

Delivering as One Pilots Stocktaking Exercise for 2007

The eight Delivering as One United Nations pilot countries concluded their first year of working together more coherently with a stocktaking exercise. The stocktaking was done informally at the country level to assess progress, review emerging issues and identify lessons learned. Both the UN Country Teams and the national governments provided assessments, as did some UN agencies. The stocktaking was not part of the formal evaluations of the pilot exercise that will be conducted by the UN Evaluation Group. While each pilot experience was different and clearly reflected the principle that no one size fits all, some general preliminary impressions are worth highlighting.

National Ownership and Leadership: The pilots are clearly nationally driven, and are leading to better communication, interaction and engagement between governments and UN Country Teams. As a result, the UN system is more effectively aligning its programming to support national priorities, national reform processes such as the Paris Declaration, and national development plans, including the Millennium Development Goals. Government ownership, oversight and coordination is getting stronger, and clearly determines the scope and nature of the One Programme. The UN should continue exploring how best to align its assistance with national development priorities and strategies. Including line ministries at all stages of the process is helping the pilots define and implement the One Programme.

One Programme: The pilots are truly exploring how the UN can respond better to national priorities through joint analysis, joint prioritization and joint budgeting. They are taking a system-wide view of the UN's capacity to address national priorities, drawing on the mandates, experience and expertise of all relevant UN agencies, including those not resident in the country. One Programme has also encouraged pilots to apply the UN's normative framework and cross-cutting themes more thoroughly, and increased the possibilities for upstream policy advice and advocacy. Strategic joint programming aligned with national priorities has to grow from the UN Development Assistance Framework. This helps the UN to be more demand-driven. Rwanda's experience building a One Programme together with a new UNDAF has proven to be the optimal sequence and timing for starting initiatives to increase coherence. The new generation of UNDAF guidelines provides enough tools for building coherent programmes at the country level. The UN Development Group needs ensure country teams recognize that joint programming is the process of planning and thinking

together, and not simply implementing a few joint programmes.

Key Findings

- Increased government leadership and ownership of the UN Programme, and greater alignment of UN priorities with national government development priorities.
- Increased participation and joint programming among the UN agencies, including specialized and non-resident agencies.
- Progress in developing One Programme, One Budgetary Framework and One Leader with mutual accountability between the Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team, and agreements on division of labor among agencies.

One Leader and One Team: There has been a positive change in attitudes and behavior through the pilots. UN agencies report that they better understand each others' mandates, expertise, business models, and comparative advantages. Recognition of the Resident Coordinator's value and function as UNCT leader is growing, and the pilots have made progress in clarifying the mutual accountability of the RC and UN agencies. The deployment of UNDP Country Directors is helping the RCs to fulfill their coordination role. The Pilots have helped the UN system define a much clearer division of labor, allocation of roles and responsibilities, and commitment to common and individual results with accountability for each agency. As a result the governments' burden of consultation and reporting has been reduced. Clearer definitions of roles, responsibilities and accountability will be essential to Delivering as One.



Striking a balance between inclusiveness and strategic focus and alignment is still a challenge.

One Budgetary Framework: New mechanisms such as the joint budgetary framework and One Fund are proving to be effective tools. Partners now have a full and transparent overview of UN activities, financing and funding gaps. Some donors have made additional resources available to fund pilot projects and committed themselves to increase programme funding.

Challenges: The pace of reform and change in HQ systems has been slow, including approval processes, reporting requirements, human resources, and IT. UNCTs report insufficient guidance and sometimes slow support from HQ and Regional Offices, and occasionally conflicting messages and communications from agencies' HQ and Regional Offices. While the initial strategy of providing little or no guidance to the pilots has allowed them to innovate, it is clear that they could also have benefited from some headquarters guidance and more robust and regular communications from HQ agencies to staff, more inter-agency missions, as well as a faster response to the change management challenges they face. HQs need to be more effective in harmonizing their operating systems and procedures, and need to provide consistent messages on UN reform.

The Pilot countries experienced a heavy workload at all levels as a result of Delivering as One. There has been an increase in short-term start-up costs for UN agencies, including the transaction costs related to some agencies' internal reorganization. Some

agencies found that their planning and budgeting approaches and their allocation of technical resources by theme or issue do not facilitate the country programming approach. Government and UN expectations for increased funding can lead to unrealistic programming. It can be difficult for UNCTs to prioritize when they are not certain that resources will be available to cover the funding gaps in their One Programme. Of the four "Ones", progress on the One Office is the slowest. It is still too early to assess comprehensively whether Delivering as One is reducing transaction costs. The pilots' first year was focused on putting the necessary processes, planning, mechanisms, and joint programming in place. The real challenge for 2008 and beyond is implementation.

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD (2008)

The UN Development Group is proposing three priorities to put in practice the guidance given by the UN General Assembly's Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review resolutions of 2004 and 2007.

1. Ensure effective and timely implementation of the One Programme in the eight pilots with continuing government ownership and leadership, as well as mapping and addressing the issue of transaction costs in pilot countries.
2. Spread the lessons being learned from the pilots to countries in which governments are requesting more coherent and aligned programming from the UN, as well as for countries planning a new UNDAF with governments.
3. Provide timely and needed changes to Headquarters systems and support to the pilots and other UNCTs that are exploring and implementing innovative ways of working together, as requested by national governments. Increase the emphasis on and harmonization of business practices at the country level, with support from HQ and regional offices.

A detailed summary of the 2007 stocktaking and the individual country reports are available at www.undg.org.