decision-making of staff, the Programme Approval Group (PAG) and the Project Review Committee (PRC) in evaluating the use of partners in UNEP's programmatic and project work. It will also allow UNEP to strive for an equitable balance of partners, from both developing and developed countries. The module of the database on partnerships would be developed in consultation with the Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC).

¹ The areas of focus of UNEP work are spelled out in its Medium-Term Strategy and the corresponding Programmes of Work.


² Programmatic-level objectives are spelled out under each Sub-programme in the Programme of Work and Medium-Term Strategy and the implementation strategy is captured in UNEP's Programme Frameworks.

3. DCPI to draft policy guidance for partners on the use of UNEP's logo and name.
4. PAG to review partnership approach in Programme Frameworks while PRC to review partnership approach at project level for the delivery of the Programme of Work 2010-2011. The Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) in its role in the PAG to pay particular attention to the choice and involvement of scientific networks and organizations highlighted in Programme Frameworks.
5. UNEP's Evaluation Office to integrate into UNEP Subprogrammes, Expected Accomplishments and project evaluations parameters to ensure review of the partnership approach used by UNEP in the delivery of its Programme of Work.
6. Future reviews of the policy will be conducted on a regular basis, along the time line of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), to ensure that they remain valid, updated and relevant. This will be led by the Senior Management Team (SMT) of UNEP.

Implementation plan:

The timetable for implementation of the decisions will be as follows:

Description	Responsible Org. Unit	2009				
		Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1. Project Database: definition of data fields for partnerships component	DRC in consultation with other Divisions					
2. Integration of parameter on partnership analysis into UNEP evaluations and Evaluation Plan for 2010-2011	Evaluation Office					
3. Policy guidance to partners on the use of the UNEP name and logo	QAS					
4. Review of partners and their roles in the delivery of each Expected Accomplishment in PoW as outlined in Programme Frameworks	PAG					
5. Review of the scientific networks and organizations to be partnered within the delivery of each Expected Accomplishment in PoW as outlined in Programme Frameworks	DEWA					
6. Review of partner identification and roles as outlined in projects	PRC					

Approval	
<p>This document has been approved by UNEP's Senior Management Team and goes into effect from 1 September 09. The policy and guidelines will be reviewed periodically based on experiences in its application.</p>	
<p>Achim Steiner Executive Director</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Signature: </p> <p style="text-align: right;">Date:</p>

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Summary

Environmental management cuts across traditional institutional structures and policies on sectors such as forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, energy, water and land management. Catalyzing environmental management worldwide is part of UNEP's mandate, but the pathways to achieve this mandate cannot be over-simplified given the number of sectors, institutional structures and unique national and local settings and stakeholders that exist. UNEP deals with a wide range of partners: governments; major groups and stakeholders³ including business and industry, academia and research institutions, local authorities, Parliamentarians, International Nongovernmental Organizations (INGOs), and intergovernmental organizations, including UN agencies. It is imperative to improve the collaboration among the different players and stakeholders and for this reason, the objective of a UNEP's policy on partnerships is to institutionalize and enhance practices in UNEP for making the best use of partnerships to improve UNEP's implementation and delivery of its 2010-2011 and subsequent Programmes of Work (PoW).

While these guidelines provide a common framework for entering into UNEP-convened partnerships, the actual process and criteria may be applied differently depending on the type of partners and ultimate objective to achieve.

However, when UNEP is invited to join a partnership, the terms of that particular partnership will apply, in full respect of UNEP's mandate, its Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work. By joining a partnership, UNEP helps to mainstream environmental concerns in the policies, initiatives and actions of the partners.

It should also be noted that when it comes to partnerships with UN system organizations the main guidance comes from the General Assembly, the Secretary General, the Chief Executives Board (CEB), and in particular from the UN Development Group (UNDG).

This Policy does not replace, alter, or expand regulations, rules and administrative procedures relating to procurement and hence it is not a substitute to initiate procurement action.

Section 1: UNEP Policy on Partnerships

As highlighted in its [Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013 \(MTS\)](#), "UNEP recognizes the critical importance of engaging with United Nations entities, international institutions, MEAs, bilateral aid agencies, civil society and the private sector in delivering on its broad environmental mandate and seeks to be a preferred partner when dealing with environmental issues." Therefore its decision to "develop and implement with its partners practical programmes and projects to respond to identified country needs and priorities to deliver tangible results"⁴ is aligned with its overarching objective.

1. Definitions

³ These are so-called non-government actors, and they are clustered according to the list of the nine Major groups as per Agenda 21: Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous Peoples and their communities, NGOs, Local Authorities, Workers and their Trade Unions, Business and Industry, The Scientific and Technological Community, and Farmers.

⁴ UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013, page 13.

In the United Nations context, partnerships are encouraged and defined within the [General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/215/2005](#) as "...voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits..."

In UNEP, partnerships refer to any alliance, collaboration or association involving UNEP and external partners (governments; major groups and stakeholders including business and industry, academia and research institutions, local authorities; NGOs and intergovernmental organizations including UN agencies) with the purpose of achieving common goals and objectives. Partnerships can involve two or more parties, and may vary in size or importance.

2. Overview of existing partnerships

There are many examples of successful partnerships within UNEP, among which the [Global Reporting Initiative](#), the [Global e-Sustainability Initiative \(GeSI\)](#), the [Sustainable Energy Finance Initiative](#), the [Tour Operators Initiative](#), the [Global Partnership toward Cleaner Fuels](#), the [UNEP-UNDP Poverty and Environment Initiative](#), the [UNEP-IUCN Framework Agreement](#), the [Atmospheric Brown Cloud Partnership](#), the [Green Economy Initiative](#), etc.

These types of partnerships are complex multistakeholder partnerships, which involve a wide range of actors (untapped so far by UNEP) not only involved in delivery of outputs and implementation, but more so in sharing knowledge, learning, and influencing governance/policy debate at national, regional and global levels. These partnerships also contribute to build capacity and creating enabling policy frameworks at national level, and share information. They have gained more visibility given the number, scope of actors involved, and have already yielded some impacts, e.g. the [Global Green New Deal](#) paper presented at the G8 Summit in April 2009.

UNEP seeks to build on the lessons learnt from those partnerships, including with the private sector or regional development banks, to further strengthen its delivery of the PoW.

3. Purpose and key principles of UNEP's partnerships

3.1. Purpose and Benefits

In line with the intention of UNEP to heighten the relevance and impact of its work in responding to countries' needs, and given its limited physical presence at the national and sub-regional level, partnerships are indispensable for the delivery of the programmes of work of UNEP. Box 1 provides the rationale for entering into partnerships.

Box 1. Rationale for UNEP's entry into partnerships

UNEP will partner with other institutions when one or more of the following shared interests and benefits are foreseen:

- Integrate environmental considerations into the work of partners (including but not limited to UN sister agencies and private sector partners), and into national and regional development frameworks.
- Form a critical mass of players with the appropriate sector knowledge, discipline and discipline, and access to resources, to develop joint initiatives.
- Leverage technical capacity and human resources—indispensable to the delivery of the UNEP Programmes of Work, particularly where such capacity does not exist in the organization.
- Achieving sustainable and measurable results based on completing the cycle from generation of scientific knowledge to policy, and enhanced implementation.
- Wider institutional and policy changes at different geographic scales.
- Advocacy channels, added legitimacy and credibility, and stakeholder ownership of programmes.
- Leverage more impact based on the complementarities and synergies available to deliver common results relevant for partners and UNEP in the context of its Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work.

3.2. Partnership Principles

Irrespective of the nature of the cooperative arrangements UNEP may hold with a partner, they should be guided by the following principles:

1. **Equality and Mutual Respect:** Mutual respect between partners irrespective of size and power.
2. **Results-oriented approach and Quality:** The partnership should be reality-based and action-oriented, with clear measurable goals. All partners should adhere to quality standards that will guide them through the partnerships.
3. **Efficiency and coherence with UNEP's priority areas:** The terms of UNEP's engagement in a partnership must be aligned to UNEP's MTS and its PoW. Resources of all partners to be used to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.
4. **Responsibility:** Key to successful partnerships is the ability of the partners to achieve the commitments they have made in the partnership. Selection and screening criteria need to be in place to ensure the suitability of the partners.
5. **Complementarity and Value-added:** The partners will build on comparative advantages and adding value to each other's work.
6. **Trust, transparency and accountability:** A pre-condition will be to establish clear objectives and outcomes of the partnership in a transparent manner to build confidence and trust between partners, with time-bound deliverables. This should be further supported by a time-bound accountability framework that meets the fiduciary and legal standards of UNEP.
7. **Partnerships management:** Partners should be referred to in UNEP's programme frameworks/projects, and the information integrated into the UNEP project database. Measurable objectives and outputs of the partnership will be monitored through progress reporting undertaken in programme frameworks/projects, where roles and responsibilities of the partners are outlined.

8. **Sustainable funding:** Sustainable funding must be ensured if this is required for the partnership to function. Where the partnership is not a simple contractual agreement with UNEP, partners should collectively design a fundraising strategy in consultation with UNEP's Resource Mobilization Section.
9. **Attribution of credit:** Communication on the partnerships should acknowledge the work or contribution of all partners.
10. **Consideration of external factors:** Consideration of externalities and trade-offs, e.g. transaction costs vs. outcomes and impacts of the partnership, substantive vs. political considerations, will be given equal weight and importance in the execution of the partnerships, without compromising their objectives and goals.
11. **Adherence to relevant Guidelines for engaging with the private sector:** Owing to the growing relevance of public-private partnerships in support of sustainable development goals, the [Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Private Sector \(2009\)](#) and [Guidelines on Cooperation between UNEP and the Private Sector \(2004\)](#) will guide the work of UNEP with the private sector.

These principles aim to preserve the integrity of the partnerships, impartiality of the partners, and ensure that mutual benefits are conferred to all parties involved. In the event where UNEP is invited to join a partnership, the terms and conditions of UNEP's engagement are to be aligned to its MTS and PoW.

4. Types of partners

Without being exhaustive in developing a typology of partners, UNEP recognizes that it must work with partners that generate scientific knowledge and work at the policy interface with governments. Depending on the objective of the partnership, they ought to have the ability to upscale pilot demonstration work to a broader level, expertise in capacity development, proven skills in engaging with different types of stakeholders, or be able to provide advocacy and campaigning capacity. When relevant, and as part of the support to the partnership, they should also have the capacity to provide some administrative services.

UNEP recognizes eight (8) functional categories of partners, as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Types of UNEP partners

Type of partners	Objectives	Examples of partners
Scientific networks and institutions	To harness the scientific knowledge generated by global, regional sub-regional or national scientific networks and research institutions	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR); International Council for Science (ICSU), UNEP Collaborating Centers
Policy advisory bodies including national level institutions	To harness the policy-setting skills of partners, either at global, regional sub-regional or national level	Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (at the international level); UNDP (at the national level), Regional economic and political groupings (ECA, ASEAN, etc.), Governments and relevant national institutions
Out- and up-scaling partners including national level institutions	To harness the partner's capability in taking a norm, standard or results from pilot or demonstration sites and either upscaling it to	FAO, WHO, UNDP, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN),

	national level or replicating it in other similar situations	governments and relevant national institutions
Institutions skilled in capacity development	To harness skills of partners experienced in developing the capacity of others	UNITAR
Development partners	To harness skills, expertise and knowledge of development priorities and pertinent action at global/regional/national levels	UNDP, The Institute for Transport and Development Policy (ITDP), The Energy Research Institute (TERI), relevant national agencies
Investment partners	To harness the investment potential of partners where results of UNEP work must eventually lead to investment	The World Bank, African Development Bank, the donor community
Private sector	To harness the potential of the private sector, business and industry in mainstreaming environment into their operations and achieving sustainable development	commercial enterprises or businesses such as LG Electronics, Bayer, Luo Hong Commercial Banks, individuals, business associations and coalitions; cross industry and industry focused initiatives; corporate philanthropic foundations
Civil society organizations	To harness the advocacy and campaigning capacity of partners	Third World Network, Indigenous Peoples Biodiversity Network

While a partner may belong to one or more of these categories, UNEP will need to work with a range of partners on any one given issue to ensure the science-policy-action-results continuum and to bring about a better link between normative and operational work.

Section 2: Guidelines for Implementation

1. *Modalities for entering into partnerships*

The purpose of partnerships may range from one time agreements on specific issues (e.g. delivering a specific thematic piece of work for a short duration with time-bound outputs and outcomes), to serving the broad UNEP constituency on a longer-term basis, as is the case for more strategic institutional engagements (e.g. those with scientific institutions). Modalities for entering into partnerships require flexibility because each partnership is situation-specific. However, to ensure that the organization does not under-utilize the strengths that partnering can bring to UNEP's programmes, the following distinction is made on how UNEP delineates its partnerships:

- Programmatic-level partnerships:**
 These are partnerships underpinned by a common interest along the six areas of the MTS, e.g. partnerships with organizations working on the subject of ecosystem services could become part of a network of institutions. The purpose of such partnerships is to ensure that UNEP's portfolio of projects on a given subject complements the work of other organizations working on the same subject and vice versa. The purpose of these partnerships would be captured in the Programme Frameworks and would normally focus on a handful of partners working with UNEP at a more strategic level. The aim is to work with the most significant actors in the field in a more strategic and complementary manner. The partnerships at Programme Framework level would be managed by the Lead Division for the Subprogramme in consultation with the relevant Coordinating Division. Where a regional organization is identified as a partner at the programmatic-level, the Regional Office would lead the discussions with the partner in consultation with the Lead Division.
- Project-based partnerships:**
 These partnerships are defined by a joint project with UNEP where the roles of each partner are explicitly described. Partnerships similar to UNEP's joint collaboration with financial institutions

through the UNEP Finance Initiative (FI) or public-private partnerships such as the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles would be captured in UNEP's projects. The partnership expires on completion of the project and could be renewed in a follow-up project. These project partnerships would be managed by the Division or the Regional Office responsible for delivering the specific project output, with overall guidance of the Managing Division for the project. Within a project, the management of the partnership at the global level will be carried out by the Managing Division for a project and at the regional and country level by Regional Offices.

2. Selection Criteria for partners

During the design of UNEP's interventions, partners are selected by assessing their technical, managerial, administrative and financial capacities necessary for delivering the activities. The following selection criteria are to be used in guiding staff members in their consideration of partners.

Table 2. Capacity Assessment of Partners

Functional Categories	Selection Criteria
Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutrality and independence • Ability to influence political agenda at the national, regional and global level • Ability to inform the policy agenda of UNEP • Reputation and credibility
Technical capacity / Specialisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary skills and competencies that complement those of UNEP • Proven experience record and knowledge • Ability to access relevant information/resources • Ability to use effective approaches to reach its targets (i.e. participatory methods and respect of cultural diversity))
Managerial capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to plan, monitor and co-ordinate activities • Ability to submit sound and timely progress reports • Capacity to anticipate and resolve conflicts • Capacity for rapid intervention
Administrative and Financial capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to procure goods and services in a transparent and competitive manner ensuring value for money and adherence to social and environmental safeguards • Ability to recruit personnel in a transparent manner • Proven ability in managing financial and human resources
Institutional setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance structure: composition of its governing body, constituency, oversight principles, organizational structure, etc. • Legal status • Reference check of past performance
Other partnerships, networks, external relations and local/global linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of regional, national or local context and ethical interaction with the communities/constituencies, where appropriate • Presence in networks within its own sector • Relationship with relevant government or private sector institutions

The PAG and PRC will apply these selection criteria in assessing the partnership proposed at Programme Framework and Project levels, respectively.

3. Operational arrangements

Table 3 outlines the different levels where partnerships will feature in the PoW.

Table 3. Partnerships at PoW Level

Steps	Partnerships at Programme Framework Level	Partnerships at Project Level
Initiating partnerships	<p>Any staff member can propose a partnership in a Programme Framework, stating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value added of working with partner at a programmatic level; • the comparative strengths, roles and responsibilities of partner, and the contribution of the partnerships to the delivery of a Subprogramme or an Expected Accomplishment in the Programme of Work. <p>Subprogramme Coordinators working with Divisions and Regional Offices will recommend the most strategic partners in the Programme Framework at the level of the relevant Expected Accomplishment or Subprogramme.</p> <p>Partnerships recommended in the Programme Frameworks would be distinct from the project-specific role a partner may play in a given project, although a partner may be included both in a Programme framework and in a project.</p>	<p>Any staff member can propose a partnership for a project, stating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the kind of work to occur under the partnership; • the value added of working with the partner, describing the comparative strengths of the partner that UNEP could benefit from in the context of a project included in a Programme Framework • the reason for the selection of that particular partner should other comparable choices of partners exist. <p>Where partnerships have projects or activities in a particular region, the Regional Office must be involved in the selection of partners at the initial stages of development.</p> <p>Managing Divisions working with Divisions and Regional Offices will recommend the most strategic partners for the project.</p>
Approval of partnerships	Final decision on partnership proposed made by PAG during its review of the Programme Framework, taking into account the view of the Regional Offices concerned where regional organizations are part of the Programme Framework partnership.	Final decision on partnership proposed made by PRC during its review of the project, taking into account the view of the Regional Offices where implementation of a project is to occur in a particular region or country.

4. Legal arrangements

The engagement of partners will be made legally binding between the parties by concluding a legal agreement to be signed by all partners. The guidance for using standard legal instruments and the related templates can be found at <http://intranet.unep.org/ICT/index.asp?id=legal>.

5. Information sharing and knowledge management

Pre-requisites for enhancing partnerships are the tools, processes and resources in place. UNEP must build into its integrated project database a feature on partnerships. The aim is to establish the modality and format for gathering information on lessons learnt, and provide relevant and updated information on partners and lessons learned in working with each of them. A mechanism to record partnerships and communicate experiences throughout UNEP is not the pretext to centralize decision-making on all partners. Individual UNEP staff members have the freedom to innovate on a project level, while conforming to the partnerships' policy, and ensuring review of the best use of the partnership through the reviews of the PAG and the PRC. A lack of awareness of existing projects and experiences with different partners, forestalls institutionalised learning, specifically in the design of partnership arrangements. It also often precludes the opportunity to find out about the quality of work of proposed partners who have worked previously with UNEP. UNEP's project database will provide the managerial information necessary to allow qualitative evaluation of the partnerships. It will also allow UNEP to strive

for an equitable balance of partners, from both developing and developed countries, and across sectors. The performance assessment of partners, captured in UNEP's project database will be used by the PAG and PRC in assessing the partnerships proposed by staff in working at a programmatic and project level.

6. *Monitoring and Evaluation*

UNEP's progress in working with partners will be reviewed bi-annually based on information contained in the organization's six-monthly progress reports at both Project and Programme Framework level. This information will feed into the management information on progress reporting which will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT), on a six-monthly basis, to assess whether project milestones are being met. QAS has the responsibility for verifying that this information is captured in the six-monthly progress reporting.

The evaluation plan for the MTS duration will include a parameter for reviewing UNEP's experience with its different partners in the course of the implementation of its Programme of Work. The Evaluation Office has the responsibility for ensuring this parameter is included in its evaluations at Subprogramme, Expected Accomplishment and project levels.

Future reviews

Partnerships are influenced by changes in the political and economic environment. To remain valid, these guidelines will be reviewed regularly and updated periodically. A time span of four years, coinciding with end of the current MTS, will be observed for a full review and update of these guidelines.