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Organizational matters

**Management response to the evaluation of the regional
programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2008-2013**

Context, background and findings

1. The regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2008-2013, was approved by the Executive Board in decision 2008/8 at its first regular session 2008. The regional programme document is framed around four broad themes: (a) poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); (b) democratic governance; (c) crisis prevention and recovery; and (d) environment and sustainable development. The overarching goal is to promote regional initiatives for achieving the MDGs.
2. The evaluation of the regional programme for Asia and the Pacific (DP/2013/xx) examined the results achieved through the 14 thematic programmes under the regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, and the complementary technical support services provided to country offices and other national or regional partners, as defined in the regional programme document (DP/RPD/RAP/1). The evaluation further took into account changes made over time by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), including the institutional reform of its regional centres undertaken in 2010.
3. The contribution of the programme to the development outcomes was assessed according to a standard set of evaluation criteria used in all regional programme evaluations (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability), as well as criteria to examine not just what was delivered but also how it was implemented. The evaluation used a combination of desk reviews of material, field visits to nine selected countries and interviews with various stakeholders, including extensive use of online interviews and a cyber-metric analysis commissioned by the UNDP Evaluation Office to gauge the use of the regional programme's knowledge products on the Internet.
4. The evaluation concluded that, despite the constraints of operating in an extremely diverse region, the RBAP regional programme was highly relevant, had addressed critical regional development challenges and operated efficiently, ensuring programme delivery consistent with RBAP-defined 'regionality' principles, which are unique to the region. The evaluation also assessed that "the regional programme has made important strides to incorporate gender mainstreaming into its policy, programming and implementation. Across focus areas, the



regional programme mainstreamed a gender dimension well in both the design and implementation of its projects, as well as in its support to country offices”. Lessons from this experience will be carried into the next programme cycle, 2014-2017.

5. The evaluation also concluded that the RBAP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in Bangkok and the Pacific Centre in Suva have implemented and made important contributions to the achievement of regional programme results and have provided highly valued technical and advisory services, especially by the UNDP country offices. The evaluation also concluded that the development of a parallel programme for the Pacific provided more efficiency gains than losses.

Annex. Key recommendations and management response

Evaluation recommendation 1				
RBAP should reconceptualize the regional programme as the instrument playing an important leveraging role within the overall architecture of the UNDP delivery mechanism of development results.				
Management response				
Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. The ongoing regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2008-2013, was aligned with the current UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2013, towards achieving thematic practice-based outcomes. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, will also be aligned to the new UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017, but more specifically from a regional context. The new regional programme will be issues-based, focusing on a limited number of strategic areas in order to address priority regional challenges, and to support and bring added value to country programme results.				
Key action(s)	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2014-2017, and in subsequent programming.	2014-2017	RBAP, Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok (APRC) and Pacific Centre, Suva		
1.2 Increase synergies between the regional and country programmes to ensure more targeted sub-regional responses, in particular through the integrated work plan preparation process and through more regular consultations with the APRC and Pacific Centre management boards and ongoing annual engagement dialogues.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 2				
RBAP should create a framework for shared responsibilities and mutual accountability between the regional centres and country offices for development results at the country level to be achieved by regional programmes activities or by country programme activities supported by the regional centres.				
Management response				
Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. Preparation for the new regional programme is taking place through close consultation with country offices, national partners and other regional and sub-regional stakeholders to enhance ownership of the regional programme, especially by country offices. RBAP will ensure that subsequent project designs under the new regional programme, 2014-2017, are tailored to further enhance linkages and added value to country office programmes, while at the same time ensuring mutual accountability towards results between the regional and country programmes.				
2.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2014-2017, and in subsequent programming	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
2.2 Formulate regional programme through close consultation with country offices and other relevant stakeholders at the national and sub-regional levels to further improve linkages with country programmes.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
2.3 Increase synergies between the regional programme and country programmes through more regular consultations with APRC and Pacific Centre management boards, ongoing annual engagement dialogues, etc.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 3				
RBAP should seriously explore ways in which to use an issues-based approach for the regional programme in order to address key development challenges in the region, and to further encourage cross-practice work within the regional centres and in their support to country programmes.				
Management response				
Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. The recommendation for an issues-based approach is strongly supported as it strengthens cross-practice approaches and draws together opportunities for better integrating tools, such as Solutions Exchange and South-South cooperation, into the mode in which the regional programme				

is delivered. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, will be issues-based, focusing on a limited number of strategic areas in order to address priority regional challenges. An issues-based approach also provides the opportunity for greater flexibility when responding to emerging issues and evolving development challenges, in particular the potential new directions that may emerge from the conclusion of consultations on the MDG post-2015 agenda. Ongoing cross-practice work in APRC and the Pacific Centre, which the evaluation concluded was a 'thriving practice', will be continued and further strengthened through feasible and relevant institutionalization in order to continue supporting coherent, effective interventions at the regional and country levels.				
3.1 Adopt issues-based approach for the new regional programme.	2013	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
3.2 Review and identify feasible mechanisms to institutionalize ongoing rich cross-cutting practice in the regional centres.	2014	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
3.3 Enhance the APRC/ Pacific Centre service tracker, and other annual engagement mechanisms with country offices, in order to better reflect effective provision of cross-practice advisory services.	2014	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 4 The regional centres should continue to seek appropriate regional or national partners to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the regional programme contribution.				
Management response Relevant and acceptable. RBAP recognizes that such partnerships will be at the foundation of the design of interventions and that in all cases it will be vital that the UNDP niche and involvement is defined early in the process. APRC and the Pacific Centre will continue to focus on initiating new and strengthening ongoing regional and national partnerships to ensure the effectiveness and the sustainability of regional programme contributions and results.				
4.1 Formulate partnership building strategy for the new regional programme document, with a strong focus on identifying strategic sub-regional and national level partners.	2014	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		
4.2 Reflect evaluation recommendations in developing regional programme regional projects.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 5 The regional centres should introduce, in the engagement policy with country offices, regular monitoring of progress made and results achieved by the regional programme initiatives and technical support rendered to the country offices.				
Management response Relevant and acceptable; response initiated. This recommendation is in line with the RBAP focus on ensuring that regional programmes complement country programmes, that country programmes are designed in a way to provide space for follow-up on advocacy and policy support initiatives supported initially through the regional programme, and that there is mutual accountability of results between regional and country programmes in relevant programme areas.				
5.1 Adjust the new regional programme formulation process to ensure stronger country office consultation and participation during conceptual and design phase.	2013	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
5.2 Take measures to enhance mutual accountability for results and to ensure targeted support to countries as part of the corporate integrated work plan/results-oriented annual report exercises, and engagement dialogues with country offices in the region.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 6 The regional centres should define knowledge management as one of the core mandates of its experts.				
Management response Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, will be developed to give appropriate attention to defining knowledge management as one of the key mandates of the work of the regional centres.				
6.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2014-2017, and in subsequent programming.	2013-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		

6.2 Design a knowledge management and communication strategy that is responsive to regional and country office needs, and that is geared to capture and disseminate good practices.	2014	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 7 The regional centres should further enhance the outreach of their knowledge products and contents, particularly at the national level in the region.				
Management response Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. To facilitate the use of knowledge management as a tool of programme delivery and effectiveness, the regional centres will enhance the outreach and use of their knowledge products through the identification of appropriate national partners, such as research institutions, and the translation of relevant knowledge products into national languages and its wide dissemination using different media and formats, such as social media, e-learning and video clips. Furthermore, the design and development of knowledge products will include a comprehensive communications and knowledge management strategy that ensures that the key elements and recommendations of the relevant product are brought to the attention of national and regional policy-makers and stakeholders.				
7.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme, 2014-2017.	2013	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
7.2 Identify relevant focus countries and national partners for key regional knowledge products to foster their dissemination and use through different media and other formats.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 8 UNDP should seek ways to establish programming and funding arrangements that ensure coherence of the programme of the regional centres in Asia and the Pacific.				
Management response Relevant and partially acceptable. This recommendation has broader corporate implications and will be addressed in the context of the new UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017. Together with other relevant UNDP bureaux, such as the Bureau for Development Policy, RBAP will review the present programming and funding arrangements of the regional centres to analyze and better understand their impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the regional centres.				
8.1 To contribute to corporate work on establishing programming and funding arrangements of the regional centres, study the present programming and funding arrangements of RBAP regional centers to inform next steps at the corporate level.	2013-2014	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 9 UNDP should introduce in the programming framework the means for the regional programme to come up with, pursue, test and apply innovative and issues-based ideas and approaches that reflect priorities and emerging issues in the region.				
Management response Relevant and acceptable. This recommendation has broader corporate implications and will be addressed in the context of the new UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, for Asia and the Pacific will be issues-based, focusing on a limited number of strategic areas in order to address priorities and emerging issues in the region. The regional programme will continue to be informed and guided by RBAP regionality principles, which provide the rationale for the regional programme, the use of which is unique to the region.				
9.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme, 2014-2017.	2013	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
9.2 Ensure the new regional programme outcome areas and focus are informed by the new UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017, as well as RBAP regionality principles and assessment of the development challenges in the region.	2013-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		

Evaluation recommendation 10				
UNDP should create corporate recognition and incentives for cross-practice and issues-based work, and introduce a mechanism to properly attribute results achieved across practice areas.				
Management response				
Relevant and acceptable. This recommendation has broader corporate implications and will be addressed in the context of the new UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017.				
10.1 To contribute to corporate work on creating recognition and incentives for cross-practice and issues-based work, continue to support and strengthen RBAP cross-practice work through coherent, effective interventions at the regional and country levels.	2013-2017	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 11				
UNDP should enhance institutional support to the regional centres by mobilizing funding at the regional level.				
Management response				
Relevant and acceptable. This recommendation has broader corporate implications and will be addressed in the context of the new UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017. RBAP recognizes the importance of a strong partnership and resource mobilization strategy for each regional centre that is responsive to changing development partner interests.				
11.1 Develop a resource mobilization strategy for the new regional programme document, in order to complement corporate efforts to enhance institutional support to regional centres.	2013-2014	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database.