An Evaluation of ESCAP's Approach to Capacity Development

Final Report
November 14, 2007

by

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Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CD	capacity development
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOSOC	(United Nations) Economic and Social Council
EPOC	ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre
ESCAP	(United Nations) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IUCN	World Conservation Union
JECF	Japan-ESCAP Cooperation Fund
LDC	Least-developed country
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	non-governmental organization
PMD	Programme Management Division
QAT	Quality Assurance Team
SIAP	(United Nations) Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
SPM	Strategic Planning and Management
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Title of Evaluation			
Management Response By: (Organizational Units)			
Cleared By	Executive-Secretary		
	Name and Designation	Signature	Date
General Remarks by Management			

Report Recommendation	Management Response	Follow-up Action	By Whom	By When
1. That the Executive Secretary articulate a vision for the Secretariat's operational work and strategic roles in relation to capacity development;				
2. That senior management place more emphasis on identifying appropriate partners to provide the necessary follow up to develop national capacity in-country				
3. That the Programme Management Division (PMD) and division directors ensure that future capacity development initiatives are directed at strengthening organizational and institutional capacities rather than individual capacities				

only, with closer attention to the formal and informal systems that affect performance, and with the use of appropriate modalities				
4. That senior management continue to scale back the number of technical cooperation projects in favour of programmes that delve more deeply into organizational and institutional capacity				
5. That senior management improve the planning and implementation of technical cooperation projects aimed at developing capacity by encouraging a programmatic approach, strengthening the integration of gender equality and by paying closer attention to capacity gaps and influencing factors at organizational and institutional levels				
6. That the Executive Secretary, on the basis of further assessment, develop a gender equality strategy with action plans and appropriate resources to ensure that gender				

equality is fully integrated into ESCAP's future programming				
7. That senior management form a cross-divisional group to learn more about capacity development through learning networks and that it give this group the responsibility and resources needed to educate Secretariat staff about capacity and its development				
8. That Secretariat staff use the terms 'capacity' and 'capacity development' consistently in planning and programming documents, explaining precisely what is meant				

Executive Summary

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has a mandate to contribute to countries' efforts to build national capacity at the request of members and associate members. ESCAP commissioned this forward-looking evaluation in order to assess ESCAP's potential value added in conducting capacity development work; assess the relevance and effectiveness of ESCAP's overall approach to capacity development; and provide recommendations for how ESCAP can strengthen its approach. The evaluation focuses on five-year period, 2002-2003 to 2006-2007.

The evaluator used a mix of methods, including: face-to-face, semi-structured group discussions and interviews with more than 90 Secretariat staff, five staff at ESCAP's Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC) in Fiji, and 13 partners in the sub-region; interviews with capacity development specialists at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); assessment of 17 technical cooperation projects; and an extensive file review and literature search.

Findings
The evaluation finds the relevance and effectiveness of ESCAP's capacity development programming uneven and ESCAP's role in capacity development unclear. According to many staff, the Secretariat lacks a coherent vision for its operational work, and its absence contributes to the scattered, incongruous nature of much of what they do in relation to capacity development. Lack of clarity in relation to the Secretariat's role in capacity development comes at a time when the organization faces stiff competition from UN specialized agencies and others that have, unlike ESCAP, an in-country presence, far more resources and more development experience

In light of the competition, many Secretariat staff and some of its partners question whether ESCAP's past comparative advantages—its convening power, multi-disciplinary programming, expertise in economic analysis, for example—still hold true. The evaluation finds examples where the Secretariat has applied multi-disciplinary approaches to capacity development, such as when it brought health and youth issues to the transport sector. However, the evaluation also finds that the Secretariat's divisions do not always work together well nor do they take full advantage of multi-disciplinary expertise.

The evaluation finds ESCAP's comparative strengths lie in its policy and advocacy work, and the leverage it gets from its intergovernmental status in the region. However, much of the Secretariat's capacity development work has been directed at individuals at the mirco-level.

The evaluation finds ESCAP's operational programming shaped more by the interests of donors and Secretariat staff than by individual states through such mechanisms as common country assessments (CCAs) and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). Although this goes against the grain of UN reform, it underscores one of ESCAP's major strengths: it has been most successful in capacity development where it has identified important trans-border issues that fall outside the scope of other agencies and beyond the immediate priorities of individual states.

With respect to effectiveness, the evaluation found several examples of successful capacity development initiatives, such as the Asian Highway and ESCAP's groundbreaking disability work. However, the majority of technical cooperation projects have been small, unlinked to larger initiatives and lacking sufficient in-country follow up to have a significant impact. The evaluation notes that the Pacific region and, to a lesser extent, Central Asia, often get sidelined when it comes to technical cooperation because of distance, high travel cost and, in Central Asia, language barriers.

Most technical cooperation projects have involved training, meetings, workshops and information exchanges. With few exceptions, these have changed little because they have not been linked with interventions in national organizations and institutions. Because ESCAP has limited capacity to work in national organizations and institutions, it must partner with others that do. The evaluation finds that most of ESCAP's successful projects have involved highly productive partnerships.

Information gleaned from interviews, group discussions and past evaluations shows that the contribution of ESCAP's five regional institutes to national capacity development has, with the exception of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), been small. This same finding applies to the work of the Secretariat's regional advisors.

ESCAP faces significant challenges in relation to gender equality. Many staff appear to be gender unaware and technical cooperation projects generally show few signs of integrating gender equality successfully. For a UN organization that ought to be at the forefront on this issue, ESCAP's performance is deficient.

The evaluation notes that ESCAP's quality assurance process has improved project planning significantly. Technical cooperation proposals now reflect many of the principles of aid effectiveness.

Lessons

Resent studies shed light on the *complexity* of capacity development. They show that developing individual capabilities only, without dealing with the organizational and institutional factors, is unlikely to bring about significant change under most circumstances. They indicate that those involved in capacity development need to pay close attention to the *formal and informal systems* of beliefs, values, rewards and sanctions, and social and political dimensions that affect performance.

ESCAP and many of its UN partners have shown that successful capacity development usually requires *strong and varied partners*. ESCAP's most successful capacity development initiatives have been operational for many years, some, such as the Asian Highway initiative, for decades. Evaluation of capacity development has also confirmed the need for *long-term perspectives*. Some donors are now planning capacity development programmes that could span 25 years.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) recommends *holistic, multi-dimensional approaches* to capacity development and the use of open systems analysis, change management, mentoring and other *experimental modalities*. Traditional interventions, such as training, short-term technical assistance and information dissemination, have proven largely unsuccessful on their own.

The experience of the international development community has also demonstrated the need for *diverse interventions that are tailored to needs*. Most capacity development initiatives require an iterative response for which there are no fixed rules or blueprints. Not all capacity development has to be part of large, long-term programmes. Research shows that relatively small, short-term interventions can, under the right circumstances, make significant contributions.

Conclusions and recommendations

This evaluation concludes that ESCAP faces too many constraints to play a major role in capacity development at the national level. However, it has potential to perform important niche roles. It can add value to national capacity development initiatives, particularly in relation to policy and normative concerns where there is an international dimension and the need for regional or sub-regional cooperation, and where the capacity gaps fall within ESCAP's realm of expertise and influence. It can capitalize on its strengths in policy, advocacy and standard setting, using its intergovernmental status as

leverage. It must <mark>carefully select these capacity issues</mark> and greatly limit its operational work. It must partner with others who can take on the bulk of the work required to follow through on developing capacity in national organizations. This niche role gives ESCAP the potential to complement the national capacity-building work of others by focusing on high-level capacity gaps.

The Secretariat must look to new, creative partnerships and joint ventures within the UN system and with national and international development organizations, including NGOs and the private sector. It could begin by strengthening joint programming partnerships with its own regional institutes where they have potential to contribute to national capacity development.

The evaluation concludes that ESCAP's approach to capacity development, which is based on a linear, technical-transfer model, is unlikely to lead to sustainable change under most circumstances because it pays insufficient attention to the formal and informal systems that affect the performance of organizations and institutions. ESCAP has relied on conventional modalities in the past and must now begin experimenting with alternatives that are better suited to organizational and institutional change.

ESCAP's quality assurance team (QAT) process has helped to improve the effectiveness of operational activities but ESCAP could do more to channel its limited resources into programmes that are consistent with a coherent vision for the Secretariat's operational work and that conform to clear, strategic roles in relation to capacity development. To this end the evaluation recommends:

1. **That the Executive Secretary articulate a vision for the Secretariat's operational work and strategic roles in relation to capacity development;**

2. **That senior management place more emphasis on identifying appropriate partners to provide the necessary follow up to develop national capacity in-country;**

3. **That the Programme Management Division (PMD) and division directors ensure that future capacity development initiatives are directed at strengthening organizational and institutional capacities rather than individual capacities only, with closer attention to the formal and informal systems that affect performance, and with the use of appropriate modalities;**

4. **That senior management continue to scale back the number of technical cooperation projects in favour of programmes that delve more deeply into organizational and institutional capacity;**

5. **That senior management improve the planning and implementation of technical cooperation projects aimed at developing capacity by encouraging a programmatic approach, strengthening the integration of gender equality and by paying closer attention to capacity gaps and influencing factors at organizational and institutional levels;**

6. **That the Executive Secretary, on the basis of further assessment, develop a gender equality strategy with action plans and appropriate resources to ensure that gender equality is fully integrated into ESCAP's future programming;**

7. **That senior management form a cross-divisional group to learn more about capacity development through learning networks and that it give this group the responsibility and resources needed to educate Secretariat staff about capacity and its development; and**

8. **That Secretariat staff use the terms 'capacity' and 'capacity development' consistently in planning and programming documents, explaining precisely what is meant.**

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the regional development arm of the United Nations for the Asia-Pacific region. ESCAP has 62 member and associate member states, 58 of which are in the region, and a geographical scope that stretches from Turkey in the west to the Pacific island nation of Kiribati in the east, and from the Russian Federation in the north to New Zealand in the south. The region covered by ESCAP accounts for almost 60 percent of the world's population.

Established in 1947, ESCAP seeks to foster cooperation between its members in order to promote economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region and to overcome some of the region's greatest challenges, particularly in relation to:
- Poverty reduction;
- Managing globalization; and
- Emerging social issues.

ESCAP deals with issues that:
- all or a group of countries in the region face, for which it is necessary to learn from each other;
- benefit from regional or multi-country involvement;
- are transboundary in nature, or that would benefit from collaborative inter-country approaches;
- are of a sensitive or emerging nature and require further advocacy and negotiation.

ESCAP fulfils its mandate through:
- *Normative work*: Promotion of universal norms and values as well as setting standards at the regional level with a view to advancing economic and social development;
- *Analytical work*: Research, analysis and measurement of regional economic and social development trends and issues as a basis for policy-making and programme development; and
- *Technical cooperation*: Building national capacity through development of human resources and institutions in key economic and social development sectors.

ESCAP undertakes capacity development[1] primarily through technical cooperation, although it can be argued that its analytical and normative work also contributes to capacity development.

ESCAP's 2006-2007 strategic framework states that "… ESCAP will contribute to countries' efforts to build national capacity at the request of members and associate members" (ESCAP, 2004, p. 12) in four areas:

>   *(i)*   Developing and implementing economic and social development policies and programmes, including regulatory, legal and institutional frameworks;

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[1] The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) defines capacity development as: "The process whereby people, organizations, and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time" (UNDG Working Group Position Statement, October 2006, p. 2). Alternative definitions can be found in the UNFPA's *Thematic Evaluation of UNFPA Support to National Capacity Development. Evaluation Guide* (2001) and in Peter Morgan's *The Concept of Capacity* (2006).

(ii)   Negotiating effectively in multilateral and regional fora;

(iii)   Building effective partnerships with all sectors of civil society including the private sector;

(iv)   Implementing commitments from global and regional conferences and reviewing progress in achieving the internationally agreed goals and targets adopted at global and regional conferences. (ESCAP, 2004, p. 13)

The evaluation was conducted in the context of the following on-going efforts and processes to harmonize the operational activities of the UN system and its development partners:

- The UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel 2006 report: *Delivering as One*
- UNDG Capacity Development Group
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) policy position on capacity development
- The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005)
- UN General Assembly Resolution 59/250 on operational activities for development
- The UN High Level Committee on Programmes mandated analysis being undertaken by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the UNDG Capacity Development Group in preparation for the 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

Building national capacity is at the core of the UN development system and is a key objective applied throughout ESCAP's eight sub-programmes. In the past, ESCAP has evaluated individual technical cooperation projects, but it has never undertaken a thematic evaluation of capacity development.

The evaluation is expected to contribute to ESCAP's revised Technical Cooperation Strategy. The management response will provide a basis for potential changes to ESCAP's programme and project planning and implementation processes.

Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were:

1. To assess ESCAP's potential value added in conducting capacity development work in the context of ESCAP's comparative advantages, mandate and core functions;

2. To assess the relevance and effectiveness of ESCAP's current overall approach to capacity development; and

3. To provide recommendations for how ESCAP can strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of its approach to planning and implementing capacity development programmes, consistent with ESCAP's mandate and core functions.

1.3 Scope

The evaluation reviewed ESCAP's programming over the period 2002-2003 to 2006-2007. It focuses on relevance and programming effectiveness and attempts to answer the following key questions:

Relevance

- Does ESCAP have a clear role in capacity development in member states?

- How are ESCAP's comparative advantages reflected in capacity development activities, particularly in complementing analytical and normative work?

- To what extent is ESCAP's approach to capacity development consistent with that promoted by the UNDG?

- To what extent do ESCAP capacity development initiatives take into account and build upon the comparative advantages and on-going activities of partner organizations or agencies?

- To what extent do the capacity development activities:

    o clearly identify key stakeholders and target groups?

    o clearly and accurately identify development problems?

    o take into account lessons learned from past experience?

    o analyze assumptions and risks?

Effectiveness

- To what extent is it possible to ascertain the effectiveness of ESCAP's capacity development approach?

- To what extent does ESCAP promote a clear and coherent approach towards capacity development?

- To what extent was ESCAP able to apply a cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to capacity development?

- To what extent is the work of regional institutes and regional advisers utilized in capacity development activities (where appropriate)?

- To what extent was a gender perspective applied in ensuring that men and women benefited equally from activity outputs?

- To what extent do specific capacity development activities take advantage of synergies with the analytical and normative work of ESCAP?

The terms of reference for the evaluation appear in Annex A.

2. Methodology

2.1 Approach and Methods

The evaluator's approach was forward-looking and participatory. Rather than judge past performance only, the evaluator focused on ways to improve ESCAP's approach to capacity development in order to strengthen future activities and assist ESCAP in better defining its role in capacity development. The evaluation terms of reference were adjusted after an initial round of consultation in order to better reflect this forward-looking approach.

A reference group was established for the evaluation in order to enhance the Secretariat's ownership of the process and to facilitate the Secretariat's involvement in decisions relating to methodology, data collection and data interpretation. The evaluator met with the reference group at the beginning of the evaluation, but was unable to meet as planned toward the end, owing to conflicting travel schedules. The Programme Management Division (PMD) became the *de facto* reference group and had extensive input at each stage of the evaluation.

The evaluation occurred in two phases: the first involving meetings with senior management and staff of the Secretariat in May 2007; the second consisting of a field visit to ESCAP's Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC) in Suvu, Fiji, in September 2007, followed by a debriefing with the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, a presentation to Secretariat staff and discussions with the PMD regarding the evaluation findings and their implications.

The evaluator pursued multiple lines of inquiry to solicit a wide range of perspectives using the following mix of methods:

- Face-to-face, semi-structured group discussions and interviews with more than 90 Secretariat staff, some individuals several times, including regional advisors;
- Face-to-face, semi-structured group discussions with five EPOC staff in Suva, Fiji;
- Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with representatives of 13 organizations in Suva, Fiji, all of which had been involved in ESCAP's programming;
- Two face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with a senior capacity development advisor at the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Regional Centre in Bangkok;
- Semi-structured telephone interviews with two capacity development specialists at the office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in New York;
- Review of profiles of 17 technical cooperation projects, a quarter of which had peer reviews completed by the Secretariat's Quality Assurance Team (QAT); and
- Extensive file and literature review.

A list of those consulted for the evaluation appears in Annex B. A list of the key documents reviewed appears in Annex C.

2.2 Limitations

Lack of funds limited the evaluator's field visits to the Pacific sub-region. It was felt that ESCAP's Pacific Office offered a unique opportunity to assess the potential for ESCAP's engagement in capacity development in the sub-region. The evaluation did not allow for a first-hand look at the role of ESCAP's institutions in capacity development across the region. Some, such as the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), were slated for evaluation in the near future.

2.3 Structure of the Report

The report begins by setting the context for capacity development in relation to UN reform and by briefly outlining some of what the development community has learned in recent years about capacity and its development. The report then turns to an assessment of ESCAP's approach to capacity development, focusing on questions of relevance and effectiveness. This is followed by lessons from ESCAP's experience and, more broadly, that of the international development community. The report ends with conclusions and recommendations aimed at assisting ESCAP in determining its niche in capacity development and strengthening its programming.

3. Capacity Development in the Context of UN Reform

3.1 Capacity Development: A High Priority of the UN System

Over the past five years most international development organizations have made capacity development a high priority. For example, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on development effectiveness identified capacity as one of three determinants of development effectiveness (UNDP, 2004). The World Bank concluded that capacity development was the missing link to Africa's development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (World Bank, 2005). The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (2005) made capacity development an objective of national development and poverty-reduction strategies and the OECD's Network on Governance produced numerous papers in recent years underscoring the importance of capacity development.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recommended that all UN organizations support country-led strategies for capacity development in the pursuit of internationally agreed development goals. The 2004 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of the UN General Assembly tasked the UN to increase efforts to strengthen the national capacity development strategies essential to achieving the MDGs (General Assembly Resolution 59/250, December 2004).

3.2 *Delivering as One*

Country-led capacity development within a single UN country framework has become a major part of UN reform aimed at achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness. *Delivering as One*, the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence, set the direction for reform by recommending a unified, coherent approach to all UN activities at the country level, in line with the principle of country ownership. *Delivering as One* called for a single, UN programme in order to overcome the fragmented approach to programming of earlier years, and to more effectively bring together the UN's "normative and analytic expertise, its operational and coordination capabilities, and its advocacy role…at the regional level and at the global level" (United Nations, 2006a, p. 2).

Since the report was published in 2006, the UN has undertaken several "One-UN" pilots, consisting of a single UN country presence with one budget, one programme and one office and one leader.

3.3 UNDG and Capacity Development

The UNDG prepared a position paper in 2006 setting out a framework for the UN's work at the country level. The paper encouraged UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to "articulate capacity development and its underlying principles as the central thrust of the UNDG's role in the country, captured in the CCA [Common Country Assessment] and the UNDAF [United Nations Development Assistance Framework]" (UNDG, October 2006, p. 3). The UNDG called on UNCTs to take "a collective approach towards capacity development, maximizing individual agency strengths at the country level, including non-resident agencies, in line with UN reform" (UNDG, October 2006, p. 3).

The concept of "endogenously led" capacity development is central to the UNDG's position. It represents a paradigm shift in the UN's approach to development, as explained in *Implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*:

> The UN system, with is access to a broad range of technical expertise, is widely acknowledged as a key partner for supporting capacity development efforts in programme countries. However, in the past, capacity development initiatives often addressed capacities needed to manage and implement UN-supported programmes/projects, rather than strengthen counterpart capacities to manage and implement the national development process. (United Nations, 2005, p. 3)

The UNDG Working Group on Non-resident Agencies set out a "menu of options" for non-resident agencies, such as ESCAP, to engage in coordinated UN capacity development initiatives at the national level (UNDG, March 2006, p. 20). These ranged from participating fully in joint programming with UNCTs to improving communication and liaison with the lead UN agency in each country. The central message of the Working Group was that business as usual was not an option: non-resident agencies were henceforth expected to adjust their programming and their approaches to capacity development in line with a single, coherent plan of action at the country level. The Working Group called for greater "commitment, consistency, communication and coordination" on all sides (UNDG, March 2006, p. 17).

Since 2006, the UNDG has produced guides and tools to assist UN organizations in assessing capacity and integrating capacity development as a central strategy of development.

In summary, capacity development is increasingly recognized by the UN and many of its partners as central to development. Capacity development has become the foundation of the UN's work at the country level. In the context of UN reform, all UN development organizations, including regional commissions, are encouraged to engage in coordinated, endogenously-led capacity development following the CCA/UNDAF process.

But what does this mean in practical terms for ESCAP? To answer that question, it is important to examine what the international donor community has learned about capacity and capacity development in recent years. The report turns to this next.
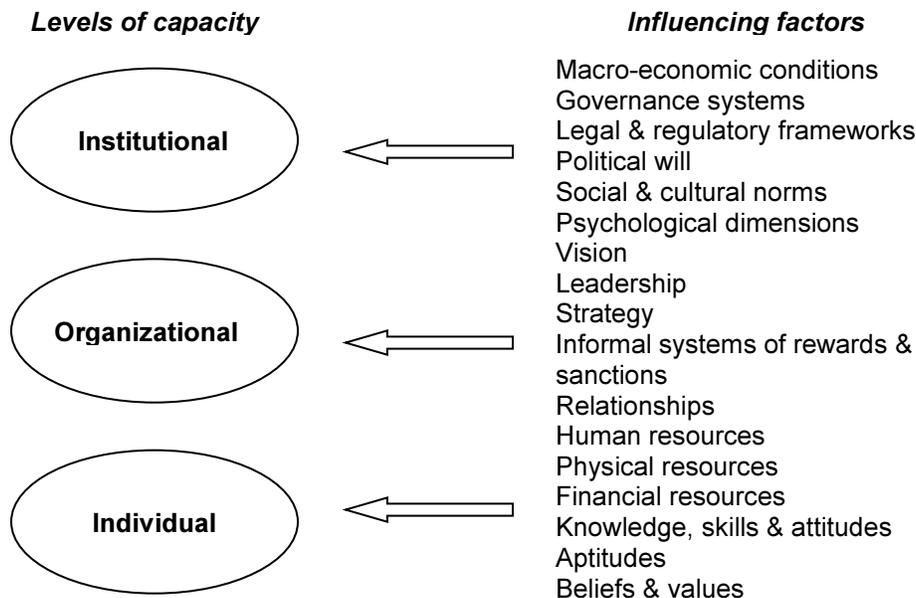
4. Recent Learning about Capacity and its Development

In recent years, the international development community has sponsored research that sheds light on the challenges faced by ESCAP in complying with the UN's increased emphasis on capacity development.

One common finding is that capacity and capacity development are far more complex than most development organizations have envisaged, and are as yet not fully understood (Morgan, 2006). Studies undertaken by the World Bank and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) show that capacity development must be directed at organizations and their institutional environments in order to be effective (World Bank, Aug 2005; Teskey, October 2005). To develop individual capabilities only, without dealing with the organizational and institutional contexts, is unlikely to bring about significant change under most circumstances, the studies conclude.

The research suggests that those involved in developing capacity need to pay close attention to the formal and informal systems, beliefs, values, skill sets and social and political processes that affect individuals and organizations in carrying out their functions. Figure 1 depicts three levels of capacity and some of the factors that influence them. This conceptual framework illustrates the complexity of capacity development.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework for Capacity Development

Levels of capacity	*Influencing factors*
Institutional	Macro-economic conditions
	Governance systems
	Legal & regulatory frameworks
	Political will
	Social & cultural norms
	Psychological dimensions
	Vision
	Leadership
Organizational	Strategy
	Informal systems of rewards & sanctions
	Relationships
	Human resources
	Physical resources
	Financial resources
Individual	Knowledge, skills & attitudes
	Aptitudes
	Beliefs & values

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ECDPM researchers contend that systemic factors are usually responsible for enabling or blocking change. Development assistance needs to deal with not only the 'hard' capacities of organizations—the human, financial and technical resources—but also, the 'soft' capacities linked to management functions and the formal and informal systems that encourage or impede positive change.

Bosen and Therkildsen (2005) and Morgan (2006) contend that open-systems theory is suited to organizational capacity analysis because it requires the assessment of the formal and informal agents of change inside and outside organizational boundaries. Bosen and Therkildsen claim that a functional-rational dimension of organizational analysis, which takes a mechanical view of performance, needs to be supplemented with an analysis of the political dimensions of organizations[2]. Political dimensions include the systems of sanctions and rewards, extrinsic incentives, advocacy pressures, power relationships, interests, loyalties and obligations. Political factors can often be more important than functional-rational factors in bringing about positive change, according to Bosen and Therkildsen.

Morgan (2006) suggests that capacity evolves or emerges "through the pushes and pulls of contextual factors" of larger systems such as global economic trends, governance and so on (p. 17-19). He argues that any understanding of capacity must reach beyond the technical and functional aspects of organizations and come to grips with their human, emotional, political, cultural and even psychological dimensions. As one moves from individual capabilities to organizational capacities and beyond to larger systems of institutions, the complexity increases and exceeds the development community's knowledge and understanding of effective practices, according to Morgan.

Systems complexity makes monitoring and evaluation challenging. Morgan (2006) and Watson (2006) say that monitoring and evaluation that rigidly follow results-based management are inappropriate in programmes that focus on complex systems change. They claim that more informal approaches to monitoring and evaluation that feature self-assessment, reflection and learning tend to be more effective.

If capacity is highly complex, how does one go about developing it? Recent research confirms that training and technical assistance are more often than not insufficient. The World Bank concludes:

> The concept of capacity has evolved significantly from a narrow pre-occupation with training and technical assistance to dealing with the capacity of individuals, organizations and the broader institutional framework within which they operate to deliver specific tasks and mandates. (World Bank, Aug 2005, p. 12)

Recent experience points to the need for alternative methods, tools and techniques to help organizations adapt to change and improve performance. These include, but are not limited to, change management, organizational re-engineering, mentoring, coaching, networking and political systems design, the latter of which is, essentially, about governance. Most conventional modalities—training, technical assistance and information dissemination, among them—have limited application because they are not well suited to the complex systems processes that drive institutional change (Morgan, personal communication, January 12, 2007). The ECDMP research confirms that there is no single best method of capacity development; much depends on the development circumstances and context. In most situations, a combination of methods and a good deal of experimentation are recommended.

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[2] A functional-rational analysis would, for example, surmise that technical training and improved management systems would result in enhanced organizational performance. In reality, however, the development of capacity is usually far more complex.

Capacity development requires time, often more than what many development organizations have come to expect. Bosen and Therkildsen (2005) say that it can take 10 to 25 years to develop capacity in national organizations, even longer where the institutional environment is unstable.

In summary, recent research calls for a multi-layered, multi-dimensional framework for understanding capacity and a holistic, long-term approach to its development with particular attention to the formal and informal systems that affect organizational behaviour and change. To achieve sustainable results, capacities need to be developed at all three levels—individual, organizational and institutional. Short-term, technocratic approaches focused at the individual level run the risk of achieving little.

Having outlined the findings of some of the latest research into capacity and capacity development, the report turns to an assessment of ESCAP's approach, beginning with a brief overview of its capacity development programming, followed by a description of how Secretariat staff conceive of and operationalize capacity development.

5. Assessment of ESCAP's Approach to Capacity Development

5.1 Overview of ESCAP's Capacity Development Programming

ESCAP contributes to capacity development through its technical cooperation projects, regional advisors, normative and analytical outputs, and training and technical assistance provided by its regional institutions, of which there are five. Technical cooperation projects form the bulk of ESCAP's capacity development activity and they are intended to add value to ESCAP's normative and analytical work, ensuring that the normative and analytical functions are linked to development realities on the ground.

ESCAP is organized to do capacity development in a highly centralized fashion. All but a handful of staff are located at the Secretariat in Bangkok. Those who work in regional institutions, at EPOC in Fiji and elsewhere, are the exception. ESCAP's programming is organized around three thematic areas: reducing poverty, managing globalization and responding to persistent and emerging social issues. The Secretariat has eight programming divisions:

1. Poverty and Development;
2. Statistics;
3. EPOC;
4. Trade and Investment;
5. Transport and Tourism;
6. Environment and Sustainable Development;
7. Information, Communication and Space Technology; and
8. Emerging Social Issues.

With a staff of about 590, ESCAP has a regular annual budget of about US$45 million. It receives varying amounts of extra-budgetary funding for technical cooperation each year, mainly from donors and participating developing countries. ESCAP received US$25.4 million for technical cooperation in 2005 (ESCAP, 2006, p. 38) and US$12.5 million in 2006 (ESCAP, 2007a, p. 52).

ESCAP defines technical cooperation as "processes aimed at developing the capacities of individuals and institutions to formulate and implement policies for sustainable economic and social development" (ESCAP, 7 August 2003, p. 1). ESCAP's technical cooperation strategy has three functions:

1. Policy advocacy and dialogue on global and regional commitments and critical emerging issues that need the urgent attention of its members;
2. Regional knowledge networking to enable its members and associate members to share and discuss information and experiences on good and innovative practices; and
3. Training, advisory services and other technical assistance aimed at strengthening the abilities of its members and associate members to formulate and implement effective policies and programmes. (ESCAP, 7 August 2003, p. 2)

All technical cooperation projects are supposed to contribute to countries' efforts to build national capacity, which is chief among ESCAP's results for the 2006-2007 biennium. Some ESCAP documents refer to building regional capacities, but it is unclear whether this means developing the capacities of sub-regional inter-governmental bodies or developing national capacities to work with other governments on regional and sub-regional issues. To date ESCAP's priority appears to have been the latter. Even regional knowledge networking, which is one of ESCAP's capacity development activities, deals with national entities in order to ensure that good and innovative practices are implemented.

The Secretariat supports about 70 technical cooperation projects annually, many of them involving training, meetings, workshops and the dissemination of information. Most projects are in the $100,000-range and run for about two years, although there is now a trend toward fewer, larger and longer initiatives. The smallest projects are in the $30,000-range, the largest valued at several million dollars. The Secretariat appraises technical cooperation projects with QATs, which undertake peer reviews.

Five regional advisors based in Bangkok and two stationed at EPOC in Fiji provide national governments with technical advice. The advisors, all of whom are specialists in their particular field, are thinly stretched and by their own admission have difficulty meeting the demand for their services.

Of ESCAP's five regional institutions, SIAP, located in Japan, is regarded as contributing most to capacity development with ongoing training programmes directed at statistical officers in the national governments of member countries and others. It can be argued that ESCAP's analytical and normative products, such as its research papers, publications, regional agreements and legal and regulatory frameworks also contribute to capacity development.

5.2 Understanding of, and Approach to, Capacity Development

To what extent does ESCAP promote a clear and coherent approach towards capacity development?

A majority of Secretariat staff interviewed know that capacity development must deal with more than individual capabilities. Most recognize the importance of developing capacity at the organizational level and a few acknowledge that institutional factors are important. For the most part, however, staff lack awareness of the complexity of capacity development. None of the divisions has taken upon itself to become familiar with advancements in this field.

The concept of capacity development reflected in ESCAP's written materials is narrow and mechanistic, as the title of ESCAP's *Transfer of Good and Innovative Practices* for poverty reduction implies (ESCAP, August 4, 2003). That document sees ESCAP as having "an advantageous position to identify an innovative approach to poverty reduction in one country, analyse and document it and disseminate it to other counties" (ESCAP, August 4, 2003, p. 4). It identifies the need for capacity development at two levels: training for government and NGO staff when a new practice is introduced and work "to adjust the policy environment, particularly rules and regulations that may currently obstruct the introduction of the new practice" (ESCAP, August 4, 2003, p. 12).

The modalities that staff typically employ for capacity building, as explained in more detail in Section 5.4, also suggest a linear, mechanical understanding of capacity development. Many technical cooperation initiatives follow a similar pattern: research, meetings of experts, sub-regional workshops, pilot project and the dissemination of reports and studies. This model of capacity development is academic in its orientation and, as pointed out earlier, unlikely to achieve sustainable change on its own.

Nowhere in ESCAP's planning documents is the concept of capacity or capacity development clearly articulated. While there are frequent references to ESCAP having a mandate 'to contribute to' and 'add value to countries' efforts to build national capacity,' there is no well-defined framework to achieve this. Without clarity, the concept of capacity development is wide open to interpretation.

Several past evaluations, including the 2006 external evaluation (Djamala, Hirono and Mankad, 2006) and the evaluation of the Japan-ESCAP Cooperation Fund (JECF) 1996-2006 (Reynders, Holt, Naik and Ness, 2007) have characterized ESCAP's operational activities as "piecemeal," spread thinly across many sectors and lacking programme coherence. Many Secretariat staff interviewed for this evaluation agreed with this assessment, adding that one of the main reasons for it was the lack of a coherent vision for ESCAP itself. Although this issue is beyond the scope of this evaluation, it came up so frequently in discussions with Secretariat staff that it warrants attention. Many of them believe that the Secretariat's *ad hoc* approach to capacity development is directly related to the absence of an over-arching, coherent vision for ESCAP. Many staff feel "at sea" in determining where to focus their energies and limited resources for capacity development. ESCAP's broad mandate and its wide geographic coverage also contribute to disjointed programming, but, nevertheless, many staff believe that the lack of a clearly articulated vision is at the root of the problem.

Many staff claim that they often look for development issues that escape the attention of other UN organizations. This strategy, while at times effective, may, however, further diffuse ESCAP's operational work unless tied to a clearly articulated vision and role.

5.3 Relevance

Does ESCAP have a clear role in capacity development in member states?

This evaluation is unable to find a clear-cut answer to this question. As shown earlier, capacity development is well within ESCAP's mandate and the UNDG and its Working Group on Non-resident Agencies has encouraged regional commissions, such as ESCAP, to engage in CCAs and UNDAFs towards the development of national capacities. However, ESCAP has many formidable constraints, including: lack of an in-country presence; dependence on a handful of

donors who in the past have tended to fund short-term, one-off technical cooperation projects; and a short planning cycle.

Without a country presence, it is challenging for ESCAP to play a significant role in CCAs and UNDAFs and to be involved in major national capacity development programmes. Even if it were to have a presence, as it does at the sub-regional level in the Pacific, it has relatively little to offer in the way of human and financial resources compared to others, according to most EPOC staff and many of its partners.

In determining its role in national capacity development, ESCAP must come to grips with the fact that the development assistance environment has changed dramatically over the past two decades. The field has become crowded and increasingly competitive. For example, ESCAP faces stiff competition from specialized UN agencies, such as the UNDP and FAO. Many of ESCAP's sister UN agencies have a presence in countries and/or in the sub-regions, much greater financial resources and a good deal more development experience. The evaluator noted 11 UN agencies and a wide range of donors and local and sub-regional organizations serving the Pacific sub-region from offices in Suva, some with budgets that exceeded ESCAP's regular budget for the entire Asia-Pacific region. These organizations cover many of ESCAP's traditional areas of activity[3].

ESCAP faces competition from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank, which have multimillion-dollar investments, and comprehensive programmes. Bilateral donors—most of which are involved in developing national capacity—are lining up to assist lesser-developed countries (LDCs) of the region. Increasingly, well-heeled international NGOs and private sector actors have become major players in developing capacity, often with programming associated with natural disasters, environment, communicable diseases and emerging social issues.

The institutional environment has expanded exponentially since the regional commission was created some 60 years ago, with many organizations taking on roles that were once ESCAP's sole prerogative. Major institutions, many of them sub-regional, include the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, South Pacific Forum, Economic Cooperation Organization, Eurasian Economic Community and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. International organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) have become more influential in the region, according to some ESCAP staff members and ESCAP's publications (for example, ESCAP, 2007b).

Given its modest resources, centralized structure and relative inexperience in capacity development, what does ESCAP have to offer? This question relates to one of the central issues of this evaluation:

What are ESCAP's comparative advantages and are they reflected in its capacity development activities?

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[3] For example, with a budget of about $46 million annually and with ADB, EU, Australia, New Zealand, GTZ, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, and others as partners, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community develops capacity in most Pacific island countries. Its programming includes sustainable agriculture, forestry, marine resources, statistics, policy and planning, public health, population, gender, youth, communications, culture, leadership and training for national censuses.

ESCAP documents cite a number of comparative advantages, among them convening power, multi-disciplinary programming, expertise in economic analysis, and ability to bring together its analytical, normative and operational functions. However, many staff members and some partner organizations question many of these advantages. Some claim that other organizations in the region have as much or more convening power on a sub-regional basis; that ESCAP's technical expertise is waning; that its divisions infrequently work together in an integrated, multi-disciplinary manner; and that it succeeds only infrequently in bringing together its analytical, normative and operational functions. The evaluator's review of technical cooperation proposals suggests that some of this skepticism is well-founded. What then does ESCAP have to offer that is unique?

Other than its people, which are the most important aspect of any organization, ESCAP's strongest advantage is its stature as a UN regional, intergovernmental body[4]. This gives ESCAP access to senior government officials in key ministries and government bodies dealing with policy. It provides ESCAP with considerable power to advocate for international standards, norms and policies. It is within this high-level, normative function that ESCAP appears to have the greatest potential to contribute to the capacity of LDCs of the region. However, only about a quarter of the technical cooperation proposals examined for this evaluation capitalize on this advantage. Many projects in the past have been directed at much lower levels and although there have been improvements, many still operate at a micro level according to the 2006 external evaluation of ESCAP (Djamala et al, 2006) and the evaluation of the JECF (Reynders et al, 2007).

Many stakeholders interviewed spoke of other related advantages, including ESCAP's neutrality and impartiality, which have earned the organization a great deal of trust among countries of the region. It is to its advantage that ESCAP is not reliant on any single source of funding[5].

Several questions remain within the gamut of relevance:

a. *To what extent is ESCAP's approach to capacity development consistent with that promoted by the UNDG?*
b. *To what extent do ESCAP's capacity development initiatives build on the comparative advantages and on-going activities of partner organizations or agencies? and*
c. *To what extent do the capacity development activities: clearly identify key stakeholders and target groups; clearly and accurately identify development problems; take into account lessons from past experience; and analyze risks?*

The UNDG promotes endogenously-led capacity development that is situated "within national policy and development plans," that draws on or feeds into "national sector capacity assessments and capacity development strategies" and that follows "the principles of national ownership and leadership articulated *inter alia* in the TCPR [Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review] resolutions and the *Paris Declaration*," and that "when addressed together often provide the necessary capacities to reach development goals in the context of a rights-based approach" (UNDG, 2006, p. 5). A review of recent technical cooperation proposals found few that were closely linked to CCA

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[4] That said, several staff claim that some member states often bypass ESCAP, preferring to go directly to UN headquarters in New York on important economic and social issues.

[5] Another comparative advantage is ESCAP's ability to analyze issues from both a social and an economic perspective. For example, ESCAP's *Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific 2007* featured a study on the economic costs of gender discrimination in the region. This was the first such study in the region and it received widespread publicity.

and UNDAF processes[6]. Interviews and discussions with Secretariat staff confirmed that many, but not all, technical cooperation projects stem from the interests of donor and staff members themselves. A majority of proposals were weak on needs assessment. Staff say that they do not have the funds to go into the field and assess needs. Staff in most divisions told the evaluator that the present Conference structure does a poor job of identifying needs. The QAT process requires project proponents to check to ensure that proposals are linked to CCAs or UNDAFs, but some staff claim that this is often done only after the project topics have been identified.

Many technical cooperation projects deal with subjects of a trans-boundary nature that are neither addressed by other UN agencies and donors nor identified in CCA and UNDAF processes. But, in a way, this speaks to one of ESCAP's major strengths. The organization has been most successful in capacity development where it has identified important issues that fall outside the scope of other agencies and beyond the immediate development priorities of countries in the region. ESCAP's Asian Highway initiative and its groundbreaking work on disability are but two examples.

The 2006 external evaluation commended ESCAP for working in close partnership on a regional basis with UNDP and ADB, particularly in relation to the MDGs (Djumala et al, 2006). Other evaluations have criticized the Secretariat for not working with others as planned (for example, Craver, 2005). Many staff members told the evaluator that ESCAP could do much better at identifying and working with partners, including sub-regional organizations. There is potential for ESCAP to work with these organizations towards national capacity development, with ESCAP contributing to high level policy and analytical work in areas of common interest and that have a cross-border or regional dimension.

Many of the technical cooperation proposals examined for this evaluation show a commitment to work with a variety of partners, albeit few with NGOs. Often lacking, is a commitment from partners to undertake the long and difficult follow-up work of developing capacities at the national level to implement a particular international standard or innovation. Most proposals clearly identify target groups and key stakeholders, but are generally weak on drawing lessons from ESCAP's past experience and the experience of others. An external evaluation of a capacity-building project related to the planning and management of natural resources had similar findings (Gurung, 2005).

The QAT process is, in part, responsible for bringing greater rigor to project development, including increased conformity with the principles of aid effectiveness spelled out in the *Paris Declaration*. There is, however, a considerable distance to go. Few, proposals examined are based on an analysis of capacity gaps; few deal with organizational and institutional capacity; few have adequate risk analysis and risk mitigation strategies; and only one features a rights-based approach[7]. All are weak on gender equality, a point that this evaluation returns to in Section 5.5. More work is needed to unpack the capacities required for regional cooperation and for implementing international standards and agreements.

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[6] According to staff, ESCAP plays a significant role in CCAs and UNDAFs in only a few countries, such as Maldives and Bhutan. The evaluator notes that ESCAP is involved in UNDAFs for the Pacific sub-region, but marginally.

[7] The evaluation of the JECF 1996-2006 (Reynders et al, 2007, p. 36) also noted weakness in integrating a rights-based approach in relation to transport and urban environmental issues.

5.4 Effectiveness

To what extent is it possible to ascertain the effectiveness of ESCAP's capacity development approach?

It is difficult to assess the results of ESCAP's capacity development initiatives, having visited few project sites, and owing to a dearth of information on results in project reports.

A few, mostly long-term initiatives, stand out as having achieved impressive results. Both the External Evaluation 2006 and the evaluation of the JECF 1996-2006 found the Asian Highway Initiative to have been effective at strengthening networks, achieving binding international agreements and contributing to trade, tourism and other economic activity, particularly in landlocked developing countries (Reynders et al, 2007). ESCAP played a major role in getting disability on the national agenda of many of countries of the region, some of them introducing for the first time legislation to provide equal opportunities and protect the rights of persons with disabilities. ESCAP succeeded in getting the governments of the region to commit to two decades of work on disability, the second decade (2003-2012) based on the Biwako Millennium Framework, which calls for an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society. As of 2007, 14 member countries had produced comprehensive legislation on disability and 12 had national plans of action (ESCAP, 2007b, p. 94). ESCAP has produced what appear to be impressive results in the area of statistics with numerous technical cooperation projects and training programmes provided by SIAP[8]. It was, however, impossible within the scope of this evaluation to fully assess the effectiveness of these efforts in contributing to national capacity development.

However, many of ESCAP's activities under the rubric of capacity development have been short-term and one-off, with little follow up or follow through. Consequently, they show little evidence of positive change, according to the External Evaluation 2006 (Djumala et al, 2006), the evaluation of the JECF 1996-2006 (Reynders et al, 2007) and the evaluation of a project to strengthen capacity for managing globalization (Craver, 2005). The External Evaluation referred to ESCAP's operational activities at the national level as "piecemeal" and lacking adequate follow-up (Djumala et al, 2006, p. 21). Staff recognize the high transaction cost of small, short-term projects and see the merits of moving to long-term programmes, but acknowledge difficulties doing so.

Some longer-term initiatives have also produced few results. An evaluation of a five-year, $738,000 project aimed at building capacity to plan and manage natural resources in 22 countries of Asia and the Pacific concluded that "the capacity gained though valuable has been insufficient to institutionalize the SPM [strategic planning and management] process in countries where the SPM concept was relatively new" (Gurung, 2005, p. 2). That same evaluation questioned the project's sustainability and called on ESCAP to pay closer attention to the formal and informal systems that influence the adoption of SPM, such as political commitment, governance and hierarchy that inhibit participation and collaboration, and inadequate and/or complex institutional and legal frameworks (Gurung, 2005, p. 2).

This evaluation has found that the Pacific region and, to a lesser extent, Central Asia, often get sidelined when it comes to technical cooperation because of distance, high travel cost and, in Central Asia, language barriers. Many staff members voiced this opinion and the evaluator

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[8] A 2003 evaluation of SIAP concluded that the institution needed, *inter alia*, to greatly expand its course offerings, direct more resources to strengthening statistical training capabilities in countries of the region and more closely align its programs with ESCAP's (Skinner, 2003).

witnessed the same first-hand in the Pacific where ESCAP has a small staff with insufficient resources to enable them to become seriously engaged in much national capacity development.

Most of ESCAP's technical cooperation projects use modalities such as training, meetings, workshops, research, information exchange through regional networks and pilot projects. With few exceptions, these modalities are unlikely to contribute significantly to enhancing organizational or institutional capacity. It is difficult to determine if they have brought about sustainable change even at the individual level for lack of follow-up assessments.

This evaluation has been unable to determine the effectiveness of other initiatives such as the products of ESCAP's normative and analytical work. Publications, policy guidelines and frameworks may be useful to some countries, but, generally, they are unlikely to contribute significantly to sustainable change unless combined with a variety of other interventions over time (Chatterjee, 1989). Here as well, the Secretariat carries out few follow-up assessments to determine the extent to which such products are used.

To what extent is the work of regional institutes and regional advisers utilized in capacity development?

A thorough analysis of the contribution of ESCAP's regional institutes to capacity development was beyond the scope of this evaluation. However, Secretariat staff were generally of the opinion that, with the exception of SIAP, the contribution is small[9]. Five of the 17 technical cooperation proposals examined contained plans to involve regional institutes and/or regional advisors. Feedback from Secretariat staff suggests room to improve collaboration with regional institutes. However, staff also noted that the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops Development in Asia and the Pacific, the Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery, and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology were either nascent or in the midst of restructuring and were unable to contribute in any major way to the Secretariat's capacity development initiatives.

Regional advisory services, as presently structured, contribute to the development of national capacity by working directly with the line departments of national governments. However, most regional advisors told this evaluator they were too thinly spread and incapable of giving national governments more than short-term attention. Regional advisors are linked inadequately to technical cooperation projects and other initiatives, according to some staff members and the External Evaluation 2006 (Djumala et al, 2006). The External Evaluation determined that regional advisory services risked duplicating the work of UNCTs and were so short that it made it "difficult for ESCAP to demonstrate the impact of advisory missions" (Djumala et al, 2006, p. 22). Regional advisors may help national governments write funding proposals and prepare development plans, but the development community increasingly discredits this approach as an effective means to sustainable development.

To what extent was ESCAP able to apply a cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to capacity development?

The evaluation finds mixed results and considerable room for improvement in relation to cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approaches to capacity development. On the positive side, staff report that ESCAP has had success integrating health and youth issues, including HIV/AIDS

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[9] It may be that SIAP's performance has improved since 2003 when an external evaluator concluded that SIAP's contribution fell "well short of what is needed to address the current level of demand" (Skinner, 2003, p. iii) and that SIAP directed few activities or resources to "establishing or strengthening statistical training capability in countries" (Skinner, 2003, p. vi).

prevention, into much of its work on transportation as well. The 2006 External Evaluation lauds the close cooperation between the transport and trade sub-programmes. Thirteen of the 17 technical cooperation proposals examined for this evaluation showed signs of a cross-sectoral, multi-disciplinary approach, particularly in relation to trade and transport. Although many staff claim that divisions do not work well together, some say that technical cooperation projects have become more multi-disciplinary within the divisions themselves[10]. But, some recent evaluations, such as Craver (2005) and Reynders et al (2007), suggest that the divisions' track record for working together is uneven, and as a result the cross-sectoral nature of ESCAP's operational activities is far from ideal. An external evaluation of a project aimed at strengthening the capacity of 22 countries to plan and manage their natural resources was critical of ESCAP for not doing more to draw on much-needed multi-sectoral, in-house expertise (Gurung, 2005).

To what extent do specific capacity development activities take advantage of synergies with the analytical and normative work of ESCAP?

ESCAP's strategy in relation to capacity development is to add value to members' and associate members' efforts to strengthen national capacity by linking its normative, analytical and operational work. Evidence suggests that the Secretariat is striving to create these synergies with some notable success, particularly in relation to transport, trade, disability and emerging social issues. Secretariat staff say, however, that much more could be done in this regard.

The evaluation commends the Secretariat's QAT process, which has come a long way towards ensuring that projects reflect sound development principles and that they are, as much as possible, linked to CCAs and UNDAFs. The QAT process has brought needed rigour and discipline to project design so as minimize the frequent one-off, *ad hoc* projects of the past. The peer review process has helped to reduce the number of projects from a high of 300 in 2000 to less than 75 today. Projects have become longer, deeper and larger in relation to financial inputs. While this is encouraging, more could be done to improve the QAT process so as to encourage better integration of gender equality and a more programmatic approach to technical cooperation as pointed out in a recent evaluation (Reynders et al, 2007).

5.5 Integration of Gender Equality

To what extent was a gender perspective applied in ensuring that men and women benefited equally from activity outputs?

It has been over 10 years since the Beijing Platform of Action endorsed gender equality. ESCAP views gender equality as "a prerequisite for sustainable economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region" and has a mandate to carry out gender mainstreaming in all areas of its work (*Why Gender Mainstreaming at ESCAP?* Acquired May 10, 2007 from United Nations Intranet). ECOSOC Resolution 2005/31 requires UN organizations to:
- Develop clear guidelines on the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming;
- Incorporate gender perspectives in programme budgets and all results-budgeted processes; and
- Ensure continuous awareness raising, training, and development of staff to carry out gender analysis in all its programming activity.

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[10] The focus group on emerging social issues estimated that about 20 percent of technical cooperation in its field is multi-sectoral or multi-disciplinary.

Despite the above directives and statements in ESCAP's planning documents to the effect that it has "mainstreamed gender into all relevant subprogrammes" (United Nations General Assembly A/60/6, 6 May 2005, p. 3), this evaluation finds ESCAP's performance woefully lacking. Staff are, for the most part, gender unaware[11]; the organization invests too few resources in this critically important area[12]; gender equality is absent from or insufficiently integrated into ESCAP's operational activities; and senior management have provided inadequate leadership with respect to gender during the period under review. One division claims that attempts to mainstream gender in its programming were dropped after some member states raised objections.

Many staff interviewed for this evaluation failed to see how gender equality applied to their specialized fields of work. Some who did assumed that providing equal opportunity to women and men was sufficient. Of the 17 technical cooperation proposals examined, none adequately dealt with gender equality. Logical frameworks for technical cooperation projects often lack gender-related results and gender-sensitive indicators.

The Secretariat has "marginalized" its Gender and Development Section, according to one discussion group, providing it with six professional staff positions (not all filled at the time of this evaluation) and an annual recurrent budget of less than $50,000. Although there are gender focal points in each divisions who meet every 2-3 months as part of a Gender Mainstreaming Task Force, gender equality is equated with women's development in the minds of many staff and, consequently, often left to the Gender and Development Section. Another discussion group characterized ESCAP's attention to gender equality as "lip service".

According to the JECF 1996-2006 evaluation, "Very little is done in terms of gender mainstreaming in the institution or in the projects supported by JECF and other funds." Similarly, "Support [for gender equality] from the higher echelons in ESCAP…has been very limited so far" (Reynders et al, 2007, p. 39).

Sixty-seven percent of the Secretariat's professional staff were men as of December 2006 (Retrieved 16 February, 2007 from <http://intranet/gm/s04/s04_de42profile.html>)

The situation is not entirely bleak. This evaluation finds evidence of some strong analytical work on gender equality, as well as potentially powerful training on the economic cost of gender discrimination.

The report turns next to lessons in successful capacity development, based on ESCAP's experience and others.

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[11] Those who are gender unaware pay inadequate attention to the gender dimensions of development. They fail to factor men and women's different opportunities, experiences, attributes and constraints into their programming in a way that fosters gender equality. Gender unawareness may result in reinforcing the status quo of gender relations.

[12] Gender mainstreaming involves: recognizing the links between gender inequality and poverty; assessing the different implications for women and men; devising strategies and systems to ensure that the different concerns, experiences and capacities of women and men shape the way the organization plans, implements and evaluates all activities; and ensures that the organization's internal practices are consistent with the above so that all activities and the way that they are undertaken contribute to gender equality (Gell, F. and Motla, P. [2002]. *Gender Mainstreaming Tools: Questions and checklists to use across the programme management cycle*. Oxford, Oxfam Great Britain).

6. Lessons

6.1 Lessons from ESCAP's Technical Cooperation Experience

The first two lessons are those that emerged most frequently in discussions with Secretariat staff.

Strong and varied partnerships

Secretariat staff have learned that technical cooperation needs strong and varied partnerships in order to achieve sustainable results. When Secretariat staff pointed to successful technical cooperation initiatives those they described most often involved partnerships with organizations that were able to work on the ground within participating countries to bring about change. For example, ESCAP has worked closely with ADB, the International Labor Organization, the World Health Organization and UNAIDS to combat the spread of HIV by truck drivers in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. As noted earlier, ESCAP has a strong, tripartite partnership with the ADB and UNDP in the regional MDG programme. EPOC's support to the Fiji Disabilities Association and its alliance with the Disability Coordinator at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat has helped to extend ESCAP's pioneering work in this field, bringing needed resources and new programmes to several Pacific island states. ESCAP is working in partnership with the Sri Lanka Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights and numerous other organizations to test community-based, multi-hazard early warning systems. ESCAP is working to build trade and investment research capacity in developing countries through partnerships with the International Development Research Centre, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNDP and the WTO.

Long-term perspective

Some of ESCAP's most successful capacity development initiatives have been operational for many years, and a few for decades, such as its Asian Highway initiative, its strengthening of national statistics offices, and its work on disability. Several staff members spoke of the need to take time to build relationships of trust with governments and other partners before beginning to develop capacities[13]. Many noted that long timeframes were needed to bring about organizational and institutional change.

6.2 Lessons from the International Development Community

A number of additional lessons and guiding principles have emerged from the experience of the international development community in recent years, of which the following are examples.

Capacity development at several levels

As described in Section 4, recent World Bank and ECDPM studies have underscored the need to develop capacity at all three levels: individual, organization and institution. The studies conclude that working at the individual level alone is unlikely to produce sustainable results; institutional change is usually required in order to turn individual capabilities into organizational capacity.

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[13] UNFPA strongly endorsed this same point (telephone interview May 25, 2007)

Attention to formal and informal systems

Recent studies, noted in Section 4, emphasize the importance of the formal and informal systems that influence individual and organizational behaviour. They point to the need for capacity gap analyses that go beyond the usual technical and functional aspects of organizations. The OECD/DAC Network on Governance claims, for example, that successful capacity development requires "attention not only to the skills and organizational procedures, but also to issues of incentives and governance" (OECD/DAC Network on Governance, 01 February 2006, p. 10). Incentives, both formal and informal, are part of the enabling environment which affects the behaviours of individuals and the performance of organizations.

Holistic, multi-disciplinary approach

OECD/DAC underscores the merits of a holistic, multi-dimensional approach to capacity development, the need for iteration and the use of open systems and other experimental modalities along the lines of those used by the private sector to bring about organizational and political systems change. "The traditional capacity building tools of TC [technical cooperation] and training have often proved ineffective in helping to improve performance because they have not been linked to the necessary organizational and institutional developments" (OECD/DAC, 2006, p. 26). The implication is that capacity development needs an integrated approach "so that individual skills and organizational settings in which they can be put effectively to work are created simultaneously" (OECD/DAC, 2006, p. 26-27).

UN organizations, such as UNDP, say that successful capacity development requires "a wide variety of actors contributing their particular skills and resources" including "creative partnerships, alliances, networks and joint ventures both within the UN system and with national and international development partners, including civil society, NGOs and private sector" (United Nations, 2006b, p. 4).

Diverse interventions that are tailored to needs

The international experience suggests that capacity development is situation-specific, and that there are exceptions to the lessons and successful practices above. For example, ESCAP has been successful identifying important capacity gaps that CCAs and UNDAFs may have overlooked. Similarly, a case can be made for small, short-term strategic interventions under the right conditions. Relatively small, short-term initiatives can, under the right circumstances, make significant contributions. ESCAP's publication of guides, standards and innovative practices can fill capacity gaps if they are of high quality, if they have involved stakeholders in their development, and if they are accompanied by effective distribution and follow-up activity in-country to see that they are used.

In 2006, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Food Programme endorsed 10 guiding principles for capacity development, several of which mirror the aforementioned lessons. They appear in Annex E.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Within the context of UN reform, ESCAP is seeking ways to contribute to national capacity development within endogenously-led, national development processes. This evaluation concludes that ESCAP is ill-suited for a major role in national capacity development, but has potential to play important niche roles.

ESCAP can add value to national capacity development initiatives particularly in relation to policy and normative concerns where there is an international dimension and the need for regional or sub-regional cooperation, and where the capacity gaps fall within ESCAP's realm of expertise and influence. It can capitalize on its strengths in policy, advocacy and standard setting, using its intergovernmental status as leverage. But ESCAP must select these capacity issues with care and greatly limit its operational work, partnering with others who can take on the bulk of the work required to follow through with capacity development at national levels. In this way it will have better assurance that the policies and international standards are implemented successfully. This niche role gives ESCAP the potential to complement the national capacity-building work of others by focusing on high-level capacity gaps pertaining to the institutional environment.

ESCAP also has an important role to play in explaining international standards to members and associate members, encouraging them to reform their policies, laws, regulations and programmes in keeping with international norms. As a prelude to national capacity development, ESCAP has an equally important role in building trust among countries of the sub-regions so they can work together on cross-border issues of mutual interest.

This evaluation strongly suggests that ESCAP stick to such "upstream" roles. To do so will necessitate a significant reorientation of the Secretariat under the leadership of the Executive Secretary. As a starting point, it will require the Executive Secretary to clearly articulate a vision for the Secretariat's operational work and its roles in relation to capacity development.

Recommendation #1: It is recommended that the Executive Secretary articulate a vision for the Secretariat's operational work and strategic roles in relation to capacity development.

The evaluator would suggest that the Executive Secretary involve junior and senior staff, as well as ESCAP's key partners, in preparing a vision statement and a capacity development strategy. When ready, senior management needs to ensure that the vision and strategy are clearly communicated to member and associate member states, Secretariat staff, and partners inside and outside the UN system. A clear vision and defined roles would help guide the PMD in revising its Technical Cooperation Strategy and would inform the development of subsequent work plans.

ESCAP's most important contributions to the region relate to policy and advocacy—getting governments to take notice of, and make commitments to, action in relation to regional and sub-regional economic and social issues. ESCAP does well at this level; it does less well with the long and complex job of strengthening national organizations and institutions. Where it falls short is in mobilizing others who can take up this role. The evaluation has shown that ESCAP can play a successful catalytic role, but without an in-country presence and much longer, deeper programming, it must rely on partners to carry forward the often long, arduous work of capacity development.

Recommendation #2: It is recommended that senior management place more emphasis on identifying appropriate partners to provide the necessary follow up to develop national capacity in-country.

The Secretariat must choose its partners with care. It must look to new, creative partnerships and joint ventures within the UN system and with national and international development organizations, including NGOs and private sector development groups. It could begin by strengthening its partnerships with its own regional institutes where those institutes have potential to contribute to national capacity development. ESCAP should consider putting more effort into strengthening the capacity of intermediary organizations, including its own regional institutions, so that they can play a more effective role at the national level over time. The Secretariat must involve its partners at the outset of programme planning so as to benefit from their expertise and secure their commitment.

The evaluation has shown that ESCAP's approach to capacity development, which is based on a linear, technical-transfer model, has produced a few remarkable successes during the period under review. But this approach is unlikely to lead to sustainable results under most circumstances because it pays insufficient attention to the formal and informal systems of organizations and institutions. ESCAP has directed much of its technical cooperation to strengthening the capabilities of individuals, often to the neglect of organizational and institutional capacities. It has relied on conventional modalities, which may have increased the knowledge, awareness and skills of individuals, but have largely failed to bring about needed change in the organizations and institutions in which they function.

Recommendation #3: It is recommended that the PMD and division directors ensure that future capacity development initiatives are directed at strengthening organizational and institutional capacities rather than individual capacities only, with closer attention to the formal and informal systems that affect performance, and with the use of appropriate modalities.

The Secretariat and its partners need to choose modalities for capacity development with care and experiment with them, as no one size fits all circumstances. Some modalities, which other development organizations have found effective, include change management, mentoring, coaching, and networking. The Secretariat and its partners may wish to focus on governance systems, which are a part of political systems design, in keeping with high-level, niche roles. The Secretariat should consider experimenting with monitoring and evaluation that use iterative rather than rigid program models, in keeping with the non-linear nature of systems change in organizations.

The evaluation concludes that the QAT process has helped improve the effectiveness of ESCAP's operational activities. However, more work is needed to focus ESCAP's limited resources in coherent programmes consistent with its capacity development strategy. Programmes by their nature are likely to be multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral. They will require close collaboration among divisions and holistic programme design. A move to a more programmatic approach is likely to have organizational and managerial implications for ESCAP beyond the scope of this

evaluation. <mark>To be successful, it will need the support of all member and associate member countries, some that have preferred funding short-term projects in the past.</mark>

Recommendation #4: It is recommended that senior management continue to scale back the number of technical cooperation projects in favour of programmes that delve more deeply into organizational and institutional capacity.

This does not mean that ESCAP should cease all small-scale projects. Some are necessary to identify needs, build intergovernmental relationships around emerging economic and social issues, learn lessons from innovation and pave the way for scaled-up responses with partners. One of ESCAP's strengths is its ability to identify issues that have escaped the attention of CCAs and UNDAFs. For this to continue, it will need some flexibility in its use of extra-budgetary funding.

The evaluation has pointed out several shortcomings in ESCAP's operational work, some of which could be overcome with continued improvements to the QAT process.

Recommendation #5: It is recommended that senior management improve the planning and implementation of technical cooperation projects aimed at developing capacity by encouraging a programmatic approach, strengthening the integration of gender equality and by paying closer attention to capacity gaps and influencing factors at organizational and institutional levels.

Implementing the above recommendation will go only part way to rectify the serious shortcomings with respect to gender equality at ESCAP. This issue requires urgent attention at the highest level.

Recommendation # 6: It is recommended that the Executive Secretary, on the basis of further assessment, develop a gender equality strategy with action plans and appropriate resources to ensure that gender equality is fully integrated into ESCAP's future programming.

Even though ESCAP's role in capacity development may be narrowly confined to upstream interventions in future, the Secretariat would do well to learn more about capacity development by becoming involved in learning networks, such as those outlined in Annex D. An appropriate structure and adequate resources are needed to this end.

Recommendation # 7: It is recommended that senior management form a cross-divisional group to learn more about capacity development through learning networks and that it give this group the responsibility and resources needed to educate Secretariat staff about capacity and its development.

The final recommendation, below, is intended to set the stage for better understanding and more precise use of the terms 'capacity' and 'capacity development' at ESCAP.

Recommendation # 8: It is recommended that Secretariat staff use the terms 'capacity' and 'capacity development' consistently in planning and programming documents, explaining precisely what is meant.

Greater precision in the use of terms, such as 'capacity' and 'capacity development' could help to avoid obfuscation, which can lead to the justification of almost any type of programming. Whenever the term, capacity development is used, Secretariat staff ought to be clear about: What capacity? Whose capacity? Capacity at what level? and Capacity development for what purpose?

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UNESCAP

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1. Background

Based on the global and regional mandates, ESCAP fosters cooperation between its members in order to promote economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region. It fulfils this mandate through undertaking a combination of normative, analytical and technical cooperation work. These include:

- *Normative work*: Promotion of universal norms and values as well as setting standards at the regional level with a view to advancing economic and social development.
- *Analytical work*: Research, analysis and measurement of regional economic and social development trends and issues as a basis for policy-making and programme development.
- *Technical cooperation*: Building national capacity through development of human resources and institutions in key economic and social development sectors (e.g. training and advisory services).

ESCAP's normative, analytical and technical cooperation work thus provides a framework within which the organization delivers not only human resource but also institutional and organizational capacity development. The 2006 External Evaluation of ESCAP notes that the ability to interrelate both normative and analytical work with technical cooperation work sets ESCAP apart from other development assistance agencies in Asia and the Pacific. Capacity development[14] is regarded as a means to achieve ESCAP's strategic objective of promoting economic and social development, with special emphasis on increasing access to opportunities for individuals, communities and economies, in the Asian and Pacific region.

Four areas outlined in the 2006-2007 strategic framework indicate, in very general terms, the direction for capacity development activities in the organization. According to this, capacity development should be applied as follows: "In terms of results, ESCAP will contribute to countries' efforts to build national capacity at the request of members and associate members in:

(i) Developing and implementing economic and social development policies and programmes, including regulatory, legal and institutional frameworks;
(ii) Negotiating effectively in multilateral and regional forums;
(iii) Building effective partnerships with all sectors of civil society including the

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[14] The UNDG definition of capacity development is used for the purpose of this assessment: "The process whereby people, organizations, and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time." UNDG Working Group Position Statement, July 2006.

private sector;

(iv) Implementing commitments from global and regional conferences and reviewing progress in achieving the internationally agreed goals and targets adopted at global and regional conferences.

While individual capacity development activities, such as technical cooperation projects, trainings and workshops, have been evaluated, a thematic evaluation of capacity development has never been conducted for ESCAP.

As capacity development is at the core of the UN development system, this evaluation will be conducted in the context of the following on-going efforts and processes to harmonize the operational activities of the UN system, and its development partners:

- UNDG Capacity Development Group
- OECD/DAC policy position on capacity development
- The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
- GA resolution 59/250 on operational activities for development
- The HLCP mandated analysis being undertaken by UNDESA and the UNDG Capacity Development Group in preparation for the 2007 TCPR

To the extent possible, ESCAP will maintain consistency in the use of terminology and methodology with these processes.

2. Objectives

Purpose

The building of national capacity is at the core of the UN development system. Building national capacity is thus a key objective applied throughout ESCAP's eight sub-programmes as expressed in most sub-programme Expected Accomplishments.

It has therefore been suggested that ESCAP undertakes a thematic evaluation of its approach to capacity development. The management response and implementation plan of this forward-looking evaluation of ESCAP's capacity development interventions will provide a basis for potential changes to ESCAP's programme and project planning and implementation processes. The report will also form the basis of ESCAP's revised Technical Cooperation Strategy.

Objectives of the Evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are:

1. To assess ESCAP's potential value added in conducting capacity development work in the context of ESCAP's comparative advantages, mandate and core functions.

2. To assess the relevance of ESCAP's current overall approach to capacity development.

3. Provide recommendations for how ESCAP can strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of its approach to planning and implementing capacity development programmes, consistent with ESCAP's mandate and core functions.

Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will be forward looking, primarily seeking to identify best practices and recommend improvements to the current approach in order to enhance future activities.

The indicative criteria and sets of sub-issues to be reviewed over the 2002-2003, 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 programmes of work.

Relevance

- Does ESCAP have a clear role in capacity development in member states?

- How are ESCAP's comparative advantages reflected in capacity development activities, particularly in complementing analytical and normative work?

- To what extent is ESCAP's approach to capacity development consistent with that promoted by the UN Development Group (UNDG)?

- To what extent do ESCAP capacity development initiatives take into account and build upon the comparative advantages and on-going activities of partner organizations or agencies?

To what extent do the capacity development activities:

- Clearly identify key stakeholders and target groups?

- Clearly and accurately identify development problems?

- Take into account lessons learned from past experience?

- Analyze assumptions and risks?

Effectiveness

- To what extent is it possible to ascertain the effectiveness of ESCAP's capacity development approach?

- To what extent does ESCAP promote a clear and coherent approach towards capacity development?

- To what extent was ESCAP able to apply a cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to capacity development?

- To what extent is the work of regional institutes and regional advisers utilized in capacity development activities (where appropriate)?

- To what extent was a gender perspective applied in ensuring that men and women benefited equally from activity outputs?

- To what extent do specific capacity development activities take advantage of

synergies with the analytical and normative work ESCAP?

Methodology

The evaluation will be undertaken by one external capacity development expert with support from the Programme Management Division (PMD). The evaluation will be divided into two phases.

Phase 1

1. A review of ESCAP's strategic and programmatic objectives including issues of ESCAP's mandate, capacity and comparative advantage in undertaking capacity development of member countries.

2. A desk review of relevant materials will be undertaken including project documents, progress and terminal reports, accomplishment statements, mid-term reviews, training surveys and earlier evaluations of ESCAP activities. The assessment will review technical cooperation activities as well as analytical and normative activities that may have contributed capacity building under sub-programme expected accomplishments.

3. Interviews and/or focus group discussions with ESCAP staff based on the outcome of the reviews undertaken above.

4. Provision of a preliminary report and proposal for the methodology for country visits, including suggestions for revisions to the draft table of contents of the final report (Annex 1 of these TOR).

Phase 2

Subject to (i) the satisfactory conclusion of Phase 1, and (ii) a review of the overall assignment process following Phase 1, including assessment of the remaining required inputs by the consultant; and (iii) the necessity, as identified in Phase 1, to conduct country level visits:

1. Interviews and discussions with the ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre (EPOC) and development partners including the UNDP Pacific Sub-regional Centre and the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) effectiveness and sustainability of ESCAP capacity development interventions.

2. Development of a series of recommendations for the strengthening of ESCAP's overall approach to capacity development, based on ESCAP's mandate and comparative advantage, best practices from other organizations (such as OECD, UNDP), and in the context of existing initiatives to improve the impact of UN capacity development activities (such as the TCPR, UNDG etc.).

3. Outputs from the work assignment *(must be tangible and measurable)*
Outputs: 1. <u>Preliminary report</u>: Preliminary report on observations made during Phase 1 of the evaluation (no longer than 5 typed pages) and proposal outlining the rationale for country visits, if appropriate, including their methodology and suggestions for the methodology for country visits, including suggestions for revisions to the draft table of contents of the final report   2. <u>Final report</u>: A comprehensive in-depth evaluation report (approximately 20-25 typed pages excluding annexes) of the capacity development approach applied in ESCAP including a set of recommendations regarding improvements of future activities as well as lessons learned.

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List of Documents Reviewed

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Annex D

Capacity Development Networks

Capacity-net

To request membership, e-mail to the Network Facilitator, Jayne Musumba, at <jayne.musumba@undp.org> or <capacity-net@groups.undp.org>

The Capacity Development Network (Capacity-net) is an informal and external network open to development practitioners engaged in capacity development work. Members include government representatives, UN agencies, NGOs, Academia, Regional Institutions, and members of the international development community. The network was launched in February 2007 as a direct follow-up of the 2006 Madrid global event on the capacity development strategies. Capacity-net is a moderated e-mail network hosted by the UNDP Capacity Development Group. The main objective of the network is to create an environment that is conducive to exchange knowledge and experiences between people working on capacity development issues. The network offers the following to its members:

- Regular exchange of comparative experiences, lessons learned and good practices related to sustainable capacity development;
- Discussions on a wide variety of capacity development topics especially around the capacity development strategies, their applications and tools;
- Access to new knowledge and information on capacity development, mainstreaming capacity strategies throughout development finance, policy and programme efforts, such as in the preparation and monitoring of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and national and local development plans;
- Access to information on the role of the wider development community and the UN development system in the work to help countries anchor the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in national development strategies, and ensure the full range of capacities required meeting these goals; and
- Quick referrals to experts and organizations engaged in capacity development work.

Products and Services

- **e-Discussions**: Discuss substantive issues related to capacity development, coming to a collective position on what works and good practices in application of capacity development strategies and capacity diagnostics. Discussions remain demand driven, flexible and informal to ensure their relevance and usefulness to the day-to-work of development practitioners.
- **Consolidated Replies**: Consolidate together in one document a summary to the query or discussion, additional recommended resources, contacts and relevant experiences, as well as all the individual responses received.
- **Expert Referrals**: Colleagues support each other by recommending appropriate experts, institutions, similar projects and/or publications. Where necessary the facilitator will supplement member responses by searching rosters, outside sources and previous network discussions.
- **Monthly News Update**: This is a product *by and for* the broader Communities of Practice. The objective is to provide the community with a means to share recent news, initiatives, relevant resources, vacancy announcements, training opportunities, and to provide an overview of network activities.

European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)

Contact: www.ecdpm.org

Study on Capacity Change and Performance

This study - Capacity, Change and Performance - aims at a better understanding of the relationships among these three factors and at developing practical guidance for policy makers and practitioners. The study is part of the broader workplan of the Network on Governance of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Its research methodology focuses mainly on an extensive literature review and 18 in-depth field cases which look at how capacity has developed from the perspective of those involved in the change process.

The focus of the study is on the endogenous process of capacity development – the process of change from within the system. This includes the factors that encourage it, how it differs from one context to another and why efforts to develop capacity succeed in some contexts better than in others. The objectives of the study are:
1. to enhance understanding of the interrelationships amongst capacity, organisational change, and performance across a wide range of development experiences, and
2. to provide general recommendations and tools to improve the effectiveness of the design and implementation of interventions in support of improved capacities and performance.

There are seven subsections to the study:
case studies (analysis),
thematic papers (reflection),
interim reports (synthesis),
methodology,
policy dialogue / Workshops / Calendar.
complementary papers
discussion papers in French / documents de réflexions en français

Capacity.org

Contact: http://www.capacity.org/

Capacity.org, is a web magazine-cum-portal intended for practitioners and policy makers who work in or on capacity development in international cooperation in the South. The site is accompanied by a printed journal and an email newsletter, which are published quarterly in English, French and Spanish. Each issue of Capacity.org focuses on a specific theme relevant to capacity development, with feature articles, reports on policy and practice, interviews and a guest column, and annotated links to related web resources, publications and events.

Readers are welcome to reproduce materials published in Capacity.org provided that the source is clearly acknowledged. Professionals involved in the field of capacity development are invited to contribute their views, or to exchange and share information with other professionals in the sector. For more information, contact the Editor-in-Chief at <editor@capacity.org>.

Annex D

GOVNET

Contact: <www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_34565_1_1_1_1_1,00.html>

The DAC Network on Governance (GOVNET) aims at improving the effectiveness of donor assistance in governance and in support of capacity development. It provides members with a policy forum for exchanging experiences, and lessons, as well as identifying and disseminating good practice, and developing pro-poor policy and analytical tools.

Areas of work include: capacity development , the fight against corruption, taxation and accountability , human rights and development, and political economy analysis.

Learning Network on Capacity Development (LenCD)

Contact: < www.capacity.org/en/events/learning_network_on_capacity_development_lencd>

LenCD was established at a meeting of the cosponsors of those events in Berlin, June 2004 and came out of the desire to provide greater form and visibility to capacity development, both as part of the work of the DAC Network on Governance (GOVNET) and beyond. (LenCD draws on a greater range of participants than the GOVNET) The model largely follows the example of the Learning Network on Program-Based Approaches (LENPA), but the LenCD is also closely linked to the GOVNET.

Viewing development through a capacity lens has important implications for aid effectiveness. It requires us to focus on a range of capabilities at the individual, organizational/ institutional and societal levels that can help to increase productivity and support the attainment of wider social and developmental goals. Capacity development is then the endogenous change process, which helps to strengthen these capabilities and which depends on local ownership, leadership and conducive motivators? Development cooperation agencies can support this change process or even provide catalysts to stimulate it, but these tasks require skills, approaches, and strategies, which these organizations need to nurture within their staff.

LenCD promotes learning about capacity development. Its objectives are to:
1. Facilitate the sharing of lessons about good and bad practice for supporting capacity development in developing countries;
2. Promote the exchange of experience and cooperation in mainstreaming capacity development concerns into agency operations;
3. Foster country level dialogue and collaboration around the pursuit of lasting capacity outcomes;
4. Promote data collection, monitoring and other empirical work on capacity development;
5. Be the main partner to advance the GOVNET's capacity development agenda; and
6. Support the DAC in mainstreaming a capacity development perspective throughout its work.

LENCD has embarked on the following work programme:
1. Prepare a good practice paper on Capacity Development as the responsible DAC/GOVNET task team for consultation and endorsement in principle in January 2005 and subsequent approval by the DAC itself.
2. Establish the group's credibility by expanding its membership within the broad development community

3. Exchange CD knowledge through the CD workspace, CD clearinghouse, CD monitor, etc.).
4. Support the completion of the GOVNET study on Capacity, change and performance carried out by ECDPM and other partners.
5. Organize a CD Symposium in early 2006, tentatively around the subject of "Monitoring for capacity development results" in particular at the country level. (lead sponsor GTZ).
6. Promote and sponsor a regional workshop in Africa in follow-up to the Latin-American workshop on CD and South-South Cooperation in Bogotá, September 2004.

INTRAC.Org

Contact: <http://intrac.org/arena_org_cap.php>

INTRAC focuses on:
- Identifying strategies for capacity building and organisational approaches to capacity building through practice and research.
- Working in partnership with local support organisations and organisational capacity development consultants.
- Encouraging sustainability through management development, constituency building, accountability, governance and advocacy.

INTRAC offers training courses and consultancy services in organisational development and capacity building. INTRAC's programmes take a long-term proactive approach to achieve greater impact within organisational capacity building.

Annex E

Principles for Capacity Development[15]

1. **Don't rush.** Capacity development is a long-term process. It is not amenable to delivery pressures, quick fixes and short-term results seeking. Engagement for capacity development needs to have a long term horizon and be reliable.

2. **Respect the value systems and foster self-esteem.** The imposition of alien values can undermine confidence. Capacity development requires respect. Self-esteem is at the root of capacity and empowerment.

3. **Scan locally and globally; reinvent locally.** There are no blueprints. Capacity development means learning. Learning is a voluntary process that requires genuine commitment and interest. Knowledge transfer is no longer seen as the relevant modality. Knowledge needs to be acquired.

4. **Challenge mindsets and power differentials.** Capacity development is not power neutral and challenging vested interest is difficult. Frank dialogue and moving from closed curtains to a collective culture of transparency is essential to promote a positive dynamic for overcoming them.

5. **Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes.** Capacity is at the core of development. Any course of action needs to promote this end. Responsible leaders can inspire their institutions and societies to effectively work towards capacity development.

6. **Establish positive incentives.** Distortions in public sector employment are major obstacles to capacity development. Governance systems respectful of fundamental rights are a powerful incentive.

7. **Integrate external inputs into national priorities, processes and systems.** External inputs need to correspond to real demand and need to be flexible to respond effectively to national needs and possibilities. Where such systems are not strong enough they need to be reformed and strengthened, not bypassed.

8. **Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones.** This implies the use of national expertise as prime option, resuscitation and strengthening of national institutions, and protecting social and cultural capital.

9. **Stay engaged under difficult circumstances.** The weaker the capacity the greater the need. Weak capacities are not an argument for withdrawal or for driving external agendas. People should not be hostage to irresponsible governance.

10. **Remain accountable to ultimate beneficiaries.** Any responsible government is answerable to its people, and should foster transparency as the foremost instrument of public accountability. Where governance is unsatisfactory it is even more important to anchor development firmly in stakeholder participation and to maintain pressure points for an inclusive accountability system.

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[15] From 'Ownership, Leadership and Transformation' – Carlos Lopes and Thomas Theisohn, UNDP, 2003. Reprinted in United Nations (2006). *The UN System and Capacity Development. Background Document. Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP.*