Chapter 3

An Approach to Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming

Coverage

- Proposes a programmatic approach to poverty-environment mainstreaming (section 3.1)
- Discusses the role of stakeholders and the development community (section 3.2)

Key Messages

- Successful mainstreaming requires first and foremost the involvement of many stakeholders, whose various efforts can be strengthened and connected by adopting a programmatic approach
- The approach is a flexible model that helps guide the choice of activities, tactics, methodologies and tools to address a particular country situation
- The chronology of the approach is not rigid, and there are many interlinkages between activities
- The champions taking the lead will vary from country to country and possibly throughout the process
- Close collaboration with development actors is vital for ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the initiative and for obtaining political, technical and financial support

3.1 Programmatic Approach

The aim of poverty-environment mainstreaming is to integrate the contribution of the environment to human well-being, pro-poor economic growth and achievement of the MDGs in the core business of government, overall national development and poverty reduction strategies, and sector and subnational planning and investment.

The programmatic approach the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative recommends for mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages into national development planning comprises three components:

- **Finding the entry points and making the case**, which sets the stage for mainstreaming
- **Mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages into policy processes**, which is focused on integrating poverty-environment linkages into an ongoing policy process, such as a PRSP or sector strategy, based on country-specific evidence
- **Meeting the implementation challenge**, which is aimed at ensuring integration of poverty-environment linkages into budgeting, implementation and monitoring processes

Figure 3.1 presents the activities that can take place throughout the mainstreaming effort.

Using this approach can help in prioritizing mainstreaming efforts in a specific national context and seeing more clearly how different activities and tactics can be combined to achieve intended outcomes at different stages in the design or implementation of development planning (figure 3.2). Also, it can help structure programmes adopted by governments to achieve effective mainstreaming over a sustained time period—often building on more diverse and short-lived activities adopted by multiple stakeholders.

As noted in chapter 1, this programmatic approach should be considered a **flexible model** to help guide the choice of activities, tactics, methodologies and tools in a particular country situation. Depending on the context and collective progress made to date with respect to poverty-environment mainstreaming in the country, some activities might be implemented in an accelerated manner or skipped; their sequence is not rigid either. Each component builds on previous activities and work carried out in the country. The process is iterative, with many interconnections between activities. Stakeholder engagement, coordination with the development community and institutional and capacity strengthening take place at all stages, from inception through policy development, implementation and monitoring.

Examples: Iterative Approach

- The development of poverty-environment indicators builds on the targets set in policy documents while mainstreaming poverty-environment issues into policy processes.
- The monitoring system aims to inform the integration of poverty-environment linkages into policy processes.
- Budgeting relies on the development and costing of policy measures.

This approach also provides a framework to mainstream specific environmental issues—such as climate change, chemicals management, sustainable land management, sustainable consumption and production, and water resource management—into national development planning. Box 3.1 provides a checklist of outcomes to be achieved throughout the application of the approach.

Figure 3.1 Programmatic Approach to Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming

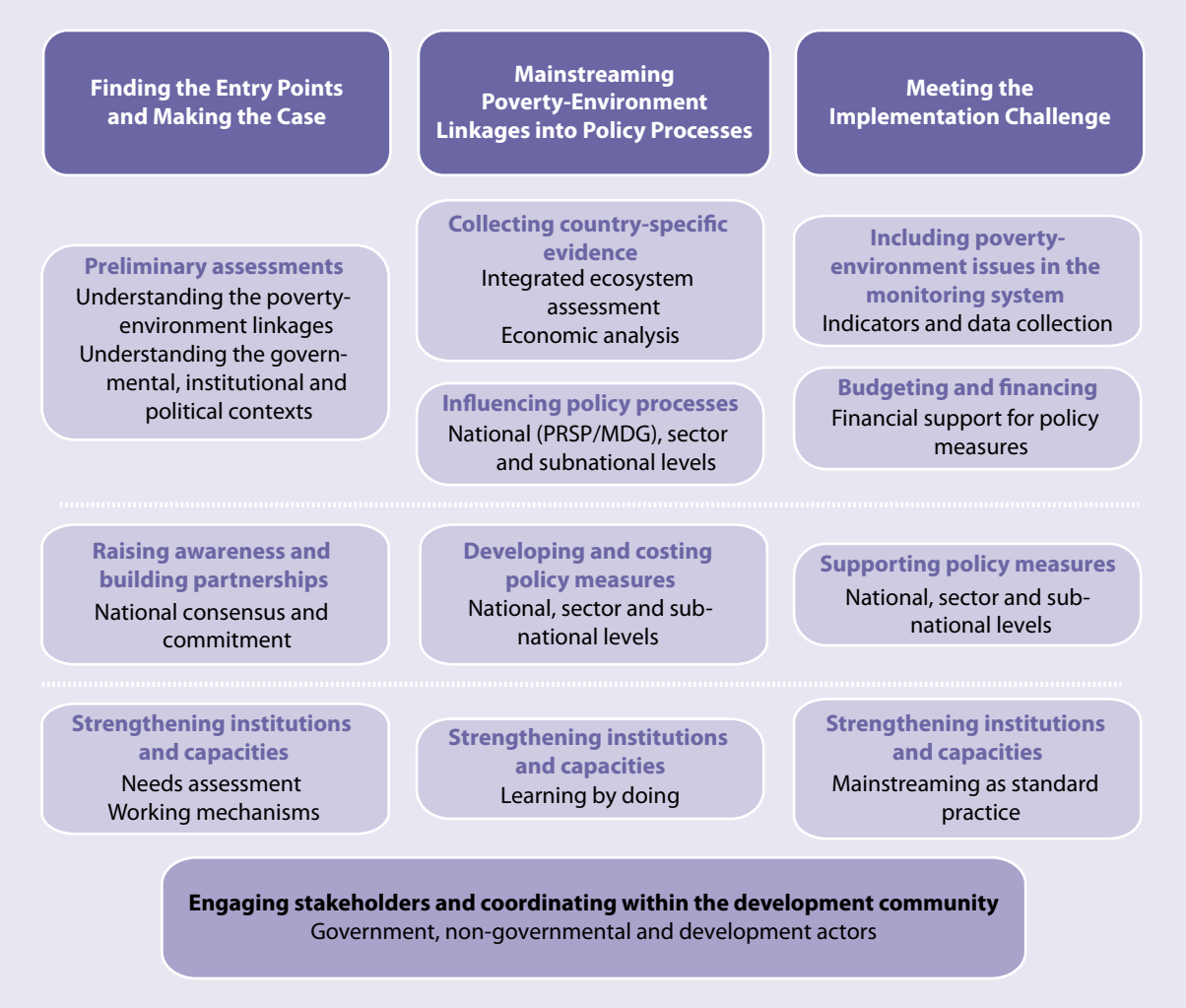
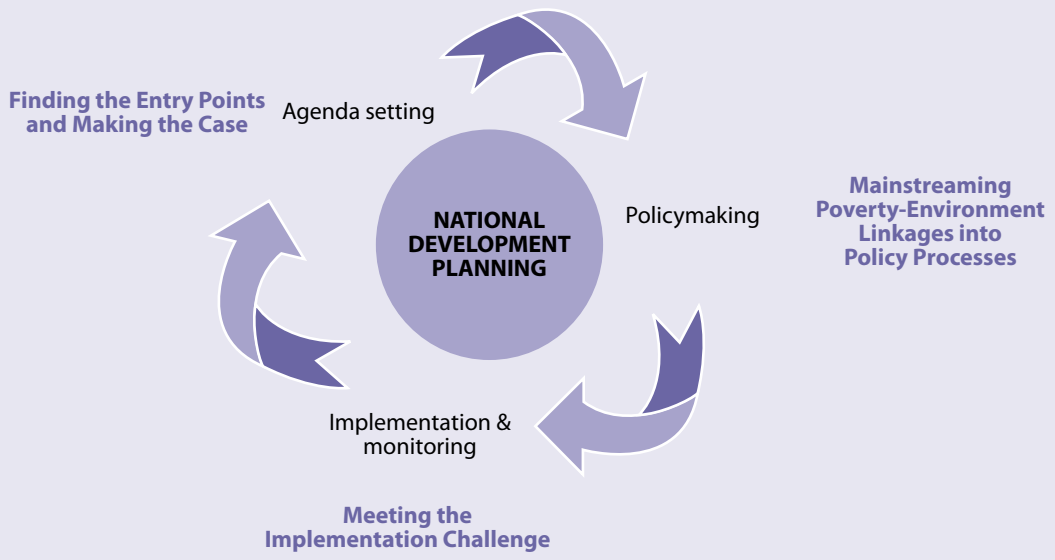


Figure 3.2 Relationship of the Programmatic Approach to the National Development Planning Cycle



Box 3.1 Progress Checklist for Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming

Finding the Entry Points and Making the Case

- ✓ Entry points for poverty-environment mainstreaming agreed on and related road map taken into account in the workplan for the following stage of the effort
- ✓ Key ministries (e.g. environment, finance, planning, sectors) relevant to the agreed entry points are members of the steering committee or task force of the poverty-environment mainstreaming effort
- ✓ Poverty-environment champions liaising with in-country donor coordination mechanisms
- ✓ Activities to be implemented in collaboration with finance and planning or relevant sector ministries included in the workplan for the following stage of the effort

Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into Policy Processes

- ✓ Country-specific evidence collected on the contribution of the environment to human well-being and pro-poor economic growth
- ✓ Poverty-environment linkages included in the working documents produced during the targeted policy process (e.g. documents produced by the working groups of the PRSP or relevant sector and subnational planning processes)
- ✓ Environmental sustainability included as a priority in the completed policy documents of targeted policy process (e.g. PRSP, MDG strategy, relevant sector or subnational plan)
- ✓ Policy measures to mainstream poverty-environment linkages costed by finance and planning or sector ministries and subnational bodies

Meeting the Implementation Challenge

- ✓ Poverty-environment indicators linked to policy documents of national development planning integrated in the national monitoring system
- ✓ Increased budget allocations for poverty-environment policy measures of non-environment ministries and subnational bodies
- ✓ Increased public expenditures for poverty-environment policy measures of non-environment ministries and subnational bodies
- ✓ Increased in-country donor contributions for poverty-environment issues
- ✓ Poverty-environment mainstreaming established as standard practice in government and administrative processes, procedures and systems (e.g. budget call circulars, systematic public environmental expenditure reviews and other administrative procedures and systems)

Long-Term Outcomes

- ✓ Institutions and capacities strengthened for long-term poverty-environment mainstreaming
- ✓ Conditions for simultaneous improvement in environmental sustainability and poverty reduction enhanced

Finding the Entry Points and Making the Case

This group of activities sets the stage for mainstreaming. It includes activities designed to help countries identify desirable pro-poor environmental outcomes and entry points into the development planning process as well as those aimed at making a strong case for the importance of poverty-environment mainstreaming. It thus consists of the initial set-up work that must take place before a full mainstreaming initiative goes forward. Key activities include the following:

- **Carry out preliminary assessments.** Mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages into national development planning starts with conducting assessments of the nature of poverty-environment linkages and vulnerability to climate change in the country, and other assessments that increase understanding of the country's governmental, institutional and political contexts. This entails identifying pro-poor environmental outcomes to be achieved and the governance, institutional and development factors that affect planning and decision-making at national, sector and subnational levels. It is also important to understand government, donor and civil society processes that shape development priorities. These preliminary assessments enable countries to identify the right entry points and possible champions for poverty-environment mainstreaming.
- **Raise awareness and build partnerships.** The preliminary assessments described above provide the information needed to raise the awareness of decision-makers and to develop convincing arguments for partnerships within and beyond government. From the outset, the priority is to engage with the finance and planning ministries responsible for economic development, and to bring the environmental institutions into the planning process.
- **Evaluate institutions and capacities.** Complementing the preliminary assessments are rapid assessments of institutional and capacity needs. This activity helps countries design a better poverty-environment mainstreaming initiative, rooted in national and local institutional capabilities.
- **Set up working mechanisms.** Establishing working arrangements that can sustain a long-term effort to mainstream poverty-environment linkages is an essential preparatory activity. It entails securing commitment on the part of participants in planning and finance ministries and those in environment-related agencies. The arrangements made must be conducive to building consensus among the diverse participants in poverty-environment mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming Poverty-Environment Linkages into Policy Processes

This component of the programmatic approach is concerned with integrating poverty-environment linkages into a policy process and the resulting policy measures. The effort targets a specific policy process—such as a national development plan or sector strategy—previously identified as an entry point. Its activities build on previous work, especially preliminary assessments, awareness-raising and partnership-building, and include the following:

- **Collect country-specific evidence.** Targeted analytical studies are undertaken that complement and build on the preliminary assessments to unearth evidence about the nature of poverty-environment linkages in the country. These studies further build the case for the importance of poverty-environment mainstreaming and help examine the

issue from different perspectives. Such studies might include integrated ecosystem assessments and economic analyses using extensive amounts of national data to elucidate the specific contributions of the environment and natural resources to both the national economy and human well-being in the country.

The likely effects of climate change should be integrated into these studies, by making use of additional analyses such as vulnerability and adaptation assessments and by taking into account the content and lessons learned when developing national communications and national adaptation programmes of action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

- **Influence policy processes.** The collection of country-specific evidence provides a sound basis for efforts to influence the targeted policy process. Armed with such evidence, practitioners are better able to identify priorities and craft the arguments necessary to have an impact on the targeted policy process (such as a PRSP, MDG strategy or sector plan) and its associated documents. This requires attention to alignment with governance mechanisms shaping the policy process, which may entail engagement with institutional working groups and stakeholders and coordination with relevant donors. The resulting output of the targeted policy process should include strategic and sector-specific goals and targets, supported by specific plans for implementation.
- **Develop and cost policy measures.** Once poverty-environment linkages have been integrated in the policy document, mainstreaming efforts continue with the development and initial costing of policy measures. These measures might be systemic interventions (such as fiscal measures), or they might be more narrowly focused, such as sector interventions (targeting, for example, agricultural legislation, promotion of renewable energy or the conservation of protected areas) or subnational interventions (targeting a specific region of the country).
- **Strengthen institutions and capacities.** Institutional and capacity strengthening occurs throughout the mainstreaming initiative and is accomplished through tactical capacity-building, including the sharing of analytical results, policy briefs, on-the-job learning and more formal types of training. In addition, demonstration projects can illustrate on the ground the contribution of the environment to the economy while strengthening institutions and national capacities.

Meeting the Implementation Challenge

The final and most sustained set of activities in the mainstreaming effort focuses on making poverty-environment mainstreaming operational through engagement in budgeting, implementation and monitoring processes. These activities are aimed at ensuring that poverty-environment mainstreaming becomes established as standard practice within the country and include the following:

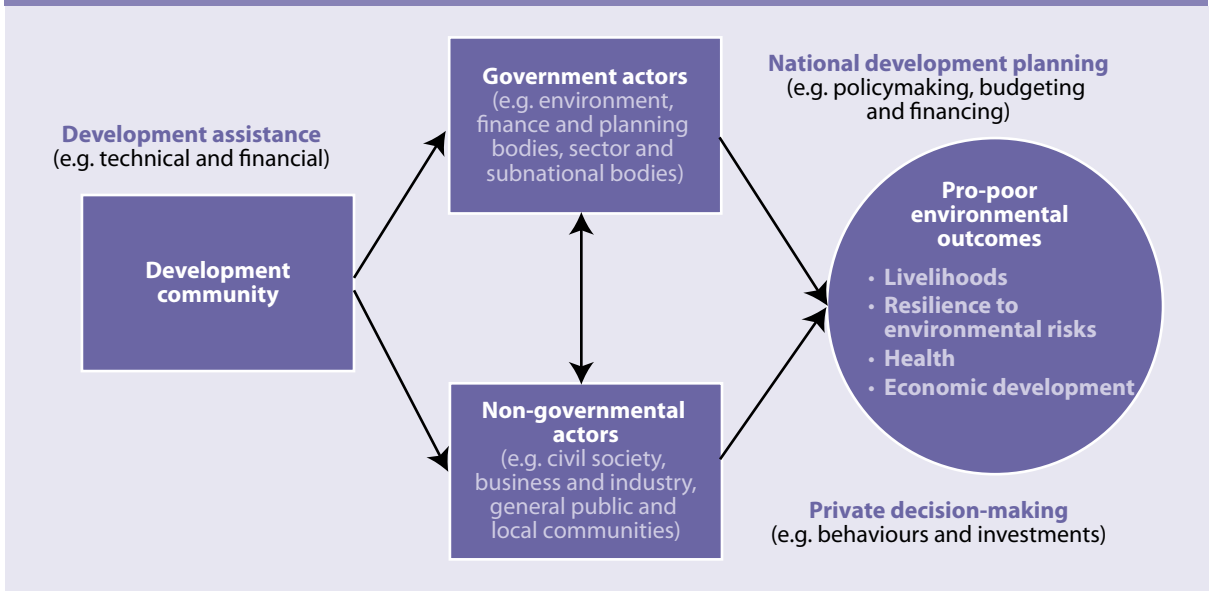
- **Integrate poverty-environment linkages in the monitoring system.** The integration of these linkages in the national monitoring system enables a country to track trends and the impact of policies as well as emerging issues such as climate change. Building on the sector-specific goals and targets included in the PRSP or similar policy documents, key priorities are to design appropriate poverty-environment indicators, strengthen data collection and management, and fully integrate poverty-environment linkages in the national monitoring system.

- **Budget for and finance poverty-environment mainstreaming.** This activity entails engaging in budgeting processes to ensure that these incorporate the economic value of the environment's contribution to the national economy and pro-poor economic growth, and that the policy measures associated with poverty-environment mainstreaming are funded. The government also needs to develop financing options, including interventions to improve the domestic financial base for environmental institutions and investments.
- **Support policy measures at national, sector and subnational levels.** This activity involves collaborating with sector and subnational bodies to build their capacities to mainstream poverty-environment linkages within their work and effectively implement policy measures at various levels.
- **Strengthen institutions and capacities.** In order to strengthen institutions and capacities in the long term, it is critical to establish poverty-environment mainstreaming as standard practice in government and administrative processes, procedures and systems at all levels.

3.2 Role of Stakeholders and the Development Community

Successful mainstreaming requires the engagement of many stakeholders, encompassing government and non-governmental actors and the broader development community (including United Nations agencies) operating in the country. Focusing on the pro-poor environmental outcomes to be achieved, a mainstreaming effort should be based on careful analysis and an understanding of the roles of different stakeholders in the country's development processes and how to best complement them, as depicted in figure 3.3. This includes awareness of the fact that stakeholders have different interests and that some may not be as supportive as others of poverty-environment mainstreaming, improved environmental management and pro-poor reforms. It is critical to understand what motivates various stakeholders and determine how to craft appropriate arguments that will appeal to different interests.

Figure 3.3 Roles of the Various Stakeholders in Achieving Pro-Poor Environmental Outcomes



Government and Non-Governmental Actors

The mainstreaming effort entails the cooperation of many government actors, each of which raises significant challenges and opportunities throughout the process (table 3.1).

An early crucial decision in the process is determining which government agency will lead the mainstreaming effort. Because of the close relationship between poverty-environment mainstreaming and national development planning, the ministry of planning or finance, in collaboration with environmental institutions, will usually be a logical choice.

Non-governmental actors can play a key role in advancing the integration of poverty-environment linkages into national development planning, and powerful advocates can be found among them. Involving these actors, including local communities, is an integral part of a mainstreaming initiative and should take place throughout the effort. Challenges that may be encountered when engaging with non-governmental actors include lack of awareness, weak capacities and conflicting interests with respect to poverty-environment policy measures (table 3.2).

Development Community

Harmonization, Alignment and Coordination

In accord with the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Rome Declaration on Harmonization (2003), development actors are striving for increased harmonization, alignment and coordination of their support to the governments of developing countries (World Bank 2008; OECD 2005: Aid Harmonization 2003). It is important to ensure that mainstreaming efforts are embedded in existing donor coordination mechanisms. This includes engaging with relevant donor groups and individual donors to ensure that mainstreaming operations are in line with the agreed harmonization, alignment and coordination principles for the country.

Political, Financial and Technical Support

Close collaboration and dialogue with various development actors are vital not only for ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the mainstreaming initiative, but also for obtaining political and financial support.

Donor spending on the environment has not kept pace with overall increases in aid budgets. Furthermore, donor spending on the environment has not been as coordinated as efforts in other sectors (Hicks et al. 2008). Lack of donor coordination and buy-in reduces the scope for a more strategic and unified approach to environmental management and poverty reduction. To develop a fully effective mainstreaming programme, it is necessary to build and embed support for poverty-environment mainstreaming in donor groups working on different sectors or issues (e.g. climate change).

In the longer term, collaboration with development actors can result in an increased number of actors joining the initiative and contributing funds towards sustained mainstreaming through various instruments—for example, in the form of a sectorwide approach.

A poverty-environment mainstreaming effort also benefits from the technical expertise of donors, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and research institutes active in the fields of the environment, development and poverty reduction.

Table 3.1 Challenges and Opportunities in Working with Government Actors		
Actor	**Challenges**	**Opportunities**
Head of state's office	• Has many priorities to deal with • May face conflicting interests	• Turn this actor into a champion • Have it take a leading role in the mainstreaming effort
Political parties	• Lack direct involvement in development planning • May have limited awareness of environment-related issues • May face conflicting interests	• Use the election process to raise awareness on poverty-environment issues • Make these issues a theme of political campaigns
Parliament	• Often not involved in all stages of national development planning • May have limited awareness of environment-related issues • May face conflicting interests	• Leverage its legislative role • Foster its advocacy role, especially for budgeting • Cooperate with (or help create) committees on poverty-environment issues (e.g. access to land)
Judicial system	• May have limited awareness of environment-related issues • Enforcement of laws may be lacking • May face conflicting interests	• Develop synergies with laws related to good governance (e.g. corruption, illegal trade, tax evasion)
Finance and planning bodies	• Linkages with environmental institutions may be weak • Environment may not be seen as a priority for economic development and poverty reduction	• Turn these bodies into champions (e.g. through permanent secretaries) • Have them take a leading role in the effort (with environmental institutions) • Develop synergies with revenue collection measures (e.g. fight against corruption, tax evasion)
Environmental institutions	• Financial, human and leadership capacities may be weak • May be focused on projects as opposed to development planning • May have an approach focused on protection rather than sustainable use of the environment	• Make use of their expertise, including in monitoring and climate change • Develop their potential to take several roles (e.g. advocacy, coordination) • Develop synergies (e.g. with obligations related to multilateral environmental agreements)
Sector ministries and subnational bodies	• May have weak capacities in regard to the environment • The lack of funding of subnational bodies can lead to overharvesting of natural resources • Environmental units are usually not well connected to development planning	• Support them in fulfilling their roles in development planning • Make use of the fact that some of these bodies deal directly with environmental assets (e.g. fisheries, forestry) • Encourage them to integrate poverty-environment linkages into plans and budgets
National statistics office	• Data collection and management are often weak • Poverty-environment data are not generally captured by regular surveys • Capacity to produce policy-relevant information may be weak	• Develop poverty-environment indicators and integrate them in the national monitoring system • Build capacity to collect, manage and analyse data on poverty-environment linkages

Table 3.2 Challenges and Opportunities in Working with Non-Governmental Actors

Actor	Challenges	Opportunities
Civil society organizations	• Capacities may be weak, especially with respect to engagement in national development planning • Often not involved in all stages of national development planning	• Make use of their expertise, including in addressing gender issues related to the environment • Help reflect local realities and bring voices from the community level • Foster their role in information collection, information-sharing and awareness-raising (from policymakers to local communities) • Encourage them in their watchdog role (i.e., in promoting transparency and accountability) • Turn them into champions for poverty-environment mainstreaming
Academic and research institutes	• May be disconnected from national development planning processes • Capacity to produce policy-relevant information may be weak	• Make use of their expertise, particularly with respect to data collection, analysis of poverty-environment linkages and collection of country-specific evidence • Promote interdisciplinary teams • Promote South-South and North-South cooperation (twinning approaches)
Business and industry	• May perceive environmental management and legislation (e.g. environmental impact assessments) as a barrier to their activities	• Mitigate the effect of their activities that have a large impact on poverty and the environment (e.g. mining, forestry, water services) • Make use of this major source of knowledge • Make use of this major source of investment • Focus on resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production (e.g. sustainable energy, water efficiency, integrated waste management)
General public, local communities and small-scale farmers and fishers	• Ability to make their voices heard may be weak or non-existent • Generally disconnected from national development planning processes	• Include the poorest groups of the population • Integrate the voices of the poorest when defining the outcomes of the poverty-environment mainstreaming effort • Make use of their knowledge of poverty-environment issues at the grass-roots level
Media	• May lack knowledge of and attention to poverty-environment issues • May lack freedom of expression	• Make use of their role in shaping the opinions of both decision-makers and the general public • Work with them to encourage public involvement in national development planning • Collaborate with them to reach out to the community level • Provide them with scientific and policy-related information

United Nations

Cooperation, coordination and harmonization among the United Nations agencies is important both for increasing effectiveness and for gaining political support for their in-country work. When one or more United Nations agencies are supporting a poverty-environment mainstreaming initiative, the programme should be embedded into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the One UN Programme (where applicable) and the work programmes of participating agencies (UNDG 2007).

As a lead United Nations agency in the field of development and poverty reduction, UNDP is in a strategic position to advance mainstreaming into national development planning with the government and other partners. Within UNDP, it is important to ensure that both poverty reduction and energy and environment practices are engaged in such an effort. Other United Nations agencies active in the country are also potential partners through their technical expertise and their existing programmes and networks.

Practitioners working on mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages can seek to partner with the United Nations initiatives described in box 3.2.

Box 3.2 United Nations Initiatives and Their Potential Contribution to Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming

UNDP MDG Support Initiative. The initiative is designed to quickly mobilize technical support from across UNDP and the United Nations system to help developing country governments achieve the MDGs. It provides countries with a menu of services that can be adapted to the development context and demands of each country, both nationally and locally, in three focal areas: MDG-based diagnostics, needs assessments and planning; widening access to policy options, including costing; and strengthening national capacity to deliver.

UNDP-UNEP Partnership on Climate Change and Development. The partnership aims to help developing countries achieve sustainable development in the face of a changing climate. It has two core objectives: incorporating climate change adaptation into national development plans and United Nations cooperation frameworks; and helping countries access carbon finance and cleaner technologies. The partnership mainstreams climate change concerns into national development strategies through a three-pronged approach, involving national development strategies, United Nations country programming and pilot projects.

UNDP-UNEP Partnership Initiative for the Sound Management of Chemicals. The partnership helps countries assess their national regimes for sound management of chemicals, develop plans to address gaps in these regimes and improve the integration of sound management of chemicals priorities into the national development discourse and planning agenda. The partnership is currently active in Uganda, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Zambia.

UNEP's Sustainable Consumption and Production Programme. The programme focuses on promoting sustainable consumption and production among public and private decision-makers. Activities aim to facilitate the processing and consumption of natural resources in a more environmentally sustainable way over the whole life cycle. In doing so, the work contributes to decoupling growth in production and consumption from resource depletion and environmental degradation. The approach offers numerous opportunities, such as the reduction of production costs, the creation of new markets and jobs, pollution prevention and leapfrogging to efficient and competitive technologies.

(continued)

Box 3.2 United Nations Initiatives and Their Potential Contribution to Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming (continued)

United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD). This programme is a collaboration among the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, UNDP and UNEP aimed at managing forests in a sustainable manner so they benefit communities while contributing to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The immediate goal is to assess whether payment structures and capacity support can create the incentives to ensure lasting and measurable emission reductions while maintaining the other ecosystem services forests provide. The programme looks to establish whole-of-government responses and contributions to national strategies to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative. The PEI supports country-led programmes to mainstream poverty-environment linkages into national development planning. At the time of publication, the PEI was working in Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam. It supports countries throughout the mainstreaming effort, from carrying out preliminary assessments to supporting policy measures. Countries can access financial and technical assistance to set up dedicated country teams based in the government lead institution(s) and carry out activities to address the particular country situation. The PEI approach provides a framework to jointly mainstream various environmental issues—such as climate change, chemicals management, sustainable land management, sustainable consumption and production and water resource management.