

Review of UNISDR's Biennial Work Programme 2010/11

Final Report

October, 2012



2B-268 FIRST AVENUE OTTAWA, ON CANADA K1S 2G8

T 613 594 3033, F 613 594 8928

iensen@estaconsulting.org

www.estaconsulting.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
OVERVIEW	2
PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT	2
METHODOLOGY	3
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT FOR UNISDR	4
EVALUATIONS AND THEIR FINDINGS	5
EVOLUTION OF THE BWP PROCESS IN UNISDR.....	6
BWP 2010-11: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	7
THE BWP PROCESS.....	7
STRENGTHS OF THE PROCESS	8
AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROCESS	10
CONCLUSION/SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS/PRIORITIES	18
APPENDICIES.....	19
APPENDIX 1– REVIEW OF EVALUATION FINDINGS	20
APPENDIX 2– PROPOSED MANAGEMENT CONTROL FRAMEWORK FOR UNISDR	29
APPENDIX 3– LIST OF INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED FOR THE REVIEW	30
APPENDIX 4– INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	31
APPENDIX 5–REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	32

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The primary means by which UNISDR plans and delivers its mandate¹ is the Biennial Work Programme (BWP) process. The purpose of this project was to review the 2010/11 BWP results and process (and relevant developments since then) to assess what worked well and to identify areas for improvement.

UNISDR is a relatively young organization and has made steady and measurable progress in implementing its mandate and addressing concerns of donors. However, UNISDR's mandate and operating environment continue to present challenges for the management of the delivery of UNISDR's mandate through the BWP process.

Our review identified the following strengths and improvements that occurred either during the 2010/11 BWP process or subsequently:

- UNISDR has had success in responding to evaluations and donor concerns.
- The planning process has improved considerably.
- Staff are dedicated and committed to improvement.
- Staff are more focussed on achieving tangible results.
- The Results Based Management System (RBMS) has become the tool for demonstrating cost effectiveness and value for money and has made the organization more results oriented.

This review also identified a number of areas where improvements can still occur:

- a) The full range of program management activities needs to be managed.
- b) The Strategic Objectives can be improved.
- c) Implementation requires greater attention.
- d) Aspects of the RBMS remain difficult to implement and more focus on results rather than activities is required.
- e) Donor management should continue to be strengthened.
- f) Cash flow issues still affect many decisions and results.
- g) Support from HQ to regions is often inadequate.
- h) UNISDR's Value Added and the role of the regions could be clarified further.
- i) Regions and HQ Cultures need more integration.

Detailed recommendations to address each of these issues are contained in the appropriate section.

¹ http://www.unisdr.org/files/23291_1101657inteng.pdf

OVERVIEW

UNISDR is a relatively new organization, set up in December 1999 with General Assembly (GA) resolution 54/219 to coordinate the UN's disaster risk reduction efforts. Its mandate is to connect governments and partners; to produce evidence for disaster risk reduction; to mobilize decision and opinion makers; and to support strengthening of the resilience of nations and communities to disasters and the impacts of climate change.² The core functions of UNISDR are: coordination within the UN system of risk reduction issues; partnership development; communications and advocacy; generation of evidence and knowledge for action; knowledge management; resource mobilization; regional coordination and support; and servicing of intergovernmental and other fora at global and regional levels.

The main process by which UNISDR plans and delivers its mandate is the Biennial Work Programme (BWP) process. The BWP takes as its starting point the results from the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction (convened every two years among member states and stakeholders). Over the past few years several evaluations have pointed to the need for UNISDR to be more strategic and focussed on results in its work programme. Senior management has taken numerous steps to meet the concerns of donors, including implementing a Results Based Management System (RBMS) and refining its process for determining Strategic Objectives (SOs).

PURPOSE OF THIS PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to review the 2010/11 BWP results and process (and relevant developments since then), to assess what worked well, and to identify areas for improvement. Since the BWP process is how UNISDR implements its mandate, our analysis also touches on issues which flow from the BWP process and impact on the organization. The results of the BWP process are reviewed with a focus on the BWP's effectiveness in developing and meeting strategic programme objectives. However, we did not assess the extent to which the overall results were achieved, as the linkages between outputs, outcomes and Strategic Objectives is still a work in progress (refer RBMS section below).

² http://www.unisdr.org/files/23291_1101657inteng.pdf

METHODOLOGY

The review of the 2010/11 BWP process included the following steps:

1. Review and analysis of findings of the evaluations and similar reports over the past few years (Appendix 1).
2. Development of a Proposed Management Control Framework to assess and examine delivery of UNISDR's mandate (Appendix 2).
3. Overview meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction.
4. Structured interviews with all Regional Heads (or alternates from their offices) and selected HQ managers (Appendices 3 & 4) to determine their views on the strengths, areas for improvement, and effectiveness of the BWP process.
5. Structured interviews with two donors to assess their needs in regard to the BWP process (Appendices 3 & 4).
6. Analysis of findings of document review and interviews.
7. Synthesis of findings and preparation of recommendations.
8. Preparation of draft and final reports.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT FOR UNISDR

UNISDR derives its legislative authority and mandate from United Nations General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly set out the guiding principles of humanitarian response. The UN has identified UNISDR as having the principal responsibility for coordination of disaster risk reduction activities. Direction on what UNISDR should do was provided by the Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. In order to meet the expected outcomes of this framework, objectives and expected accomplishments for UNISDR are set out in Programme 22 (Humanitarian assistance), Subprogramme 3 (Natural disaster reduction) of the UN Strategic Framework for 2010/11 (and subsequent versions) and the UN Programme budget for 2010/11

The mission of UNISDR is to connect governments and partners; to produce evidence for disaster risk reduction; to mobilize decision and opinion makers; and to support strengthening of the resilience of nations and communities to disasters and the impacts of climate change.³ Though UNISDR does not implement programs at the global, regional or country level, its coordination role requires that it play a strong role as advocate, knowledge broker and convenor of all relevant stakeholders on disaster risk reduction issues. These factors have clear implications not only for its work, but for the measurement of results that are achieved.

UNISDR's work tends to be long term in nature as the problems are complex and solutions require the intervention and efforts of several layers of partners. The number of UN organizations like UNISDR is not large and donors are more used to working with and assessing the results of organizations which deliver programs directly. Some countries and donors see DRR through a humanitarian lens while others see it from an economic perspective, complicating the approaches regions must take. A final and no less important issue is that the funding for UNISDR has not yet stabilized and a significant portion of their funding is tied to specific projects or timeframes.

Taken together the elements of this environment create significant challenges for the management of the delivery of UNISDR's mandate through the BWP process and these challenges will be reviewed below.

³ http://www.unisdr.org/files/23291_1101657inteng.pdf

EVALUATIONS AND THEIR FINDINGS

There have been five external evaluations by donor countries, a consultant and the UN which have examined issues relevant to the BWP process. In addition two internal reviews have also looked at the strategic planning process and the RBMS. A review of these studies can be found in Appendix 1.

Most of the evaluations of UNISDR have commented positively on the efforts the organization has made to raise the profile of the need for disaster risk reduction and the development of international and national partners to achieve their mandate. In this regard the advocacy, convening and coordination efforts of UNISDR have received significant recognition. Evaluations have also often noted the relatively young age of the organization and the difficulty of its mandate. Some have also noted the difficulty of measuring the links between development results and advocacy/coordination. UNISDR has been given credit for its fairly recent focus on results through the RBMS. In terms of areas for improvement, most evaluations have been critical of the lack of a strategic approach to its mandate; priorities not being chosen in line with an overall strategy; no clear link between strategy, implementation and results; and a resource allocation strategy not being clear. Evaluations have also noted that UNISDR has too many activities and that more focus in areas where it has clear value added is required.

On funding, most evaluations have recommended that UNISDR extend its donor base while fewer note that UNISDR receives humanitarian rather than development funding.

The conclusions of at least one evaluation are questionable given its methodology. The UK evaluation lumped together UN organizations with quite different mandates and did not appear to differentiate among the organizations in terms of their mandate and operational environment. This evaluation also did not factor in the relative youth of UNISDR nor its small size and resulting capacity. The section on Organizational Strengths makes no mention of the efforts UNISDR has made to address previous evaluations and the information is dated in more than one instance.

As many evaluations measure results, it should be noted that measuring results for agencies which deliver programs at the country level (e.g. World Food Program) is significantly easier than measuring who is responsible for changes that originate with advocacy and coordination. Our interviews with donor countries lead us to believe that many countries and organizations recognize this conceptual and methodological problem but a clear solution does not appear close at hand.

Another problem with some of the evaluations is that UNISDR appears to have not been able to correct factual or interpretation issues early on in the process and the evaluations conclusions become established “fact”. This resulted in subsequent evaluations (Danish, following the UK,

and to some extent, a later review by Australia) using some of the same language, and presumably, coming to some of the same erroneous conclusions. The strengthened Resource Mobilization Unit will be recommending steps to address this issue.

EVOLUTION OF THE BWP PROCESS IN UNISDR

Prior to 2009 (when BWP 2010/11 started) BWP's were coordinated and developed almost entirely by HQ in Geneva. The work plans and organizational results were built around the core functions of UNISDR: coordination; advocacy and information services. This approach apparently resulted in an emphasis on "activities" rather than the "results" that donors were looking for.

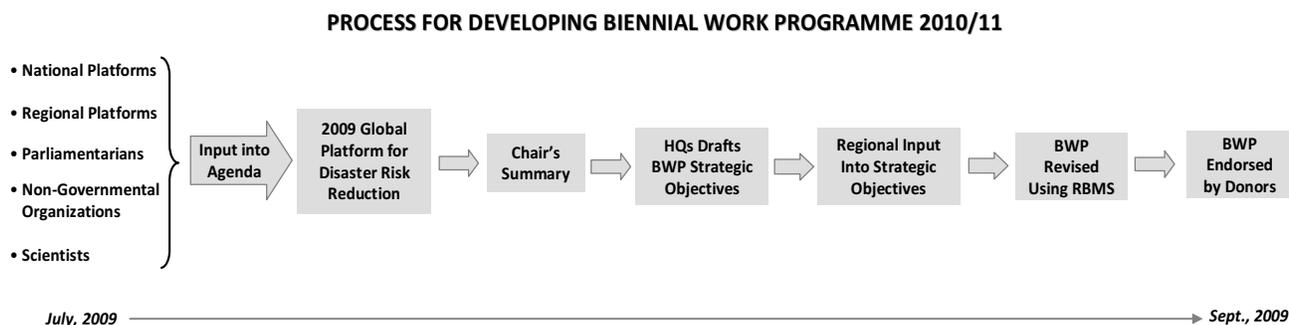
For the 2010/11 process it was decided to uncouple the Strategic Objectives from the core functions, to make them more results oriented and to have greater involvement of the regions.

The 2012/13 process, while retaining the close collaboration between HQ and regions, undertook to address some of the deficiencies identified subsequent to the 2010/11 process, especially in regard to the breadth and depth of the Strategic Objectives, indicators and outcomes.

BWP 2010-11: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE BWP PROCESS

The process for developing the 2010/11 BWP took approximately three months to complete (July-Sept, 2009). There was significant involvement of the regions and HQ, including the SRSG, in the development of the Strategic Objectives. In terms of content, the basis for starting discussions within UNISDR was the Chair's summary from the 2009 Global Platform meeting. The agenda for the Global Platform was and is developed using outputs from national and regional platforms and information gathered from parliamentarians, scientists, and NGOs. Using the Chair's summary, HQ prepared some draft Strategic Objectives⁴ which were then refined in discussions with the regions and HQ. The draft BWP was then discussed with select donors in Geneva. Donor and partner comments informed the final draft. Following the mid-term review, the BWP was revised using the new RBMS, as it became evident there were too many indicators and their relevance was not always evident (donors had raised concerns in this regard).



⁴ The final 2010/11 Strategic Objectives were: SO1 –Disaster risk reduction accepted and applied for climate change adaptation; SO2 –Measureable increase in investments in disaster risk reduction; SO3 – Disaster resilient cities, schools and hospitals; SO4 –Strengthened international system for disaster risk reduction.

STRENGTHS OF THE PROCESS

a) UNISDR has had success in responding to evaluations and donor concerns.

UNISDR has had clear success addressing evaluations and donors concerns in two areas. The organization has undertaken extensive efforts to ensure it takes a more strategic approach to its work and the creation of the Strategic Framework for 2025 is an important development in setting the medium-long term direction of the organization. UNISDR has revised its method of developing the Strategic Objectives and is trying to ensure that the SOs and the supporting indicators, outcomes and outputs are more results based. It has learnt from previous exercises, incorporated learning's and made adjustments from one BWP process to another. People generally recognize that the 2010/11 framework advanced from the previous one and the 2012/13 has incorporated learning's from 2010/11. The second area where changes have occurred has been developing a focus on results. Management has provided impetus for a corporate wide focus on results and championed the introduction of a new and extensive Results Based Management System. Staff have been trained and a comprehensive implementation plan for the RBMS with milestones and clear deliverables has been put in place.

b) The planning process has improved considerably.

There is widespread agreement that the planning part of the BWP process is much better now than it was before 2009. Key factors cited include: extensive involvement of the regions; widespread consultation with staff; involvement of donors and partners; clearer direction from HQ; collaboration on some issues with HQ and regions has increased; reporting has become more standardized; and better integration across the organization has occurred.

c) Staff are dedicated and committed to improvement.

The staff of UNISDR is committed to its mandate and morale is generally high. Staff and managers believe in the importance of the work and are committed to improving the manner in which the organization does business. These are not small factors in regard to their ability to affect an organization's success.

d) Staff are more focussed on achieving tangible results.

Staff has learned, often the hard way –through evaluations and donors comments –about the importance placed on UNISDR to achieve results which demonstrate good value for money. Several managers have noted the mindset of staff has changed and it is no longer necessary to “sell” them on this objective. The 2010/11 BWP process marked a transition from a small advocacy based culture to a results based one. As a result, the organization is now at a common starting point in regard to one of its main objectives

e) RBMS has become the tool for demonstrating cost effectiveness and value for money and has made the organization more results oriented.

Although in its early stages, the RBMS system is recognized as having the potential to demonstrate UNISDR's work is cost effective and provides good value for money. As noted in the Environmental Context section above, the nature of UNISDR's work makes it easier to describe activities than results. However, this comment aside, steps have been taken to make UNISDR's Strategic Objectives more concrete, to limit the number of outputs, outcomes and activities and to provide more focus on the organization's mandate. The journey is not yet completed in regard to results but some good first steps have been taken.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROCESS

This section will examine those issues identified by managers and stakeholders as well as through our firm's analysis, which impact on the ability of UNISDR to define and deliver on its mandate. Some issues were identified as being relevant not just in the BWP 2010/11 process but for the general management of UNISDR in terms of developing and implementing its priorities (e.g. how HQ deals with the regions).

a) The full range of program management activities need to be managed.

As noted above, UNISDR had devoted considerable effort to improving its strategic direction and implementing a results-based approach. It could however devote more attention to other areas (e.g. operational planning) of the management control process (refer Appendix 2), and to programme implementation broadly. There is mixed, and in some cases, inadequate support for the regions in some key areas and accountabilities for management/operational processes are unclear.

Recommendations:

- Management needs to devote greater attention to the full spectrum of their management responsibilities especially in the areas of operational planning; implementation of BWP objectives and integration of these areas into the overall business of the organization.
- The SLG should adopt the Proposed Management Control Framework (Appendix 2) which outlines the main areas of management responsibility that are necessary to implement UNISDR's work programme.
- The SLG should take steps to ensure that accountabilities for each area of the Framework are clear.
- Processes and procedures should be gradually developed and implemented to ensure each area under the Framework receives the attention it requires.

b) Strategic Objectives can be improved.

UNISDR has made good progress in creating its Strategic Objectives (SOs) and each iteration is better than the last. That said, there are a few areas in which this process could be improved. Some of the 2010/11 SOs appear to have been beyond the mandate, capacity and resources of UNISDR to achieve (at least in the near term). SO1 and SO2 appear to be in this category. SO1 was difficult for UNISDR to have a meaningful influence on by itself and differences of opinion on what SO2 meant existed within the organization, limiting the ability to achieve the outcomes. The SOs created were not always linked to what was going on in the regions and sometimes the indicators were too specific, potentially excluding one or more regions' contribution. Additional problems identified included: it was not always clear who was in charge of each SO, who was making the changes to the content, or why these changes were being made. These factors slowed preparation of regional work plans and ultimately, implementation by the regions.

Recommendations:

- The SOs should be developed with implementation and reporting on results in mind.
- A limited number of outcomes for each SO should be developed and there should be a clear understanding of what they mean and how they support the achievement of the SO.
- Each SO should be accompanied by a diagnosis/review of the challenge(s) in achieving the objective and guidelines for dealing with the challenge(s).
- Strategic Objectives should have a balance between clear global goals while leaving enough flexibility for regional variations.
- UNISDR's natural strengths (e.g. developing and managing campaigns; creating partnerships; convening stakeholders) should be considered when developing SOs.
- Regions should be involved in the discussions right from the start and a clear flow of information on both process and content needs to occur.

c) Implementation process requires greater attention.

In BWP 2010/11 sometimes the SOs were created without adequate assessment of the implications for implementation. In some cases this is a question of capacity of UNISDR to actually influence events, in others it is an absence of detail of what will be required to achieve the outcomes desired –i.e. what steps do the regions and HQ have to take on each SO; what are the milestones and deliverables; and what support and resources do they need to do this work. The leadership provided by HQ on the four SOs varied considerably. SO3 and SO4 are considered to have been better managed. The following were cited as factors: the overall coordinator was knowledgeable, clear about what was needed, and exercised leadership on an ongoing basis; there was a good flow of information; the substantive material given to the regions by HQ was of high quality; and HQ set up networks and advisory groups to help manage the process.

Additional issues affecting implementation of both BWP and other priorities include: there is no common model or template across the regions for implementing HQ priorities; and studies are sometimes undertaken and not implemented (e.g. communication branding).

Recommendations:

- When managing implementation of BWP Strategic Objectives (or other important UNISDR priorities) UNISDR should utilize the following best practices used by organizations when managing regional operations (some of these are already being used by some UNISDR managers):
 - Assign a clear senior leader for each of the Strategic Objectives and other important priorities.
 - Approach the regions and partners at the very start of the exercise (perhaps by holding a meeting) to help scope out the approach to implementing the SO and/or priority.
 - Create a small HQ/regional team to develop and provide clear guidance on how to achieve the SO; this team should develop a guidelines on how to implement the SO.
 - Clarify in some detail what UNISDR wants to achieve for that SO or priority.
 - Meet with the regions regularly in person; use a listserv to update everybody involved on a regular basis.
 - Use a weekly operations meeting (by telephone) to monitor progress and to resolve issues as they arise.

d) Aspects of the RBMS remain difficult to implement and more focus on results rather than activities is required.

The nature of UNISDR's work creates difficulties for results measurement. It is much easier to measure tonnes of food aid delivered; medicine administered; fewer children dying than it is to track the eventual results of coordination, advocacy and developing the capacity of partners. The issue of attribution (who caused this to happen) is a real one for agencies such as UNISDR – i.e. how to be able to ascertain that increased disaster risk reduction capacity on a global, regional or country basis was caused by something this organization did. An additional factor is the time it takes to create the results may go beyond the timeframe of the BWP –some results may take 3-5 years to make any significant progress.

Another issue affecting results measurement was that BWP 2010/11 had a large number of outcomes and output indicators, many of which did not appear to have much connection with the SOs. UNISDR was able to achieve over 80% of its outputs and activities but has had difficulty so far determining if they were effective in achieving the stated outcomes and Strategic Objectives.

Donors also indicate that they do not understand exactly what it is that this organization does at the regional level and that there is still too much focus on activities rather than results. All these issues imply that the RBMS needs to be looked at to determine if it is measuring the work UNISDR does in the best possible way. Once the work is appropriately measured, there remains a need to more widely communicate the value added of UNISDR programmes at the regional level.

Recommendations:

- The RBMS tools should be examined to see how to capture more concretely, conceptually and methodologically UNISDR's main activities (coordination; advocacy; partnership development etc.).
- UNISDR should review best practices “coordinating/facilitating” agencies such as theirs, use to demonstrate their results.
- Outcome indicators should be fewer and directly linked to the SOs, to UNISDR's capacity and to an eventual demonstrable result.
- Activities which may be process in nature need to be better linked to an eventual result.

e) Donor management should continue to be strengthened.

Only two donors were interviewed as part of this project. As such, their views may not be representative of other donors and they may not have been aware of recent efforts made by UNISDR to strengthen donor management.

The donors interviewed are quite complimentary of the progress UNISDR has made in working on its strategic approach and of the good working relationships they have with the UNISDR people they deal with. They have also noted that UNISDR is “clearly trying to improve its communication” of results to donors. However, they still have some areas of concern. They believe that UNISDR continues to have difficulty reporting on what its specific role has been in implementing initiatives; there are too many outcomes and activities are not tied to results; they are concerned about ongoing funding for the organization; and they do not yet feel connected to the main business of the organization. In regard to the latter, they have noted there is no body or forum whereby donors can influence UNISDR –they feel that UNISDR uses the current support group as a platform to promote issues it is interested in. It is also clear from some of the evaluations that some donors do not have a good understanding of UNISDR’s mandate nor the operational challenges in implementing it. ESTA notes that UNISDR senior management has already dedicated attention to these issues and initiated measures to address these concerns.

Recommendations:

- UNISDR should manage donor evaluations proactively. This would involve meeting with the evaluating country prior to the commencement of the evaluation to ensure that country has the best and latest information. UNISDR should follow the evaluation closely as it unfolds and ask for the opportunity to correct factual and interpretation errors. This is much easier to do if a relationship has been established prior to the evaluation starting.
- The recent decision to strengthen Resource Mobilization is a good first step to building effective relationships with donors. A priority for this group should be to work with donors to ensure more frequent contacts occur with the managers and regions who are responsible for managing the business of UNISDR in order to improve donor’s understanding and support for UNISDR’s programme priorities and challenges. (ESTA notes that the RMU is engaging headquarters and the regional offices in this regard.)

f) Cash flow issues still affect many decisions and results.

UNISDR's lack of an adequate resource base also affected the 2010/11 BWP process. Examples include: resources were not allocated according to the BWP priorities and the cost plan was not aligned or connected with the SOs and work plans; implementation of BWP priorities was slowed because money did not flow to the regions in a timely manner; there were not always sufficient funds to implement all the BWP priorities; and if donors propose a project which does not fit into the agreed upon BWP, it is still difficult for regions to turn down this funding, as long as UNISDR's (and region's) financial resources are limited.

Recommendations:

- The recommendations contained in the Financial and Administrative Process Review remain valid. The strengthening of UNISDR's resource mobilization capacity should address many of the current issues.
- The cost plans and BWP work plans should be more closely linked as early as feasible, both in planning and in implementation.

g) Support from HQ to regions is often inadequate.

This issue is related to Implementation above and was of concern to most regions. Issues raised include the following: the guidelines provided by HQ on BWP 2010/11 were minimal and often unclear; HQ has so far been unable to provide guidelines to the regions on how to link outputs and activities to outcomes and Strategic Objectives (refer RBMS below); only a few Standard Operating Procedures and guidelines for general processes exist to provide the regions guidance, and they are often not as clear as required; planning concepts are not standardized and the regions use different terms for the same issue; tools are sent out by HQ but instructions for use are often not included; HQ sometimes comes to the regions asking for comment but it's unclear exactly what HQ needs; HQ comes to the regions with too short a time frame to adequately address the issues (this was felt to be the case in BWP 2010/11).

Recommendations:

- Regions need explicit guidelines on what HQ requires of them to implement any priority (including, but not limited to the BWP). As an example, for a consultation exercise the regions need to be told what is the purpose of the exercise; who they need to consult; the processes they should use; the questions to be answered; how they are to report back and on what, etc. Guidelines are best developed jointly with HQ and the regions.
- Preparatory work for the BWP should start at least six months in advance in order that: regions can fit the process into other priorities; they can have time for proper consideration of the Strategic Objectives, outcomes and indicators etc; and sufficient time exists to deal properly with issues as they arise.
- Over time, joint HQ/Regional working groups should develop templates, guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures for those processes most important to UNISDR (Strategic Planning: Lessons for the Future; Jan/12 – Internal document -provides some specific suggestions on templates and processes).
- HQ and the regions need to communicate more verbally rather than primarily by written documents. This will facilitate the resolutions of misunderstandings and can help clarify a way forward.

h) UNISDR’s “Value Added” and the role of the regions (facilitators or drivers or both) could be clarified further.

It is still unclear to a number of staff, and some donors and partners, exactly what UNISDR’s “niche” is – i.e. what are the activities that it is best equipped and able to perform. Although the Strategic Objectives have become more focussed over the years there is still a disconnect between the intent of some of the SOs and what the regions are actually doing. There are also significant differences between the regions in both what and how they address UNISDR’s mandate. From the perspective of the regions, they feel they need to be able to respond to regional priorities, even if they are not part of the BWP. The question of whether this is good or bad for UNISDR’s mandate needs to be addressed. The issue of how closely UNISDR works with individual countries should also be examined in terms of capacity, mandate creep and results.

Recommendations:

- The Strategic Leadership Group should devote one of its upcoming sessions to discussing UNISDR’s “business model” – where is its niche; how should it operate as an organization; what is it best positioned to do that others either cannot or will not; what will be the role of regions –will they concentrate on a few priorities or can “a thousand flowers bloom”.

i) Regions and HQ Cultures need more integration.

As is often typical of organizations with regional operations, HQ and the regions do not have a shared understanding on organizational issues which creates operational challenges. UNISDR HQ seems to have a tendency to communicate with the regions through written means rather than verbally. This tends to maintain silos and against rapid resolution of issues which may affect the priorities HQ is trying to achieve. The decision making processes and follow up required have been noted by both the regions and HQ as sometimes being unclear (the new committees should help address this concern). The regions tend to believe that HQ doesn’t spend enough time in the regions and that leads to differing views on organizational positions (perhaps due to resource constraints). The regions also feel they are not always understood or supported by HQ managers and as a result some directly refer matters to the SRSB. Regional offices sometimes prioritise regional outputs over corporate ones which may require an inter-office consultation. Additionally, the cultures of the two areas appear to have significant differences in terms of how they approach their work.

Recommendations:

- The differing cultures of the two groups should be brought closer together. Regular meetings of the SLG and the all staff retreat are a good start.
- UNISDR should consider undertaking a formal study to determine the culture that best aligns with its mandate and Strategic Objectives. The study should include the dimensions of workplace culture such as: accountability, consistency, engagement, adaptability etc.

CONCLUSION/SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS/PRIORITIES

UNISDR is a relatively young organization and has made steady and measurable progress in implementing its mandate and addressing concerns of donors. However, UNISDR's mandate and operating environment continue to present challenges for the management of the delivery of UNISDR's mandate through the BWP process.

As would be expected of an organization at this point in its evolution, the review of the BWP process within UNISDR has identified some issues which could strengthen the organization's ability to effectively achieve its mandate. Some of the issues will need to be worked on in the future (e.g. setting Strategic Objectives) as the course is set for the next while. Other issues require reflection, analysis and consideration of options prior to taking action.

In terms of immediate priorities, our firm believes the most benefit can be derived from focussing on the following as soon as feasible:

- Manage full range of program management activities.
- Spend more time on the implementation process.
- Continue to strengthen donor management.
- Provide greater support from HQ to regions.
- Continue to clarify UNISDR's value added and roles of the regions.

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1– REVIEW OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

Summary of Evaluations and other Reports Findings Broken down by Management Activity

Australia (March, 2012)						
Governance	Strategic and Operational Planning	Program Delivery/ Implementation	Performance Measurement	Partner and Stakeholder Relations	Review Processes	Other
Notes the UN governance structure has not been fully effective; changes have been made; no assessment of their effectiveness	Comments that criticisms exist that there has been no clear and coherent strategy for implementing UNISDR's mandate	<p>Comments positively on leadership in results based mgt and in creating a more effective operational and mgt structure</p> <p>HR policies/practices in line with UN standards</p> <p>Comments positively on measures to strengthen financial accountability and to achieve cost savings and cost effectiveness</p> <p>No clear or transparent process for allocation of resources</p> <p>Rational for allocating resources is not clear; this is affected by unpredictability of funding</p> <p>Not clear if there has been</p>	Notes improvements in results monitoring	<p>Comments positively on development of intl. and national partners; notes need to make relationship with World Bank more transparent; comments positively on recent measures taken to strengthen partnerships</p> <p>Need to engage more with private sector ; notes UNISDR efforts in this regard</p>	<p>UNISDR has a sound system of monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>No formal disclosure policy</p>	Notes difficulty of measuring links between development results and advocacy/coordination role of UNISDR

		a response to recommendation for improvements to publication and dissemination program				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

UK (March, 2011)						
Governance	Strategic and Operational Planning	Program Delivery/ Implementation	Performance Measurement	Partner and Stakeholder Relations	Review Processes	Other
Part of a large scale review of 43 international organizations; overall found UNISDR to be unsatisfactory in contributing to UK development objectives and for its organizational strengths; found it did not perform intl. coordination well	<p>Global Platform was noted as a success</p> <p>Mandate and work plans have not specified roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Too little attention given to strategic considerations, resulting in UNISDR not clearly choosing priorities in line with an overall strategy and allocating resources accordingly.</p>	“no clear line of sight from its mandate, to a strategy, to an implementation plan. The middle is missing....”	No results based framework in place		Does not believe UNISDR effectively followed up on evaluation recommendations.	

Danish (October, 2011)

Governance	Strategic and Operational Planning	Program Delivery/ Implementation	Performance Measurement	Partner and Stakeholder Relations	Review Processes	Other
<p>Notes significant achievements UNISDR has made in several areas since its creation</p> <p>Need improvements in Secretariat structure and functions</p>	<p>UNISDR implements a high number of activities, that are not sufficiently strategic and with too limited follow up</p> <p>Need a clearer vision on 5-10 yrs out</p> <p>Current vision is very broad and all encompassing; uses same language as UK evaluation - no clear line of sight from its mandate to a strategy to an implementation plan –middle is missing resulting in a lack of strategy and prioritization</p>	<p>Communication on why, what and how needs to be improved; positive comments on PreventionWeb site; need for a mgt led communication strategy</p> <p>Need a better defined operational focus with reduced activities</p> <p>Challenges from 2007 that are still valid: No strong implementation mechanism; no efficient link to national level implementation</p>	<p>Noted an inadequate results based mgt system and lack of systematic reporting against strategic priorities; work plan is not properly developed</p>	<p>In practice there is overlap with World Bank activities</p> <p>Calls for improved dialogue with key donors</p>	<p>Not convinced UNISDR has actually responded to 2009 evaluation and to donors concerns</p>	<p>Identified need for UNISDR to be more active in connections with major disasters to advocate for DRR</p> <p>Need for a resource mobilization strategy identified</p>

	<p>which in turn results in too many activities in vast areas of work</p> <p>Strategic vision should focus on most effective and sustainable activities in each objective area (functions?)</p>					
--	---	--	--	--	--	--

UN Office of Internal Oversight Services –Internal Audit Division (July, 2010)

Governance	Strategic and Operational Planning	Program Delivery/ Implementation	Performance Measurement	Partner and Stakeholder Relations	Review Processes	Other
<p>Found that the strategic framework and biennial budget of the UN do not adequately reflect DRR as part of the overall purpose of the humanitarian assistance program</p> <p>Made a number of other recommendation/ observations re: External Governance</p>		<p>Recommended an analysis of current admin and financial mgt processes to: determine secretariats reqts for its regional and Geneva offices; identify process bottlenecks at each location and address these bottlenecks; retain and reinforce those processes the currently work well.</p>		<p>Secretariats activities to coordinate DRR investment and efforts to engage private sector could be strengthened</p>		

Dahlberg Global Development Advisors (Feb, 2010)

Governance	Strategic and Operational Planning	Program Delivery/Implementation	Performance Measurement	Partner and Stakeholder Relations	Review Processes	Other
<p>Found UNISDR to be particularly relevant and effective in coordination, advocacy and strategic information</p> <p>Effective in setting up new initiatives</p>	<p>Lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Not sufficiently strategic about choosing priorities to ensure effectiveness and sustainability in the allocation of resources and implementation of activities</p> <p>Needs to move towards a clearer and narrower strategy</p> <p>Comments that the new 2010-11 BWP addresses some of the issues raised, in</p>	<p>Work planning process and implementation have not been efficient.; global and unit work plans not sufficiently linked</p> <p>Resources not linked with Strategic Objectives, outcomes and deliverables in the work plans; cost effectiveness unable to be monitored</p> <p>Recommends a clear implementation plan for each initiative that identifies need, outcomes and partners and how to make the initiative sustainable</p> <p>Needs to ensure a more structured and well functioning way for coordinating and sharing information between HQ and regions</p>	<p>Significant improvements in information sharing and reporting</p>	<p>Recommends stronger role in agenda setting and follow up for multi-stakeholder mtgs</p> <p>Recommends against engaging private sector for now; need to develop a strategy and support from system partners</p>		<p>Notes organization is young and has made good progress in a difficult environment</p>

	<p>regard to results based resource mgt</p> <p>Needs to develop a gap and needs analysis of current activities and programs of partners</p> <p>Strategic focus should be on areas where UNISDR is most relevant and where it is best positioned to add value</p>	<p>Recommends a more structured process to evaluate demand, target audience, dissemination, practical application and mapping of internal skills as part of its publication process</p>				
--	--	---	--	--	--	--

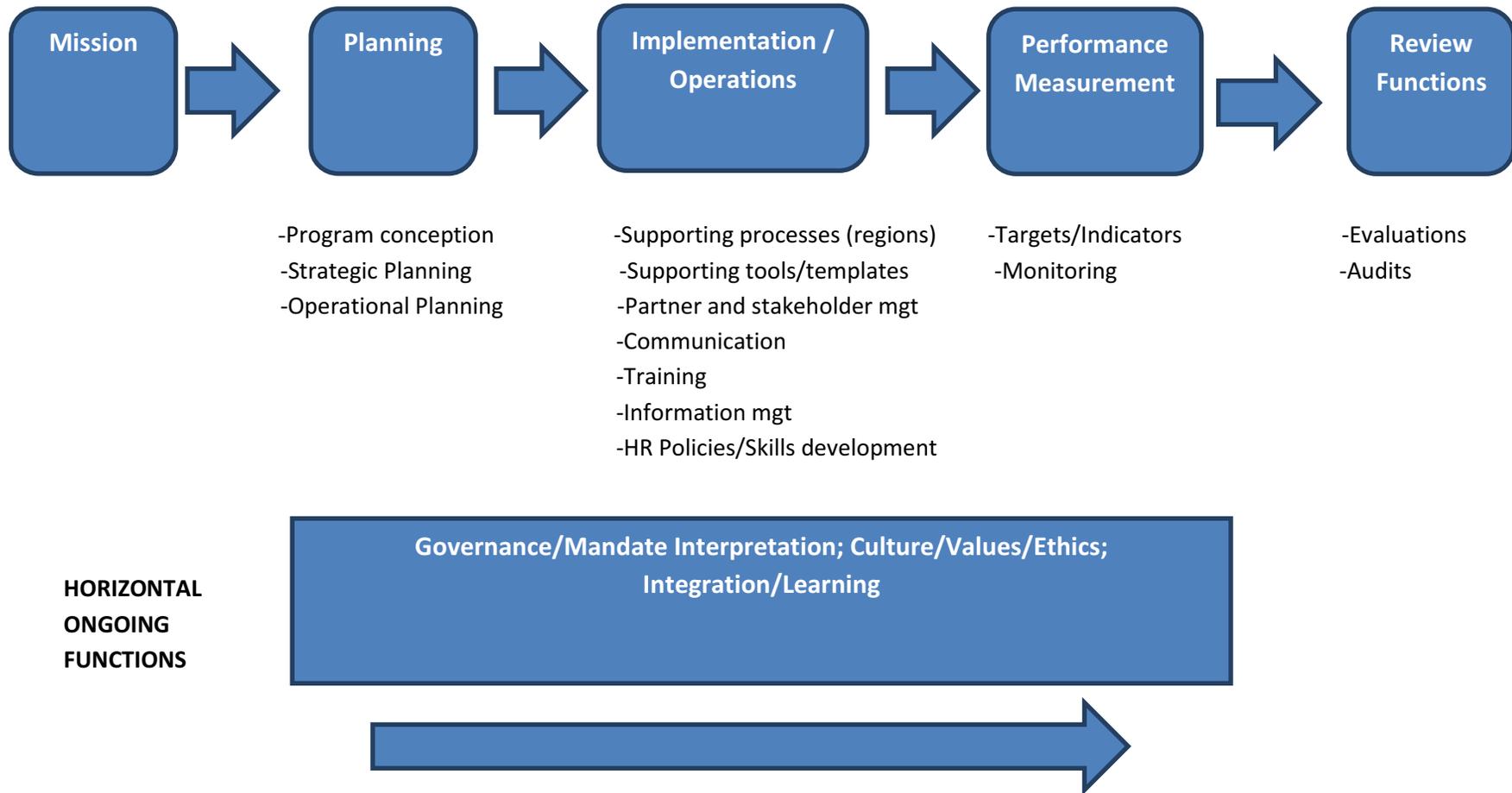
Internal –Review of UNISDR 2010-11 BWP by RBMS Team

Governance	Strategic and Operational Planning	Program Delivery/Implementation	Performance Measurement	Partner and Stakeholder Relations	Review Processes	Other
	<p>UNISDR has 4 Strategic Objectives; 11 Outcomes; it's unclear for whom, where, how much and by when</p> <p>Large parts of the UNISDR expenditures are not considered by the BWP as relevant to the achievement of the its outcomes</p>	<p>Requirements to execute outcomes unclear</p>		<p>Found issues with relevance and appropriateness of targets and indicators</p>		

Internal –UNISDR 2010-11 Strategic Planning: Lessons for the Future Jan, 2012

Governance	Strategic and Operational Planning	Program Delivery/ Implementation	Performance Measurement	Partner and Stakeholder Relations	Review Processes	Other
	<p>Participation in strategic and work planning has increased; coordination has improved but still work to do; exercise was most relevant for identification of priorities and structuring of work; cost benefit was favourable.</p> <p>Specific suggestions were identified around templates; terminology and process improvements.</p>					

APPENDIX 2– PROPOSED MANAGEMENT CONTROL FRAMEWORK FOR UNISDR



APPENDIX 3– LIST OF INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED FOR THE REVIEW

Headquarters

- Helena Molin Valdes, Chief of the Advocacy and Outreach Section, Acting Director of UNISDR
- Marco Toscano-Rivalta, Adviser to the SRSG
- Neil Macfarlane, Acting Chief, DRR Coordination
- Sharon Rusu, Consultant

Regional Offices

- Glenn Dolcemascolo, Head of Office for Northeast Asia
- Jerry Velasquez, Head of the Asia Pacific Regional Office
- Luna Abu-Swaireh, Arab States Region Liaison Officer
- Pedro Basabe, Head of the Africa Regional Office
- Raul Salazar, Programme Officer, Americas Regional Office
- Ricardo Mena, Head of Americas Regional Office
- Rhea Katsanakis, Programme Officer, Americas Regional Office
- Stephanie Dannenmann, Programme Officer, Europe Regional Office
- Youcef Ait-Chellouche, Programme Officer, Africa Regional Office
- Zulqarnain Majeed, Monitoring and Evaluation and RBMS Focal Point

Donors

- Anna Gebremedhin, Deputy-Director, Humanitarian Assistance, Foreign Ministry, Finland
- Leonie Oates-Mercier, Policy Officer, Humanitarian Affairs, Government of Australia

APPENDIX 4– INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is your overall assessment of the 2010/11 BWP process? What were its strengths and weaknesses?
2. Previous evaluations have identified issues around the need for more focussed and strategic priorities; better linkages between strategy, implementation and results; more attention to implementation –have improvements occurred? Which areas continue to need work?
3. In your view, what were the most important results that needed to be delivered in the BWP 2010/11? Were they successfully delivered? If not, why not?
4. What activities in your view have the greatest and least impact in terms of value for money?

APPENDIX 5—REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

References

¹ UNISDR Strategic Framework 2025 (http://www.unisdr.org/files/23291_1101657inteng.pdf)

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Summary Annual Report and Financial Statement -2010

Abbreviations

BWP – Biennial Work Programme

ESTA – E.S. Tunis and Associates, Inc.

GA – UN General Assembly

HQ – Headquarters (Geneva)

RBMS – Results Based Management System

RMU –Resource Mobilization Unit

SLG – Strategic Leadership Group

SO – Strategic Objective(s)

SRSR – Special Representative of the Secretary General

UNISDR – United Nations International Disaster Reduction Secretariat

UK – United Kingdom