

Terms of Reference

Preparations for 2012 Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly

***Enhancing the functioning of the UN Resident Coordinator
system.***

Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination
Department for Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

20 January 2012

1. Introduction

The QCPR is the mechanism through which the General Assembly assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of UN operational activities for development¹ and establishes system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the UN system in response to the evolving international development cooperation environment.

The 2012 QCPR will assess the implementation of policies established in GA resolutions 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review and 64/289 on system-wide coherence and ECOSOC resolution 2011/7, which provides guidance to the Secretary-General on analytical preparations for the 2012 QCPR.

The QCPR process also provides an important opportunity to Member States to engage in a dialogue on how to adapt UN operational activities to the changing global development cooperation context.

The SG facilitates the QCPR process by providing Member States with impartial, balanced and forward-looking analysis on the implementation of existing policies through several methods: firstly, survey of programme countries on UN operational activities for development, secondly, a series of analytical studies on selected issues, thirdly, a desk review of key documents in all substantive areas, and, fourthly, country visits to programme countries.

Analytical preparations for the 2012 QCPR will particularly focus on policy issues felt to require special attention by Member States.

Further broadening and strengthening of analysis on funding will be an important part of the 2012 QCPR preparations, including providing more disaggregated reporting on issues such as predictability of funding flows, breakdown of non-core funding by place of mobilization and cost recovery of non-core contributions to the UN development system.

The SG will also undertake in-depth analytical work in a number of other areas such as: UNDAF process, Resident Coordinator system, harmonization of business practices, results-based strategic planning and management, gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as examining emerging policy issues likely to impact the work of the UN development system in the 2013-2016 QCPR cycle. The analytical preparations will result in two reports of the SG on funding and TCPR implementation respectively.

Other key analytical inputs to the 2012 QCPR will be the report of the independent evaluation of 'delivering-as-one' and a report commissioned by the SG on a comprehensive review of the existing institutional framework for system-wide evaluation of UN operational activities for development.

¹ Operational activities for development refer to those activities of the United Nations development system entities which promote the sustainable development and welfare of developing countries and countries in transition. They cover both longer-term development-related activities as well as those with a humanitarian-assistance focus and relate to the work of those United Nations funds, programmes, specialized agencies, departments and offices which have a specific mandate in this regard.

Stakeholder consultations will be an integral part of the 2012 QCPR process, beginning in October 2011 with briefings to Member States and entities of the UN development system on the overall approach of the SG to the analytical preparations. In December, a workshop, open to all Member States will also examine the key findings and recommendations of the independent review of the existing institutional framework for system-wide evaluation.

A series of dialogues will be held with Member States, UN entities, UN inter-agency bodies, UN Resident Coordinators and country teams in the February to March 2012 period on the findings and recommendations of different analytical studies as well as the survey of programme countries. Furthermore, a multi-stakeholder workshop on the opportunities and challenges facing UN operational activities in the broader international development cooperation environment is planned in April 2012.

2. Mandate

In resolution 2011/7, ECOSOC requested the Secretary-General to pay particular attention in the report for the QCPR of operational activities for development of the UN system to:

- ❖ An assessment of the functioning of the resident coordinator system, including its ability to represent and support the entire United Nations system at the country level, in alignment with national development priorities, and, if needed, recommendations for measures in that regard.
- ❖ An analysis of how the characteristics, approaches and strategic and programmatic frameworks of the United Nations system operational activities should evolve to respond to various country situations, based on the principles of national ownership and leadership, and to the evolving international development cooperation environment.

3. Background

GA resolution 60/1 on World Summit Outcome

Implementing current reforms aimed at more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better-performing UN country presence with a strengthened role for the senior resident official, whether special representative, resident coordinator or humanitarian coordinator, including appropriate authority, resources and accountability, and a common management, programming and monitoring framework.

GA resolution 59/250 on triennial comprehensive policy review

Requests the Secretary-General, in full consultation with all agencies of the United Nations Development Group and the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination, as appropriate, to develop, by end of 2005, a comprehensive accountability framework for resident coordinators to exercise oversight of the design and implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, in a fully participatory manner, in support and under the leadership of national governments.

GA resolution 62/208 on triennial comprehensive policy review

Reaffirms that the resident coordinator system, within the framework of national ownership, has a key role to play in the effective and efficient functioning of the United Nations system at the country-level, including in the formulation of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, and is a key instrument for the efficient and effective coordination of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

The UN development system comprises the funds, programmes and specialized agencies that receive funding for operational activities for development. Thirty-six entities of the UN system received such funding in 2009.

UN entities identify how they can best undertake and accomplish their collective mission in the area of operational activities for development through inter-agency coordination at the national, regional and global level, while at the same time delivering and achieving their respective organizational mandates.

The purpose of inter-agency coordination in the area of development operations is to promote more strategic support for national plans and priorities in programme countries, to make operations more efficient, and to reduce transaction costs for governments.

A key mechanism for coordination of UN operational activities for development is the Resident Coordinator system

The Resident Coordinator System (RCS)

The RCS encompasses all organizations of the UN system dealing with operational activities for development, regardless of formal presence in the programme country. The RCS aims to bring together the different UN agencies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities at the country-level.

The RCs, who are funded and managed by UNDP, lead the UN country teams (UNCTs) in more than 130 countries. The RCs are the designated representatives of – and report to – the Secretary-General (as chair of CEB) through the UNDP Administrator, in his/her capacity as chair of UNDG. The management of the RCS is anchored in UNDP; however, it is owned by the whole UN system, and its functioning is participatory, collegial, and based on consensus and mutual accountability. As per the M&A system, the “day to day management of RC system” is by UNDP, and oversight/governance/accountability framework is by the UNDG.

The UNDG has agreed (through the ‘Management and Accountability System of the UN development and RC System, including the “functional firewall” for the RC System’, and relevant implementation plan) to a long-term vision for a Resident Coordinator who: “has an equal relationship with, and responsibility to, all UNCT member agencies”; “has all the leadership qualities required to be an excellent team leader who can represent the whole UN system effectively”; “is empowered by clear recognition from each entity of his/her role in strategically positioning the UN in each country”; and “be supported, as required, with access to agencies’ technical resources as agreed with the agencies’ representatives balancing resources with tasks to be performed”. The RC is accredited by letter of the Secretary-General, usually to the Head of State or Government.

The RC is also the Resident Representative of UNDP (RC/RR), and as such s/he remains accountable for UNDP overall business, but delegates the day to day functioning and fund raising for UNDP to the

UNDP CD/DR (M&A and RC job description) in accordance with the Management and Accountability System. In addition, the RC ensures that the interests of non-resident agencies (NRAs) are adequately represented, especially when he/she is leading the UNCT in developing their corresponding UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

All representatives of UN system organizations at the country-level report to the RC on matters related to the working of the UNCT and implementation of the jointly agreed UNCT workplan derived from the UNDAF. The RC is accountable to the UN system at the global-level, with inputs from the respective regional directors' team and designated managers from headquarters.

The Resident Coordinator is usually designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator in countries in the midst of a humanitarian crisis and as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in integrated presences. If a Special Representative of the Secretary-General is appointed, the RC/Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) will normally function as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General under his/her overall authority, with responsibility for coordination of development and humanitarian assistance, including early and longer-term recovery, in the context of RC/UNCT consultative arrangements (as per SG Guidance Note on Integration).

Regional UNDG Teams

The key role of Regional UNDG Teams (formerly known as "Regional Directors Teams") is to provide leadership, strategic guidance and support to RCs and UNCTs for the achievement of country-level results.

The Regional UNDG Teams' core functions are focused on the provision of coherent and timely technical support to RCs and UNCTs; quality assurance of UNDAFs/UN Programme through the quality assurance mechanism (QSA), performance management through the RC/UNCT Performance Appraisal system and "trouble shooting" in challenging country situations.

United Nations Development Group

UNDG unites the 36 UN funds, programmes, agencies, departments, and offices that play a role in development. The group's common objective is to deliver more coherent, effective and efficient support to countries seeking to attain internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

Established by the SG in 1997, the UNDG designs system-wide guidance to coordinate, harmonize and align UN development activities. The group strengthens the UN development system at the country-level, prepares it to meet future challenges and ensures that operations are conducted in accordance with mandates from UN governing bodies such as the GA.

By strengthening the UN RCS and helping UN organizations work together in new and better ways, the UNDG aims to generate synergies and efficiencies that increase the impact of UN programmes and policy advice. Coordinating development operations promotes more strategic support for national plans and priorities, makes operations more efficient and reduces transaction costs for governments. This helps the UN to be a more relevant and reliable partner for governments.

The UNDG is one of the three pillars of the CEB, which furthers coordination and cooperation on a wide range of substantive and management issues facing UN system organizations. The CEB brings the executive heads of UN organizations together on a regular basis under the chairmanship of the SG. Within the CEB structure, HLCM works on system-wide administrative and management issues, HLCP considers global policy issues, while the UNDG deals with operational activities for development with a focus on country-level work.

The UNDG Advisory Group provides the UNDG Chair with advice and guidance on managing the operational dimensions of the UNDG and the RCS.

The Administrator of UNDP chairs the UNDG. The UNDG Chair reports to the SG and the CEB on progress in implementing the group's work plan, and on the management of the RCS. The Administrator of one of the specialized agencies functions as a vice chairman on a rotational basis.

Development Operations Coordination Office

DOCO promotes social and economic progress by helping UN organizations deliver coherent, effective and efficient support to countries. The SG created DOCO (formerly the Development Group Office) and the UNDG in 1997 to unite the UN system and improve the quality of its development assistance.

Under the leadership of the UNDG Chair, and with the guidance of the UNDG, the overall objective of DOCO is to support the strategic priorities of the UNDG, and related coordination goals, and to meet DOCO's responsibilities under the Management and Accountability (M&A) system, in furtherance of the TCPR framework.

DOCO supports the UNDG at all levels to better support national partners in meeting the MDGs/IADGs and other critical national development priorities, specifically, the UNDG and its Advisory Group at Headquarters, Regional UNDG Teams, and RCs and UNCTs.

DOCO performs three main functions: (a) support the setting of the UNDG strategic priorities and global UNDG coordination; (b) support implementation of the UNDG strategic priorities at global, regional and country levels; and (c) gather evidence and lessons learned from implementation to feed into UNDG decision-making and dissemination back to countries."

DOCO also administers the UN Country Coordination Fund, which provides RCs with resources to improve their capacity to coordinate.

4. Scope of analysis

The study will:

- (i) Assess the functioning of the RCS, including its ability to represent and support the entire UN system at the country level in alignment with national development priorities.
- (ii) Analyze how the characteristics, approaches and strategic and programmatic frameworks of the United Nations system operational activities should evolve to respond to various country

situations, based on the principles of national ownership and leadership, and to the evolving international development cooperation environment.

5. Objective

The objective of the study is to advance the understanding among stakeholders of how the UN system can be tailored to deliver coherent, effective and efficient support that is responsive to different country situations/typologies (i.e. LDCs, MICs, countries in transition from relief to development, or otherwise) based on the principles of national ownership and leadership.

6. Methodology

The study will build on earlier analytical work by UNDG and others on the effectiveness of current coordination models within the UN development system including the recent independent study on the effectiveness of the Management and Accountability (M + A) System of the UN development system and the RC system including the functional firewall. This will include reviewing the findings of a survey of UN RCs and UNCTs conducted under the auspices of the above UNDG study. The recommendations of the independent study on the effectiveness of the M&A system were fully examined and relevant recommendations are being implemented by the UNDG. The independent M + A review constitutes a source of information for this study. This study will also benefit from the pre and post-Montevideo documentation, if available the independent evaluation of delivering as one.

The analytical/evaluative work undertaken under the auspices of the ongoing independent evaluation of the lessons learned from the delivering-as-one will also constitute a source of information for this study.

The study will also involve extensive consultations with UN system colleagues, particularly with Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams, relevant UNDG working group(s) and UNDG regional teams. The consultations will aim to explore, among others, the ways to overcome the challenges in the current Management and Accountability system and the impact of various business models and funding modalities used by different UN agencies on the functioning of the RC system. In addition, the study will utilize relevant findings of several other QCPR-related preparatory activities including the following:

1. A survey of programme countries on UN operational activities for development;
2. An informal survey of UN Resident Coordinators and UN country team members;
3. Informal consultations with a number of UN Resident Coordinators;
4. A financial/statistical analysis by DESA on the funding architecture of the UN development system, including concentration and fragmentation of operational activities for development at the country-level;
5. Desk review of documents in all QCPR-related areas;

6. The analytical study titled: 'The relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the UN Development Assistance Framework.'

An important objective of this study will be to advance the understanding among stakeholders of the relationship between the UN operational activities and deliverables at the country-level and the respective development context while being consistent with the principles of national ownership and leadership. This will include furthering understanding among stakeholders of how UN assistance can effectively respond to different country contexts as well as the specific needs of the national government.

Some of the factors that could be considered in this context are the following:

- ❖ Relative share of UN operational activities of total ODA at the country-level;
- ❖ Absolute amount of UN operational activities at the country-level;
- ❖ The size of the UN system at the country level in terms of number of entities and staff;
- ❖ Government capacity;
- ❖ Level of development (e.g. least-developed or middle-income country); and
- ❖ Post-conflict and/or special development situation.

Evidence gathering for this study will also involve a visit to one programme country to examine the effectiveness of the UN Resident Coordinator system and to consult with members of the UN country team on relevant issues.

7. Key tasks

The study will entail the following tasks:

1. To prepare a brief inception note outlining the approach to the assignment;
2. Review relevant studies, analytical documentation and surveys on the UN RC system and linkages with other coordination mechanisms at regional and global level within the UN development system;
3. Develop a conceptual framework to advance understanding among stakeholders on the relationship between different UN assistance models at the country-level and the respective development context;
4. Consult extensively with relevant experts in UNDG/DOCO, CEB secretariat and other UN entities on issues related to the study;
5. Undertake a mission to a programme country or through other means to assess the effectiveness of the UN RC system, as well as to consult with UN country team members;
6. Finalize the report, which should include information on methodology and process as well as recommendations;

7. Perform other tasks as requested by DCPB.

8. Main deliverables

The consultant will be expected to produce the following deliverable(s):

Analytical report on how to enhance the functioning of the UN Resident Coordinator system with a view to enhancing the role and the relevance of the UN system at country level including how it should evolve to respond to various country situations based on the principles of national ownership and leadership.

9. Resources needed

10. Qualifications

The consultant is expected to possess the following qualifications:

- Excellent knowledge of UN development operations at the country, regional and global level;
- Strong analytical and drafting skills;
- Good understanding of research methodologies;
- Advanced university degree in public administration, business administration, social sciences or related field.

11. Timeframe

The consultant is expected to commence work on 1 December 2011 and complete the assignment no later than 28 February 2012.

12. Performance success indicators

- Effective cooperation established with UNDESA and other UN colleagues with expertise in the area of UN coordination;
- A sound strategy, workplan and methodology developed for the study;
- The outcome of the study is found to be credible and useful by UN system colleagues and other stakeholders; and
- The findings of the study add significant value to analytical preparations for the 2012 QCPR of the GA.

13. Management and reporting arrangements

The consultant will work under the supervision of Kristinn Sv. Helgason, Deputy Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, UNDESA (helgason@un.org; tel: (212) 963-8418) and in close partnership with the branch's statistician, Andrew MacPherson (macpherson@un.org; tel: (917) 367-5372 who serves as the focal point for the preparation of the annual report of the Secretary-General on funding for operational activities for development.