

Working Methods for UNDG Groups on country operations As of 4 February 2008

UNDG linkage to Working Groups

- The Chair and UNDG, will be informed by a Regional Management Teams' Operational Quality Assurance Group that brings together the regional management structures of all UNDG members. That group will synthesize the monitoring and operational tracking and oversight performed at that level, to highlight issues or draw lessons for UNDG's consideration. The UNDG should review the Regional Management Teams' Operational Quality Assurance Group every six months to one year, to ensure that the proposed modus operandi does provide the clear linkage between country and headquarters levels
- UNDG agendas should clearly delineate between programme and operational issues, indicating time allocated and nature of the item (e.g. decision/information) as well as reports relating to specific Working Groups. Agendas should include a standing item on "the Secretary-General's Policy Committee", to share broad feedback and allow inputs to the UNDG Chair on operational issues.
- The UNDG should annually review the structure of Working Groups and their working methods.

Working Groups

- Working Groups supporting the UNDG will be focused on operational issues at country level, and their key functions and workplans will be reviewed and agreed by the full UNDG and Chair on an annual basis as all CEB pillars' workplans are reviewed. The Working Groups are currently expected to include five standing groups focused on the following:
 1. Resident Coordinator System issues
 2. Multi-donor Trust Funds, joint programmes and funding issues
 3. Country Office Business Practices and Premises issues
 4. Programming issues
 5. Post-crisis and Transition operational issues

- Each Working Group will select a Convenor¹ and alternate Convenor, jointly responsible for directing the work of the Group and having accountability to the UNDG and its Chair for achieving the results/outputs indicated in their tasking memoranda or workplans.
- Each Working Group Convenor's organization will provide the main secretarial, administrative and financial support to the logistical functioning of the Group, assisted by the UNDG Secretariat.
- Organisations will take into account the competencies needed for the Working Groups' proper functioning when nominating conveners/members.
- Members must have knowledge and experience in the Group's area of work, as well as the relevant level of decision-making authority. Bringing to the Group their organisation's knowledge and experience, they should, however, keep in mind a system-wide perspective and not only that of their individual organisations. Each organization will have one voice in the groups.
- Organisations should designate alternates to the Members.
- Organisations must allow adequate time for their participants to contribute effectively to the Groups' expected outputs.
- Working Group members need to keep their organisations informed on the progress of the Group's work and ensure their representatives at the UNDG are fully briefed before UNDG meetings.

Conditions under which Working Group sub-structures may be considered

- Working groups are expected to perform all tasks in their workplans. On occasion, it may be necessary for them to organize themselves into small teams (in the past these took forms such as Task Teams, Friends of the Chair or similar modalities for temporary bodies), recruit consultants, seek additional technical support, etc. to enable them to complete *ad hoc* time-bound tasks with concrete key results.

¹ Terms of Reference for Convenors to be delineated.

- A Working Group will normally not establish more than one sub-structure at a time, to focus on a specific issue or to provide specific technical advice. Any such temporary small groups will be reviewed, by the Working Group to which it reports, on at least a quarterly basis, with a specific decision about whether the work has been achieved, and whether there is any need to continue the small group or move on to another issue.
- If a sub-structure is established, it may include up to one third of the members of the Working Group to which it reports; if a larger percentage of the sub-structure members also belong to the Working Group, the Working Group itself should undertake to achieve the necessary output without setting up a sub-structure.
- To reduce time spent in meetings, and especially for information-sharing items, Working Groups may establish electronic Networks to discuss specific issues. Those Networks will include all members of the Working Group as well as additional members who have technical expertise on the subject. Prior to establishment of Networks, consultation should take place with the UNDG to ensure no duplication and to avoid overstretching technical expertise. Networks will be established for no longer than one year, after which they will be reviewed and either disbanded or given a new or renewed mandate by the Working Group.

Functioning of the UNDG and Working Groups

- The UNDG and its working groups will set a *schedule* of regular meetings at the beginning of each year, assisted by the UNDG Secretariat to ensure there is no overlapping of meeting dates with other working groups and with the HLCP/HLCM mechanisms. The regular meeting schedule does not preclude, if required, *ad hoc* meetings to address specific issues; however, those issues should normally be addressed either at the regular meetings or by e-mail exchanges. Efforts will be made to address all issues by e-mail.
- A *quorum* will be achieved when at least two-thirds of the group's member organizations are represented, or have indicated in advance that they are unable to attend. In that case, they may reserve judgement on a decision item until two working days (48 hours) after the draft note for

the meeting is issued. The Convenor will facilitate consultation with any organization reserving judgement on a decision item.

- The UNDG will have *agendas* clearly delineated among issues pertaining to the Working Groups. Meetings will begin with decision items and move to information items, with a clear indication in the agenda of the nature of the item to be discussed.
- Decision items must be accompanied by a one-page “*decision sheet*” that outlines: the issue, brief background, and budget implications.
- Any *supporting documents* for the UNDG meetings, including Working Group meetings, must be circulated 5 working days in advance of the meeting. On rare occasions where it is not possible to circulate documents 5 working days in advance, the groups will discuss the issues only when requested by the Chair or Convenor, and a majority of members agrees to do so.
- *Decisions* will be achieved by consensus. Any reservations that had been raised during discussion will also be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- *Draft Notes for the record* of all UNDG and Working Group meetings will be circulated within 3 working days after the meeting. Task Teams may decide if notes are required; Networks will not have notes as their discussions will be recorded by e-mail exchanges.