

EMG Consultative Process on Sustainable Infrastructure: 2022 activities (supplement to existing Terms of Reference)

BACKGROUND

In November 2020, the EMG Senior Officials agreed to establish a Consultative Process on Sustainable Infrastructure to strengthen the coordination of UN-system support to Member States in this area of work.

Through 2021, entities provided feedback and inputs into a second edition of the *International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure* for publication at the second session of the fifth UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2), and collated complementary sustainable infrastructure tools and case studies. A Task Team was established in August-September 2021 to advance the key outputs of the Consultative Process, discussing the feedback on the Principles and the potential of a future barrier analysis to support the Principles, as proposed by UNU-FLORES.

As the normative work of the Consultative Process progresses, unsustainable infrastructure is still being built on the ground. So far, the vast majority of governments' recovery spending has been "minimally green". Of spending in 2020, 17% may in fact negatively impact natural capital - mainly through expanded road transportation and defence services¹. Infrastructure remains responsible for an estimated 79% of global greenhouse gas emissions overall², using vast amounts of natural resources while falling short of meeting the needs of the world's growing population. However, the opportunities from investing in more sustainable infrastructure are considerable: low- and middle-income countries could benefit from a 4 USD return for every 1 USD spent on infrastructure that prioritizes future-focused resilience³.

In this context, and building on the 2021 activities, focal points of the Consultative Process discussed the need to now focus activities on implementation, with particular respect to the Principles and investment. On 30 September 2021, the Senior Officials of the Technical Segment endorsed the second edition of the Principles and agreed to extend the Consultative Process until the 28th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in 2022 in order to coordinate implementation issues. The extension and the second edition of the Principles received approval from the Senior Officials at the 27th SOM on 7 October 2021.

PROPOSED 2022 ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Based on the discussions of the Task Team, the second meeting of focal points on 15 September 2021 and the decisions of the 27th SOM, the following activities are proposed for the second phase of the Consultative Process in 2022:

- a) UN entities' promotion of second edition of the *International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure* among government counterparts following publication in February 2022, and application to entities' internal facilities and operations (to be coordinated with Sustainable United Nations (SUN))
- b) Barrier analysis to support implementation of the Principles led by UNU-FLORES – proposed piloting of this approach on transportation, buildings and energy sectors in Chile, with workshops and roadmap for policymakers to overcome barriers (see separate concept note)
- c) EMG Nexus Dialogue on investing in natural infrastructure in the COVID-19 recovery context - involving the [Partnership for Action on Green Economy](#), and co-initiated by UNEP and UNDP, to catalyze country implementation and sustain momentum post UNEA-5.2 (separate concept note to be shared)

¹ UNEP. 2021. Are We Building Back Better? Evidence from 2020 and Pathways for Inclusive Green Recovery Spending. <https://www.unep.org/resources/publication/are-we-building-back-better-evidence-2020-and-pathways-inclusive-green>.

² Thacker S, Adshead D, Fantini C, Palmer R, Ghosal R, Adeoti T, Morgan G, Stratton-Short S. 2021. Infrastructure for climate action. UNOPS. <https://www.unep.org/resources/report/infrastructure-climate-action>.

³ Hallegatte, S., Rentschler, J., Rozenberg, J. 2019. Lifelines : The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity. Sustainable Infrastructure. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31805>.

- d) Continued sharing and consolidation of sustainable infrastructure tools to support implementation and financing – to be integrated into existing [Sustainable Infrastructure Tool Navigator](#) Platform, as applicable
- e) Continued sharing and consolidation of sustainable infrastructure case studies to illustrate implementation – to be published in existing [Sustainable Infrastructure Partnership](#) database, as applicable, and/or presented in relevant webinars and events

PROPOSED TIMELINE OF NEW ACTIVITIES⁴

Activity	Indicative dates
Meeting of focal points to discuss completed activities in 2021, UNEA-5.2 and planned activities for 2022	January/February 2022
Nexus Dialogue event on investing in natural infrastructure in the COVID-19 recovery context	May 2022
Barrier analysis completion	July 2022
Task Team meeting to consider progress and advance key activities (if need/interest)	Tbd
Deadline for questionnaire submission on how entities have been promoting/applying the Principles	September 2022
Meeting of focal points to consolidate activities, outputs and outcomes of the Consultative Process	September 2022

⁴ This table does not include relevant activities listed in the original ToR for the Consultative Process dated at as “ongoing” or for 2022.