Monitoring Policy
Approved by the Executive Director
Reviewed by the Senior Management Team on 22 January 2010

This document presents UNEP policy on programme monitoring. It states the purpose and scope of monitoring, presents the legislative and other operational requirements that guide monitoring in UNEP, defines the institutional framework within which it operates and outlines the general processes by which it is operationalized. This policy is consistent with and complementary to United Nations (UN) requirements and practices pertaining to the monitoring of programme implementation.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Approval</th>
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<tr>
<td>With my approval below this policy (which has been reviewed and endorsed by UNEP’s Senior Management Team) goes into effect from 8 March 2010. It will be reviewed periodically based on experiences in its application.</td>
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Achim Steiner
Executive Director

Signature: 
Date: 10/03/10
Programme Performance Monitoring Policy

1. Introduction

This document promulgates UNEP’s policy on monitoring. It states the purpose and scope of monitoring and presents the legislative context and other principles that guide the monitoring and reporting process.

In general, it describes the key elements of monitoring and reporting on programme performance and defines the institutional framework within which this monitoring and reporting is carried out. In particular, it sets forth the principles and requirements that determine and guide the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the Programme of Work (PoW), the provision of feedback on performance and the process of making adjustments in programme delivery to ensure that UNEP is able to deliver its programmed commitments and achieve expected results. The policy is consistent with and complementary to United Nations (UN) requirements and practices pertaining to the monitoring of programme implementation.

2. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of monitoring is to support the achievement of UNEP’s programme objectives and results. It is a continuing programme management function which systematically collects pre-determined data on an on-going programme to provide management and Member States with indications of the extent of progress in programme implementation, achievement of results and use of resources.

The determination of relevance of a programme objectives, the efficacy of programme design and the responsiveness and sustainability of results achieved are outside the mandate of monitoring.

The broad objectives of monitoring are:

- to provide feedback to management, including early-warning, on programme performance to enable them to effectively steer the implementation of the programme;
- to apprise governing and oversight bodies on progress in delivering programmed commitments, the achievement of expected results and the utilization of resources; and
- to draw lessons from programme implementation experience to improve on-going programme and project operations and future undertakings.

The scope of monitoring addressed in this policy document covers the Programme of Work (PoW) funded from the UN Regular Budget and the resources under the direct purview of the Governing Council, namely the Environment Fund (EF) and those extra budgetary resources that directly support EF programme activities.

Consistent with UNEP’s new arrangements in respect of PoW implementation, the monitoring process encompasses both subprogramme level monitoring which focuses on progress in achieving expected accomplishments, and project level monitoring since projects represent a significant element of the means by which the PoW is implemented.

3. Policy Directives

Monitoring in UNEP is governed by decisions of the Governing Council (GC) and the UN Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the

1 UN Regular Budget is under the purview of the General Assembly
Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (ST/SGB/2000/8).

Most recently, the GC in its decision GC.25/13 on the PoW for 2010-2011, called for UNEP:

- to continue to shift the emphasis of the PoW implementation to the achievement of results and to hold programme managers accountable for the achievement of programme objectives and for the use of resources.

- to report (see section 6) to Governments, through Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) on a half-yearly basis, and to the GC at its regular and special sessions, on programme performance with an emphasis on results and on the financial performance.

ST/SGB/2000/8 requires that PoW performance is assessed in terms of results achieved and outputs delivered:

- the results report should describe the progress made at the subprogramme and expected accomplishment levels.

- the progress of output delivery should be reported every six months through the UN's Integrated Management and Documentation Information System (IMDIS). This report should clarify whether outputs have been completed as programmed, completed as reformulated, postponed, terminated or added by legislative authority or management discretion. UNEP is assigned a UN performance rating based on the output implementation rate.

4. Guiding Principles

With the increased focus on the achievement of results, the monitoring function must support and enhance:

(a) Decision-making

Monitoring must inform decision-making at all levels of programme management. The data and information collected through monitoring should enable managers to identify evolving problems and determine and implement timely remedial measures to ensure that substantive work achieves the required results and that resources are utilized appropriately, efficiently and effectively.

(b) Accountability

Monitoring should enable and ensure the substantive and financial accountability of programme management to Member States in respect of the delivery of UNEP mandates and resources provided for the delivery of the programme. Monitoring should provide management with timely information as to whether expected outcomes are likely to be achieved in a cost effective manner so that management can adopt crucial strategies to address any potential shortcomings, including, as appropriate in consultation with Member States through the CPR.

(c) Learning

Implementation of the PoW generates operational and substantive experience and related knowledge. Valuable lessons learned from successes and failures in PoW implementation should feedback through the relevant planning and programming process to improve the performance and outcomes of future undertakings. The monitoring process should be
designed to take advantage of every lesson offered and in so doing provide a mechanism to institutionalize the learning process.

5. Monitoring Approach

5.1. Data Collection & Validation

Monitoring is based on self-assessments carried out at subprogramme and project levels by Divisions and Regional Offices at six-monthly intervals. Project assessments provide essential inputs to the subprogramme assessments and as a consequence the quality of data collected and assessments produced at project level is central to the success of the monitoring process. Divisions and Regional Offices are responsible for the quality of their own assessments at project level as well as subprogramme level.

Selectively, or based upon specific requests from Divisions or Regional Offices, independent reviews may be undertaken by Quality Assurance Section (QAS) to validate and further strengthen the outcomes of self-assessments and/or self-assessment processes.

5.2. Self-Assessment Methodology

At each level, the monitoring function focuses on two distinct but complementary areas of programme performance:

- Performance in delivering programmed commitments
- Performance in achieving expected results/outcomes

(a) Measuring Delivery

Performance in the delivery of programmed commitments is monitored through measuring and assessing progress against approved work plans and budget allocations to provide an indication as to whether PoW implementation is on-track. Specifically, this process measures the following:

- If projects are on-track in-terms of project output delivery based on the achievement of milestones, and the attainment of targets for project outcome indicators;
- If PoW output delivery is on track measured based on the progress of the delivery of all corresponding project outputs;
- If subprogrammes are on track to achieve the targets for each PoW indicator defined for expected accomplishments of the PoW;
- If project expenditure on staff and operating costs are in line with the budget allocations at project and expected accomplishment levels.

This aspect of monitoring is essential to ensure the delivery of programmed commitments and the optimal use of the resources provided.

(b) Assessing Results

Performance in achieving results is measured through a rapid assessment\(^2\) of the immediate effect or benefit of UNEP’s assistance as reflected in, or evident from, the targeted beneficiary’s actions. Such assessments provide context and interpretation for indicator based measurements and a qualitative understanding of change. The scope of achievement monitoring entails a rapid assessment of the following:

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\(^2\) The assessment of relevance, responsiveness, quality, etc of the assistance provided are evaluation functions to be carried out by the Evaluation Office.
• The immediate effects and benefits of UNEP’s assistance by focusing on the events and activities taking place in beneficiary constituencies within the context of the desired change (as articulated in each of the PoW indicators).

• The use or application of UNEP delivered outputs (products and services) by constituencies and the recording of output usage statistics and detail references, including beneficiary feedback.

• The lessons learned from successes, failures and other experiences at project level and from other cross-cutting issues observed or experienced at subprogramme level.

Rapid assessments are aimed at providing quick indications of progress towards outcomes based on simple assessment criteria or techniques, including the following:

• Perceptions among stakeholders especially of the changes wrought and benefits accrued both at the assistance framework level and at the specific key output level.

• References, evidence, etc. to ascertain if and how project outputs contribute towards project outcomes and expected accomplishments.

• Qualitative interpretations of indicator measurements and progression from baseline levels by applying findings from user perceptions, statistical evidence, etc.

Rapid assessments are not expected to be exhaustive and as such employ simple appraisal methods to obtain indications of the likelihood of achieving desired results. More comprehensive evaluations or audits can be requested based on the findings/indications from rapid assessments. Simple appraisal methods include:

• Direct observations based on what is seen and learned at the project site or from the intended beneficiaries.

• Scheduled and semi-structured discussions with focus group of beneficiaries or interviews with key informants selected for their knowledge or experience in the subject area and UNEP’s particular intervention; and

• Mini-surveys through structured questionnaires with few key close-ended questions administered to small selected groups.

6. Statutory Reporting

Statutory reporting obligations emanate from directives of UNEP and UN governing bodies and from the UN’s internal and external oversight bodies (as outlined in section 3). The data requirements for statutory reporting are met through the performance monitoring process outlined above.

(a) Reporting to Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) and Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

In accordance with Governing Council decision 25/13 UNEP reports to the CPR on a six-monthly basis on the implementation of the PoW. Starting from the 12th month of the biennium, this performance report incorporates more depth and details on the progress towards expected accomplishments and highlights of subprogrammes’ achievements, transforming the emphasis of the report to results.

Regular segments are allocated in the CPR agenda for its review of this six-monthly report. The Deputy Executive Director, assisted by Division Directors, presents the report and leads UNEP through CPR’s deliberations. He/she also ensures that the recommendations of the CPR are implemented.

Progress in implementing the PoW is reported to the GC at its regular and special sessions. In view of the timing of the issuance of these reports, and of the six-monthly reporting to
CPR, the reports submitted to the regular session and the special session will be similar to the CPR reports at the 12 and 24 month marks respectively.

(b) Reporting to General Assembly & UN Department of Management (DM)

In accordance with ST/SGB/2000/8, UNEP reports to DM every six months providing up-to-date information on the progress of output delivery through IMDIS. The output implementation rate at the end of the biennium is considered an indication as to whether the organization is delivering on its programmed commitments. At the 12, 18 and 24 month marks UNEP reports to DM through IMDIS on the progress made in achieving subprogramme expected accomplishments and the overall programme highlights.

UNEP’s submissions to DM form the basis of the Secretary General’s report to the General Assembly on the performance of the UN’s Programme 14: Environment. The Executive Director is accountable to the General Assembly through the Secretary General for UNEP’s programme performance and is required to provide, upon request, further clarification or justification including to Fifth Committee, Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) and Advisory Committee on Administrative & Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

Non-compliance with UN reporting requirements also has implications for UNEP in the context of the Executive Director’s compact with the Secretary General. Weak programme performance, as indicated by a low output implementation rate, may trigger management reviews and/or inspections, including by UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

7. Internal Reporting & Follow-up

The principal utility of monitoring is the feedback that enables management to take timely action to address issues affecting on-going implementation. The process of feedback and management response is facilitated through two tracks of internal reviews – the divisional review and the corporate review.

7.1. Divisional Level Review

In line with their managerial accountabilities, the Directors of Lead and Managing Divisions conduct periodic reviews of the performance of subprogrammes and projects under their purview to provide management oversight of work in-progress and to improve coordination with other Divisions.

The Divisions are free to adopt their own mechanisms (e.g. establishing steering committees, etc.) for these reviews which in their view are the most effective and efficient given the scope, circumstances, etc. As for the periodicity, the reviews must be conducted at least every six months so that the same reporting process, in addition to serving the needs of Divisional reviews, can support six monthly corporate reviews and the preparation of statutory reports. However, the Divisions may internally adopt shorter reporting and review cycles (e.g. three monthly) for projects to inspire and intensify their implementation, only with a marginal increase in reporting workload which is outweighed by the benefits.

These reviews are supported by subprogramme and project performance reports produced by consolidating, as appropriate, the progress data submitted by Coordinating Divisions on expected accomplishments, Accountable Divisions on PoW output implementation, Managing Divisions/Regional Offices on project outcomes and Responsible Divisions/Regional Offices on project outputs.

A summary of the review objectives and the main areas of focus of these performance reviews by Divisions at subprogramme and project levels are outlined below:
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<tr>
<th>Review Level</th>
<th>Review by</th>
<th>Review Objectives &amp; Focus</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subprogramme Review</td>
<td>Lead Division</td>
<td><strong>Objective</strong>: Improve technical, financial and administrative coordination of programme delivery at subprogramme level.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Principle Focus</strong>: Progress of achieving subprogrammes’ expected results; progress of PoW outputs; performance of contributing projects. Performance constraints and risks. Actions taken or strategies recommended for mitigating performance issues and managing risks. Technical leadership and decisions on subprogramme strategy and in ensuring the achievement of targets and results. IMDIS requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Review</td>
<td>Managing Division</td>
<td><strong>Objective</strong>: Improve the project management and delivery.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Principle Focus</strong>: Progress against milestones, delivery of outputs, achievement of project outcomes. Factors affecting project delivery, project risks and mitigation strategies. Technical leadership and decisions on project design and logic, and in ensuring attainment of targets and outcomes. Administrative coordination and external contract management. Compliance with reporting related obligations.</td>
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### 7.2. Corporate Level Review

**(a) Programme Approval Group (PAG) Review:**

Every six-months, a mandatory performance review of each subprogramme is conducted by PAG to coincide with statutory reporting to governing and oversight bodies. The statutory reports, reflecting the overall PoW performance, are produced by QAS and CSS on the basis of the six-monthly subprogramme performance reports submitted by Lead Divisions.

PAG reviews enable independent validation of PoW performance prior to the release of the statutory reports and facilitate the resolution of key external challenges, corporate or cross-divisional issues and funding gaps impeding PoW delivery. Based on the findings of its reviews, PAG authorizes the Project Review Committee (PRC) to further examine projects whose implementation is falling behind. In addition, PAG examines and addresses gaps in subprogramme strategy and work in-progress that will hinder the achievement of results and biennial targets. The implementation of PAG and PRC recommendations are followed up by Lead Divisions and Managing Divisions/Regional Offices respectively.

The PAG and PRC processes provide two authoritative platforms for review and coordination of PoW implementation. They facilitate the resolution of performance issues, coordination bottlenecks, resource constraints, etc through the active involvement of Divisions and Regional Offices in the process. This generates organization-wide ownership of PAG/PRC review conclusions and recommendations.

**(b) Review by the Executive Director:**

At the discretion of the Executive Director (ED), bilateral meetings are held periodically between ED and Division Directors on matters concerning the Divisions including the Directors’ managerial performance. Review of the execution of Divisions’ programmatic responsibilities forms a central part of these discussions and will be assessed along with Directors’ other managerial responsibilities including the performance of administrative functions which have been delegated to them through UNEP’s Accountability Framework.

These reviews are served by high level performance reports, jointly produced by QAS and CSS, highlighting Divisions’ (i) performance in fulfilling their programmatic commitments...
related to each subprogramme; (ii) external challenges (e.g. political, institutional) and funding gaps which require ED’s attention or intervention for resolution; (iii) accountability in the use of resources; and (iv) compliance with UN policies, rules and regulations.

These reviews enable the ED to exercise managerial accountability and take timely decisions/inter alia, to resolve problems affecting PoW implementation. The implementation of these decisions will be followed-up by the Executive Office with assistance of QAS/CSS.

7.3. Lessons Learned

Monitoring must enable a systematic assessment of PoW delivery from which it is possible to draw lessons. This assessment must focus on the implementation process and determine how external and internal factors (i.e. implementation approach/instruments and external partners, etc.) influence and impact the programme delivery.

Inputs from Divisions and Regional Offices serve as the basis for the assessment of delivery. The following list includes the key questions Divisions and Regional Offices need to address when reporting on their experience delivering the PoW:

- Was the, initiation and execution of UNEP’s intervention adequate and appropriate? What should have been done differently?
- What was the impact of internal policies, procedures and standards on delivery? What improvements or changes are necessary or desirable?
- What were the external challenges and constraints encountered? What was their impact on delivery? What was done or should have been done to avoid them or minimize their effects?
- Will/does the final outcome/result meet the expected functional or operational needs and quality standards? What are the main reasons for variance vis-à-vis planned outcome/results?
- How have decisions on the selection of geographical scope, partners, outsourcing and execution modalities affected performance? What should have been done differently?
- Does actual expenditure conform to the budget and to cost component calculations? Has the rate of expenditure matched expectations or agreed timelines? What are the main reasons for deviations, if any?

QAS and CSS will analyze the feedback received from Divisions and Regional Offices and draw conclusions, and make recommendations, aimed at improving PoW performance.

The next step of the lessons learned process aims at the integration of these lessons in the future work of the organization. The Deputy Executive Director, in his/her capacity as the Head of the Programme, approves the recommendations and communicates lessons-learned and recommendations across UNEP for information and follow up. The lessons-learned and recommendations related to programmatic matters are incorporated in the work of PAG and PRC, particularly in their criteria for review and approval of programmes and projects. Given this role, PAG and PRC provide the most effective mechanisms for mainstreaming the lessons learned into planning and administrative processes at subprogramme and project levels. Recommendations concerning operational policies, practices and standards, will be acted upon by the relevant central units, QAS, CSS and Resource Mobilization Section (RMS) under the direction of the Deputy Executive Director.

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3 The assessment of results/outcomes including their relevance, responsiveness and effectiveness are functions within the scope of evaluation.
7.4. Dissemination

Information gathered and processed during performance monitoring should provide additional inputs to support UNEP’s work in the areas of communication and public information. The monitoring process combined with UNEP’s internal knowledge management systems should provide Divisions with convenient access to this information in due course.

Evaluation will have unrestricted access to both monitoring data and processed information such as assessment findings, management responses, lessons learned, etc. to complement their data needs.

8. Institutional Arrangements

Monitoring is an essential programme management function exercised at multiple levels in the organization, with differentiated roles and responsibilities.

(a) Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Management Team, Executive Office

- The Executive Director establishes UNEP policies and procedures pertaining to monitoring and reporting in line with relevant UN policies, regulations and rules.
- The Executive Director is accountable to the General Assembly through the Secretary General for the implementation of the UN’s Programme 14: Environment and for reporting thereon to the General Assembly in accordance with Article VI, Regulations 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 Rules 106.1, 106.2 of ST/SGB/2000/8.
- The Executive Director is accountable to the Governing Council for the implementation of the biennial PoW and for reporting thereon to the Council and CPR in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Council.
- The Deputy Executive Director, under the delegated authority of the Executive Director as the Head of UNEP’s Programme, ensures (i) the effective and efficient delivery of the PoW and the transparent management of programme resources; and (ii) the compliance with statutory reporting obligations and adherence to relevant UN and UNEP policies, regulations and rules.
- The Senior Management Team (SMT) provides a forum for both technical and administrative discussions on the PoW implementation at the corporate level and a mechanism for disseminating lessons-learned and addressing cross-divisional issues.
- Chief, Executive Office in liaison with QAS and CSS is responsible for following up on the implementation of the decisions of the Executive Director or Deputy Executive Director on programme matters, including those taken following SMT discussions or bilateral discussions with Division Directors.

(b) Quality Assurance Section (QAS) and Corporate Service Section (CSS)

QAS and CSS report to the Deputy Executive Director, as the Head of UNEP Programme, and support the exercise of his/her responsibilities related to programme monitoring and reporting. This includes:

- The development and promulgation of UNEP norms and standards for monitoring and reporting, and for project supervision, including through conducting internal seminars and workshops (within the framework of relevant UN and UNEP policies, regulations and rules).
- The guidance and coordination of the monitoring, assessment and reporting process at subprogramme and project levels; service as the technical secretariat for PAG and PRC.
review of subprogramme and project performance and for follow up on the implementation of their recommendations; keeping the Executive Director or Deputy Executive Director informed of programme and financial performance including through six monthly reporting.

- Coordination and preparation of statutory reports on PoW performance to the General Assembly and the Governing Council; coordination of progress reporting through IMDIS on substantive progress and through Budget Information System and IMIS on budget and financial performance.

- Serving as the focal point to the CPR and UN Department of Management on performance reporting; ensuring that additional information or clarifications on programme and financial performance by CPR and by CPC, ACABQ, Fifth Committee, etc (including through the Department of Management) are adequately addressed.

(c) Divisions

Divisions' monitoring responsibilities are determined on the basis of their specific programmatic obligations at each subprogramme, expected accomplishment, project and project output levels. The chart below outlines their key responsibilities at each level of the PoW structure according to UNEP’s cross-divisional implementation model.

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<th>Programme Structure</th>
<th>Responsible Division</th>
<th>Role and Principal Monitoring Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project output &amp; milestone</td>
<td>Responsible Division or Regional Office</td>
<td>Accountable for the achievement of project outputs and output milestones including through the execution of output budget, staff and contracts. Assess and report on output delivery, achievement of milestones, output budget execution and status of external contract management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Managing Division or Regional Office</td>
<td>Accountable for the achievement of project outcomes and milestones through coordination of project partners, administration of the project budget and resolution of constraints and risks. Assess the achievement of project outcomes and milestones and report on project progress, output delivery and project budget performance. Review project progress periodically with implementing partners and address pertinent issues. Respond to PAG/PRC queries on project progress and ensure that their recommendations are implemented.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PoW output</td>
<td>Accountable Division</td>
<td>Accountable for ensuring that PoW outputs are delivered through projects and in-turn through project outputs. Report the progress of PoW output delivery in IMDIS consistent with rules of ST/SGB/2000/8 and Annex 1: UN System Major Work Categories, of the UN programme planning instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Accomplishment</td>
<td>Coordinating Division</td>
<td>Accountable for the achievement of an expected accomplishment including through coordination of all contributors, and resolution of constraints and risks. Assess and report on progress towards the achievement of the expected accomplishment based</td>
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Programme Structure | Responsible Division | Role and Principal Monitoring Responsibilities
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Subprogramme | Lead Division | Accountable for achieving subprogramme objective through overall coordination and management oversight of the work programme. Report on subprogramme’s substantive and financial performance including a synthesis of its principal achievements. Review subprogramme’s progress periodically with partners and address pertinent issues. Present its progress to PAG and ensure that PAG recommendations are implemented.

(d) Role of the Subprogramme Coordinator

Under the direct supervision of and the delegated authority from the Lead Division Director, the Subprogramme Coordinator manages the day-to-day affairs of the subprogramme implementation. He/she will work closely with all other Divisions with differentiated roles in subprogramme delivery and perform the following duties in relation to monitoring:

- Keep under review the work in-progress; and ensure the substantive quality of the work and that the subprogramme strategy under implementation is adequate in attaining biennial targets and achieving expected results.
- Provide guidance and assistance in the measurement and assessment of project delivery, and the achievement of project outcomes and expected accomplishments; and mitigation/management of risks and constraints.
- Oversee the progress reporting at project, PoW output and expected accomplishment levels by relevant Divisions and ensure their compliance with reporting needs, standards and processes including updating of IMDIS results accounts and PoW output records.
- Produce subprogramme performance report by consolidating and synthesizing relevant inputs solicited from contributing Divisions; highlighting hotspots and lessons to learn; and recommending appropriate management response.

(e) Role of the Programme Support Units in Divisions

Divisions have multiple roles ranging from the delivery of specific project outputs to the overall management of the implementation of subprogrammes. The Division Director is accountable for the responsibilities exercised in the performance of these roles.

To support Division Directors, Programme Support Units (PSUs) have been set up in some Divisions and they are responsible, inter alia, for the following functions:

- Ensuring Divisions compliance with monitoring and reporting obligations, including through internal coordination, compliance monitoring and follow-up, verification of reports and claims, review and update of IMDIS
- Providing substantive support to the rapid assessment of results and the production of high quality results statements, including by conducting mini-surveys, organizing interviews or discussions, etc.