

**Review of the SURF System: Way Forward  
for  
Knowledge Management in UNDP**

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## Foreword

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations produced by a team chartered by the UNDP Evaluation Office to review the SURF system, UNDP's primary knowledge management (KM) initiative. The team adopted an evaluative approach. Its mission was to provide a critical and forward-looking assessment of the functioning and effectiveness of the SURF system as a component of UNDP's knowledge-based management initiative. Objectives were:

- Assessment of the results of the SURF system in the areas of expert referral, identification of best practice, technical backstopping, networking and any other results if applicable; and
- Formulation of concrete recommendations, including a roadmap delineating future directions for streamlining the SURF system and institutionalizing KM within UNDP in the context of the organization's future.

The findings and recommendations in this report summarize the collective inputs of key stakeholders in the UNDP development community, including:

Associate Administrator  
Evaluation Office  
Regional Bureaux  
Other corporate units based at UNDP headquarters  
SURF system Coordinators and associated staff  
The Global Hub  
Regional Representatives  
Resident Representatives  
UN agencies  
Network partners  
Facilitators  
Focal Points

The review team extends its thanks and appreciation to all of the UNDP and external participants for their time and contributions to this report. The team is particularly grateful for the warm hospitality and knowledge-sharing attitude of specific mission sites visited, including Warsaw (Poland), Bratislava (Slovak Republic), Beirut (Lebanon), Pretoria (South Africa), Nairobi (Kenya), Dhaka (Bangladesh) and Bangkok (Thailand).

As this is an independent review, the views expressed in this report belong to the evaluators and do not necessarily reflect those of the Evaluation Office or any other unit of UNDP.

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## 1. Executive Summary

### Perspective

UNDP envisions itself as the acknowledged leader in the fight to reduce absolute poverty around the world by 50 per cent by the year 2015. It seeks to capitalize strategically on the trust and knowledge it has gained through successful projects to reinforce and enrich its role as an advisor, catalyst, partner and facilitator. But UNDP understands that to fight poverty and have a substantial influence in reversing the current trend toward reduction in ODA funding it must act decisively in new and innovative ways, including leveraging technology and new business processes such as knowledge management (KM).

UNDP has determined that a major force of its mission will be to refocus its programme by moving from a project-driven policy to policy-driven projects, while pursuing downstream interventions only to validate innovative concepts through pilot programmes. In moving upstream, UNDP must act as a catalyst and a change agent, applying its limited resources where the multiplier of such coordinating capabilities as the innovative application of new technologies and best practice knowledge can provide a much higher probability of goal attainment.

To achieve its vision, UNDP intends to align all efforts, necessarily at very detailed levels. This will include shifting core business, creating a performance culture, renewing staff, leveraging matrix management, optimizing organizational collaboration and enriching partnerships. UNDP can accomplish these business processes by evolving itself into a world-class knowledge institution. It has taken important steps in the direction of building knowledge management systems, capitalizing on the achievements of the SURF system, which was intended to provide efficiently organized expert knowledge to UNDP country offices (COs).

### SURF: Background

The UNDP system of Sub-Regional Resource Facilities (SURFs) began full operations in early 1999. SURFs were one outcome of the “2001 Change Process,” introduced in 1997 to refocus UNDP and adapt it to future challenges. The UNDP Executive Committee (EC) decided that, “Since UNDP headquarters cannot provide effective technical backstopping or routine operations support to 132 country offices, UNDP should decentralize substantive support and operational decision-making to clusters at the regional or sub-regional level in order to reap efficiency gains and attune its services to local conditions.” (EC Decision of 27 February 1997)

From a broader perspective, the level and complexity of knowledge and approach to sharing it has changed considerably over the millennia. While there is much to be said for storytelling and fireside chats, such knowledge-sharing methods don’t suffice when the level and complexity of needed knowledge is doubling with each generation. In particular, many new knowledge management (KM) technologies and methods have emerged in just the last two years, especially the explosive growth of the Internet.

It is now time to provide a critical assessment of UNDP’s key KM initiative, the SURF system. This will determine whether the initial SURF direction is still viable, or whether making a mid-course correction is warranted and feasible, considering recent technological changes and UNDP’s new directions as it enters a period of major redefinition of its vision.

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## Objectives of the Review

Based on a detailed Terms of Reference, the following were articulated as the main objectives of the review:

- Assess the results of the SURF system in the areas of expert referral, identification of best practice, technical backstopping, networking and any other results if applicable;
- Assess the extent to which the SURF system has been instrumental in knowledge dissemination and organizational learning in UNDP;
- Review the institutional and management arrangements for the SURF system and recommend improvements to its functions and organization to reinforce knowledge building in UNDP;
- Building on the experience of the SURF system, recommend a wider framework for instituting knowledge management systems in UNDP, keeping in perspective the new UNDP vision to fight poverty by impacting on macro policy regimes and institutional systems in the programme countries through extensive partnership arrangements with the development community.

## Main Findings and Key Issues

- The SURF system has made a major contribution to COs in identifying, mobilizing and organizing delivery of a specific set of technical services that were not previously available to them. SURF start-up performance has been mixed but much has been accomplished.
  - The SURFs have supported COs by rapidly mobilizing appropriate experts and expertise. A number of SURFs have moved on to providing technical backstopping, albeit in limited form due to resource constraints, and most importantly, evolving processes and technical instruments and tools intrinsically related to building KM processes in the organization. The SURFs have made impressive efforts in blending KM functions with technical backstopping in response to considerable demand from COs. The decentralized SURF structure has enabled it to better meet CO needs.
  - A key issue concerns the ability of the SURF system to perform both KM (expert referral, identification of best practices and networking functions) and technical support services (backstopping) functions at present staffing levels. There appears to be much enthusiasm among SURF staff for providing technical backstopping to COs. Whether this enthusiasm can be carried to the KM functions, especially best practices/lessons learned, is an issue.
  - The SURF staffs were found to be competent and highly motivated. For the most part, they have displayed an entrepreneurial spirit that has overcome much adversity common to start-up situations. SURFs believe they do not have the critical mass needed to perform their stated functions to meet CO demands, especially technical backstopping.
  - On the KM functions of SURFs, the following were observed:
    - **Identifying and documenting best practices and lessons learned.** The SURFs are groping for a best methodology and practical procedure for documenting best practices and comparative lessons learned.
    - **Thematic groups and networking.** The proper organization and technical infrastructure support of thematic networks can make a critical contribution to the KM process.
    - **Expert referral.** SURFs have provided value-added service in compiling databases of experts and responding efficiently to CO requests for appropriate experts. However, quality (versus quantity) of referral remains an issue to be resolved.
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- **Institutional networking.** The SURFs have been strategic in developing links with two sets of institutions in their respective regions: regional organizations and offices of the UN system.
  - UNDP has not yet evolved a coherent, shared vision for KM and how organizational strategy should be aligned. Neither has it determined how the SURF system can contribute to a strengthened KM process in the organization, nor how organizational KM strategy will facilitate optimization of SURF potential.
  - UNDP has initiated improvement programmes but culture change has been slow to emerge, especially in the key areas of knowledge sharing.

## **Future Directions: Building Knowledge Systems and Mechanisms to Enhance Country Office Technical and Advisory Capacity**

The report identified a number of challenges for the SURF system and for UNDP if it wishes to be a learning organization. Accordingly, the report recommendations take a broader macro perspective and provide a roadmap for implementing an enterprise-wide knowledge management system. The recommendations are based on lessons learned from experience in the broader knowledge management industry, and in light of specific knowledge gained about UNDP and the SURF system. They suggest a two-pronged strategy.

The first set of recommendations emphasizes the organization of efficient delivery of high quality advisory and technical knowledge input to empower country offices to perform upstream functions. This is an expressed demand of the country offices and has clear implications for redefining the role of the SURFs. In this regard, the report recommends that the SURF system framework be strengthened to serve as a platform for delivery and technical support services to country offices by giving the SURFs a clear mission, functions and organizational structure. The report builds up a strong case for defining the services SURFs should provide, namely provision of high quality, multidisciplinary experts to service clusters of countries so as to enrich the expert referral system and institutional networking.

The second set of recommendations concerns organizational knowledge management involving innovative approaches to enhance knowledge acquisition, production and integration. This set also suggests specific actions to institutionalize KM, involving people, processes and technology. This has clear implications for policy and strategy setting, as well as for the corporate structure (Global Hub) for managing knowledge.

UNDP has charted an aggressive course of action that might not have been conceivable just a few years ago. A KM solution to fully support UNDP's vision requires integration of people, processes and technology. But until recently, the technology that will be an essential enabler of many of the new strategies recommended below did not exist. Also, the understanding of KM was previously inadequate to fully support these strategies. Many technologies, as well as knowledge of what is possible, have only just emerged and UNDP is poised to take advantage of this convergence. It must now unify its staff behind these new technologies and KM processes to achieve its vision.

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## Recommendations: The SURF System

The evaluation findings reveal that the SURF system needs to concentrate and develop its core capability in its organizational ability to deliver high quality advisory and knowledge services. Therefore, a priority task is to clarify the SURFs' mission and provide them with a sharper organizational framework and terms of reference. This is needed to facilitate a platform for delivering decentralized, cost-effective technical support services to COs involving technical backstopping, expert referrals and institutional networking.

*(a) High quality, technical advisory and programming related expert services* are in high demand by the COs and the sub-regional location of SURFs provides an efficient vehicle for delivery of such services to them. Expert capacity at the sub-regional level should be enhanced by the planned reallocation of more than 50 experts from New York (Bureau for Development Policy - BDP) to existing SURF locations, closer to the COs.

The SURFs would provide the platform for and facilitate delivery of BDP-provided experts; hence they would not need budget resources for in-house experts. They should provide administrative and management support for these experts. This would include processing CO requests, networking with in-house experts (under the substantive supervision of BDP), maintaining linkages with regional programmes and projects, utilizing their resources in support of CO needs and exploring other sources of expertise within as well as outside of the region. The SURF's responsibility would still be to ensure that the best person and knowledge are made available to the client, irrespective of the location of the newly decentralized staff.

*(b) The expert referral system* developed under the SURF system allows for ready access to relevant experts and institutional expertise. It should be enriched in a number of ways and oriented more towards self-service. The expert roster should include qualified experts from both outside and within UNDP. Profiles that detail the expertise of UNDP staff members with particular programmatic and operational skill sets need to be developed and incorporated in the expert referral system. This system should provide qualitative appraisals, as well as validation of CVs, of external and internal resources. It should have a self-service design (with appropriate security features), enabling any CO to access the database and evaluative referrals.

*(c) The existing institutional networking system* should be strengthened. The networking partners, including UN agencies, regional and country level institutions and centres of excellence, and UNDP regional projects expect UNDP to take the lead and coordinate. A well-conceived UNDP KM strategy with regard to knowledge sharing among partners might enable closer alignment and more dependence of networking partners on UNDP's intellectual capital – its explicit knowledge base or repository.

Institutional networking should be an integral function of the SURFs in their task to identify and mobilize appropriate regional and international expertise to support CO programme activities. The SURFs are in an excellent position to network with these institutions to maintain updated information and knowledge of their expert profiles, experiences and knowledge resource bases.

*(d) Staffing and resource requirements of SURFs.* The current location of SURFs at the sub-regional level is cost-effective. The proposed streamlined, focused functions of the SURF system would reduce demand for SURF staffing and associated budget. With two mid-level professionals and administrative staff, each SURF should be able to deliver its core functions. The core staff would not be required to undertake technical backstopping missions to COs or other technical

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services; their functions would be to identify, mobilize and administer delivery of technical experts, to maintain the expert referral system and to carry out institutional networking. The subject matter experts located in the SURFs would be deployed under the BDP budget and would report directly to BDP. Hence, substantial cost savings should be realized with the new staffing profile. The resources released can be reallocated to KM build-up and operation. The SURF core staff would report to the senior management of the respective host UNDP CO, and in turn to the relevant Regional Bureau.

(e) **The proposed streamlined functions of the SURF system can be adequately performed by the existing nine SURFs.** However, two additional SURFs may be justified to cover the Latin America/Caribbean and Africa regions adequately.

## **Recommendations: Institutionalizing the Knowledge Management System**

### **Defining Knowledge Management**

The roots of today’s collaborative communities and networks date to elders sharing tacit knowledge of their traditions and culture while seated around the campfire. The SURF system was designed to capitalize on these natural human instincts; it makes connections among trusted individuals. But the level and complexity of knowledge and approaches to acquiring, creating and sharing it have changed considerably, enabled by technology.

Knowledge is “understanding gained from experience.” Knowledge is used activities; it enables the use of data and information to make decisions. Also, knowledge is used to create new knowledge from existing knowledge and information; to validate existing knowledge for reliable application; and to structure existing knowledge into actionable formats, rules, procedures, lessons, etc. for transfer to others. Though much UNDP knowledge is resident in documents, UNDP’s best practices and lessons learned reside in the minds of the innovators/development practitioners, mostly unavailable to others. UNDP needs to be able to both connect these individuals and collect their pertinent best practices and lessons learned for widespread use by others. When UNDP balances connection and collections its intellectual assets will grow and multiply, innovation will flourish, and UNDP and its clients will reap the promised benefits of being a learning organization.

KM is thus the management of knowledge processes – knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation and the transfer/integration of validated knowledge throughout the rest of the organization. The key KM principle followed in these recommendations is to provide “the best knowledge to the right person at the right time.”

The recommendations are organized around the three system components necessary for a total solution: **People, Process and Technology.**

### **People – Empower KM in UNDP**

The business process and organizational learning in UNDP can be considerably enhanced by institutionalizing KM across the organization. This will include changes in organizational culture, learning methods and modalities of delivering technical advice and know-how to programme

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countries. Institutionalizing the KM system will not entail elaborate structures; a knowledge universe generated through a KM system can be virtual and can function most effectively without “borders” and organizational hierarchies.

(a) **KM vision.** The first critical step in institutionalizing KM is to articulate a KM vision and strategy. The Administrator and the Associate Administrator should create a KM-specific vision and implementation strategy and promote awareness of KM throughout UNDP and among its partners, to ensure KM’s success and realize the expected benefits. Top management’s KM enthusiasm should be spread throughout all senior management and employee ranks. An “awareness campaign” would need to be pursued vigorously and reinforced thereafter once KM was in action.

(b) **A top KM advocate** should be created and someone (preferably from within UNDP) should be appointed as the chief knowledge manager or officer (CKM/CKO). This person will: establish and continue to justify the KM initiative for top management; get buy-in and cooperative support from other senior management; ensure standardization of all KM efforts for maximum performance and client satisfaction; inspire the global KM staff to peak performance; and innovate whatever it takes to better use KM as an enabler and builder of trust in UNDP. The individual should be an in-house person.

(c) **A Knowledge Management Council** should be created to ensure interdepartmental cooperation and integration of KM efforts. The council would benefit from the participation of three or four internal key stakeholder groups, including representatives from both programme (process) and thematic (probably governance) sides; a technology representative (depending on the level of technology insertion); and possibly someone from human resources (preferably with a learning emphasis). Also, the council should include one of two outside members to obtain a customer input to critical thinking, as well as a KM expert to infuse the group with external best practices.

(d) **KM-specific learning needs** and benefits should be pursued by the employee group to make the KM vision operational in UNDP. Staff members must assume ownership of knowledge sharing efforts and make sure the UNDP knowledge base is developed, relevant and constantly useful. The new UNDP performance review system should have specific categories of attributes associated with knowledge creation and sharing to make knowledge sharing an incentive.

## **Process and Embed KM**

KM thinking and procedures need to be embedded into the very fabric of the UNDP way of doing business.

**Map UNDP knowledge needs and resources.** Fundamentally, mapping includes determining what (substantive and process) knowledge is needed by whom; what knowledge UNDP has and in what format; where it is (in people, libraries, system repositories); what knowledge is missing and the best ways to obtain it; and finally, a way to begin to anticipate what knowledge will be needed tomorrow and how to acquire it.

Knowledge mapping is a classical KM recommendation. However, it is critically important here as UNDP introduces major risks as it changes to an upstream focus.

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**Integrate global (enterprise) networks.** A key recommendation is to restructure and enrich UNDP collaboration – in programmatic and thematic areas. This capability will be enabled by technology, but driven by the true knowledge needs of UNDP as it satisfies its upstream knowledge demands and natural communities of practice evolve. Rather than a SURF Regional Network connecting COs, or the Global Thematic Network connecting substantive staffers by thematic group (e.g. governance), the integrated, enterprise-wide (global) network will connect everyone, anywhere. Any community of practice can be established, or abolished, as the knowledge demands and interests warrant.

**Identify/disseminate best practices and standardize.** A best practice system, possibly one of the most powerful tools for innovation in UNDP, must be carefully defined, implemented and consistently practiced. And the SURFs should begin to standardize their operations and procedures around the best practices to meet stakeholder knowledge needs, learned so far from UNDP’s own experience and from external best practices and proven tools.

**Promote innovation – KM means innovation.** UNDP needs to focus on knowledge creation and organizational innovation if it is to realize its full potential over the long term. Evolving best practices into lessons learned to leverage creative insights, and creating an innovation lab to uncover and promote innovation techniques applicable to the UNDP environment are recommended. Innovation serves as a bridge between what can be done immediately and a new way of thinking that will link to what UNDP will be able to do in the future.

### **Technology – Enable KM.**

The evaluation team’s charter did not include a technical design of the SURF system but the team concluded that its KM-inspired insights might add value to that effort.

The following recommendations address the technology needed by UNDP to implement the recommended KM system (in which technology is an enabler of KM).

**Technology-enhanced systems** for organizational learning are critical to developing a KM system. Priority should be given to upgrading the functionality of UNDP’s essentially ad hoc, labour-intensive approach. Collaborative software can be adapted to enhance the capabilities of the collaborative networks, to allow the system to focus more on connecting exactly the right people. The software should allow major knowledge domains, such as thematic areas, to be decomposed into hierarchical sub-categories or threads, based on demand-side needs.

**Connect – provide state-of-the-art collaborative capabilities/networks.** UNDP should upgrade the functionality of its collaborative e-mail networks to evolving de facto industry standards. Here is a clear place to put modern technology to work! Collaborative networks, primary tools for connecting people, must be made to focus more on connecting just the right people, without the need for an intermediary. In addition, they must provide functionality that is an initial means to accumulate and better document the knowledge that is being made explicit in such dialogues. Modern, off-the-shelf, collaborative software is beginning to have such enriched functionality.

The above recommendation – to map UNDP knowledge needs and resources – is an integral step in maximizing the functional advantages of advanced collaborative systems.

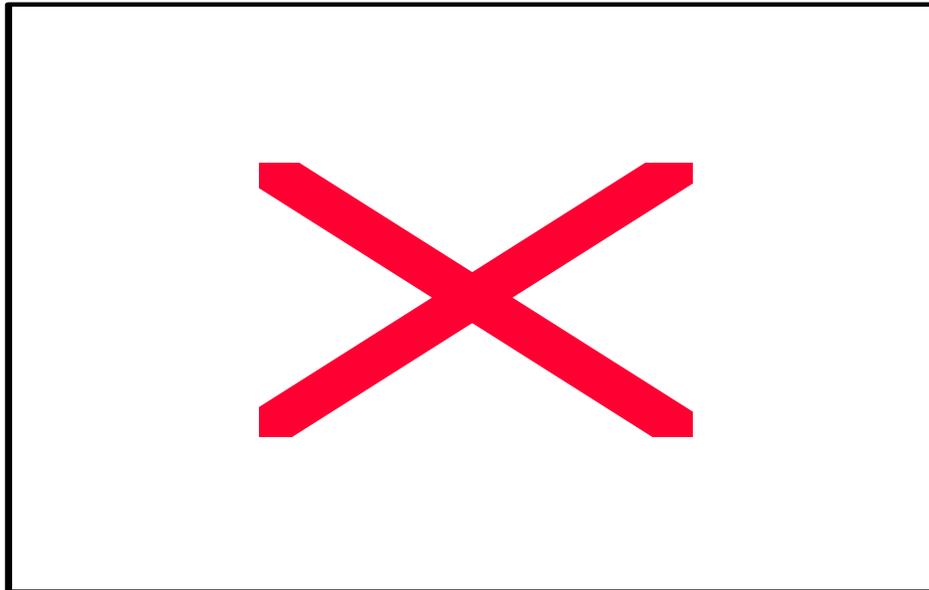
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**Collect – provide knowledge repository capabilities.** UNDP needs to document and better organize its existing knowledge into knowledge bases that enable easy, self-service access while fostering innovation. Collaborative systems focus on connectivity while beginning to enable the ability to document and collect knowledge. Knowledge bases become the essentially self-service repositories for collected explicit knowledge. Knowledge bases can be organized around hierarchical thematic knowledge domains, and/or the core processes of the organization.

**KM organizational infrastructure.** Minimal organizational restructuring will be required to implement the above. A new position is necessitated by KM, the role of top KM advocate, a Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO) or Manager. This position should report to the Office of the Associate Administrator and have “dotted line,” matrixed control over decentralized KM functions.

**KM organizational interaction.** The role of the CKO is to evangelize KM whenever the opportunity avails itself. Other, more mundane tasks include bringing in-house, the best KM methods and tools, justifying and coordinating the implementation of KM initiatives, and the



training and ongoing mentoring of knowledge managers and workers to foster knowledge acquisition, production and transfer/integration throughout UNDP.

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## **2. Introduction and Background**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Humankind has dealt with knowledge, a distinctly human capability, since before recorded history – elders sharing tacit knowledge of their traditions and culture while seated around the campfire. Little was done to change these traditions until 1990 when Peter Senge popularized the “Learning Organization” in his book, “The Fifth Discipline.” Though appealing, this notion was not fully capable of being implemented at that time. In his follow-on book, the “Fifth Discipline Handbook,” published in 1993, Mr. Senge acknowledged this by admitting that we didn’t yet have the methods or tools to implement the Learning Organization he had described.

But the knowledge imperative was growing, along with the tools to meet it. In the mid 1990s, certain collaborative tools were emerging, e.g., Lotus Notes, and leading knowledge-intensive firms, especially professional services (consultancies) were beginning to find the tools and methodologies Senge sought earlier. Search engines, data mining and growing awareness of the benefits and affordability of self-paced instruction added fuel to the knowledge fire. But the great breakthrough came with the explosive popularity of the Internet, which enabled the human instinct for collaboration to find its technological enabler. Innovators were publicizing their success with collaborative tools, notably the World Bank, which dates its Knowledge Bank efforts to late 1996.

It is in this context that the SURF system was launched with early adapter hopes of great benefit to UNDP and its client countries. Much new knowledge management technology and many new methods have emerged during the last two years while the SURF system laboured through its birthing pains. Also, UNDP is in the throes of a major realignment of its vision. It is time now to provide a critical evaluation of the SURF system start-up effort to determine whether the initial SURF direction is still viable, or whether it is warranted and feasible to make a mid-course correction. Specifically, UNDP aims to obtain a critical and forward-looking assessment of the functioning and effectiveness of the SURF system as a component of its knowledge-based management.

### **2.2 Background and stakeholder expectations**

The Sub-Regional Resource Facilities (SURFs) were established in May 1997 to support the changing and dynamic development challenges that UNDP Country Offices were facing, and to enhance organizational learning. This initiative emanated from the recommendations of the *UNDP 2001 Change Process* to decentralize the delivery of technical services at the sub-regional level so that COs could secure such services, including provision of high quality regional experts and knowledge, on short notice. The SURFs’ role in organizing the delivery of technical services was expected to complement the substantive technical backstopping role of the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP). By virtue of being located at the sub-regional level, SURFs were expected to be in a position to network with regional institutions and centres of excellence to identify and mobilize technical expertise with specific knowledge of the region. In this manner, SURFs would augment the organization’s capacity to deliver and transfer appropriate knowledge and expertise to COs, and by extension, to the client institutions they serve in the programme countries.

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Following a decision in February 1997 of the UNDP Executive Committee, the five regional Bureaux proceeded to establish SURFs in their respective regions. Each Bureau pursued the programme flexibly, based on its own understanding of the appropriate modality for SURF operations, the availability of funding and the identification of suitable personnel to manage the SURFs. In September 1997 the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) undertook an evaluation of the SURFs in Bangkok and Islamabad, which were among the first ones to be established. The report strongly recommended continuation of the SURFs, with strengthened capabilities in both technical service and network orientation to support precise capacity requirements of COs in delivering high quality programmes and services.

The present review, in direct response to the Administrator's Business Plan 2000-2003, is to situate the SURF system and its functions within the context of rapidly evolving UNDP into a learning organization. The Business Plan is explicit about the strategic importance of knowledge management (KM) and the inherent cultural shift that is required within UNDP to pursue highly focused upstream and capacity building activities in the programme countries. The Plan points to the direction of utilizing the SURF system to institute KM as a mainstream UNDP function.

This evaluative review was therefore expected to provide a critical and forward-looking assessment of the SURF system. It was expected to contribute to developing a corporate strategy for building knowledge management systems in UNDP, while simultaneously streamlining the SURF system to reinforce KM and organize the delivery of high quality, yet cost-effective and efficiently organized knowledge resources and expert services to COs.

### **2.3 Terms of reference**

The terms of reference (TOR), appended as Annex 1 to this report, required the evaluators/consultants to conduct an evaluative review of the SURF system. After initial consultations with the Associate Administrator and different headquarters units, it was agreed that the following tasks would be the main focus of the review:

- assess the results of the SURF system in the areas of expert referral, identification of best practice, technical backstopping, networking and any other results if applicable;
- assess the extent to which the SURF system has been instrumental in knowledge dissemination and organizational learning in UNDP;
- review the institutional and management arrangements for the SURF system and recommend improvements to its functions and organization to reinforce knowledge building in UNDP;
- building on the experience of the SURF system, recommend a wider framework for instituting knowledge management systems in UNDP, keeping in perspective the new UNDP vision to fight poverty by impacting on macro policy regimes and institutional systems in the programme countries through extensive partnership arrangements with the development community.

### **2.4 Methodology and organization**

The Evaluation Office managed the review process and guided the review team at each stage of the exercise. The team members spent the first ten days together in New York, meeting with key stakeholders at UNDP headquarters. Persons met included the Associate Administrator and his staff and staff members from the Operations Support Group (OSG), the five Regional Bureaux, the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), including each of its technical departments, the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs (BREA), the Bureau for Planning and Resource

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Management (BPRM) and the Global Hub. While in New York, the team members had a “conference call meeting” with key staff of the nine SURFs currently functional in the regions of Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Arab States. The team also benefited from a meeting in New York with key staff of the nine SURFs and the Global Hub.

Country visits were subsequently undertaken to cover selected SURF host country offices as well as countries in the sub-region expected to be in the SURF network. The selection of countries was determined by topology of different SURFs (viz. thematic, multi-sectoral, regional office, decentralised operation). Visits to COs not hosting a SURF office were undertaken to provide a client perspective of the SURF system. CO visits were supplemented by a Client Survey, with a questionnaire administered to randomly chosen COs. The results of the Survey are given in Annex 6.

Logistical inconvenience and the limited time available for field visits restricted the coverage of field visits. One of the team members undertook consultation visits to Pretoria (South Africa), Nairobi (Kenya), Dhaka (Bangladesh) and Bangkok (Thailand). The other, accompanied by an Evaluation Office staff member and an information technology (IT) consultant engaged by the New York-based Global Hub, visited Bratislava (Slovak Republic), Warsaw (Poland) and Beirut (Lebanon). In some of the countries visited, the team members had the opportunity to consult with other UN Agencies and UNDP funded regional programmes and projects. The list of persons met by the team members is provided in Annex 3.

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### **3. Overall Assessment**

The SURF system has made a major contribution in developing an effective expert referral system, as well as modalities of networking among COs and with institutions to mobilize appropriate knowledge resources at the regional level. Although constrained by lack of resources, the SURFs have been particularly efficient in responding to CO needs for mobilizing and organizing delivery of a specific set of technical services that were not previously available to them. Starting out by developing a roster of CVs of regional and international experts, the SURFs have supported COs by mobilizing appropriate experts and expertise with considerable speed. A number of SURFs have moved on to providing technical backstopping, albeit in limited form due to resource constraints, and, most importantly, evolving processes and technical instruments and tools intrinsically related to building KM processes within UNDP. Faced not only with resource constraints but the absence of a coherent corporate strategy on the KM process, the SURFs have adopted innovative ways to deliver a mix of their four functions (see below.) Nevertheless, the SURF system faces an immense challenge in delivering a blend of increased levels of KM and technical backstopping functions to meet the demands and aspirations of the COs, as reflected in the CO Survey. (See Annex 6.) The infrastructure and the experience generated by the SURF system now provide a significant opportunity for UNDP to evolve highly networked organizational learning processes and to establish conditions for staff members to work in a knowledge universe.

#### **3.1 The SURF system operationalized**

Since the establishment of the first SURF in Islamabad in mid-1996, eight more SURFs have become operational at the sub-regional level to cover clusters of programme countries in each of the five programme regions. The SURF system now consists of a network of offices in the field reporting to their respective Regional Bureaux. The system also includes a Global Hub in New York that provides coordination, networking and other support services to the SURF system. The SURFs currently operational in the five regions are located in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Bangkok (Thailand), Islamabad (Pakistan), Beijing (China), Suva (Fiji), Beirut (Lebanon), Bratislava (Slovak Republic), Harare (Zimbabwe) and Port-of-Spain (Trinidad and Tobago).

The original intention of establishing 17 SURFs has been pursued cautiously by the Regional Bureaux. Drawing from the initial experience of SURFs in Islamabad and Bangkok, the other Bureaux developed strategies and operational modalities for SURFs to account for the differences in the institutional, technological and logistical infrastructures in their respective regions. Further, because of the substantial resources needed for SURF operation the Bureaux adopted a prudent approach to implementing the SURF system in a phased manner. This provided an opportunity to evolve appropriate strategies and operational modalities for the SURFs. There is now a consensus in UNDP on the usefulness of SURFs in facilitating organizational learning and knowledge brokering as well as in providing technical backstopping to COs aimed at augmenting their programme quality. A consensus has also emerged on the need to avoid proliferation of SURFs, especially when the organization is faced with resource constraints.

#### **3.2 Strategic coverage of the SURFs**

The location of the SURFs has been determined by factors related to logistical and communication access to the programme countries a sub-regional based SURF is to serve. In addition, the necessity of a cohesive geo-political response also influenced the grouping of

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countries for SURF coverage. However, the SURF system is not covering all of the countries in the Latin America region and Africa. Differences in language usage and geographical dispersion of the programme countries require the establishment of two additional SURFs – one each to cover Latin American countries and the West and Central African region. The “Client Survey” conducted in 14 randomly chosen countries revealed that countries not currently served by the SURF system are unable to access SURF facilities, while there is an expressed need for services that are typically provided by SURFs already operational in other regions. (See Annex 6.)

### 3.3 Delivery of functions through different innovative modalities

**3.3.1 Functions.** The SURFs are providing services in the four inter-related functions that underline the terms of reference of the SURF system, namely:

- Referral and access to information on specialists and programmes, especially within sub-regions and developing countries;
- Technical support for UNDP country programme identification, design and implementation, as well as technical support services in specific subject matters relating to UNDP focus areas of programmes;
- Identification, documentation and dissemination of best practices and comparative experiences in the subject matters of UNDP focus programmes;
- Networking and information sharing between staff and development partners.

**3.3.2 A SURF with thematic programme focus.** A cursory observation of the current operation of the SURF system reveals the existence of a wide variation in the operational modality and levels of services provided by each of the nine SURFs. This is partly due to the different time frames in which the nine SURFs have been established. But a more important factor is the context in which the nine SURFs have been set up. For instance, the Islamabad SURF evolved from a perspective of developing a sub-regionally based support facility to identify and facilitate mobilization of appropriate expertise needed by the COs in the sub-region served by the SURF. With a focus on developing competence in a particular thematic programme area, the Islamabad SURF has evolved into a specialized resource facility for governance. Networking with regional and international institutions, UN agencies, centres of excellence, UNDP headquarters units and UNDP regional projects has allowed the SURF to deliver qualitative and timely support to the COs. Technical backstopping and networking to mobilize technical expertise assumed a predominant function in the Islamabad SURF.

**3.3.3 A SURF with expert referral and institutional networking capability.** The Bangkok-based SURF on the other hand placed emphasis in its initial stage (until early 1999) on developing a roster of regional experts and supporting COs in the sub-region with timely availability of appropriate experts. In a subsequent phase, there has been greater concentration on networking with regional institutions to support COs with appropriate institutional expertise. More recently the focus is shifting to documenting lessons learned on specific programmes (e.g. community empowerment) while the database of experts is regularly updated as a part of the expert referral function.

**3.3.4 A highly networked sub-regional cluster of UNDP offices.** The Southern Africa SURF has evolved from initiatives taken by the COs in networking among themselves to the reinforcement of knowledge available to all eight UNDP offices in the sub-region. The mechanism of Resident Representative Cluster Meetings, normally held every six months, has prompted coordination of work programmes along thematic lines while the distribution of each

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CO's responsibility for particular thematic programmes has been clearly defined. This division of responsibility among COs has contributed to efficient management of networks for generating and sharing knowledge resources in the sub-region. In the process, the networking system is making a significant contribution to sub-regional cooperation. The SA-SURF has placed considerable emphasis on networking with SADC programmes and UNDP-funded regional projects. Commensurate with the development priorities in the sub-region, the SA-SURF is concentrating on developing an expertise and knowledge base in 14 thematic areas while the focal points for these thematic areas are extended beyond UNDP COs to include regional projects. This strategy has optimized the resources of UNDP. Following the organization of a network system, since late 1998 the SA-SURF has emphasized other functions, viz. development of an expert data base; delivery of technical backstopping services in thematic areas; and operational matters such as resource mobilization, national execution, and documentation of best practices and lessons learned. It should be noted that the SA-SURF has been functioning without the appointment of a Coordinator at its office in Harare. The absence of key staff has constrained progress in the work of the SURF system and highlighted the critical importance of an "entity" to prompt and coordinate networking for KM.

**3.3.5 *The latecomers capitalize on existing experience.*** The more recently established SURFs in Addis Ababa, China, Fiji and Port-of-Spain have drawn on the experience of other SURFs in organizing networking systems and delivery of the four KM and technical backstopping functions. There is a discernible trend to develop in the initial phase of operation a database of regional experts and provide expert referral services to the COs. During this initial phase the SURFs have also placed emphasis on networking with regional institutions and UNDP regional projects to develop their expert referral systems and mobilize expertise.

#### **3.4 Effective response to CO needs for technical backstopping services**

It has been observed that the more mature SURFs have made a shift from developing an expert referral roster to networking to support COs with technical expertise, technical backstopping and documenting lessons learned and best practices. In this latter phase the SURFs are also attempting to enrich their expert referral systems by documenting knowledge of the specific expertise, track record and performance of individual experts.

The SURFs have recognized the importance of developing multi-disciplinary capability to meet the diverse requirements of the programme countries. This has been in response to CO's expressed needs to enable them to undertake complex programme development, upstream advisory services, including policy analysis, and management functions. However, the capacity of SURFs has been severely constrained by their limited resource base, with a maximum of two professionals assigned to running a SURF operation. Clearly, it has been difficult for the SURFs to meet CO requirements for technical backstopping and support services on the one hand, and to carry out the other three functions that are more directly related to organizational learning on the other. Interestingly, the pressure to accomplish work in each of the four functions has induced SURFs to adopt innovative ways of performing certain functions. For example, the Bratislava SURF responded by mobilizing expertise from regional projects and UN agencies to meet the increased demand for technical services from its client countries. The pressure of resource constraint has nonetheless made it difficult for SURFs to prioritize work programme vis-à-vis the four prescribed functions.

The SURFs' ability to provide technical backstopping services to COs has been most effective where there has been an opportunity for synergy between the SURF's thematic focus and the

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presence of regional and country projects in the same thematic area. Thus, the Islamabad SURF has been effective in providing technical backstopping for governance-related programmes. The Bratislava SURF, on the other hand, as mentioned above, has outsourced and mobilized technical experts in multiple subject matters in response to CO requests for specialized technical services. The Southern Africa region demonstrated the critical importance of networking with regional institutions and UN agencies in mobilizing appropriate technical expertise to meet specific requirements of the COs.

The SURFs have not made much progress in documenting best practices and sharing lessons learned. While recognizing their critical importance in facilitating KM processes, initiatives have been made to develop systems and instruments that can effectively assimilate lessons learned and best practices, especially those that could be derived from UNDP CO programme experience. But the SURFs ability to carry out these functions is constrained by uncertainty in financing and absence of corporate direction on a KM strategy.

### **3.5 Attempt at coordinating and consolidating diverse systems: role played by the Global Hub.**

The New York-based Global Hub has made a major contribution to coordinating strategic directions for SURFs, especially in facilitating greater communication and dialogue among the SURFs and bringing the SURFs within a corporate system. The Global Hub reinforces the functioning of the SURF offices in the regions that serve the COs. The Global Hub also provides direct services to COs that are yet to be served by a SURF.

The Global Hub has been instrumental in inducing SURFs to work on standardizing IT systems and intranet-based communication structures, including standardized and consistent web-based tools. It also initiated knowledge networks with six thematic facilitators based in technical units in BDP. Without exercising any supervisory or managerial responsibilities over the SURFs, the Global Hub managed to forge coordination among them, including the setting of standards and procedures and harmonization in a number of areas. Above all, the Global Hub has been instrumental in raising awareness about SURFs and, within UNDP, about the need to make the KM process a core corporate function. Other important initiatives made by SURFs have yet to be systematically pursued so as to ensure their corporate assimilation. Initiatives such as guidelines for best practices are inherently corporate policy instruments. Their development and application cannot be pursued independently by the SURFs.

An elaborate description of the status of each of the nine SURFs is provided in Annex 6.

## **4. Findings and Key Issues**

Below is an analysis of issues derived from findings on the current operations of the SURF system. The issues are addressed in the context of evaluating the value added function of the SURF system in terms of both providing technical support services to COs and contributing to KM and take into account the role of other corporate entities in the organization.

### **4.1 Uneven development of SURFs**

*SURF start-up performance has been mixed, but much has been accomplished.* As mentioned in Section 3, the nine SURFs are at different stages and levels of operation. Further, the SURFs

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possess different characteristics and deliver the four stated functions with varied levels of intensity, although each has the objective of providing COs with technical services in programme and specific subject matters as well as facilitating knowledge sharing. While the decision to establish SURFs emanated from UNDP's top leadership and Executive Board, the operational modality of the SURF system is devoid of a coherent explicit strategy and institutional framework. The absence of such a strategic framework, as well as the lack of an explicit KM strategy, is primarily responsible for the uneven development of the SURFs. The delay in implementation of some of the SURFs is also attributable to the apparent difficulty experienced by some of the Regional Bureaux in articulating implementation strategy, identifying funding sources and identifying suitable candidates for the key staffing positions. Undeveloped IT infrastructure in Addis Ababa as well as in other countries (e.g. Cambodia, North Korea) has also been an obstacle for the development of the SURF system in some countries.

Synchronized development of the SURFs is essential to: establishing common technical standards; accelerating the pace of building KM processes; and, most importantly, ensuring that staff in the entire system are participating and making contributions to evolving UNDP into a learning organization.

#### **4.2 Co-mingled functions (knowledge management facilitator and technical backstopping)**

*SURFs have been asked to perform fundamentally different functions – knowledge management and knowledge services (technical backstopping).* Technical backstopping and the other three KM-oriented functions, namely, expert referral, best practices and institutional networking, are fundamentally different. With limited resources available, the SURFs have had difficulty in balancing delivery of services in the four functions on the one hand and concentrating on developing competence in a particular area on the other. Some of the SURFs have adopted innovative approaches in delivering technical support services, by emphasizing networking to mobilize experts and expertise from institutions at the regional level, UNDP regional programmes, UN agencies and headquarters-based technical units. Some others have been successful in mobilizing additional resources from COs and, to a limited extent, other donors. Such strategic networking may constitute a core function of a SURF rather than an attempt to secure additional resources to augment its in-house expert base.

It is critical that a corporate strategy and operational guidelines be developed to steer the SURF system in establishing KM processes, while keeping in perspective the demand pattern of COs (as reflected in the results of the Client Survey presented in Annex 6). Meeting the demands of COs will also reflect the distribution of activities among the KM and technical support services functions of the SURFs.

#### **4.3 Lack of KM vision**

*UNDP has not yet evolved a coherent, shared vision for KM and how organizational strategy should be aligned, nor how the SURF system can contribute to a strengthened KM process in the organization.* However, elements of KM processes are emerging as SURFs are innovating network mechanisms and instruments for knowledge acquisition, sharing and dissemination. There are three issues that should be addressed in the evolving KM vision:

*Core Competency.* Though much progress has been made, as evidenced by the Transition Team, Business Plan, existing improvement in initiatives and the SURF system's progress, UNDP has

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not clarified its core competencies, essential to focus organizational learning efforts and deliver expected results.

*World-Class Aspirations.* The SURF system as presently envisioned and supported, while a valuable resource for information and knowledge sharing and a test bed for KM experimentation in UNDP, is not sufficient for making a “world-class” breakthrough in KM to deliver expected results.

*Change Management.* The greatest barrier to leveraging knowledge within UNDP is not technology or lack of enthusiasm among the existing SURF staff and beneficiaries, but buy-in and commitment by UNDP management and awareness and willingness to change among all UNDP personnel.

#### **4.4 Technical backstopping**

*There appears to be much enthusiasm among SURF staff to provide technical backstopping to COs.* The COs also place high priority on receiving technical backstopping in order to augment their substantive capacity. It is however not clear if the COs expect the SURFs to possess the required in-house capacity to deliver technical services in priority subject matters. Some of the SURFs have indeed provided direct support to COs in programme review, project formulation and design and assessment of NEX capacity. SURF staff members have also undertaken missions to COs in specialized subject matters such as governance. The quality of their services have also been positively assessed by the recipient COs.

At a closer look, it becomes clear that provision of technical backstopping by SURF staff is dependent on the particular technical background of the SURF staff members. A SURF’s in-house expertise is limited to given staffing strength at a certain point in time. There is therefore an inherent risk of discontinuity in the provision of technical services, especially those involving particular subject matter, following the relocation of SURF staff members. A more important issue is that if SURF staff members were to spend a substantial portion of their time on missions to programme countries, they would not be able to give concentrated effort to performing the core KM functions. It is precisely for this reason that even a relatively strong resource network SURF (viz. Bratislava) is confronted with the problem of staffing and resource constraints.

#### **4.5 Identifying and documenting best practices and lessons learned**

*The SURFs are groping for a best methodology and practical procedure for documenting best practices and comparative lessons learned. (This is a critical area for innovation and continuous improvement.)* The SURFs are faced with difficulty in classifying and identifying best practices relevant to COs since the programme areas are diverse. They are also not clear if the focus of their effort should be on documenting good practices relating to design of project interventions, or strategic outcomes of a development programme strategy. In either case, UNDP staff recognize the importance of documenting best practices and lessons learned from UNDP’s programme experience. The task is enormous and a strategy must be found to prioritize and identify programme areas and sources of lessons learned and assimilation of best practices.

The absence of an agreed set of guidelines for structuring information in an analytical format amenable to easy reference by knowledge seekers is another problem in documenting lessons learned. Some of the SURFs have networked and evolved a set of best practice guidelines. Clearly, such initiatives are pursued in response to the immediate need of the system to

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accomplish the work at hand. This is also an advantage of the opportunity available to SURFs to operate autonomously and respond to CO priority needs. It is, however, also important to ensure that a mechanism is adopted and followed for a corporate standardization of instruments such as the guidelines on lessons learned. The Global Hub is an obvious candidate to prompt corporate response to such issues.

UNDP-funded activities provide considerable opportunity for building a knowledge base in specialized subject or thematic areas, as well as core processes. At the most primary level COs have not made a systematic approach to cataloguing technical reports and other knowledge specific reports generated from projects funded by UNDP. Workshops and seminars generate a wealth of knowledge which, if captured systematically, would obviate the need for repeat discussions in subsequent workshops; instead greater opportunity could be seized in such workshops for finding solutions to development problems and issues. These are knowledge sources that are not capitalized upon and integrated into a knowledge learning process.

#### **4.6 Thematic groups and networking**

*The proper organization of Thematic Networks can make a critical contribution to the KM process.* There is a growing awareness among UNDP staff of the advantages of sharing knowledge and programme experience through electronic mail groups. But most have been waiting for an organized system to be put into place for managing such electronically networked thematic groups.

At the sub-regional level, SURFs have initiated formation of e-mail groups that link country offices in the region. This has facilitated communication on thematic issues of interest to the programme countries as well as requests for expert referrals. Much of the correspondence among members of the e-mail groups is ad hoc, emanating mainly from immediate needs of the COs. The discussions are unstructured and therefore not easily amenable to being documented as references for lessons learned or best practices. Thus, opportunities to capture and further leverage the knowledge of e-mail group members are not being capitalized on. In this network topology SURFs act as intermediaries between the COs and external knowledge sources. For instance, SURFs have developed linkages with regional centres of excellence, regional institutions, UN agencies, UNDP regional projects, etc. (See Figure 2.) These sources of knowledge are mobilized to support the specific needs of COs. As required, SURFs also maintain links with other SURFs and the Global Hub for securing knowledge and expertise not available in the region.

The Southern Africa SURF has supported a cohesive, substantively defined network operated along thematic lines. This network evolved from the collaborative efforts of the Resident Representatives of the eight COs to share information and knowledge to reinforce the programme content of their individual Country Cooperation Frameworks (CCFs). They also wanted to develop a shared vision on regional development strategies that responds to both the priorities of the region and programme countries and global issues. Each of the COs, and some regional projects, have been assigned responsibilities with specific themes. In this way as many as 17 themes are allocated to these institutional entities, with some of the COs having focal point responsibility for more than one theme. The Southern Africa SURF is leading the way in sub-categorizing thematic areas into workable knowledge categories, just as core process knowledge can be sub-categorized into activity and task knowledge. (See Annex 5, KM Fundamentals.) The network thus provides for substantive, thematic nodes that can manage and stimulate structured dialogue, discussion and approaches to documenting knowledge materials. The network system

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has been used for specific time-bound tasks, such as preparation of the Regional Human Development Report.

While the network system in the South African SURF has been well established, its effective operation still requires an entity to prompt and manage the workings of the network. This would include supplying it with appropriate IT instruments and tools, and building a repository for the articulated knowledge it accumulates. The former could not be accomplished due to an absence of key personnel with the appropriate skill set. This is an urgent issue to be addressed by the Regional Bureau for Africa. The latter could only be addressed by an UNDP-wide technology-enhanced solution.

The Global Hub has also taken initiative in forming global networks to bring all COs and SURFs into one loop. Six networks, related to the substantive thematic focus areas of BDP, have been formed. These networks have members who have thematic responsibilities in their respective COs as well as in BDP. Therefore, their participation allows for a more in-depth discussion on subject matters relevant to the thematic group. The group includes the Global Hub and its facilitators. (See Figure 1.) As in the regional network, SURFs access their external knowledge partners and sources, while the Hub accesses BDP knowledge through the facilitators and other UNDP headquarters units.

A thematic group is not disaggregated into sub-theme groups, so everyone in the thematic network gets a query whether it is relevant or not. This can result in a glut of e-mail messages. If a theme were decomposed into sub-themes, appropriately coded, queries would only go to people who had the relevant background to respond. This would require disaggregation of both thematic areas and people's skill profiles. It would also enable facilitators to prompt people with appropriate skill profiles who are not responding. There is no system in place to capitalize on the unstructured, explicit knowledge in the e-mail flow that needs to be documented in a "knowledge base" for future reference. Thus, a rich discussion on institutional arrangements for preparation of National Human Development Reports was not captured and made available for future use. This was recognized by members of the network. The presence of a knowledge base facilitator who would have responsibility for documenting and coordinating insights generated in the discussion would have performed the missing function. Further, there is no system for maintaining a repository or knowledge base to house such "knowledge" for future use. Based on the quality and importance of the information, the process of the assimilation and structured storage of knowledge should also have a control feature – a role that could be performed by a thematic leader located in BDP.

#### **4.7 Expert referrals**

*SURFs have provided value-added service in compiling databases of experts and responding efficiently to CO requests for appropriate experts. There is, however, a growing demand on SURFs to be selective in developing their rosters of CVs of experts/consultants.* SURFs have emphasized the use of national and regional experts in UNDP programme outcomes. It has been recognized that improved outcomes of programmes and development interventions would be achieved if regional and national expertise (of individual experts, consulting firms and institutions/centres of excellence) were adequately utilized. Equally important would be to utilize developing country expertise in solving development problems.

The SURFs have made special efforts to develop rosters of experts and have facilitated identification of good experts on short notice. Indeed, the development of a roster of qualified

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experts/consultants, using appropriate software, has been a major task of the SURFs. Even the most recent of the SURFs, viz. EA-SURF, has developed a computerized roster of more than 400 experts with an emphasis on regional expertise. The expert referral function has been the most advanced and successful of the three SURF KM functions. This is probably attributable to the fact that it was the easiest to initiate, while also the most clear cut in terms of objectives and immediate needs.

SURFs have indeed provided value-added service in compiling databases of experts and responding efficiently to CO requests for appropriate ones. There is, however, a growing demand for SURFs to be selective in developing their rosters of CVs of experts/consultants. While “run-of-the-mill” experts and consultants can be identified by COs without much difficulty, SURFs can add value by advising and recommending specialized experts/consultants supported by evaluative backgrounds. This arms the CO with improved knowledge of experts before it conveys them to client institutions in programme countries. A mandatory system to secure feedback by users of experts will enable SURFs to supplement updated CVs of experts with an evaluation and specific knowledge analysis of their experience and track records.

It is important to ensure that the repository of evaluative experts’ CVs is not only confined to the region. SURFs would need to establish appropriate systems to access expert databases in other regions and at the headquarters-based technical units. The widened access to expert referral will enable COs to draw upon “world-class” experts having relevant inter-country experience.

#### **4.8 Institutional networking**

*The SURFs have been strategic in developing links with two sets of institutions in their respective regions.* The presence of regional organizations and offices of the UN system in some locations, such as Addis Ababa, Bangkok and Suva, provides opportunities for SURFs in these locations to have easy access to regionally focused knowledge bases and expertise. The recently established SURFs in Addis Ababa and Suva have networked with these regional organization, regional programmes of UN agencies and other inter-governmental bodies with the aim of utilizing the specialized experience and expertise of these institutions and sharing the UNDP programme experience of countries in the region. The Southern Africa SURF has established a cohesive network with the SDEC programmes. The Bangkok-based SURF has established links with regional centres of excellence such as the Thailand Development Research Institute and the Cambodia Development Research Institute to forge institutional twinning among similar regional institutions as well as to draw upon the expertise of these institutions to support CO programme activities.

The resource bases of UN and inter-governmental institutions as well as those of institutions and centres of excellence at the country level are substantial. Opportunities to tap them warrant a systematic and extensive inventorying and mapping of the knowledge resources of these regional institutions. The SURFs should also leverage knowledge resources of the regionally based UNFPA Country Support Teams, and of similar ILO, UNICEF and FAO technical outfits. These resource bases will optimize the multi-disciplinary technical backgrounds of expertise needed for

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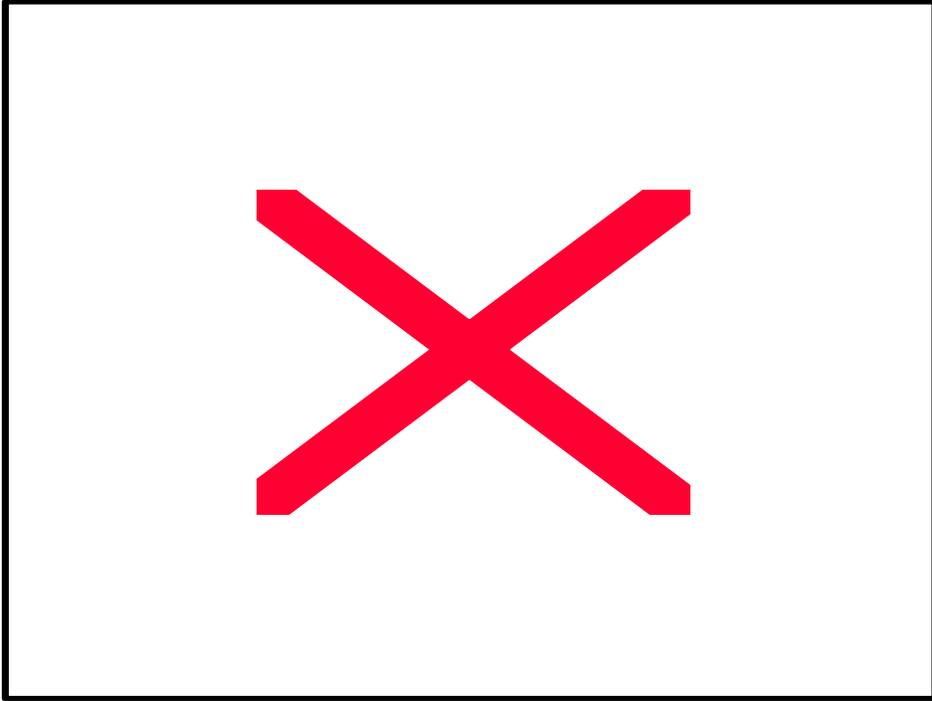


Figure 1

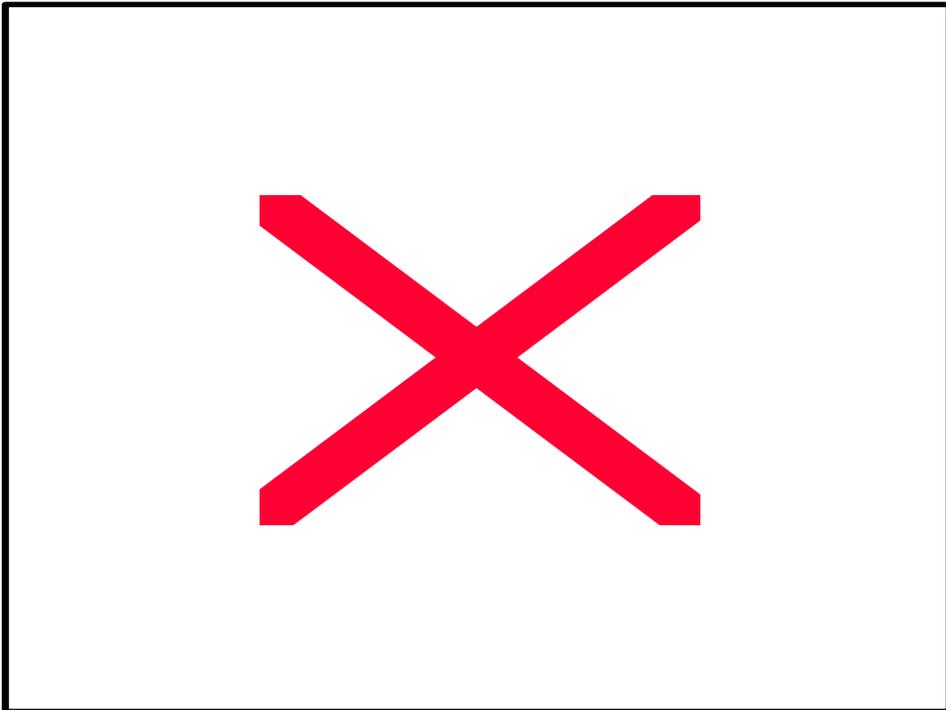


Figure 2

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the technical backstopping of CO programmes in programme/project formulation, monitoring and evaluation, upstream advisory and advocacy inputs in thematic areas and aid coordination activities. Opportunities for similar partnerships are also available with some bilateral agencies such as the Fiji-based UK DfID technical team.

#### **4.9 Staffing strength of SURFs to address core functions**

*SURFs believe they do not have a critical mass to perform their stated functions to meet CO demands, especially technical backstopping.* This is because of the coexistence of two sets of functions – technical backstopping and the three KM-oriented functions. The nature of a service facility requires in-house subject matter expertise. Without a critical mass of experts the facility will be unable to respond to clients' needs. Indeed, this has been the problem faced by all SURFs, even the Bratislava SURF, which attempts to deliver services by connecting, sourcing and mobilizing technical expertise and knowledge resources from sources other than the SURF itself. The apparent constraint on its resources is felt due to the SURF's staff being on mission more than 60 per cent of the time to support COs in reviewing, preparing and assessing programmes and projects.

SURF staffing would be adequate if SURFs were to concentrate on networking and developing their core competence in KM processes – facilitating, identifying and mobilizing knowledge and expertise. SURFs can continue to respond to COs' requirements for technical experts and knowledge by mobilizing such resources from UNDP-supported global, regional and country programmes and projects, as well as from UNDP's central, headquarters-based expert reservoir and knowledge resources, including the Learning Resources Centre. It should however be emphasized that UNDP's headquarters-based knowledge resources and technical expertise should be sufficiently oriented to meet CO needs. The Administrator is presently articulating strategies to redefine organizational configuration to shift focus of the present headquarters-based technical services to meet CO requirements.

Refocusing SURF functions to facilitate knowledge transfer rather than to develop the SURFs' own expert base does not mean that a SURF should not possess analytical capacity. Its staff should be sufficiently strong in analytical capability to undertake the core KM-oriented functions.

#### **4.10 Decentralized operation and management of SURFs**

*The decentralized SURF structure has enabled SURFs to better meet local CO needs.* Decentralized operation of SURFs under respective Bureau policy and strategic guidance has created substantial flexibility and opportunity for jump-starting certain activities that would have taken a longer time had their operation been subject to centralized supervision. SURFs have adapted work programmes that reflect CO priorities and the Bureau management plan. However, the SURFs have sometimes faced problems in prioritizing their work programmes in the face of competing demands from the cluster of countries served. Often cluster meetings of Resident Representatives have greatly facilitated work programming and strategy setting for SURFs. The effectiveness of this mechanism has been recognized by the COs and the Resident Representatives have adopted measures to intensify networking among them and hold meetings at regular intervals.

In terms of geographic coverage, there is a need to have at least two additional SURFs – one to cover the West Africa and Central Africa region and the other in Latin America to address the language issue. Geo-political and language difference can be considered key factors in

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determining the regional allocation of SURFs, while logistical, communications and IT infrastructure systems are second level factors. Nevertheless, the latter factors should be internalized in deciding on a SURF location. Thus, the experience of the EA-SURF in Addis Ababa warrants that a careful evaluation of a country's telecommunications and IT infrastructure should be done in determining a SURF's location. The problem of IT infrastructure has also prevented some of the COs from deriving benefits from the network among COs and with SURFs. While these countries have difficulties in communicating with COs and the SURF within their sub-region, they have dedicated access to UNDP headquarters. In the case of these countries, the New York-based SURF will have to support the networking system until such time as IT infrastructures are established in them.

The role of the Global Hub has not always been clear. However it appears that over time its function and role have reached greater clarity, especially as the Global Hub has attempted to provide greater value-added function in the overall SURF and networking system. The Global Hub is now expected to provide coordination of corporate-related implications of SURF functions, standardize mechanisms, instruments and tools such as common standards and features of web structure, and facilitate organization and management of Thematic Group networks that are critical to instituting enhanced KM processes, as noted above (viz. Section 4.6).

#### **4.11 Culture and ability to change**

*UNDP has instituted improvement programmes but cultural change has been slow to emerge, especially in the key KM areas of knowledge sharing.* The building of a knowledge resource base, especially the "tacit" knowledge on both substantive and operational matters already acquired by UNDP staff members, will require a systematic approach to sharing among the widely dispersed network of UNDP offices operating in more than 140 countries. Most organizations that have pursued knowledge management have faced the issue of people's participation in the generation of knowledge. In the UNDP system there are enormous social elements and human connections that are essential to knowledge acquisition and sharing. But a major behavioural obstacle appears to emanate from the way the business processes are conducted by UNDP staff members, especially in the COs and Regional Bureaux. It has been observed that much of the time and energy of CO staff is expended on programme and project administration process work, solving problems and coaching national counterpart institutions. The introduction of the national execution (NEX) modality of programme delivery has increased the amount of process administration work performed by UNDP CO staff. Clearly, the KM process cannot be pursued effectively without changing the work pattern of UNDP staff; they have to be relieved of the micro-management of projects and process administration work to open up space for creativity. Providing a knowledge base to NEX staff would make them more self-sufficient and cut down on very labour-intensive assistance from other staff members.

The organization has pursued strategies in recent years to institute behaviour patterns among staff members that reflect their inclination to perform value-added functions in their respective assignments. The performance appraisal system, associated career incentives and management training programmes have made important contributions to staff productivity and performance. However, there has been little of the awareness creation and training that is necessary to change such cultural habits as hoarding knowledge, and a lack-lustre attitude to sharing knowledge and information among colleagues in the enlarged system. Introduction of a technology-enhanced system can address only a partial requirement for facilitating the KM process; awareness, training, and appropriate incentives are more critical requirements for instituting KM processes within the organization.

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## 5. Recommendations

This section weaves the findings and issues uncovered by the review team into workable recommendations and an outline for a broad KM implementation plan. These recommendations are based on lessons learned from specific knowledge gained about UNDP and the SURF system within the context and from the experience of the broader knowledge management industry. For the purposes of this report: *knowledge is understanding gained from experience; KM is defined as the management of the full knowledge life-cycle processes of knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation and the integration of validated knowledge throughout the rest of the organization. The key KM principle followed is to provide “the best knowledge to the right person at just the right time.”*

This report’s recommendations take a broader macro perspective and provide a roadmap for implementation of an enterprise-wide knowledge management system. As a result, the high-level recommendations (supported by somewhat more detailed Annexes) go well beyond the SURF system in scope. The reviewers are of the view that UNDP, in order to accomplish its vision and business objectives as articulated in recent months (also briefly summarized in section 5.A below) requires a more comprehensive and strategic approach (much beyond the SURF system) to become a knowledge-based and learning organization.

This report’s recommendations, in section 5.B below – Future Directions, start with a description of two strategic interventions needed to accomplish the UNDP vision. Keeping in view the role played by the SURF system, the first set of recommendations emphasizes the organization of the efficient delivery of high-quality advisory and technical knowledge input to empower country offices to perform upstream functions most effectively. This would mean strengthening the SURF system with redefined and enriched functions. The second set of KM-specific recommendations – 5.B – addresses innovative approaches to enhance knowledge acquisition, production and integration, and to institutionalize KM within UNDP. It covers people, process and technology and includes the recommended KM system organizational structure. Sections 5.C and 5.D address financial implications and an overview of an implementation plan, respectively.

<b>KM System Recommendations</b>	
5.A	Align KM with UNDP Vision
5.B	Future Directions
	1. Enhance CO technical and advisory capacity
	2. Institutionalize KM within UNDP
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People – Empower KM</li> <li>• Process – Embed KM</li> <li>• Technology – Enable KM</li> </ul>
	3. KM System Organizational Structure
5.C	KM System Justification
5.D	Notional Implementation Plan

### 5. A Align KM with UNDP vision<sup>1,2</sup>

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UNDP envisions itself as the acknowledged leader in the fight to reduce world poverty by 50 per cent by the year 2015. It seeks to capitalize strategically on the trust, presence and knowledge it has gained through successful projects to reinforce and enrich its role as an advisor, catalyst, partner and facilitator. But UNDP understands that to fight poverty and have a substantial influence in reversing the current trend toward reduction in ODA funding, it must act decisively in new and innovative ways, including leveraging technology and new business processes such as knowledge management (KM).

UNDP has determined that a major force of its mission will be to refocus its programme by moving from a project-driven policy to policy-driven projects, while pursuing downstream interventions only to validate innovative concepts through pilot programmes. In moving upstream, UNDP must act as a catalyst and change agent and apply its limited resources where the multiplier of such coordinating capabilities as the innovative application of new technologies and best practice knowledge will be a much higher probability of goal attainment.

To achieve its vision, UNDP intends to align all efforts, necessarily at very detailed levels. This will include shifting core business, creating a performance culture, renewing its staff, leveraging matrix management, optimizing organizational collaboration and enriching partnerships. UNDP can achieve these business processes by making itself into a world-class knowledge institution. It has taken important steps in the direction of building knowledge management systems, capitalizing on the achievements of the SURF system, which was intended to provide efficiently organized expert knowledge to country offices.

Though a complete solution requires the integration of people, process and technology, UNDP has charted an aggressive course of action that might not have been conceivable just a few years ago. Until recently the needed technology that will be an essential enabler of many of the new strategies recommended below did not exist. Also, understanding of KM was inadequate to fully support these strategies. Many technologies and knowledge of what is possible have only just emerged and UNDP is poised to take advantage of this convergence. It must now unify its staff behind these new technologies and KM processes to achieve its vision.

Alignment ... alignment ... alignment! One last note from the evaluation team. At times, early in the evaluation cycle, team members were conflicted about certain recommendations. Fortunately, the UNDP vision was clarified during this period and served as a guiding light for the team's final deliberations. Essentially, its recommendations have been solidified by the new UNDP vision.

## **5.B Future directions: building knowledge systems and mechanisms to enhance CO technical and advisory capacity**

UNDP is committed to accelerating the process of making the organization into a world-class knowledge institution. It has taken important steps in the direction of constructing knowledge management systems, building on the achievements of the SURF system. However, the evaluation findings reveal that the *SURF system needs to be reorganized and configured to allow for the development of core competence in certain functions that it can deliver best*. Essentially,

<sup>1</sup> Brown, Mark Malloch, (Draft) *The Way Forward: The Administrator's Business Plans (2000-2003)*, New York, 30 November 1999

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, *Changing Our World*, UNDP: Global Res Reps Meeting, New York, February 2000

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as described in B.1 below, its core function should constitute a capability to organize and facilitate delivery of high quality experts and knowledge sources on expertise to COs, from both within and outside the organization. Further, to transform UNDP into a knowledge-based institution, necessary to deliver higher impact upstream programmes to client institutions, proven knowledge management practices need to be instituted, developed and mainstreamed throughout the organization.

### ***5.B.1 Efficient delivery of high quality advisory and knowledge services***

#### ***(i) Background***

The core staffing strength of the country offices is not adequate to meet the demand for knowledge content needed for impacting on upstream, policy design and intervention for economy-wide effect. COs have substantive programme management capacity but do not have the in-house expert base to undertake the above advisory and policy related functions. The Country Cooperation Framework usually consists of programmes and projects constituting a mix of downstream development interventions and upstream programme and policy related activities. The new UNDP vision points to the need to change this mix so that there is greater emphasis on policy-driven interventions. Downstream project interventions are to be more strategic, with sharper focus on concept validation and policy feedback mechanisms. To accomplish the new set of tasks the COs will need to have access to appropriate experts and institutional expertise that can be mobilized at short notice. Further, the delivery of expertise must be cost-effective. Building on the facilities and arrangements already established within UNDP, it is recommended that the following three facilities or instruments be further developed and realigned to meet CO needs most efficiently.

- High quality multi-disciplinary experts at sub-regional level to service clusters of COs.
- A substantive expert referral system.
- Institutional networking to reinforce the functioning of the above two facilities.

#### ***(ii) Enrich SURF functions***

The SURF system was indeed designed to deliver the above functions and it has made a substantial contribution in providing expert referral and technical backstopping services to COs. However, in an attempt to develop KM functions the SURF system has encountered difficulties in augmenting its technical support services to meet the increased demands of COs. The skill sets to accomplish technical backstopping are not the same skill sets needed to optimize KM functions. The KM skill sets include those necessary to: build and maintain a quality referral database; build and maintain a robust network of development partners; provide technical and facilitation expertise to promote technologically-enhanced collaboration among both substantive and programmatic specialists; and document lessons learned and other knowledge into useful knowledge bases. These expanded KM functions are elaborated below.

The SURF system cannot be expected to have a passion for doing KM, especially when the system has to develop a strong capacity to deliver technical services. Therefore, *a priority task is to clarify the SURF mission* and provide the SURF with a sharper organizational framework and terms of reference to facilitate a platform for delivering decentralized, cost-effective technical support services to COs involving technical backstopping, expert referrals and institutional

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networking. Before recommendations for clarifying the SURF mission are set forth, suggestions are made for augmenting the capacity of the three facilities/instruments.

*(a) High quality multi-disciplinary experts at sub-regional level to service clusters of COs.* There is clearly a high demand for high quality technical advisory and programming-related expert services by the COs. (See Annex 6.) The few professional staff located in the SURFs have been providing some technical backstopping to COs. But the capacity of the SURFs is severely constrained due to lack of resources. At a time when UNDP has to re-organize its delivery mechanisms in response to reduced levels of programme resources, it is important that any attempt to augment the technical resource base at the sub-regional level is pursued in a cost-effective manner. The recent corporate decision to reallocate more than 50 experts from New York (BDP) to the sub-regional level, closer to the COs, provides an opportunity to enhance expert capacity at the sub-regional level. Essentially, UNDP should anchor its BDP resources so as to respond efficiently to CO needs. The precise number of experts to be located at the sub-regional level should be derived from an assessment of the CCFs of the programme countries, keeping in perspective the need to first leverage technical experts from BDP, regional projects and other external sources as noted above.

The upshot of the above recommendations would be to utilize the infrastructure already established by the SURF system to organize and administer the delivery of experts who would be under the substantive management oversight of BDP. The SURFs themselves would not need budget resources to have in-house experts. They would provide the platform for and facilitate the delivery of experts furnished by BDP and also provide administrative and management support (e.g. work planning in relation to CO needs) for these experts. SURF tasks would be to process CO requests, network with in-house experts (under the substantive supervision of BDP), maintain linkage with regional programmes and projects and utilize their resources in support of CO needs, and explore other sources of expertise within as well as outside the region. The SURFs should network with BDP to map the latter's knowledge base and utilize its resources more extensively. They should network with country and regional level institutions, centres of excellence, consulting firms, UN agencies, and other development partners in their respective sub-regions to draw upon appropriate expertise as needed by COs.

The SURF's responsibility is to see that the best person and knowledge are made available to the client regardless of the location of newly decentralized staff.

*(b) Enrich the substantive expert referral system.* The expert referral system developed under the SURF system allows for ready access to relevant experts and institutional expertise. The referral system should, however, be enriched in a number of ways and made more self-service oriented. Expert referral is the acquisition and cataloguing of knowledge about qualified experts from outside as well as within UNDP<sup>1</sup>. It is also the transfer of actionable knowledge about such potential candidates to COs to reinforce the latter's technical capacity. As noted in Section 4 - Findings, the expert referral system is relatively well developed. But the profile and expertise of UNDP staff members with particular programmatic and operational skill sets needs to be developed and incorporated in the expert referral system as well.

The *referral system should provide for qualitative appraisals* for validation of CVs of external and internal resources, not just numbers of CVs. For external experts, it should have appraisals on

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<sup>1</sup> UNDP programme and process management staff have specialized skills that are not easily available outside of the organization but can be deployed to deliver programmatic and operational functions such as CCF formulation and review, programme and project design, financial management of NEX, etc.

UNDP consultants collected and incorporated in the qualitative appraisal section of their CVs. Similarly, with the involvement of the Office of Human Resources (OHR), skills profiles of UNDP staff members should be established. After the initial start-up cadre of CVs is in place with qualitative measures, ongoing maintenance of expert and relevant UNDP staff CVs should be manageable in terms of SURF time. This assumes a fully accessible, global knowledge base is established as well as a reasonable method of feedback to continuously enrich the content of the expert referral component of the SURF system, based on tracking results of recommended referrals.

Finally, *the expert referral system should have an essentially self-service design*. The need for SURF staff to access the referral database for COs is a non-value adding activity. In other words, the system should be designed (with appropriate security features) to allow any CO to access the data base and evaluative referrals.

*(c) Enrich institutional networking.* The existing institutional networking system is a true value added function for the SURFs; it should be strengthened. The networking partners, including UN agencies, regional and country level institutions and centres of excellence, and UNDP regional projects are positive about the networking function and what UNDP might do if it took the lead. A well-conceived UNDP KM strategy with regard to knowledge sharing among partners might enable closer alignment and more dependence of networking partners on UNDP's intellectual capital (i.e. its explicit knowledge base or repository). Possibilities, such as inclusion of networking partners in technology-enhanced, threaded discussions should be reviewed in the technical evaluation.

Institutional networking should be an integral function of the SURFs as a part of their task to identify and mobilize appropriate regional and international expertise to support CO programme activities. The SURFs are in an excellent position to network with these institutions to maintain updated information and knowledge of their expert profiles, experiences and knowledge resource bases.

### ***(iii) Redefine SURF mission***

*(a) Align SURF roles and functions.* The above has alluded to the role and functions of the SURFs. Essentially, the SURF's infrastructure and capability should be used to facilitate and administer the delivery of high quality experts and knowledge resources through institutional networking. In relation to the streamlined functions of the SURF system, its size and organizational positioning should be properly aligned.

*(b) Organizational positioning, staffing, reporting and implications for resource requirements.* The current location of SURFs at the sub-regional level is cost-effective. The SURF's overhead cost is substantially reduced as its office space and other operational infrastructures (e.g. communication) are provided by host COs. The proposed streamlined, focused functions of the SURF system suggests that each SURF may not require more *than two mid-level professionals*, and staff to handle administration. The core staff of SURFs should not themselves undertake technical backstopping missions to COs or other technical services; their functions are to identify, mobilize and administer delivery of technical experts, and to maintain the expert referral system and institutional networking. The subject matter experts located in the SURFs would be deployed under the BDP budget and would report directly to BDP. Hence, substantial cost savings should be realized with the new staffing profile. The resources released can be reallocated for KM build-up and operation.

The SURF core staff would report to the senior management of the respective host UNDP CO, and in turn to the relevant Regional Bureau.

*(c) Number of SURFs.* In view of the proposed streamlined functions of the SURF system, it is recommended that a substantially reduced number of SURFs than the 17 originally planned should be operational. Taking into account the unique characteristics of the regions, the necessity to create and foster networking relationships, and the potential for increased substantive staff to perform technical backstopping based on the decentralization plan, the present number of nine SURFs is adequate. However, some minor changes might be justified and findings indicate the possible need for two additional SURFs as discussed in Section 4 - Findings.

### ***5.B.2 Knowledge Management System – People, Process and Technology***

The following KM-specific recommendations could be organized in a number of ways: by priority ranking, sequentially, or by some meaningful, proven grouping such as people, process and technology components. Since a priority ranking might imply the ability to create success if just the top recommendations were implemented, and since these recommendations need to be considered as a complete, holistic KM system involving people, process and technology, these categories were purposefully chosen and included in that format. A key recommendation concerns organizational restructuring designed to fully implement the recommendations below. A revised organization is discussed in the next section – B.3, below.

The financial implications of these recommendations are briefly summarized in 5.C below, with more details, including a financial chart in Annex 9 – Financial Implications of SURF Evaluation Recommendations. A logical final step, well beyond the charter of this evaluation, would be to “roll out” these recommendations into a KM System Implementation Plan, possibly using a graphical device such as a Gantt Chart. A notional implementation plan is discussed in 5.D below with more details in Annex 10 – Notional Implementation Plan for SURF Evaluation Recommendations.

### **Institutionalize KM within UNDP – Critical Components**

People – Empower KM	Process – Embed KM	Technology – Enable KM
a. Top Management Initiatives KM Vision and Strategy Policy Statement Top KM Advocate KM Council	a. Map UNDP Knowledge Needs and Resources	a. Create Technology- Enhanced KM System
b. Provide KM-Specific Training	b. Integrate Global (Enterprise) Networks	b. Provide Collaboration Capability
c. Rethink Organizational Training/Learning	c. Identify/Disseminate Best Practices	c. Provide Knowledge Repository Capability
d. Create Incentives for Alignment with Knowledge Sharing Culture	d. Promote Innovation	d. Enrich Functionality of Existing KM Instruments

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### People – Empower UNDP staff for KM

UNDP staff must be empowered for KM through a corporate culture featuring knowledge and decentralized responsibility and authority. This cultural change – aligned with the UNDP vision – is probably the most critical ingredient in the implementation of the recommended KM system.

(a) Top Management Initiatives. The following recommendations address necessary top management initiatives to initiate and institutionalize KM in UNDP through its people.

\* KM Vision and Strategy. *The Administrator and the Associate Administrator can aggressively institutionalize knowledge management within UNDP by creating a KM-specific vision and implementation strategy, and by promoting awareness of KM throughout UNDP and among its partners, to ensure KM's success and the realization of its expected benefits.* Top management recognizes and is already committed to the value of knowledge. UNDP needs to: focus on creating a KM vision that includes a call to action; spread top management's KM enthusiasm throughout all senior management and employee ranks; and ensure all strategies, KM and otherwise, are aligned toward UNDP's overall vision, of which KM is to be a major part.

\* Policy statement. The imperative to institutionalize KM will require a policy statement that includes this strategy, further to the Business Plan. This initial strategy statement and other associated actions will launch the enriched KM initiative. It will be immediately followed by an “awareness campaign” and thereafter continuously reinforced in word and deed.

An awareness campaign, a traditional component of a new initiative, includes explaining “what's in it for me,” new names and labels, re-organizations and associated titles, etc. Much confusion exists within UNDP about the true operable definition and benefits of KM. *Thus, KM training is especially needed as part of the awareness campaign.* (KM training is discussed below.)

\* Create top KM advocate. *Someone, preferably from within UNDP, should be appointed the chief knowledge manager or officer (CKM/CKO).* This person will: establish and continue to justify the KM initiative for top management; get buy-in and cooperative support from other senior management; ensure standardization of all KM efforts for maximum performance and client satisfaction; inspire global KM staff to peak performance; and innovate whatever it takes to better use KM as an enabler and builder of trust in UNDP. The CKM's skills are defined by the above roles and responsibilities, except for one. In the considerable amount that has been written about the skill set required, the almost universal consensus is that it is highly desirable that the individual be an in-house person who can be evangelical about KM, able to win converts to the KM cause. If no single, senior person is responsible for UNDP's KM efforts they will fragment, never reach full potential, or worse yet, die under the weight of conflicting goals, expensive incompatible systems and inefficient operations. The uneven SURF start-up is evidence of just such a scenario.

\* Create and support a Knowledge Management Council. The purpose of the KM Council is to ensure interdepartmental cooperation and integration of KM efforts. Integration, a critically important action beyond KM, can often only be achieved through planning, cooperation and buy-in at the senior management level.

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The Council should have, as a minimum, representatives of three or four internal key stakeholder groups, including representatives of key programme and thematic knowledge areas, technology and human resources. Looking at UNDP's structure, the team recommended that this council include representatives from BDP, the Evaluation Office, Regional Bureaux and the Bureau of Management. Additional members could be co-opted depending on the criticality of their knowledge related functions.

Also, one or two outside members should participate. The outside members should include a trusted representative of the external partnerships developed to capitalize on the new KM initiatives and give a customer input to critical thinking; and, a KM expert to infuse the group with external best practices, especially if the in-house CKM has little prior actual KM experience.

Once top management leads the way with the above actions, cultural change can begin in earnest, starting with KM-specific training, followed by other key cultural issues: organizational learning and incentives.

(b) Provide KM-Specific Training. Here is a brief overview of the KM-specific learning needs and benefits, by employee group, required to institutionalize KM within UNDP. The KM training programme is detailed more fully in Annex 8 – Make the KM Vision Operational in UNDP.

Senior executives need to know the fundamentals of KM and how to globally leverage KM and justify it against other desirable, yet competing initiatives.

Key KM Managers need operational skills to design and run the KM system.

KM users/knowledge workers need training to motivate them and optimize their ability to create and share knowledge.

Rethink Organizational Training/Learning – Learning, more typically and misleadingly called training, is at the very heart of becoming a learning organization. The existing UNDP strategy to provide formal staff training at a level of five per cent of staff time shows UNDP's awareness of the importance of training for prior positive action. This is most commendable. However, some within UNDP are misinterpreting this learning initiative by making the assumption that “five per cent” means two and one half weeks of formal training per year.

This interpretation is counter to the true concept of continuous learning and the value of the proven imperative to learn while doing. UNDP should rethink its implementation of organizational learning in the context of the KM imperatives and move from five per cent formal training to a much larger per cent of continuous knowledge sharing and learning while doing. Where formal training is necessary, the concept should evolve from “just-in-case courses” to “just-at-the-right-time lessons,” delivered directly to the UNDP staff with the learning need. This concept is discussed more fully in Annex 5 – KM Fundamentals.

Create incentives for alignment with a knowledge sharing culture. Staff members need to take ownership of knowledge sharing efforts and make sure the UNDP knowledge base is developed, relevant and constantly useful. The new *UNDP performance review system needs to have specific categories of attributes associated with knowledge creation and sharing*, to create incentives for knowledge sharing.

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Change Management. The above and other cultural changes are often overlooked in a major new initiative. Dealing with intangibles is not easy. The following process-oriented recommendations are more tangible, but will only work if integrated with the above intangible initiatives.

### Process – Embed KM

The following recommendations primarily affect the UNDP processes necessary to implement the recommended KM system in areas where KM thinking and procedures must be embedded into the very fabric of the UNDP way of doing business.

- (a) Map UNDP Knowledge Needs and Resources
- (b) Integrate Global (Enterprise) Networks
- (c) Identify/Disseminate Best Practices
- (d) Promote Innovation

(a) Map UNDP knowledge needs and resources. UNDP should understand its important stakeholders, what knowledge is necessary to satisfy stakeholders' needs, and the location and quality of existing UNDP and partner knowledge resources available to satisfy uncovered needs. Fundamentally, mapping includes determining: what substantive and process knowledge is needed by whom; what knowledge UNDP has and in what format; where it is (in people, libraries, system repositories); what knowledge is missing and the best ways to obtain it; and finally, a way to begin to anticipate what knowledge will be needed tomorrow and how to get it.

Knowledge mapping is a classical KM start-up recommendation. However, it is critically important here as UNDP changes to an upstream focus.

UNDP's upstream move introduces major risks associated with any substantive change initiative. The risk is the development of an imbalance between client upstream needs and UNDP capabilities during the transition. The enriched SURF/UNDP KM capabilities should smooth this transition, but only if the SURF KM implementation is well executed and based on truly meeting stakeholder needs. The importance of mapping knowledge needs and resources is critical to both a successful KM implementation and – especially – to UNDP in the transition. The resultant maps will help to define the most appropriate networks, discussed next below, and the areas for best practice focus and innovation emphasis (c. and d. below).

(b) Integrate Global (Enterprise) Networks. A key recommendation is to restructure UNDP collaboration in programmatic and thematic areas. This capability will be enabled by technology, but driven by the true knowledge needs of UNDP as it satisfies its upstream knowledge demands and natural communities of practice evolve. Here is a brief summary.

Network Structure. Rather than a SURF Regional Network connecting COs, or the Global Thematic Network connecting substantive staffers by thematic group (e.g. governance), the integrated, enterprise-wide (global) network will connect everyone, anywhere. Any community of practice can be established, or abolished, as the knowledge demands and interests warrant.

Knowledge Organization. The above mapping exercise will help define the high-level decomposition of thematic areas (e.g. parliamentary governance). Actual UNDP knowledge needs will help define further decompositions and eventual communities of practice around these and other needs.

Operation Leaders and Location. Knowledge leaders (experts) will emerge to spearhead communities while facilitators will administer the networks, promote and facilitate dialogue, and especially harvest validated knowledge for the knowledge base. Importantly, anyone with access authority can view or contribute to any threaded message dialogues, not just a chosen cadre. This is possible because messages are logically tracked and displayed. The location of the knowledge leader/facilitator is invisible in such systems, so relocations have little negative impact. There is no hub, just a location for a server based on economics, not personnel assignments.

Technology. The technological capability for useful “threaded messaging” list servers, push technology, agents and other knowledge sharing technology enablers (see technology recommendation b. - Provide Collaboration Capability) will enable planned and opportunistic queries and discussions by anyone, but particularly enable efficient communities of practice.

(c) Identify/Disseminate Best Practices and Standardize. A best practice system, possibly one of the most powerful tools for innovation in UNDP, must be carefully defined and implemented and consistently practiced. The SURFs are working diligently to define a workable best practice system. But it could be substantially improved by incorporating more specificity – lessons learned by activity. This concept is developed more fully in Annex 8. (See both Best Practices and Promote Innovation subsections.)

*The SURFs should begin to standardize their operations and procedures around the best practices to meet stakeholder knowledge needs, learned so far from their own experiences and from external best practices and proven tools.* The SURF system has major incompatibilities and differential performance across sites. There seem to be no options here. If SURFs don’t standardize, they will face a lesson of history – it is far more expensive to standardize later than at the outset. This lesson, learned by most commercial firms in the last ten years, is having to be relearned by recent KM leaders, who have designed numerous incompatible web sites, for example.

*Eventually, UNDP should establish a method to benchmark and incorporate best practices and lessons learned by others.*

(d) Promote Innovation. KM means innovation. *UNDP needs to focus on knowledge creation and organizational innovation* if it is to realize its full potential over the long term. Examples include: promoting the Results Based Management (RBM) initiative to emphasize results; evolving best practices into lessons learned to leverage creative insights; and creating an Innovation Lab to uncover and promote innovation techniques applicable to the UNDP environment.

Innovation serves as a bridge between what can be done immediately and a new way of thinking that will link to what UNDP will be able to do in the future.

The most exciting factor about innovation is that, if done well, it can be inexpensive with exceedingly high rewards – much benefit gained for a limited investment. Innovation doesn’t require expensive research labs. It requires a new way of thinking about everyday activities, including designing innovation-inducing methods into personnel policies; adding simple functionality to operational tools such as the SURF and KM systems while they are being designed; and having a team who specifically focuses on innovation. UNDP needs to focus on innovation, the performance-enhancing benefit of knowledge creation, if it is to realise its full potential over the long term.

The strategic principle to “gain comparative advantage” is critical to the success of any KM programme. Earlier draft recommendations have been largely superseded by recent UNDP actions; they have been relegated to Annex 8. We concur with those pronouncements. UNDP’s understanding of its Core Competencies is critical to its success and the KM system and innovation needs to give priority to and focus energies on the core. But in today’s economy, technology infusion is essential to enable KM.

### Technology – Enable KM

The following recommendations address UNDP technology needs to implement the recommended KM system, in which technology is an enabler of KM.

- (a) Create Technology-Enhanced Systems for Organizational Learning – Connect and Collect
- (b) Provide State-of-the-Art Collaborative Capabilities/Networks – Threaded Messaging, Push Technology, etc.
- (c) Provide Knowledge Repository Capabilities – Collect and Self-Serve
- (d) Enrich Functionality of Existing SURF KM Instruments

(a) Create technology-enhanced systems for organizational learning. UNDP should provide “*the best knowledge to the right person at just the right time*” to satisfy needs. This implies a focus on knowledge versus information, much more extensive decomposition or sub-classification of UNDP knowledge than presently planned, and the building of knowledge bases, organized accordingly. Successful collaborative networks provide natural linkages that align the right people, whose actual job responsibilities and skill sets match, with: 1) each other, for unarticulated knowledge exchange; and 2) applicable, easily-accessed, explicit/documentated knowledge, for self-service access. Complete KM systems provide both “Connect” and “Collect” functionality.

The evaluation team’s charter does not include a technical design of the SURF system but the team concluded that its KM-inspired insights might be value added to that effort. These insights are summarized below and disclosed more fully in Annex 5 – KM Fundamentals.

(b) Provide State-of-the-Art Collaborative Capabilities/Networks. *UNDP should upgrade the functionality of its essentially ad hoc, labour-intensive, collaborative e-mail networks to evolving de facto industry standards.* Here is a clear place to put modern technology to work! Collaborative networks, a primary tool to connect people, must be made to focus more on connecting just the right people without the need for an intermediary, and they must provide functionality that is an initial means to accumulate and better document the knowledge that is being made explicit in such dialogues. Modern, off-the-shelf, collaborative software is beginning to have such enriched functionality.

One important function of such software allows major knowledge domains, such as thematic areas, to be decomposed into hierarchical sub-categories or threads, based on demand-side needs.

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Though anyone can follow or review such “threaded messages” in any category, all whose personal specialty code aligns with a specific category can be provided the appropriate, and only the appropriate messages (“push” technology). Three industry leaders are: Intraspect, Open Text’s LiveLink, and Dataware. They are multi-functioned, full life-cycle KM systems. Their functionality should be reviewed as part of the technology-enhancement strategy, as a guide to what is possible.

The above process recommendation – to map UNDP knowledge needs and resources – becomes an integral step to maximize the functional advantages of such advanced collaborative systems.

Some issues to be addressed while choosing or designing the networking functionality are noted below. Initially lauded KM network systems often implode when: 1) staff get bombarded with e-mail queries that are outside their field of interest; 2) certain motivated staff repeatedly respond while others don’t share the burden and no incentive to continue knowledge sharing evolves; 3) trust is not established that encourages staff to ask questions without embarrassment, and the ability for them to find answers to simple questions on their own is not provided; 4) questions that have been documented and should be known are continually asked, or worse, are documented but difficult to find; and 5) existing documents, templates, recommended tools and techniques, policies, etc. are difficult to find. The UNDP system should provide solutions to these issues.

Finally, the imperative for self-service must be enabled by such systems. As presently designed, the SURF system necessitates the SURF acting as an intermediary, often if not primarily a non-value-adding function, that can be replaced by a function-rich collaborative system with resultant savings in SURF personnel time and faster access to needed knowledge.

(c) Provide Knowledge Repository Capabilities. *UNDP needs to document and better organize its existing knowledge into knowledge bases that enable easy, self-service access while fostering innovation.* Collaborative systems focus on connectivity, while beginning to enable the ability to document and collect knowledge. Knowledge bases become the essentially self-service repository for collected explicit knowledge. Knowledge bases can be organized around hierarchical thematic knowledge domains, and/or the core processes of the organization.

An example of such a hierarchical knowledge base, used by the U.S. Department of Defence for its Business Process Re-engineering Knowledge Base, NASA for flight operations, the U.S. Navy as part of its acquisition KM system design criteria, and the Knowledge Management Consortium International (KMCI) to house its KM Methods knowledge base, is displayed in Annex 5 – KM Fundamentals.

(d) Enrich Functionality of Existing SURF KM instruments. *The existing SURF KM instruments should contain more enhanced knowledge-intensive modules than those presently planned.* For instance, the Referral System Search Topics as presently developed by the SURF system contain 24 functions or modules. Most of this functionality is more information oriented than knowledge oriented – more document management than knowledge management. This is not a criticism because such information is needed, but the *SURF system designers need more of a knowledge-intensive mindset if they are to create a true knowledge management system.*

For instance, we believe a “Learning” module, besides including announcements (information) about conferences, workshops and course availability, should include the actual courses (knowledge) associated with the tasks and expertise needed by UNDP staff. To implement such a recommendation concerning individual learning, a key ingredient in organizational learning, the

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*activities of the Learning Resources Centre will need to be refocused and aligned with the KM initiative.*

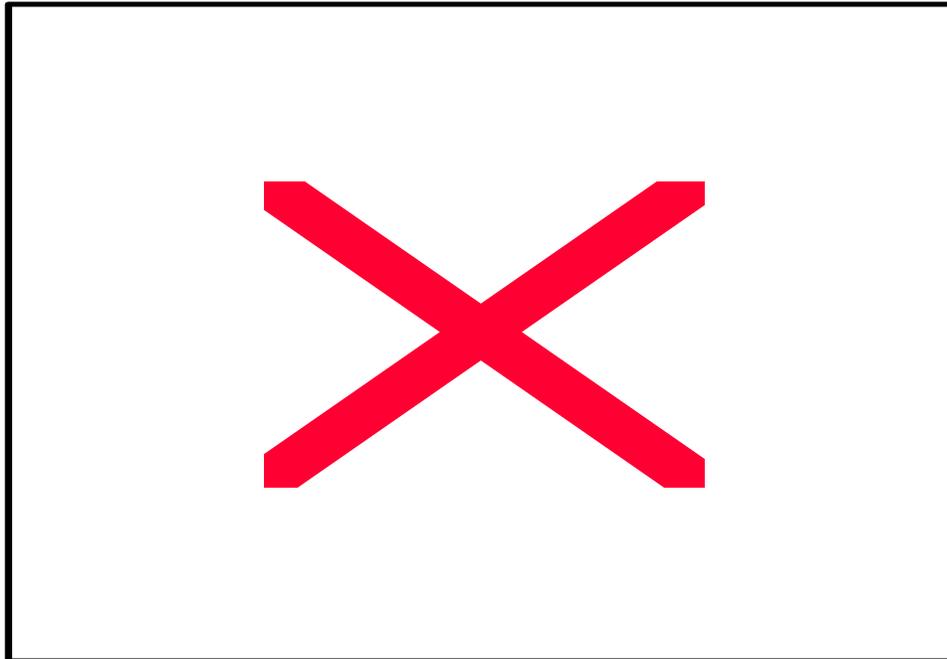
Some of the modules do include contents the team believes essential to a complete KM system – tools, templates and software work aids, for instance. Here, the team had some concerns about how difficult it might be for staff to be aware of and find such tools, templates and software, although it found the focus to be beneficial.

The underlying theme for design enhancements of the existing SURF system should be to provide “*the best knowledge to the right person at just the right time,*” described more fully in Annex 5 – KM Fundamentals.

### **5.B.3 Knowledge Management System Organizational Structure**

The above KM recommendations imply minimal organizational restructuring. An organization chart, focusing on the top KM position, is provided below, along with the rationale for its design.

(i) *KM Organizational Infrastructure.* As mentioned above, a new position is necessitated by KM, the role of top KM advocate, a Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO), Manager, or Engineer. The person in this position should report to the Office of the Associate Administrator and have “dotted line,” matrixed control over decentralized KM functions.



(ii) *KM Organizational Interaction.* As shown above, the CKO should report to the Executive Office and secure buy-in on KM initiatives through the KM Council. The role of the CKO is to evangelize KM whenever the opportunity avails itself. Other, more mundane tasks include bringing in-house, the best KM methods and tools, justifying and coordinating the implementation of KM initiatives, and the training and ongoing mentoring of knowledge managers and workers to foster knowledge acquisition, production and transfer/integration throughout UNDP.

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The CKO will have a close relationship with at least four functions:

- **KM Technical Support.** Provide design specs for enhanced technology, while receiving ongoing technical support for KM-specific technologies.
- **Learning Resources Centre.** Ensure alignment of UNDP learning with the KM vision.
- **Decentralized Operations.** Ensure the best process knowledge is being harvested for UNDP-wide availability.
- **Thematic Networks.** Ensure collaboration is energized and valuable substantive knowledge is harvested.

### 5.C KM system justification

An evaluation that makes substantive recommendations should provide some level of justification for major changes – i.e. what is it going to take to get from the before (As-Is) to the after (To-Be), and is the change warranted considering the expense? Such a justification was outside the scope of the team’s original TOR but it offered some important considerations. Annex 9 – Financial Implications of SURF Evaluation Recommendations, contains some very rough-order-of-magnitude numbers.

(i) *KM Imperative* – KM is not a UNDP luxury; it is an imperative as UNDP migrates upstream. Therefore, the analysis is not a conventional return on investment (ROI) scenario: whether the expense incurred will provide suitable investment return; that is a given. Rather, the strategic question is, “Do these recommendations provide clearly sufficient KM to make UNDP a world-class provider at the lowest possible initial/ongoing KM System cost?” Once established, additional recommended KM initiatives should be evaluated on standard ROI justification principles.

*Cost/Benefit Analysis.* The above recommendations require a few major up-front investments while providing some areas of substantial cost savings. Here is a list of the substantial cost savings and required new investments:

#### Substantial Cost Savings

- \*\* Reduced number of SURFs (about nine compared with 17)
- \*\* Reduced SURF staff qualifications (two mid-level vs. senior)
- \*\* Other

Investments – Highlighted categories are clearly incremental expenses and more than nominal.

- \*\* People
  - \*\*\* Top Management Initiatives
    - \*\*\*\* CKO plus admin.
    - \*\*\*\* KM Council
  - \*\*\* KM-Specific Training
  - \*\*\* Rethink Organizational Learning
  - \*\*\* Provide Incentives
- \*\* Process
  - \*\*\* Map UNDP Knowledge
  - \*\*\* Establish Thematic Networks
  - \*\*\* Identify/Disseminate Best Practices

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- \*\*\* Promote Innovation
  - \*\* Technology
    - \*\*\* Technology-Enhanced KM System Design
    - \*\*\* Collaboration software acquisition and maintenance
    - \*\*\* Knowledge base software acquisition and maintenance
    - \*\*\* Enrich SURF System Instruments - marginal

#### **5.D Notional KM system plan**

A notional implementation plan is shown in Annex 10 – Notional Implementation Plan for SURF Evaluation Recommendations. It is provided as part of the roadmap, with minimal commentary, to merely emphasize the precedent relationships of the above recommendations, summarized below.

**People.** Primarily, top management initiatives drive downstream activities, followed closely by KM team training. Selection of the top KM person is also a driver.

**Process.** The key process recommendation, to map UNDP knowledge needs and resources, precedes other long-term, more full life-cycle activities.

**Technology.** The creation of the specifications for the technology-enhanced KM system follows staff selection and training. The implementation duration of the other technology recommendations depends on build-or-buy decisions.

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## Annex 1

### Terms of Reference

#### Review of the SURF System

##### Introduction

The UNDP system of Sub-Regional Resource Facilities (SURFs) began full operations in early 1999. It was one outcome of the “2001 Change Process,” introduced in 1997 to refocus UNDP and adapt it to future challenges. The UNDP Executive Committee decided that “Since UNDP headquarters cannot provide effective technical backstopping or routine operations support to 132 country offices, UNDP should decentralize substantive support and operational decision-making to clusters at the regional or sub-regional level in order to reap efficiency gains and attune its services to local conditions.” (EC decision of 27 February 1997)

Previously, the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) undertook this core support function. The Executive Committee further agreed to the following: “UNDP’s Policy Bureau should relinquish its obligation to provide technical backstopping to all COs. Instead, [it] should concentrate on providing policy leadership and guidance on core substantive issues and overall development policy.” (EC decision of 27 February 1997)

##### Purpose of the SURF system

It was further agreed the SURF system should have the following purpose:

- a) **Expert referral.** Meet the requirements of UNDP country offices for best practice referral and/or backstopping in advocacy, strategic planning, policy and programme formulation, implementation and monitoring in a rapid, responsive and country-specific manner;
- b) **Identification of best practice.** Enrich the organization’s knowledge base by identifying and disseminating development best practice and lessons learned across regions and globally.
- c) **Technical backstopping.** Depending on the specific needs of the sub-region, the SURFs could also offer technical backstopping on one or more of the UNDP thematic areas and on operational issues, as identified by the Regional Bureaux in collaboration with the country offices concerned within the cluster served by the SURF.
- d) **Networking** and information sharing between UNDP staff and with UNDP’s development partners.

##### Structure of the SURF system

Currently, the SURF system consists of:

- a) A “Global Hub” unit in UNDP New York. It is staffed by three persons and is responsible for providing common standards for the SURF system and exchange of experience across regions.
  - b) Nine regional SURF offices within the five UNDP regions. There are four in Asia and the Pacific (in Bangkok, Islamabad, Beijing and Suva), two in Africa (Addis Ababa and Harare), and one each in Latin America and the Caribbean (Port-of-Spain), Europe and the
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Commonwealth of Independent States (Bratislava) and the Arab States (Beirut). Two professionals (plus two support staff) staff each SURF. Initially, 17 SURF offices were envisaged.

- c) “Facilitators” in each of five substantive units in the Bureau for Development Policy (covering governance, poverty (and gender), environment, private sector and information technology), plus in the Human Development Report Office. Working closely with the Hub, they help manage the electronic mail groups. The Facilitators were not foreseen in the original design and they have been funded partly by a Trust Fund from Sweden and partly by the BDP division in which they are placed.

### **Funding of the SURF system**

UNDP also decided that “Administrative resources will be used for the establishment of the SURFs, but TRAC and other programme funds will be used as appropriate for the programme-related work of the SURFs.” Thus, the SURF system was established from the core administrative budget of UNDP plus an allocation of \$650,000 from a trust fund established by the Government of Sweden for UNDP capacity-building efforts related to the 2001 Change Process. The core budget (approximately \$5.8 million over the 1998-99 biennium budgeting cycle) has been sufficient to finance start-up costs, staff and recurrent operating costs for six SURFs (one per region plus an additional one in Asia and the Pacific) and the Global Hub. In an effort to expedite full operation of the SURF system, some Regional Bureaux have used extra-budgetary funding sources. The status of the SURF system beyond 1999 can be said to be only tenuous at best, because of the budget constraints.

Currently, the Transition Team commissioned by UNDP’s new Administrator is preparing a report to recommend organizational improvements, which will lead to the development of the UNDP Business Plan. UNDP is also undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the 2001 Change Process. The UNDP Associate Administrator requested the Evaluation Office (EO) to conduct an independent review of the SURF system, which may contribute to the above processes, as well as helping to determine the future direction of the SURF system.

### **Objectives**

UNDP aims to obtain a critical and forward-looking assessment of the functioning and effectiveness of the SURF system as a component of UNDP knowledge-based management. The review is aimed at achieving the following specific objectives:

1. Assessment of the results of the SURF system in the areas of expert referral, identification of best practice, technical backstopping, networking and any other results if applicable; and
2. Formulation of concrete recommendations aimed at improving the functions of the SURF system (i.e. expert referral, identification of best practice, technical backstopping, networking) and implications for the organization of the SURF system.

### **Issues to be addressed**

Specifically, the review will address the following issues:

1. To advise on the appropriateness and relevance of the approach adopted for developing the SURF system as one instrument for knowledge dissemination and organizational learning in
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UNDP. This should include extracting lessons learned on success/non-success factors; how to improve the value and potential of the professional networks; the degree of flexibility and client orientation; assessing the value provided by the SURF to the UNDP country offices in terms of knowledge dissemination and programme quality.

2. To review the institutional and management arrangements for the SURF system and propose improvements to its functions, organization (both internal and vis-à-vis headquarters and country offices), staffing, facilities and operating budget.
3. To recommend options for the future configuration of the SURF system, with the relative merits and drawbacks of each option and its financial implications. This should include looking at scenarios for possible future ways of organizing the SURF functions, and/or proposing appropriate alternatives for ensuring these functions within or outside the SURF system, and assessing the need to expand and/or strengthen the regional SURF offices. The review should also offer suggestions on how to ensure the financial sustainability of the options, including looking at issues of cost-effectiveness; cost recovery by the SURFs for their services; the coverage by the UNDP core budget, co-financing from Regional Bureaux extra-budgetary funding sources and the possibilities for external resource mobilization.
4. To point out the changes to other aspects of UNDP operations and/or organization, which would be required for the implementation of the recommendations made for the SURF system, such as the identification of future conditions for success, prerequisites and policy decisions to be made. This should be based on an examination of the extent to which the SURF functions may be considered to be core UNDP functions in the future, with suggested consequences for the “internalization” of the SURF system in UNDP and its sustainability.
5. To recommend how to expand the range and effectiveness of the external and internal partnerships established by the SURF system, based on an assessment of the nature of such partnerships; their contribution to cross-fertilization of ideas among regions and themes/sectors; and how effective the SURF system has been in establishing relevant partnerships that support its functions. The review should address the issue of partnerships within UNDP in addressing the complex issues of knowledge management; relationships with BDP, the Regional Bureaux (RBx), country offices (COs) and other relevant units (EO, LRC, OSG, BPRM etc.). Also to be analysed is the possibility of expanding UNDP’s reach into the UN agencies and the wider community of development professionals; and the SURF partnership with agencies with development expertise (governments, civil society organizations, the private sector) which are necessary for the SURF system to meet its objectives.

### **Products expected from the review**

UNDP expects from the review, a main consolidated review report, preferably not to exceed 25 pages, presenting findings and recommendations on the six mentioned issues above under “issues to be addressed,” with individual brief country reports as annexes.

### **Methodology**

To carry out this assignment, a total of four weeks is foreseen (in one period or consecutive shorter periods depending on team availability). This would include time for fact-finding at Headquarters and in selected SURFs and country offices, for report drafting and for debriefing.

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The review will start at UNDP Headquarters with a review of documentation and interviews/meetings with key staff in UNDP. The documentation review should help indicate the main issues to be examined more closely, and provide a global picture of UNDP initiatives in the area of knowledge management and the origin of the SURF system. Sources of information include the files of the SURF system, the Intranet information and SURF web sites, the Change 2001 documentation, documentation from the Transition Team and subsequent decisions taken, the UNDP client surveys (in 1997 by Change 2001 and in 1999 by BPRM), documents on learning and knowledge management, and the country office needs assessment. Guided by these terms of reference, the review team will interview staff and stakeholders at UNDP Headquarters, including the Associate Administrator, the SURF Global Hub and SURF facilitators, and staff of the Regional Bureaux, the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP), the Evaluation Office (EO), the Operations Support Group (OSG), the Bureau for Planning and Resource Management (BPRM) – including LRC, DIMA and OB – and members of the SURF System Contact Group and of the Learning Network.

In this context, the team should review the effectiveness of the SURF mechanism for recording client satisfaction. If more information is required, the team will design and conduct a client survey to assess the value of the SURF contributions to country offices and future client needs, among other things.

The team will also undertake visits to three to four selected SURFs/countries. The countries to visit will be selected by the review team based on the desk review and consultations with the Evaluation Office, the Regional Bureaux, BDP and the SURF Global Hub.

At country level, the team will consult with the SURF staff, the UNDP Resident Representative and other country office staff involved in the SURF collaboration. They will also consult with government representatives, as appropriate, and with institutions used by the SURF for expert referral. The team will consult other regional SURFs, not visited, through electronic channels and/or teleconferencing. While in the field and during the review the team will ensure continuous consultation through a web page set up by EO for that purpose only.

The team will make presentations to present findings and seek feedback during and after the review as may be required by UNDP. In particular, a workshop is planned in New York to present the final report to key stakeholders.

### **Review team**

A team of two-three persons will undertake the review. The team should be composed of a person specialized in knowledge management (as team leader); a person familiar with aid development; and possibly a person familiar with UNDP country office operations without any prior direct SURF involvement.

The members of the team, individually and/or as a group should have the following qualifications:

- expertise in the area of knowledge management, including the use of electronic learning platforms;
  - experience in developing countries, preferably combined with knowledge of the UN system/UNDP;
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- experience in scenario-building and institutional/organizational development and effectiveness.

A team leader who is internationally recognized and respected in the area of knowledge management will head the review team. She/he is responsible for ensuring the delivery of the review report that satisfies fully the terms of reference, and for making the necessary briefing presentations during and after the review as may be required by UNDP.

### **Implementation arrangements**

The review will be directly managed by EO, which will assign one of its staff members to be responsible for the overall management of the exercise.

EO will work closely with the following units within UNDP:

- The SURF Global Hub will act as the main resource base for the review team and make available to the team all relevant material. The Global Hub will work in close collaboration with EO to provide support on logistics and scheduling of SURF visits.
  - The RBx will provide access to their documentation to the review team and assist the EO/SURF Global Hub in organizing the country visits.
  - The Bureau for Development Policy will provide access to their documentation and staff to the review team.
  - The COs concerned, working closely with the EO/SURF Global Hub, will organize the country visits. Each local SURF and CO will designate a staff member to act as the focal point for the review who should be thoroughly familiar with these terms of reference and help facilitate the work of the team in the field.
  - The Learning Resources Centre (LRC) will provide support and information to the review team on aspects of learning and UNDP as a learning organization.
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**Suggested timetable and follow-up arrangements**

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approximate Duration</b>
Launching of the review in New York.	Early Nov 1999	1 day
Review team begins its work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discusses review framework and methodology</li> <li>▪ Agrees on individual responsibilities of team members</li> <li>▪ Interviews key resource persons in UNDP</li> <li>▪ Conducts desk research</li> <li>▪ Ensures final selection of SURFs/countries to visit; starts organizing country visits (with EO/Global Hub)</li> </ul>	Early Nov 1999 1 week	
Country visits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3-4 country visits by team member(s)</li> <li>▪ Virtual team correspondence</li> <li>▪ Writing country reports</li> </ul>	Mid-end Nov 1999	9 days Each mission, 3 days
Full team in New York to discuss the preparation of draft report	Dec. 1999	2 days
Preparation of draft report; draft report submitted to EO	Dec. 1999 – Mid January 2000	2 weeks
Discussion of draft report in New York (presentation by review team leader)	January 2000	1 day
Finalization of report; final report submitted to EO	January 2000	1 week
Workshop in New York to present the final report to stakeholders (UNDP, donors, EB as appropriate)	January 2000	1 day
Follow-up to the review. EO presents major recommendations to the UNDP management for decision, and track/report on the implementation of those recommendations.	January 2000 onwards	Continuous

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## Annex 2

### Status of the SURF System

(i) **The South Asia SURF** has a focus on governance. The Facility was originally conceptualized and established in 1996 by UNDP Pakistan with strong support from the Directors of RBAP and MDGD/BDP. After the Executive Board decision to globalize the SURF system, the South Asia SURF began its second phase operation in mid-1997. It is run by a Coordinator, a Deputy Coordinator, an Information Officer, a Programme Associate and two interns. It is funded from both programme budget and core SURF budget resources. The South Asia SURF services nine COs in the sub-region, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The South Asia SURF provides referral services in the four human development thematic areas, while having a regional focus on governance in supporting COs with technical backstopping, networking and the dissemination of best practices. The South Asia SURF can be considered to be at an advanced stage of operation with considerable experience and capability in delivering technical support services to COs in the areas of governance and referral of experts and information/intellectual resources. Its web site includes a special page devoted to intellectual resources in the area of accountability, transparency and integrity in the Asia region.

The South Asia SURF has demonstrated how a synergy between its own capability and that of other UNDP administered programmes, especially regional projects and country programmes in optimizing resources and knowledge in the organization can augment CO substantive capacity in programme management and implementation.

(ii) **The Southeast Asia SURF (SEA SURF)** builds on the SHD Resource Facility Project initiated in early 1996. It is located in Bangkok, Thailand and comprises a Coordinator, a Deputy Coordinator, a Web Master, and an Administrative Assistant. It services 10 COs in the sub-region – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. Its operation is funded from the SURF core budget. A SURF Advisory Board comprised of the Resident Representatives from each CO oversees the SURF operation and provides policy direction.

Its major focus is poverty alleviation with special emphasis on social impact of the financial crisis in Southeast Asia; community empowerment; and socio-economic rights. The SURF initially started out with substantial referral of experts and consultants in response to requests from the COs. In 1999 the work programme placed increased emphasis on technical support services to COs and sharing of best practices and comparative lessons learned from projects implemented under UNDP programmes in the sub-region.

The SEA SURF has been effective in linking regional institutions or centres of excellence for collaboration and in reinforcing knowledge sharing among countries. It has identified a strategy to efficiently manage a database of experts by enabling COs to have direct access to its database. This is considered a strategic approach to minimize maintenance and operation of the expert database and thus release resources for undertaking more substantive technical functions and other KM processes.

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(iii) **The Northeast Asia SURF (NEA SURF)** began its operation in February 1999 in Beijing, China with part-time services of a Coordinator who had previously steered the SEA SURF. Its other staff consists of a Deputy Coordinator, an Information Specialist and a Programme/Administrative Assistant. Its operation is funded from a regional project. Sub-regionally, the SURF covers four countries, namely China including Hong Kong, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea. The geo-political specificity of the sub-region prompted the decision of RBAP to establish the NEA SURF. A Steering Committee comprising Deputy Resident Representatives from the four COs has been established to oversee its operation.

Within the sub-region, the NEA SURF has provided referrals and technical backstopping on a broad range of human development (multi-thematic) issues for sub-regional clients. At the same time, the NEA SURF has a special focus on “restructuring” (single-thematic) for global clients, whereby it seeks to increase and share understanding of social, political, economic and cultural restructuring and policy options that might enhance the positive effects and mitigate the negative ones. Progress in these substantive areas as well as networking could be faster if the SURF's staff strength could be enhanced with a full-time Coordinator.

(iv) **The Pacific SURF** was established in June 1999 in Suva, Fiji. It serves three UNDP country offices in the Pacific and by extension 15 programme countries, namely Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Its financing is obtained from a regional project of RBAP. Its operation is managed by a team of three staff – a Coordinator, a Programme Specialist, and an Administrative Assistant. The Pacific SURF also operates under the oversight of an Advisory Board, consisting of Resident Representatives of the three COs.

Much of the work in its first seven months of operation entailed expert referrals and technical backstopping in programme management, including review of country programmes. As a later comer in the system, the Fiji SURF has had the benefit of learning lessons from the other SURFs in developing strategic directions, methods and instruments for KM and in providing COs with technical support services.

(v) **The Southern Africa SURF (SA-SURF)** had been operational without key staffing while COs in the sub-region continued to facilitate networking and knowledge sharing among themselves, and with regional institutions, to reinforce programme delivery in each of the eight cluster countries. It was expected that, with the appointment of a Coordinator, the network system would be considerably better managed. It was therefore considered important for RBA to identify a suitable candidate for the Coordinator position.

The SA-SURF was conceptualized by the sub-regional Resident Representatives over the two years before the review team's visit. It is to operate under a decentralized, multi-locational, multi-thematic, multi-functional, demand-driven and client-oriented approach. The thematic areas are classified into three categories: Nodes, Regional Projects, and Focal Points, primarily determined by the management entities. Nodes are the thematic areas that are managed by UNDP with a full-time staff complement to support the initiatives. They include PACT (Zimbabwe), Regional Integration (Botswana), Development Policy/Governance/SURF Coordination (Zimbabwe), Southern Africa UNV Initiative (Zimbabwe), Poverty and Sustainable Livelihoods (Malawi), and Sub-Regional Information Technology Services (South Africa). Regional Projects are joint initiatives with other UN agencies or partner institutions. They include SADC Water Roundtable (Lesotho), SADC Food Security (Zimbabwe), Human Rights Advisory Services (South Africa),

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Regional Human Development Report (Zimbabwe), HIV/AIDS initiative (South Africa) and SEATINI (Zimbabwe). Focal Points are the thematic areas that are managed by UNDP without a full-time staff complement to support the initiatives. The list includes Gender (Botswana), UNDAF/RC (Mozambique) and Private Sector (Namibia). In addition, five additional thematic areas were established during the Economist Fora in July 1999. These are: Network Economist (Angola), Cross Border Schemes (Zambia), Debt Policy (Zambia), Round Table Mechanism (Lesotho), SWAP and UNCDF (Mozambique).

It was envisaged that the SA-SURF system would be coordinated by the core unit based in Harare under the management of the rotating cluster chair and the host RR (Harare), on behalf of the RR cluster. The individual thematic areas were to be managed by respective host Resident Representatives. The financing of the SA-SURF operation was to be provided from multiple sources. The core unit would be funded from the regional programme facility (administered by RBA), Global Hub and SURF Core budgets. Other positions, projects and programmes would support respective thematic activities, simultaneously.

A distinctive feature of the SA-SURF is the existence of a strong network among the COs with a vision to evolve a robust knowledge base in the system. The adoption of decentralized responsibility along thematic lines to COs and regional projects provides for scale economy of the UNDP resource base in the sub-region.

(vi) **The Eastern Africa SURF (EA-SURF)** was established in December 1998 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Its staffing strength includes a Coordinator, a Specialist/Deputy Coordinator, an Information Specialist and an Administrative Assistant/Secretary. The SURF serves eight COs in the sub-region (Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda). Its operation is financed from the core SURF budget.

The services of EA-SURF cover the general areas of human development but place special emphasis on conflict prevention and management and good governance. The EA-SURF is attempting to establish a thematic focal point system, similar to that of the SA-SURF, with the aim of having a mechanism for inter-country knowledge sharing and effective networking in the sub-region. Because of its strategic location, where a number of UN and other regional offices are present, the EA-SURF is also in a process of establishing partnership with UN agencies and sub-regional institutions (e.g. OAU, ECA).

The EA-SURF started to make progress from August 1999 and since its establishment had primarily built up an expert database and provided limited technical services. Its progress was severely constrained by the weakness of the telecommunication infrastructure and other IT support systems in Ethiopia. The experience has shown the importance of these IT infrastructures in determining a SURF location.

(vii) **The Caribbean SURF** was established in March 1999 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Its staffing strength includes a Coordinator, a Specialist/Deputy Coordinator, a Web Site Administrator and an Administrative Assistant. While the Coordinator started her assignment in March 1999, there were some delays in recruiting other staff. The Caribbean SURF is funded from the core SURF budget. The Facility serves four COs covering 19 countries and territories in the Anglophone and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. The countries include Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Bermuda, The British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, the Netherlands Antilles, St. Kitts

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and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The Caribbean SURF is designed to provide services in multi-thematic programme areas. It is developing its capacity to provide COs with referrals to experts and expert institutions, as well as technical and advisory services on the broad range of human development issues, with a particular focus on poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods, environmental sustainability and governance. It also emphasizes networking capacities for capturing and sharing best practices in these priority areas on a region-wide basis.

In the relatively short period of its operation, the Caribbean SURF had made 50 referrals of experts and intellectual resources and conducted technical support services by fielding four missions to COs to review country programmes and explore possible areas of support that could be extended by the SURF. It had undertaken nine other technical backstopping exercises on programme management and 14 programme/project formulation, evaluation, and review missions. It had also supported COs in holding sub-regional consultation meetings.

(viii) **The RBEC SURF** was established February 1999 in Bratislava, Slovak Republic. Its operation is undertaken by a Coordinator, a Deputy Coordinator, an Information Specialist and a Programme/Administrative Assistant. Its budget is funded from the core SURF budget.

The RBEC SURF can be considered a regional one, serving all 22 COs in the RBEC region and covering the following: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Poland, Russian Federation, Romania, St. Helena, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The RBEC SURF's technical capability is multi-thematic, covering the areas of governance, poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihoods, gender and environment. The SURF can be considered to be evolving as a *development resource service centre*, with the gradual emergence of specialized service units such as the Referral and Management Unit (RMU) and the Information Management Unit. Electronic networks or "thematic groups" covering governance, poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods and sustainable development have the participation of all 22 COs. A Learning and Partnership Programme is being developed as the platform for sharing information, learning, knowledge development and capacity building of CO staff and their partner organizations.

The RBEC SURF made substantial progress in a relatively brief period of 10 months. It developed an extensive expert referral database, provided country driven services in expert referral, technical backstopping, and knowledge sourcing through networking with other SURFs, regional projects and other knowledge-based institutions. Its rapid progress can be attributable to four major factors: (a) its staffing strength supported by a combination of IT and subject matter specialists in UNDP programming functions; (b) a shared vision among SURF staff, COs and RBEC; (c) clear understanding of the KM role of the SURF, especially in identifying and mobilizing knowledge resources; and (d) strong support from its HQ-based Bureau.

(ix) **The Arab States SURF (AS-SURF)** was established in mid-October 1998 in Beirut, Lebanon. It is run by five persons, including a Coordinator, a Deputy Coordinator, a National Programme Officer and a Programme Assistant. The Deputy Coordinator was assigned in December 1999. Funding of the AS-SURF comes from the core SURF budget.

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The AS-SURF serves the entire region of 17 UNDP country offices, viz. Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. While the SURF officially reports to the Arab States Bureau, the latter has encouraged the SURF to operate semi-autonomously and innovate working methods in each of the four SURF functions.

The AS-SURF is attempting to develop specialized expertise in governance and aspects of human development as well as in general programme management. Presently, the SURF appears to be focusing its efforts on the establishment of systems to provide effective referral services for experts and comparative experiences and resource materials on governance-related subject matter. The AS-SURF appears to have been relatively more successful in balancing its work in the four functions. It has provided twelve general and thematic technical backstopping missions to COs and conducted a governance focal point training exercise, in conjunction with the South Asia SURF. It is presently engaged in mapping governance activities supported by COs in the region; mapping governance expertise (150 CVs); mapping comparative experiences and best practices; and establishment of a web site including search engines for the databases. Substantial IT systems are employed in the above product lines.

(x) **The Global Hub** was established in August 1998 in the Directorate of the Bureau for Development Policy at UNDP HQ in New York. It is run by a Chief, Deputy Chief and Administrative Assistant. In addition, there are six Facilitators each located in a thematic, technical unit of BDP.

The Global Hub reinforces the functioning of the SURF offices in the regions to serve COs. The Global Hub also provides direct services to COs which are yet to be served by a SURF. It provides other resource and knowledge network functions for headquarters units and provides overall coordination for the SURF system, including setting common standards and procedures and harmonization of IT-based systems. The Global Hub does not have any supervisory and managerial responsibilities for the SURFs.

The six thematic Facilitators based in the technical units in BDP serve as thematic focal points. They maintain extensive networks with the Regional Bureaux, COs and SURFs to facilitate information and knowledge sharing among UNDP COs. The six thematic units in BDP are: SEPED (Sustainable Livelihoods, CSO, HIV/AIDS, Gender), MDGD (Governance, Human Rights, PACT), PSDP (Private Sector, Special Unit for Microfinance), SEED (GEF, CAP21, Water, Forests), Information Technology, HDRO (National Human Development Reports). Much of the work accomplished to date by the Global Hub is in the area of forging coordination among the SURFs and effecting exchange of their work programmes and experiences. It has also trained SURF staff on managed networking, initiated formation of thematic groups (electronically networked), facilitated knowledge sharing among SURFs and COs and established technical standards of the various IT systems developed and used by the SURFs. The Global Hub has been instrumental in raising awareness about SURFs, and within UNDP, about the need to integrate KM processes into a core corporate function and to institute procedures for corporate assimilation of knowledge instruments and tools developed by the SURFs (e.g. guiding principles for documenting best practices).

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### Annex 3

#### SURF System Client Survey Results

#### Analysis of Survey Questionnaire Administered to Randomly Chosen UNDP Country Offices

##### UNDP Country Office Response

The analysis presented below is based on tabulation of responses to the survey questionnaire received from the following 14 UNDP country offices (COs): Argentina, Bahrain, Barbados, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Gabon, Kuwait, Kyrgystan, Moldova, Mongolia, Niger, Sri Lanka, UAE, Uzbekistan.

##### Questionnaire Set I

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	% Agree	% Neutral	% Disagree	Number of Responses
1.	UNDP strategy on knowledge sharing is clear		11	1	2		79%	7%	14%	14
2.	Staff can get easy access to knowledge they need	1	8	2	3		64%	14%	22%	14
3.	Incentives for knowledge sharing are adequate		3	9	2		22%	64%	14%	14
4.	SURF system adds value to Country Office (CO)	4	7	2	1		79%	14%	7%	14

##### Questionnaire Set II

		Yes	No	% Yes	% No	# CO responses
5.	Services COs need:					
	(a) Referral of expertise	14		100%		14
	(b) Technical backstopping	12	2	86%	14%	14
	(c) Lessons learnt/best practices	10	4	71%	29%	14
	(d) Networking with:					
	• Other COs	7	7	50%	50%	14
	• Other SURFs & HQ Units	6	8	43%	57%	14
	• Regional organizations	7	7	7%	7%	14
	• Regional institutions	2				2
	• Funding sources	1				1
	• World Bank	1				1
6.	SURFs should have in-house expertise in following areas:					
	• Programme/project formulation, monitoring & evaluation	8	6	57%	43%	14
	• Subject matter specialization in thematic areas	12	2	86%	14%	14
	• Programme review & capacity assessment of nat'l institutions	6	8	43%	57%	14
	• Design of inst'l arrangements for progr/project Execution/ implementation	4	10	29%	71%	14
	• Sector specific survey and research	1				
	• Administrative & office management	1				1

		Yes			No	% Yes	% No	# CO responses
7.	CO ever contacted SURF or Global Hub	12			2	86%	14%	14
8.	Why not?							
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't need them; COs have enough technical expertise in-house</li> </ul>	2						2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't know what they do</li> </ul>				2			2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't have SURF servicing them in their sub-region</li> </ul>	1			1			2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't know how to contact them</li> </ul>				2			2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other</li> </ul>							
9.	How satisfactory were services provided by SURFs or Global Hub in the following areas:	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied				
	• Referral of expertise	4	7	1		100%	0%	12
	• Technical backstopping	1	5		6	50%	50%	12
	• Lessons learnt/best practices	1	8	3		100%	0%	12
	• Networking	1	4	3	4	67%	25%	12

**Summary of Country Office Responses to Open Ended Questions**

**1. Types of support needed from HQ and SURFs**

<b>From Headquarters</b>	<b>From SURFs</b>
• Policy guidance and consistency in policy development	
• Programme policy support	
• Clarity in organization's priorities and programme themes and operations	
• Clarity on what the organization can and cannot do	
• Clarity on the role of Regional Bureaux and functional units at Headquarters	
• Guidelines on strategic areas of work	
• Programme and project procedures and implementation guidelines	
• Administrative and financial rules and procedures	
• Technical support in project formulation, monitoring and evaluation	• Programme development and technical support in project formulation, monitoring and evaluation
• Technical support in thematic and specialized areas	• Technical backstopping in thematic areas
	• Regional programming
	• Programme review and capacity assessment

<b>From Headquarters</b>	<b>From SURFs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding and resource mobilization and indication of greater certainty in resource availability</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice on fundraising strategies</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support in areas of strategic partnerships</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity on the organization’s priorities in partnership development (host governments, private sector, civil society, UN agencies, World Bank)</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking and information sharing with UNDP’s development partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking and links to networks</li> <li>• Facilitate link to donor agencies</li> <li>• Information sharing and dissemination</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices and lessons learned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices and lessons learned</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral of experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral of experts by thematic areas with certification (evaluated for expertise and performance)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on training opportunities</li> </ul>

## 2. SURF support to COs in thematic areas

The SURFs could play a more pro-active role in technical delivery in the global thematic areas of UNDP, but not as presently organized. There is a need to re-constitute their capacities in order to leverage greater impact of this function. For instance, the SURF based in Trinidad and Tobago has provided useful and timely service and inputs in response to requests from the countries it serves. It has played a very constructive role in supporting the quarterly Resident Representative cluster meetings of the four anglophone Caribbean COs. But it has not augmented CO capacity requirements in key areas. Nor was it designed with this purpose in mind.

## 3. Decentralization of SURFs

With modern communication facilities it would not seem advantageous for a SURF to be physically decentralized. For instance, telecommunications have proved to be more difficult within Africa than between Headquarters and COs.

**Decentralization of personnel to the field would weaken considerably headquarters capacity; what might be gained at one end might be more than lost at the other. It may be more advantageous to cooperate with ECA and its Sub-regional Development Centres, which are establishing similar facilities, creating synergy and economies of scale.**

SURFs should have technical experts and be available on short notice to support CO programmes. One way to do this would be to relocate headquarters-based technical subject matter specialists to the sub-regional level within the SURF system.

## 4. Responding to CO priority needs

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SURFs have proved to be useful and effective instruments for inducing knowledge sharing and networking as well as for organizing delivery of technical services to meet specific needs of programme countries. Mechanisms and instruments should be developed to enable SURFs to identify a precise range of services needed by the COs, and correspondingly, the services that can be promptly channelled to the COs.

#### **5. Provision of regional expertise and experts**

SURFs have developed a relatively good data bank on regional experts, consultants, and centres of excellence at the regional level. For instance, the web site created for SURF-Lebanon gives a wealth of information. However, the information on regional experts should be supplemented by a roster of Arabic speaking consultants (not just names but short background data information). The SURFs' location at the regional level provides them with the opportunity to service country offices with regional expertise. They are also in a better position to advise and backstop COs, especially in programme thematic areas and programme review and evaluation.

#### **6. Streamlining instruments of KM**

There is a need to streamline efforts made by UNDP central units (at HQs) and by SURFs in such areas as data banks (of best practices, lessons learned, etc. – e.g. Magnet maintained by the Bureau for Development Policy) and referral services. Web page entries need to be standardized; databases on expert referrals need to be structured in a consistent manner so that a standard set of features is established in all of the SURFs.

#### **7. Thematic groups and networking**

Thematic sub-groups, managed by a SURF, can make a major contribution to knowledge sharing and learning within UNDP. SURFs have to manage thematic sub-groups to prevent overburdening CO focal persons with excessive information. Networking along thematic lines offers a powerful means of sharing information on programme experience of UNDP COs and documenting lessons learned and best practices. More senior staff members should participate and contribute to discussions conducted in networks/e-mail groups. There is also the need to establish rules and methods for structured discussions and mechanisms for documenting lessons of experience and materials that could be considered as best practices.

#### **8. Networking with other UN agencies**

SURFs' in-house technical expertise in multidisciplinary subject areas (i.e. UNDP programme focus areas) would complement technical expertise available from ILO's regional offices, UNFPA's Country Support Teams, and regional offices, programmes and projects of other UN agencies. SURFs could optimize their technical strength by networking with all these agencies to give UNDP COs access to a wider range of subject matter expertise and knowledge.

#### **9. Awareness**

There has to be greater corporate effort in raising awareness among UNDP staff members, as well as of UN agencies, about the roles and functions of SURFs.

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## Annex 4

### Abbreviations and Acronyms

BDP	Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP)
BPRM	Bureau for Planning and Resource Management (UNDP)
BREA	Bureau for Resources and External Affairs (UNDP)
CAP21	Capacity 21 (UNDP)
CCF	Country Co-operation Framework
CO	Country Office
<b>CSO</b>	<b>(Page 51)</b>
CV	Curriculum vitae
<b>DfID</b>	<b>Page 23 (Fiji)</b>
EA-SURF	East Africa SURF
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HDRO	Human Development Report Office (UNDP)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information technology
KM	Knowledge management
<b>KMCI</b>	<b>Knowledge management ??? (page 62)</b>
LO	Learning Organization
MDGD	Management Development and Governance Division of BDP (UNDP)
NEX	National execution
OHR	Office of Human Resources (UNDP)
OSG	Operations Support Group (UNDP)
<b>PACT</b>	<b>Page 48 (Zimbabwe)</b>
PSDP	Private Sector Development Programme (UNDP)
SA-SURF	Southern Africa SURF
<b>SADC</b>	<b>Page 15 -- Southern Africa Development Conference (?)</b>
<b>SDEC</b>	<b>Page 21</b>
<b>SEATINI</b>	<b>Page 49 (Zimbabwe)</b>
SEED	Sustainable Energy and Environment Division
SEPED	Social Development and Poverty Elimination Division
SHD	Sustainable human development
SURF	Sub-regional Resource Facility (UNDP)
<b>SWAP</b>	<b>Page 49 (Mozambique)</b>
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNDP)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	UN Population Fund

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## Annex 5

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## Annex 6

### Knowledge Management Fundamentals

Many proven principles and models are beginning to emerge from the world-wide body of KM work. This Annex includes some definitions, principles and a few models that impact UNDP KM system design. They are taken, for the most part, from the Certified Knowledge Management Curriculum of the Knowledge Management Consortium International (KMCI). These fundamentals are not meant to be exhaustive, but indicative of the considerations that need to be factored into the next round of SURF enrichment.

#### *Basic Definitions – Types of Knowledge, Knowledge Processes and Knowledge Management*

**Tacit and implicit knowledge.** Humankind has dealt with knowledge, a distinctly human capability, since before recorded history. There is much to be said for the ancient art of storytelling – elders sharing knowledge of their traditions and culture while seated around the campfire. These almost instinctive traditions have their present counterpart in social nets of friends, and in advice nets and trust nets, which are essentially self-explanatory. These knowledge-sharing networks or communities evolve and exist in every organization, regardless of organizational structure. Successful initial KM initiatives must capitalize on these natural human instincts to collaborate and share knowledge among respected and trusted individuals. In many ways, the SURF system has recognized these human norms to build **collaborative communities** and capitalized on them. *UNDP itself must reinforce such efforts to build trust and a culture of knowledge sharing. It can do this by fostering an environment that makes it OK to ask for advice and by rewarding those able to provide wise counsel.*

However, the level and complexity of knowledge and approaches to sharing it have changed considerably over the millennia. There is much to be said for storytelling and dialogue between trusted associates, but such knowledge methods don't fully meet the need when the level and complexity of needed knowledge is doubling with each generation.

**Explicit knowledge.** Mankind's knowledge activities took a great leap forward when Gutenberg invented the printing press (using movable type) in about 1455. This invention, possibly the one with the greatest impact on humankind in the past millennium, enabled much tacit or previously unarticulated, implicit knowledge to be made explicit or documented in books. Books could be printed by the millions and distributed to knowledge seekers well beyond the range of the campfire. Because of this new capability for explicit knowledge articulation (codification) and transfer, the great scientists and inventors of the 16<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> century were able to integrate the knowledge of others into their own work “to stand on the shoulders of giants,” according to Newton. The knowledge lessons of history provide the principles for our knowledge-focused efforts today; these principles apply directly to the basic infrastructure assumptions of the SURF system.

**Specific knowledge definition.** There is much confusion over the seemingly conflicting concepts of information and knowledge. Knowledge is “understanding gained from experience” (Webster), which provides both the ability to perform and the flexibility to adjust to changing situations. We use knowledge in activities to create results – outputs. Knowledge consumes the input raw materials of data and information to make decisions. Knowledge is used to create new knowledge from existing knowledge and information, to validate existing knowledge for personal use, and to structure existing knowledge into actionable format, rules, procedures, lessons, etc. Though both

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information and knowledge can be stored in databases, they are fundamentally different. And the difference is important for the ultimate result. *Consider an expert referral system comprised of CVs by country – it is merely information, a database of CVs. The database could be made into a much more useful knowledge base if knowledge about the individual could be appended to each file, not just data about the experiences of the individual, though such information is helpful indeed, but **appraisals** by others who have experienced working with the individual. When the database is converted to a knowledge base we satisfy the oft-repeated need within UNDP for a CV referral system that provides quality over quantity. In the ultimate, the CV experiences could be catalogued according to the same **categorization** scheme discussed below, so CVs can be matched to specific knowledge needs.*

**Knowledge processes.** Can one manage knowledge, mostly tacit, or is knowledge management a misnomer? In essence, we don't manage knowledge, we manage three fundamental knowledge processes: 1) acquisition and validation of knowledge for use to perform activities; 2) creation of new knowledge (innovation); and 3) transfer or integration of the knowledge throughout the organization to foster organizational learning. Most organizations focus on knowledge acquisition and transfer if not full integration throughout the organization. *UNDP needs to focus on knowledge creation* if it is to realize its full potential and deliver expected results.

For examples of knowledge creation activities, see best practices and lessons learned discussions in Recommendations – 6.2 Enrich SURF Functions, and 6.8 Promote Innovation.

**Knowledge management.** So knowledge management is really knowledge process management. Some call it knowledge environment management. KM is the managing of these natural knowledge processes within an organization in order better to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization. That is the “what” of KM. KM methods are the “why” and “how”; understanding the “whys” and “hows” is far more important than a rigorous definition of KM.

### *New Knowledge Paradigms*

**The key KM principle followed in this evaluation, and resultant recommendations, is to provide “the best knowledge to the right person at just the right time.” Though this axiom seems trivial and obvious, the true implications are not. Here’s an example.**

Below, a set of books or manuals is depicted that represents certain formal documents under study – regulations, statutes or policies, whether hard copy or electronic, that might contain some guidance, if not mandates, as to how to perform in a given situation.

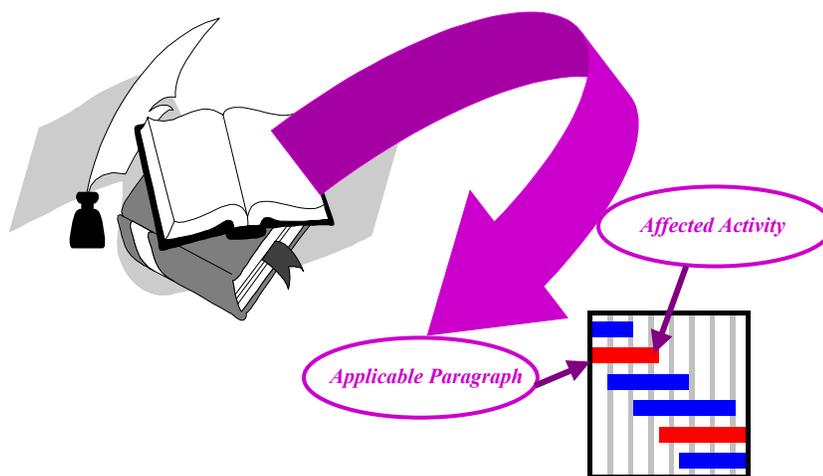
Assume there is knowledge embedded in such statutes and regulations needed for performing certain activities, as indeed there is. Responsible practitioners/knowledge workers within the organization should be knowledgeable of these constraints or guidelines; they should acquire this knowledge. It is probably published in some manual, provided in some new employee introduction or available in its entirety on some Intranet page.

The key question is, “What is the real requirement and how will it be met?” In light of “the best knowledge to the right person at just the right time” the best solution is, “Don’t provide a copy of the manual to everyone. Rather, provide the pertinent section of the statute, regulation, or policy (best knowledge to the one in need) and define how it applies to the task at hand.”

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Upon reflection, one might decide to determine the applicability of the statute to various activities and make that specific knowledge readily available to the affected parties. Question: What is your preference? Should we make the entire statute available to affected parties, such as electronically available on an Intranet site, or merely make available the section pertinent to the task at hand, possibly with an interpretation, and make it available to staff doing the task to which the statute applies? The answer is obvious when thought of in this way.

## Application of New Knowledge Paradigm: Formal Documents - Regulations, Statutes, and Policies



The application of “*the best knowledge to the right person at just the right time*” has even more powerful implications for training.

For instance, we believe a “learning” module, besides including announcements (information) about conferences, workshops and course availability, should include the actual courses (knowledge) associated with the tasks and expertise needed by UNDP staff. To implement such a recommendation concerning individual learning, a key ingredient in organizational learning, the activities of the Learning Resources Centre will need to be refocused and aligned with the KM initiative, especially with the above imperative.

### ***Knowledge Management Methods***

There is not space in this document to even summarize the growing body of KM methods, the full life-cycle methodology to facilitate successful KM. The KMCI is documenting the best practices and lessons learned of its certified practitioners and populating a knowledge base with this knowledge. Screen shots of the KM methods can be seen at the end of this Annex, as part of the discussion of knowledge bases, one type of repository for explicit knowledge.

### ***Knowledge Management Models and Principles***

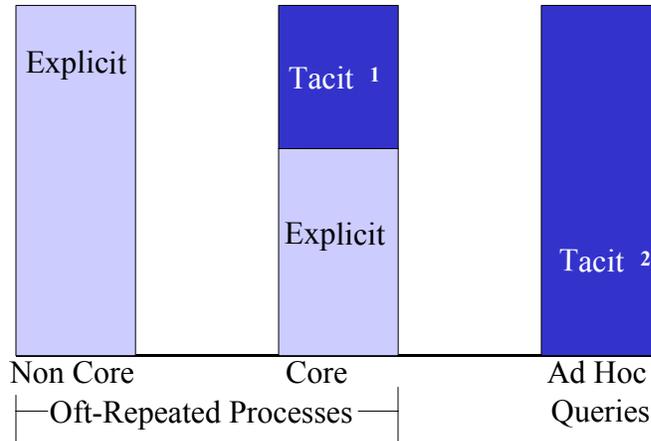
Many principles and models that are directly applicable to UNDP are beginning to emerge from the world-wide body of KM work. Models make visual and force consideration of certain proven principles. Here are two models that have a bearing on UNDP SURF system evaluation and design.

**Knowledge base content.** This model focuses attention on the types of knowledge needed, based on the types of UNDP processes performed. UNDP, despite operations in diverse countries, is far from an ad hoc operation. Three imperatives emerge from this analysis: Need for and ability to provide faster response times, and more self sufficiency, all based on construction of knowledge bases for repeatable processes.

**Type of process impacts, response time and self sufficiency.** UNDP has fundamentally two types of processes and three types of knowledge. UNDP’s processes are either core (critical to mission success, such as managing a programme) or non-core (administrative). Both types of processes are amenable to process documentation to enhance performance. UNDP’s knowledge is 1) core; 2) non-core process knowledge; or 3) substantive knowledge, addressed in the model below.

## Type of KBase System Content

(Explicit vs. Tacit Knowledge by Process Type)



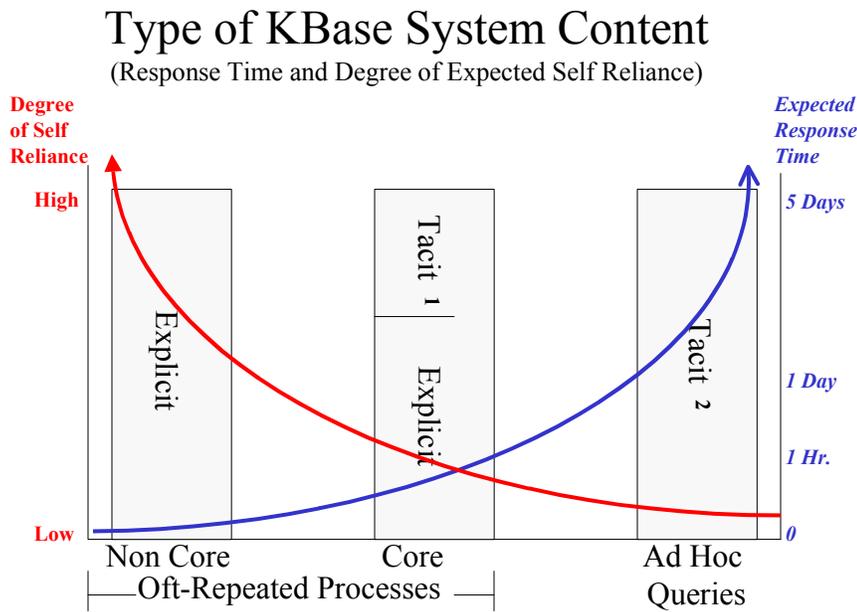
**Figure 1.** Oft-repeated non-core and core processes allow for much explicit knowledge codification of those processes into KBases, while ad hoc processes rely on implicit or tacit knowledge.

- 1) Specific Experts – Solve process-focused needs not yet codified.
- 2) Domain Experts – Provide general expertise for unusual (ad hoc) needs.

**Non-core processes:** Administrative support processes (e.g. accounts payable, personnel benefits, travel expense processing, facilities management) eventually become automated, allowing proven business rules and technology to replace human intervention.

**Core processes:** Mission critical or comparative advantage processes (e.g., programme management, provision of substantive expertise). To the best of one’s ability, it is advisable to document/apply one’s own or industry existing best practices to each activity of the process, while experimenting with new techniques to continuously discover and integrate emerging best practices. Such ongoing process management and evolutionary improvement of component activities does not preclude radical reengineering of the entire process, if warranted, based on dramatic market need changes or infusion of new enabling technology.

**Ad hoc processes:** Newly emerging or evolving processes, processes with such component variability that components/activities cannot be predicted, or processes to meet a high level of random ad hoc knowledge needs. Oft-repeated domains should be anticipated and catalogued for future access. Trends in ad hoc needs should be monitored.



**Figure 2.** The ability to codify knowledge into KBases enables a faster response time for oft-repeated processes, based on an expected much higher degree of self reliance. Conversely, if the KBase is well constructed, higher self reliance should result in lower response times and greater user satisfaction.

**Promotion of Self Service**

*The SURF system design must consider more self-reliance in its knowledge service offerings.* The SURF system, as presently conceived, runs the risk of eventual implosion. The more successful it becomes in providing its labour-intensive services to COs, the more its services will be demanded. Such demand may overload the capabilities of the SURF staff and cause an eventual decline in the quality of services. Therefore, the SURF system must evolve toward a

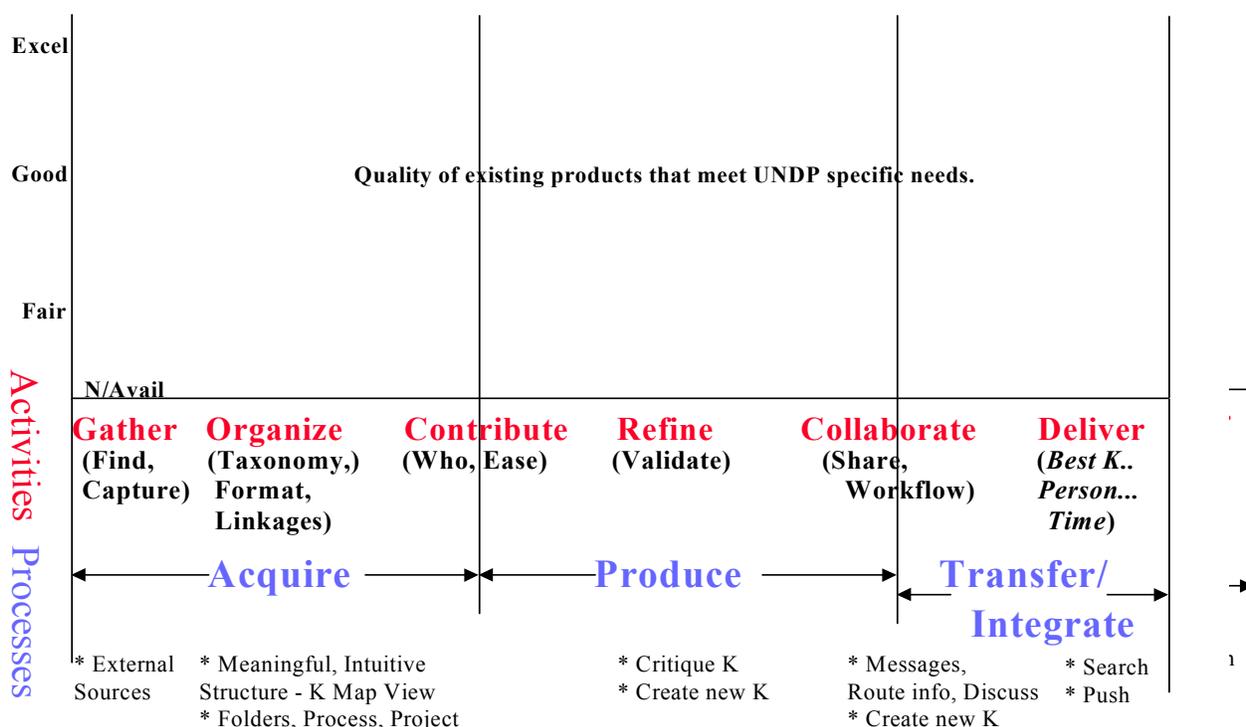
much higher component of documented (codified) knowledge and information, directly accessible to users without the need for SURF staff intervention. Also, there is evidence that CO requests imply reliance on the SURF for knowledge that the CO should already have, or COs ask for the performance of tasks that they themselves should do. SURF staff cannot become adjunct staff.

**Knowledge collection.** *UNDP’s KM system, SURF or otherwise, needs a dual knowledge capability.* The SURF system needs to foster collaboration as before, but also focus more on the ability to create **knowledge repositories** that can be designed to be essentially self-service resources. The self-service capability can be obtained by either a user-friendly search engine on a randomly arrayed repository of documents; or by a (manual) search of a categorized, hierarchical knowledge base. (Categorization examples are the Dewey Decimal System for libraries and Yahoo’s topical categories for the Internet.) Under either search scenario – search engine or categorization – the SURF system must focus on knowledge collection, the **enrichment of UNDP’s explicit knowledge base**. Therefore, the SURF system must both connect (foster collaboration) and collect reusable, demanded knowledge artefacts if it is to realize its full potential and deliver expected results.

**Types of knowledge process/activity.** This model focuses attention on types of knowledge processes/activities performed within an organization to satisfy its knowledge needs. UNDP knowledge processes span the full spectrum, from gathering (from external sources) to internal collaboration (sharing and workflows) to delivery (best knowledge to the right person at just the right time).

The selection of existing proven products to meet UNDP needs across this knowledge map is beyond the scope of this evaluation, but such a model, or its equivalent, should be an outcome of the present technical evaluation.

## Knowledge Requirements Mapping



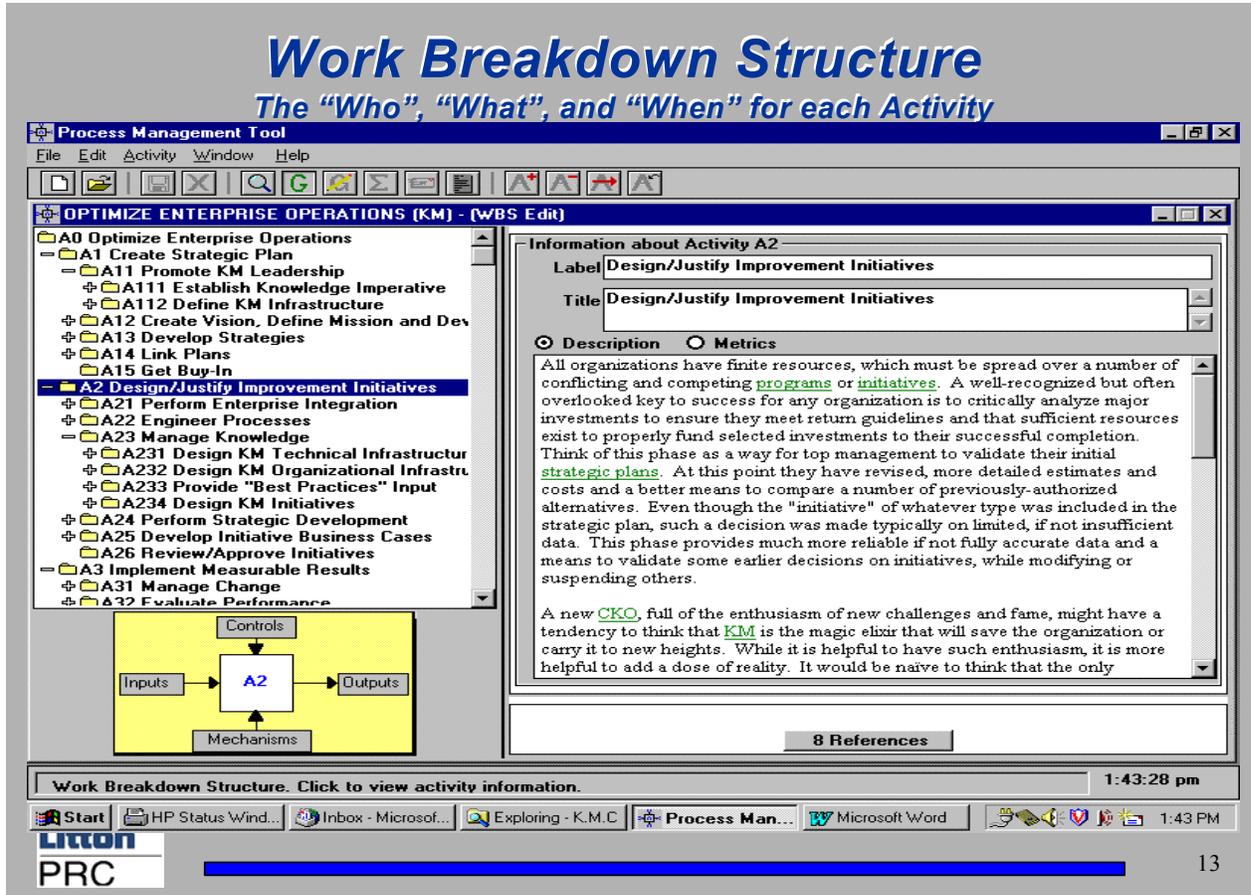
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***Other Knowledge Management Principles Applicable to UNDP***

- **Collaboration.** Knowledge collaboration is a distinctly human trait that must be fostered if a KM initiative is to be a success. Collaboration is optimized if mechanisms mirror normal human interactions in social, trust and advice nets.
  - **Documented knowledge.** Knowledge must be made explicit if it is to be leveraged. Leveraging methods include training, procedure manuals best practices, etc.
  - **Repositories.** Documented knowledge can be stored in many ways, dependent on search engines or cleverly organized for intuitive access. Meaningful organizing schemes include: taxonomies and sub-categorizations of domain knowledge and activity decomposition models for process-based knowledge, such as much of UNDP's programme management.
  - **Process orientation.** Organizations perform processes. KM must focus on them for improvement. Every recent, proven business improvement initiative recognizes the importance of process. Examples range from Total Quality Management (TQM) which is continuous/evolutionary process improvement, to Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) which is radical process redesign, to ISO9000 which is process documentation for continuous improvement, to the Software Engineering Institutes Capability Maturity Model, which urges progression up a process maturity curve.
  - **Urgency.** Speed of response is critical to success in most applications.
  - **Knowledge bases.** One of the two types of explicit categorized knowledge repositories are manually searchable knowledge bases (KBases). One example is shown below to highlight what is possible. This knowledge base was designed for the U.S. Department of Defense and is being used at NASA as well. The examples shown include the KM methods knowledge base being developed by the KMCI. The KBase has two views, the work breakdown structure (WBS) and references, which include, metaphorically, the books of knowledge. Such process-oriented knowledge bases are particularly powerful for complex processes such as research flight missions (NASA) and comprehensive, newly emerging processes – KM methods (KMCI), but they are practical for less complex processes when heavy turnover demands create training burdens, such as with nationals in COs. Variations on the process orientation shown include domain knowledge if suitable sub-categorizations can be determined, which is typically the case.
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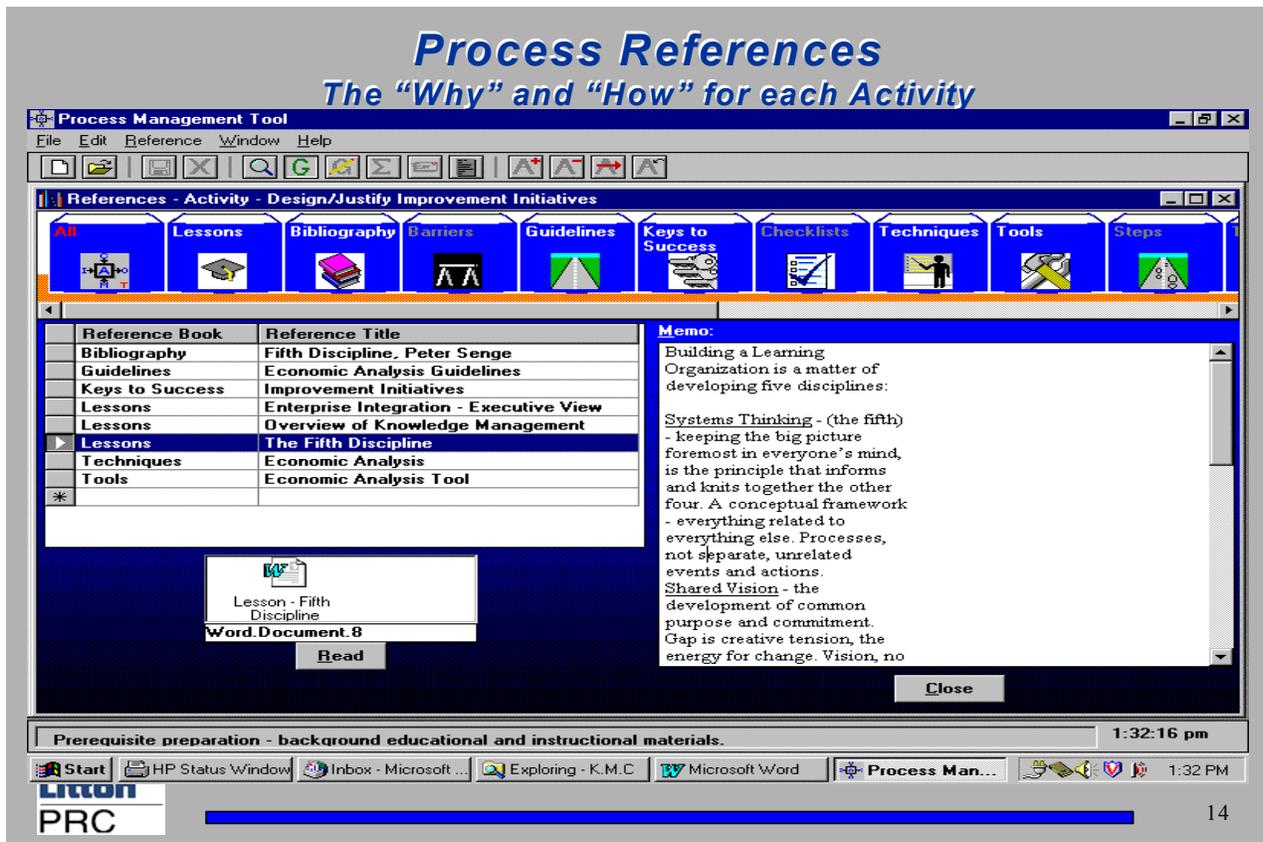
**Figure 3.** Process Knowledge Base Work Breakdown Structure. In this tool, the knowledge base is comprised of two components, a work breakdown structure (WBS) and references – the books of knowledge. (See Figure 4 below.)

The WBS is a hierarchical listing of all the activities comprising a process. For each activity, the right-hand window can display the “Description” or “Metrics.” The right-hand window can also display the inputs and outputs and other requirements to perform the activity.



**Figure 4.** Process Knowledge Base References – In this tool, knowledge references are metaphorically shown as the “Books of Knowledge.”

The “References” in the “Books of Knowledge” include the important knowledge needs to satisfy users – the performers of the process. Research has shown that Lessons, Bibliographies, Guidelines, Keys to Success, Checklists, Techniques, Tools, etc. are typically the most demanded knowledge needs.



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## Annex 7

### Make the KM Vision Operational in UNDP

Many proven principles and models are beginning to emerge from the world-wide body of KM work. They are summarized above in Annex 6 – KM Fundamentals. This Annex focuses on those proven guidelines for success in institutionalizing KM, making the KM vision operational within UNDP.

UNDP needs to: focus on creating a KM vision that includes a call to action; spread top management’s KM enthusiasm throughout all senior management and employee ranks; and ensure all strategies, KM and otherwise, are aligned toward UNDP’s overall vision, of which KM is a part. Essentially, it is recommended that UNDP become a learning organization, with the enriched SURF system as the technology and organizational enabler – the KM component of the UNDP vision.

This imperative to institutionalize KM will require a **policy statement** that includes this strategy, further to the Business Plan. This initial strategy statement and other associated actions will launch the enriched KM initiative, to be followed right away by an “awareness campaign” and continuously reinforced thereafter in word and deed.

An awareness campaign is a traditional component of a new initiative. Most actions: creating awareness, explaining “what’s in it for me (WIFM),” carrying out re-organizations with associated titles, new names and labels, etc. are traditional. However, much confusion exists within UNDP about the true operable definition and benefits of KM. *Therefore, KM training is especially needed as well.* Here is a brief overview of the learning needs and benefits to be gained from training, by employee group.

#### **KM training**

Essentially, four levels of KM knowledge are needed within UNDP.

- Senior executives (and thought leaders, explained more fully in Annex 5), as change agents, are critical to the direction, communication and success of KM implementation. They need to know the fundamentals of KM and how to globally leverage KM and justify it against other desirable, yet competing initiatives.
- Key KM Managers (CKM, Surf Coordinators), as the KM system designers and enablers, are the backbone of organizational learning and innovation. They need operational skills to design and run the KM system and to foster innovation.
- KM users are the knowledge workers. They need training to motivate them and optimize their ability to create and share knowledge.
- Other UNDP staff. Though all UNDP employees will not be involved in the primary technology-enhanced SURF initiative, all need awareness of what is going on.

Here is a more detailed description of the recommended KM training programme.

**Executive fundamentals.** Top and senior management should all attend a KM primer, customized if possible to the UNDP environment, and probably consisting of at least **two to**

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**four hours of instruction, one day preferred**, at the executive level. The specific objectives of the executive primer include:

- *Basic KM definitions - knowledge, knowledge processes, knowledge management*
- *New paradigms and models operable in the knowledge era*
- *Models - functionality of collaboration and knowledge repositories - KBase tools*
- *Overview of an advanced KM framework that will be executed by the CKM*
- *Justification for KM*

Overall, the essential outcome is for executive team commitment to KM and awareness of executive leadership requirements for KM programme success.

**Key KM Managers.** The new “CKM,” if appointed, and all key SURF staff need operational KM skills. Such training could be for about **five days**, and preferably taken together by those involved to build esprit-de-corps and mutual trust within a group that will be working together from afar. Such team building synergy typically takes a minimum of three days of workshop teaming. The most-trusted advisors – thought leaders – may need to be included in some of this more rigorous training, depending on their organizational positions.

The specific objectives of the KM Manager training include:

- *Basic KM definitions – knowledge, knowledge processes, KM, but in more depth than the executive-level training*
- *New paradigms operable in the knowledge era – their applicability to UNDP;*
- *Models – functionality of collaboration and knowledge repositories, especially KBase tools, which are new to UNDP*
- *An advanced KM framework – the methodology that will be followed to fully implement KM in UNDP – especially in-depth for the CKM*
- *Appropriate analytical KM tools will be introduced to those of the group in need of them – assessments, technology specification, etc.*
- *Example applications*
- *Justification for KM*
- *Creation of a KBase – for those responsible for daily enrichment of the KBase (SURF Coordinators)*

Overall, the essential outcome will be for the KM management team to completely understand and have the ability to implement needed KM functionality for KM programme success.

**KM users.** All active users of the KM system should be trained, including in some KM fundamentals and specifics on optimization of the KM mechanisms included in the KM solution. Depending on features of the ultimate KM design, this should take from four hours to one full day. Distance learning may be an appropriate technique to use, unless an efficient schedule can be established based on planned CO regional meetings.

**KM awareness.** All UNDP staff will receive knowledge of the KM initiative based on the awareness campaign. If well prepared, awareness material might prove adequate for many employees and other stakeholders, without the need for formal training. This group comprises those who need to know of UNDP’s KM initiative, but who won’t be expected to work with early implementation products or services. The key point here is not to do “just-in-case-training,” which is soon forgotten. The KM programme should be geared to providing knowledge transfer about the KM initiative at just-the-right-time for that individual. The following addresses the specifics of the awareness campaign.

## **KM Awareness**

The following actions will work together to substantially increase the likelihood of KM success within UNDP.

- **Prove top management commitment.** The Administrator should make a forceful statement about incorporating KM as a mainstream process management function in UNDP, saying that he is behind it 100% and further, that he expects everyone to support this initiative. The medium for this commitment should be an Administrator’s policy and strategy paper.
- **Demonstrate how KM will benefit all.** Tell why KM will benefit not only UNDP and its clients but also each stakeholder. Everyone in the organization should participate and contribute to KM processes, utilize KM in their normal professional functions and know the reasons why they are doing it.
- **Prove backing by providing incentives.** Performance and career advancement of staff will be weighed with staff members’ contributions to KM and knowledge sharing. This incentive will have the benefit of staff members taking ownership of knowledge and making sure the UNDP knowledge base is constructively developed, relevant and constantly useful. For instance, the new *UNDP performance review system needs to have specific categories of attributes associated with knowledge sharing and creation.* A successful rewards programme should include both actual (compensation) and psychic (motivational) benefits.
- **Close doors so that there is no turning back.** There must be a “burning of bridges” so that there is no turning back once the KM journey truly commences. It has been found, and documented in numerous BPR and other Change Management implementations for example, that there is much less employee resistance if the chosen path is the only remaining path. When the World Bank decided to leverage the intellectual assets of its staff, it told the world of its new direction by subtitled itself the “Knowledge Bank.”

## **Culture and Ability to Change – People, Process and Technology**

- **Create a KM image (names and labels).** At every opportunity, names and labels of KM functions must be aligned. For instance the acronym “SURF” is excellent for an information management system using the web but doesn’t clarify the higher purpose of SURF as a true knowledge management system. Also, “Coordinator” may be a commonly used title within UNDP but it certainly doesn’t communicate the new role of a knowledge-generating, -facilitating, -sharing function. Objections to a position title

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- different from the well-understood relative position of Coordinator can be overcome if the name change is well documented as part of an overall KM campaign.
- **Launch an awareness campaign.** As is typical with many if not most early initiatives, KM awareness is a problem. Once the Knowledge Management strategy is decided upon, a key component must be an internal awareness campaign, commencing with some of the most widely read and respected documents, including the Business Plan.
  - **Continually reinforce the KM initiative within UNDP.** There have been many changes and change initiatives at UNDP. Incorporate future initiatives into KM philosophy and methods rather than introducing still another initiative. Also, show that the prior efforts have been evolutionary, not individual initiatives, as businesses in general aspire to better performance and client/customer satisfaction.

### **Gaining Comparative Advantage**

This strategic principle is critical to the success of any KM programme. The following specific recommendations are mainly external to the SURF system itself (hardware, software, intellectual content and staffing). They could be classified individually as highly advantageous, if not essential, prerequisites to a successful organization. They each contribute to the institutionalization of KM within UNDP and the advancement of the UNDP within its domain with regard to both client countries and UN agencies.

- \* **Determine and focus energies on UNDP's core competency.** UNDP consists of and performs many functions or processes. Some of these processes are core – essential to the very existence of UNDP's vision and mission. Others are necessary but not essential – they could be outsourced to someone else to do for UNDP without UNDP losing any critical capability to perform its core processes. In fact, by focusing on their core competencies and outsourcing the non-core processes, many commercial firms have substantially benefited their market penetration and overall performance.

What is UNDP's core competency? Core competencies are not always intuitively obvious. For instance, a casual observer might initially believe that UNDP's core competency is the provision of substantive expertise to the development community. Upon further reflection, substantive or thematic knowledge may not be UNDP's core competency, but rather a strong capability or distinguishing feature that supports the true competency – programme management of development activities.

Evidence of the above hypothesis is that UNDP often outsources critical substantive expertise but always manages the “project” itself, from project formulation, proposal writing, staffing, etc. to tripartite review and final presentation.

Commercial firms that have programme management as their core competency meet major client needs by integrating a team of subcontractors to satisfy a specific complex need, especially where their own capabilities may not fully meet that need. Typically, the diverse, changing, or in-depth needs of their clients are too extensive and the firm is unable to maintain enough competence to fully satisfy such diverse needs. The competency of the prime contractor is that of programme management, not maintaining expert competency in multiple or fast evolving technologies or subject matters. By focusing on the core competency of programme management, such prime contractors perfect this skill set while maintaining the capability and flexibility to find and staff the

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project with the best resources available in the market, as opposed to the best resources in their employ.

If the focus on core competencies is accepted by UNDP as a beneficial business strategy, it has consequential implications for organizational emphasis, staffing and KM support systems. As we will see below, many SURF system design recommendations are highly impacted by recognition of core competencies as a strategic imperative.

- **Affirm application of proven business improvement strategies.** KM is a business discipline that emulates the sciences – it “stands on the shoulders of giants.” There are many proven business improvement precursors to KM that need to be understood, employed or integrated into the KM strategy. Then, these complementary disciplines must be aligned with and monitored along with the more encompassing KM strategy. There are at least four such proven business improvement strategies, three of which are part of the UNDP tradition and need to be integrated or aligned with the KM strategy. These include Total Quality Management (TQM), Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) and closely associated change management, Results-Based Management (RBM), and Enterprise Integration. Other business disciplines, such as enterprise resource planning, and their potential applicability to UNDP are beyond the scope of this evaluation.
- **Other initiatives.** There are a number of other possible initiatives that can enhance UNDP’s comparative advantage. Full discussion of these possible initiatives may be outside the scope of this evaluation but they were mentioned by interviewees external to UNDP. They include:
  - Create KM alliances with other UN agencies, leveraging existing KM knowledge across these agencies within the UN;
  - Benchmark UN agencies. The best way to expand your knowledge base of proven KM techniques in your domain may be to initiate a benchmarking study among UN agencies;
  - Create a KM consortium within the UN. It is expected, but not known for sure, that UNDP may be a leader in the KM race within the UN, and that other agencies may receive more individual benefit than UNDP from the benchmarking initiative. If this is true, the other agencies may provide an opportunity for UNDP to gain recognition as a KM leader within the UN. This would be powerful recognition and a potentially leveragable attribute;
  - Benchmark best commercial practices. Depending on the outcome of the above recommendations, it may still be advisable to include other external partners in a benchmark study. UNDP cannot afford to remain in a vacuum in terms of evolving KM theory and practice.

### **Learning – KM is the Learning Organization**

Learning is at the very heart of becoming a learning organization. The review team was of the opinion that the UNDP strategy to provide formal staff training at a level of five per cent of staff time projects the wrong signal and is counter to the concept of continuous learning and learning while doing. While noting that this issue is too complex to fully present in this Annex, it suggested that UNDP should think in terms of substantially increased learning, from five per cent formal training to possibly 50 per cent continuous learning and knowledge sharing. UNDP needs to rethink its internal training programme along these lines.

**Promote Innovation – KM Means Innovation**

Of the three core knowledge processes – acquire existing knowledge, produce new knowledge, and transfer/integrate both into the organization for use – the most often overlooked is the production of new knowledge – innovation. While considered too complex to fully present in this Annex, the team suggested that UNDP should attempt to benefit from recent KM initiatives in this area. The CKM is a likely candidate to promote innovation within UNDP. The CKM can acquire training and begin to apply evolving “innovation” techniques. Aggressive activity in this area of opportunity was recommended for UNDP.

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## Annex 8

### Financial Implications of SURF Evaluation Recommendations

An evaluation that makes substantive recommendations should provide some level of justification for major changes, i.e. what is it going to take to get from the before (as-is) to the after (to-be), and is the change warranted considering the expense? Such a justification is outside the scope of the original TOR, but here are some important considerations with some very rough-order-of-magnitude numbers.

**(i) KM imperative.** KM is not a UNDP luxury; it is an imperative as UNDP migrates upstream. Therefore, the analysis is not a conventional return on investment (ROI) scenario: whether the expense will provide suitable investment return; that is a given. Rather, the strategic question is: “do these recommendations provide clearly sufficient KM to make UNDP a world class provider at the lowest possible initial/ongoing KM system cost?” Once established, additional recommended KM initiatives should be evaluated on standard ROI justification principles.

**(ii) Cost/benefit analysis.** The above recommendations incur a few major up-front investments, while providing some areas of substantial cost savings. Here is a list of the cost savings and new investments:

<b>• Substantial Cost Savings</b>		<b><u>Annual Costs</u></b>	
	** Reduced number of SURFs (about nine compared with 17)		\$ 2,400,000
	** Reduced SURF staff qualifications (two mid-level vs. senior @ 9 sites)		900,000
	<b>Total</b>		<b><u>\$ 3,300,000</u></b>
<b>• Investments</b>	<b><u>Start up Invest.</u></b>	<b><u>Annual</u></b>	
<b><u>Costs</u></b>			
<b>** People</b>			
*** Top management initiatives	\$ 25,000 <sup>a</sup>		
**** CKO plus admin.		\$ 150,000 <sup>1</sup>	
**** KM Council		25,000 <sup>2</sup>	
*** KM-specific training/workshops	50,000 <sup>b</sup>	100,000 <sup>3</sup>	
*** Rethink organizational learning	5,000 <sup>c</sup>		
*** Provide incentives		nominal	
<b>** Process</b>			
*** Map UNDP knowledge	100,000 <sup>d</sup>		
*** Establish thematic networks	50,000 <sup>e</sup>		
*** Identify/disseminate best practices	55,000 <sup>f</sup>	1,000,000 <sup>4</sup>	
*** Promote innovation		50,000 <sup>5</sup>	
<b>** Technology</b>			
*** Technology-enhanced KM system design	15,000 <sup>g</sup>		
*** Collaboration software acquisition/mx	250,000 <sup>h</sup>	30,000	
*** Knowledge base software acquisition/mx	100,000 <sup>i</sup>	25,000	
*** Enrich SURF system instruments	.	<u>nominal</u>	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 650,000</b>		<b>\$ 1,380,000</b>

Notes:

### **Start up Investment**

- a. Custom KM training – Sr. Execs, policy statement, publications, etc. – awareness programme.
- b. Custom KM training for CKO/Facilitators/SURF Coordinators (2 – 3 at week each).  
    General KM training for substantive staff (day).  
    General knowledge workers (hours).
- c. Strategy sessions - Learning Resource Centre.
- d. Mapping - Four man-month effort – midlevel staff.
- e. Collaboration training and some practice with threaded messages.
- f. Build initial knowledge bases (closely tied to mapping).
- g. KM training for technology staff and strategy/system design sessions.
- h. Includes full functionality software suites, not necessarily needed. Ongoing MX at 20%.
- i. Custom-designed knowledge base. Ongoing support and enhancements.

### **Ongoing Costs**

1. Fully-loaded salary for CKO. Assume in-house person rather than recruit from outside.
2. Travel and outside participants.
3. Ongoing training/workshops for key KM staff – SURF Coordinators and Facilitators.
4. Aggressive campaign to document best practices and continually enrich knowledge base. Should be performed by TG facilitators (substantive knowledge) and SURF Coordinators (process knowledge). Therefore, may not be an actual incremental cost depending on what trainers were/are chartered to do. However, since there will be more Facilitators than planned under the SURF assumptions (possibly 10-20 compared with six) an incremental expense is included.
5. Training of CKO and Innovation Lab team on innovation techniques, performance measurement, etc. Incidental expenses – ongoing reports and analyses.

## Annex 9

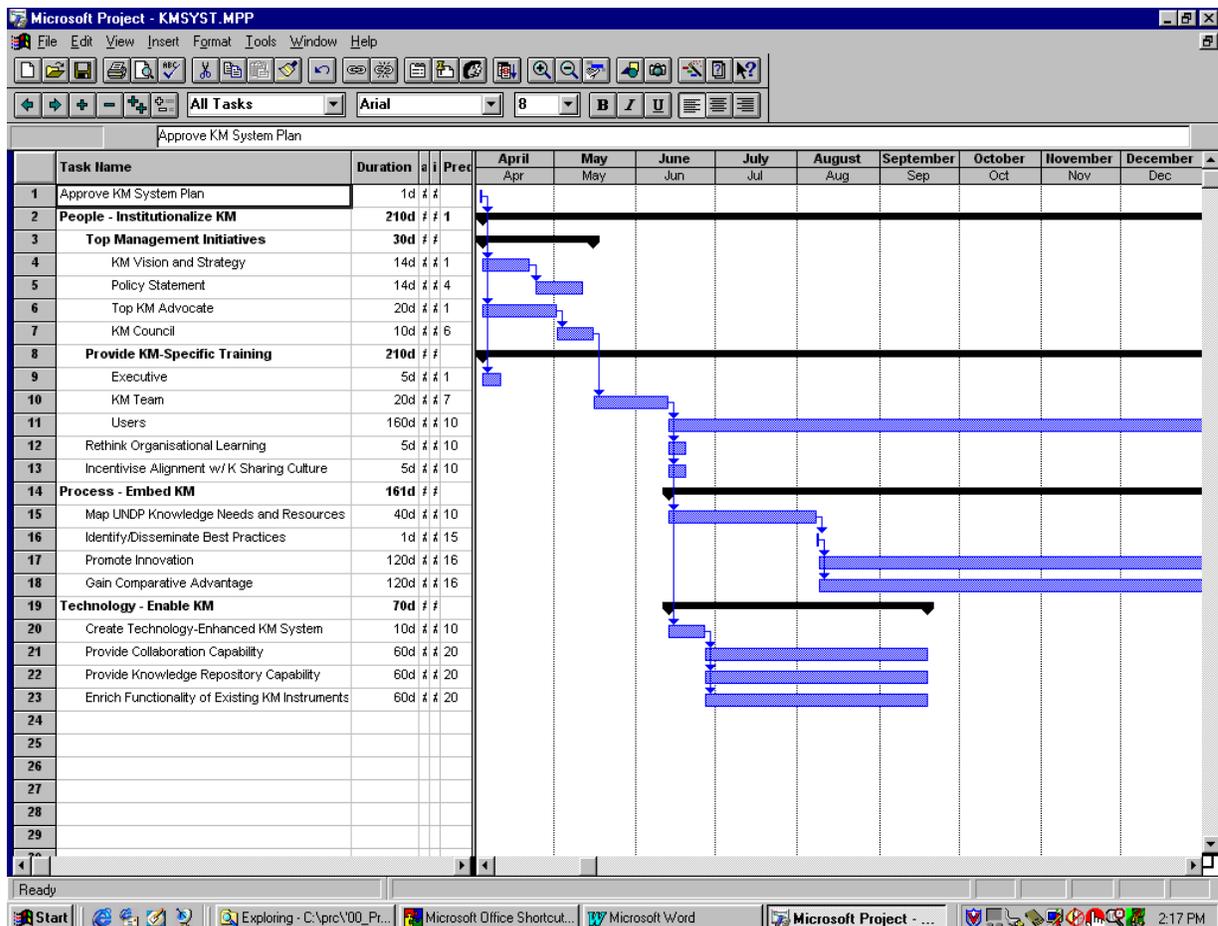
### Notional Implementation Plan for SURF Evaluation Recommendations

A notional implementation plan is shown below. It is provided with minimal commentary to merely emphasize the precedent relationships of the above recommendations. It can serve as the starting point for a much more detailed project plan, if warranted.

**People.** Primarily, top management initiatives drive downstream activities, followed closely by KM team training. Selection of the top KM person is also a driver.

**Process.** The key process recommendation, to map UNDP knowledge needs and resources, precedes other long-term, fuller life-cycle activities.

**Technology.** The creation of the specifications for the technology-enhanced KM system follows staff selection and training. Duration of the implementation of the other technology recommendations depends on build or buy decisions.



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## Annex 10

### Review Team Members and Persons Met

#### Review Team Members

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Mr. Douglas Weidner     | Team Leader - UNDP/UNOPS Consultant                              |
| 2. Mr. M. Shafiquer Rahman | Team Member - UNDP/UNOPS Consultant                              |
| 3. Ms. Sumie               | Team Member for limited duration<br>(initial period in New York) |

#### Meetings/consultations held with the following persons:

##### UNDP New York

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed (???) | Associate Administrator                             |
| 2. Mr. Fikret Akura           | DIMA  |
| 3. Mr. R. Muttukumaru         | BPRP  |
| 4. Mr. John Hendra            | BREA  |
| 5. Mr. Henry Jackelen         | Head, Microfinance, BDP                             |
| 6. Mr.                        | MDGD  |
| 7. Mr.                        | HDRO  |
| 8. Ms.                        | HDRO  |
| 9. Ms.                        | HDRO  |
| 10. Mr. S. Glovinsky          | Coordinator, Global Hub/SURF                        |
| 11. Mr. Joe Scheuer           | Deputy Coordinator, Global Hub/BDP                  |
| 12. Ms. Stephanie Hodge       | Facilitator, Global Hub/SURF, SEED, BDP             |
| 13. Ms. C. Amitzbol           | Facilitator, Global Hub/SURF, MDGD, BDP             |
| 14. Ms. K. Wignaraja          | RBAP  |
| 15. Mr. David Lockwood        | RBAP  |
| 16. Mr. Nay Htun              | Regional Director and Assistant Administrator, RBAP |
| 17. Mr. Herbert Mcleod        | Director, OSG                                       |
| 18. Mr. Bruno Pouezat         | OSG   |
| 19. Mr. Khalid Malik          | Director, Evaluation Office                         |
| 20. Mr. Nurul Alam            | Senior Evaluation Officer, Evaluation Office        |
| 21. Ms. Siv Tokle             | Evaluation Adviser, Evaluation Office               |
| 22. Mr E. Youkel              | RBEC/Bratislava Regional Office                     |
| 23. Mr. Michael Smith         | RBAS  |
| 24. Mr. Chris ..              | RBLAC   |
| 25. Mr. Svenson               | RBLAC   |
| 26. Mr ..                     | RBLAC   |

##### Pretoria, South Africa

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|----------------------|---|
| 1. Mr. David Whaley, | Resident Representative, UNDP South Africa        |
| 2. Mr. B. Sodonon    | Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP South Africa |
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| 3. | Mr. | Representative, UNICEF, South Africa |
| 4. |     | UNDP AIDS Program                    |
| 5. |     | UNDP AIDS Program                    |
| 6. |     | Program Officer, UNDP South Africa   |
| 7. |     | Program Officer, UNDP South Africa   |

### **Nairobi, Kenya**

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|----|-----------------|--|
| 1. |                 | Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Kenya       |
| 2. |                 | Program Manager & Focal Point-Gender, UNDP Kenya |
| 3. | Mr. Morgan      | Deputy Res. Rep. (Operations), UNDP Kenya        |
| 4. | Mr. F. Zama Chi | Representative, UNFPA, Kenya                     |

### **Dhaka, Bangladesh**

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|----|--------------------|--|
| 1. | Mr. Andre Klap     | Resident Representative a.i., UNDP Bangladesh      |
| 2. | Mr. Lad B. Abwooli | Assistant Res. Rep., UNDP Bangladesh               |
| 3. | Ms. Shamim Hamid   | Adviser, Officer of the UN Coord., UNDP Bangladesh |
| 4. | Mr. Hannan         | Programme Officer, UNDP Bangladesh                 |

### **Bangkok, Thailand**

- |     |                    |  |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| 1.  | Mr. Robert England | Resident Representative, UNDP, Thailand            |
| 2.  | Mr. Ngyuen         | Coordinator, SURF South-east Asia                  |
| 3.  | Mr. Alvaro R.      | Deputy Coordinator, SURF South-east Asia           |
| 4.  | Ms. Tan            | Administrative Assistant, SURF South-east Asia     |
| 5.  |                    | President, Thailand Development Research Institute |
| 6.  |                    | Senior Adviser, TDRI                               |
| 7.  |                    | Senior Adviser, TDRI                               |
| 8.  |                    | Regional Coordinator, UNDP AIDS program            |
| 9.  |                    | Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Thailand   |
| 10. |                    | Expert/staff of Com.Dev. Programme, Thailand       |

### **Warsaw, Poland**

- |    |                    |                                       |
|----|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. | Mr. Matthew Kahane | Resident Representative, UNDP, Poland |
| 2. | Prof. Dabrowski    | CASE                                  |
| 3. | Prof. Panko        | CASE                                  |
| 4. | Prof. Kosarzewski  | CASE                                  |
| 5. | Ms. U. Nowakowska  | Centre for Women's Rights             |
| 6. | Ms Alecja Seliga   | Polish Know-How Foundation            |

### **Bratislava, Slovak Republic**

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|----|--|--|
| 1. |  | Resident Representative, UNDP, Slovak Republic |
| 2. |  | Coordinator, SURF                              |
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3. Deputy Coordinator, SURF
  4. Mr. Daniel Blais Accountability Expert, RBEC Reg. Sup. Cntr., UNDP
  5. Ms. Lykke Anderson Prog. Mgmt. Officer, RBEC Reg. Sup. Cntr., UNDP
  6. Mr. Dusan Palkovic Admin. Officer, RBEC Regional Support Centre, UNDP
  7. Mr. Paul Makin Chief, MIS Division, UNIDO
  8. Dr. Jaroslav Jarunek Section of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Economy
  9. Mr. Marta Ruzickova Director, Eng., Ministry of Economy
  10. Ms. Anna Jostiakova Director General, Ministry of Economy

### **Beirut, Lebanon**

1. Mr. Yves de San Resident Representative, UNDP, Lebanon
  2. Mr. Moez Doraid Coordinator, SURF
  3. Mr. Mounir Tabet Deputy Coordinator, SURF
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