

Mid-Term Review of the Youth Employment Network YEN/Sida PROJECT



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CONTENTS

		Page No
	Executive Summary	4
	Recommendations	6
	Acronyms	8
	Key to stakeholders	9
	Part 1: Introduction	10
1	Background	10
2	Objectives of the Review	10
3	Methodology	11
a	Desk Research	
b	Interviews and consultation	
c	Respondents	
d	Limitations of the Review	
	Part 2: Findings	13
1	Relevance and Strategic Fit	13
a	Relevance to beneficiaries, country needs, global priorities and donor policies	
b	Significance to the global youth employment challenge	
c	Complementarity and linking to other donors	
d	Unique role of YEN	
2	Project Design	15
a	Logic and coherence of project design	
b	Relevance and clarity of objectives	
c	Definition of beneficiaries	
d	Risks and mitigation	
3	Project Progress	16
a	Youth Representation	
b	Knowledge sharing	
c	Impact and attribution	

4	Project Management	21
a	Size	
b	Monitoring and Evaluation	
c	Resources Mobilisation	
d	Staffing/Structure	
e	Communication/Marketing	
f	Role/ changing Mandate	
	Appendices:	26
A	Consultant ToRs	
B	Details of Interview respondents	
C	Force fields analysis with YEN Secretariat staff team	
D	YEN Secretariat logical framework version 2	

Executive Summary

- A Mid-term Review of the Sida funded YEN Project covering the period July 06 to December 09 was undertaken by three staff members of the Centre for International Development and Training, University of Wolverhampton between June and September, 2008¹.
- The objectives of this Review were to to assess what progress the project has made so far; to identify what has worked well, the scope for improvement, success factors and lessons learned; to clarify the focus of the remaining project duration; to assist Sida to take a decision on a possible extension of its support to YEN ².
- Based on a retreat of the YEN Steering Committee, the Secretariat, and core partners held in May 2008 in order to examine internal lessons learnt, a new logical framework for the remainder of the project was drafted. The log frame will represent the key guiding document for the future work of the Secretariat.
- This review confirmed that key stakeholders believe the comparative advantage of the YEN lies in being a fore-runner of the Paris Declaration; joining three significant multi-national agencies through a common platform. The review found that core partners confer credibility to the network in their relevant areas.
- The YEN objective to engage, educate and motivate actors to work together to prioritise youth employment on the political, economic and technical agenda is found to be a relevant one, with Youth Employment as a 'hot topic' on the development agenda.
- The YEN is said to recognise the value of youth engagement in tackling youth employment challenges at all levels and be committed to promoting youth participation. However without a formal and active youth representation mechanism YEN cannot claim to be 'walking the talk' of this philosophy.
- There is an impetus from Core partners to do more knowledge sharing. After years of advocacy YE is firmly 'on the table', entailing a greater number of best practices available to be shared.
- Regarding NAP development in Lead Countries YEN has played a catalytic role in terms of impact. "Without YEN it would have been ad hoc, it would happen but it would take a long time."
- Significantly amongst a number of similar harmonisation initiatives, "YEN is the only one to survive the test of time; it is able, functioning and provides information".
- YEN needs to find creative ways of bringing together partners for joint work, in areas where there is genuine political will. The YEN Secretariat's role is to look at specific countries and find ways for partners to work together. This coordination role was said to be "very effective at country level but weaker with core partners."

¹ Philip Dearden, Sarah French and Ella Haruna

² As stated in the Terms of Reference for the Mid-Term Review drawn up by the YEN Secretariat.

- A weakness identified is the lack of long-term planning. This naturally reflects the insecurity of funding in place.
- Monitoring and evaluation has room for improvement. The Secretariat needs to develop clear indicators of success for its own work as well as for the assistance provided to governments or other partners.
- Lack of core funding is seen to be a major obstacle/weakness to sustainability for YEN and its Secretariat. The lack of funding from the three core partners has strong implications, making the use of external seed funding to leverage further funds even more critical.
- Donor provision of core funding is not common, and Sida's provision of core funds to the Secretariat demonstrates that donors see real merit in the concept of YEN. The YEN Secretariat has been relatively successful in mobilising further resources following receipt of Sida seed funding.
- There were tensions between the previous management of the Secretariat and members of the Steering Committee. These were resolved with the appointment of a Manager through a competitive recruitment process and unanimous agreement of the selection committee. A shared positive outlook has now emerged across the partnership, with will and momentum to move forward.
- Communication channels between core partners and the Secretariat could still be improved. Partners are reportedly slow in sharing information and knowledge resources with the Secretariat.
- There are still some slight differences of understanding of the YEN Secretariat mandate by different core partners and external clients.
- It is difficult for YEN to prove impact upon employment rates and indirect beneficiaries i.e. young people. The challenge of demonstrating evidence is being addressed by the Secretariat, for example the 3rd Lead Country meeting recognized and began work on this problem at policy and program level.
- There has been a renewed commitment of core partners stemming from the Retreat event, which was considered a productive and fruitful exercise – it clarified the political commitment of the core agencies, and the new vision of need to deliver, what the partnership is about.
- This review recommends the Secretariat role be continued for a further phase, however further core funding is likely to be necessary to ensure survival of the Secretariat.

Recommendations

1. The Log frame needs to be refined

Core Partners and Secretariat revised the 2006 logical framework (version 1) and the review team were asked to concentrate their attentions on the newly developed logical framework (version 2.) Logical framework version 2 is more measurable, clear and workable, but could be refined further through use of the following tools:

- A thorough *Risk analysis* needs to be undertaken
- An *M&E framework* would elaborate the practical aspects of M&E indicators
- A *Stakeholder needs analysis process* would be useful. The Secretariat need to clarify network partners, and articulate services offered and beneficiary commitment/contribution.
- A *refresher log frame training* course to equip the whole team with relevant skills/ supported facilitation to refine the logical framework would be beneficial.

2. Evidence of impact on end beneficiaries should be addressed at higher logical framework levels

YEN is a network and hence outcomes should be measured at the level of partners and members. As the Secretariat is working indirectly for end beneficiaries (youth), impact upon this group is likely to only be measured at the higher levels of the logical framework. Whilst the Outputs are *deliverables*, the project objective (purpose/outcome) should *describe the change of behaviour or development conditions* resulting from the uptake of the *Outputs* by beneficiaries.

With improved monitoring and evaluation more useful and meaningful indicators can be used to demonstrate the achievements at the higher levels of the project. The Secretariat has acknowledged the need to develop clear indicators of success for its own work as well as for the assistance provided to governments or other partners.

3. A revised Lead Country mechanism needs to be developed

This should include clear selection criteria for Lead countries, process of commitment, rights and responsibilities of membership etc. Member States should be encouraged to provide additional financial resources to strengthen and expand the work of the YEN at the national, regional and international levels through this mechanism. It is understood that this topic is already under discussion within the Secretariat and being addressed under the revised logical framework.

4. Formal youth representation must be reinstated

An active mechanism of youth representation/consultation should be reinstated “to represent the concerns of young people on the functioning and strategic priorities of the YEN whilst supporting youth participation in the development, implementation and review of youth employment policies at the country level”³ It must be established at what level and through what medium, this should operate (SC, regional, national) and then steps must be taken to implement the mechanism.

The review team propose a blend of face to face representation to offer a constituency-lead steer on YEN decision making; this should be combined with web-based new media approaches to empower youth and youth support groups to exchange information and access YEN resources.

³ YEN website <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/object/index.htm>

5. Communication and marketing channels can be improved

Although strides have been made to improve exchange of information amongst the YEN Secretariat and the three core agencies, these should be consolidated and deepened.

The current web pages do not do YEN justice, however it is understood that the website issue is being addressed under the revised logical framework.

6. Issues of staffing can be examined

YEN staff should be on secure contracts to ensure the sustainable continuation of the Secretariat's work. Secondment should be looked at from the core agencies and Lead Countries to the YEN Secretariat. This would also be beneficial to the partnership so that there can be deeper understanding and progression when secondees return to their home agencies.

7. Positive relationships with Core partners must be carefully nurtured

Communication and coordination will be key to all-important good relationships in this new phase of the project to sustain the optimism and new enthusiasm. Core partners will need to seek to demonstrate "buy in", by looking for ways in which they can resource/support YEN/Secretariat at all levels to fulfil the mandate. This commitment will ensure the sustainability of YEN. It is understood that YEN is considering the invitation of a new partner such as UNDP.

8. Sustainability of YENWA should be addressed

The hosting agreement for YENWA with UNOWA and UK funding are set to expire in 2009. Resource mobilisation is needed here, particularly as YEN presence 'on the ground' in West Africa is seen as a key success of YEN by many stakeholders. The current budget has meant that operations in West Africa have taken place on a small scale.

9. Newfound optimism should be capitalised on

This review recommends that YEN Secretariat should be extended, the recent retreat was a productive and a fruitful exercise – it clarified the political commitment of the core agencies, and the new vision of what the partnership is about.

There is a genuine feeling of optimism and a good spirit in the entire network for moving ahead. One respondent stated that "the 'glass is more half full than half empty". 'The new Manager is said to be reflecting the 'new values', and bringing core partners together with "new enthusiasm and new clarity".

Respondents unilaterally noted that the new climate and signals from the key partners that they are interested meant that now would be a wrong time to call a halt to the project. Partners who six months or one year ago would not have supported continuation of the project appear to now be fully on board.

10. Work of the Secretariat should be extended in a new phase

Given the identified need for donor harmonisation facing youth employment issues, the current positive spirit of partnership and needs of YEN for coordination and facilitation, this review recommends the Secretariat role be continued for a future phase. Stakeholders generally advocated that YEN Secretariat needs another five years mandate and funding with set goals to reach in five years.

This review notes that there is a clearer sense of direction for phase 2 within the Secretariat. The use of Sida seed funding to leverage further funds has been critical; although there has been some degree of success in mobilising funds, further core funding is likely to be necessary to ensure survival of the Secretariat.

Acronyms:

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIDT	Centre for International Development and Training
DG	Director General
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (federally owned enterprise, supports the German Government in achieving its development-policy objectives)
HLP	High level panel
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LC	Lead Country
M and E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOV	Means of Verification (logical framework)
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator (logical framework)
SC	Steering Committee
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organisation
UNOWA	UN Office for West Africa
WB	World Bank
YCG	Youth Consultative Group
YE	Youth Employment
YEN	Youth Employment Network
YEN Sec	Youth Employment Network Secretariat
YENWA	Youth Employment Network West Africa
YEP	Youth Employment Project (ILO)

Overview of stakeholders:

Youth Employment Network (YEN): was created under the impetus of the Millennium Declaration, where the largest gathering of Heads of State and Government ever met at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 and resolved to "*develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.*"

YEN Secretariat (YEN Sec): is the Secretariat for the YEN hosted at ILO, Geneva.

High Level Panel (HLP): Provided overall policy guidance and strategic direction to the work of the YEN from 2001 to 2006.

Core Partners: the **United Nations (UN)**, which brings its political mandate to mobilise governments around this issue; the **World Bank (WB)**, which brings its macro-economic policies since a healthy functioning economy is a basic pre-condition for job creation; and the **ILO**, which brings technical expertise on employment and the labour market.

YEN Lead Countries: countries that have volunteered to join the Network and made the commitment to tackle youth employment challenges at the highest level.

Youth Consultative Group (YCG): represented the concerns of young people on the functioning and strategic priorities of the YEN and acted as a catalyst and resource to support youth participation in the NAPs in the YEN Lead Countries and beyond. It was put on hold in 2006.

Network Collaborators: Organizations which work together find new, durable policy and programme solutions to the youth employment challenge including: United Nations Agencies; MFIs; NGOs; Academia; Municipal Authorities; Parliamentarians; Youth Groups; Employers' and Workers' Associations.

Steering Committee (SC): consists of one representative of each core agency partner and manages and oversees the YEN strategic decision-making.

Part 1 Introduction

1. Background

YEN is the former Secretary-General's Youth Employment Network, which grew out of the Millennium Summit where Heads of State and Government pledged, 'to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.' The YEN is a partnership which was established to jointly address youth employment challenges globally, regionally and nationally. The ILO, the World Bank and the UN joined as founding partners and since 2003 the YEN Secretariat has been housed by ILO and funded by Sida. The YEN core partners bring their specific political and technical expertise to the network and offering both convening power and a multiplier effect in addressing the common challenge of youth employment.

The former Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed a High Level Panel (HLP) of experts and practitioners to provide strategic direction to the YEN. The HLP defined National Action Plans on Youth Employment as the YEN delivery vehicle and defined the broad-based multi-stakeholder approach in formulating them. However the HLP fulfilled its mandate in 2006.

The YEN recognises young people as an asset rather than as passive beneficiaries for whom employment must be found. To this end YEN advocates that consultations with young people are instrumental. Therefore, the YCG was created in 2003. However the HLP's Youth Consultative Group, made up of major international, regional and thematic youth platforms has not been in operation since 2006.

The Objective of the work of YEN is to "engage, educate and motivate actors to work together to prioritise youth employment on the political, economic and technical agenda". YEN's role is to facilitate and share information, link significant initiatives and stakeholders, build capacity, and fulfil a key international coordinating role in operationalizing peer partnerships. This includes aims to:

- Enhance the knowledge base of the core partners and of the international community on policies and interventions to promote youth employment.
- Enhance the capacity of the core partners and other associate partners to support lead countries achieve concrete, through effective policy advice, capacity building, establishment of baselines, monitoring of progress and assessment of the impacts of policies and interventions.
- Support and facilitate the involvement of youth leaders and networks in national or regional youth employment promotion efforts.⁴

The YEN is active in 21 Lead Countries including 8 in Africa. The YEN Secretariat is described as the operational arm of the network and supports the formulation of National Action Plans (NAPs) on Youth employment in Lead Countries of the YEN. The Secretariat works as a facilitator to coordinate actors, programmes and activities, share information and manage knowledge as well as provide advice and assistance. The Secretariat comprises of 5 staff at its full complement.

With support from the Governments of Sweden and the UK the YEN launched the YEN-West Africa based in Dakar, Senegal in October 2006 which is an extension of the Geneva Secretariat. This Office aims to facilitate national strategies on youth employment; identify existing programmes and activities related to youth employment

⁴ UN Review of NAPs on Youth Employment - Putting Commitment into Action 2007

to determine synergies, build linkages and share experiences; and coordinate of resource mobilization approaches.

Based on the May 2008 retreat event examining internal lessons learnt, a new logical framework for the next 18 months was drafted. The log frame will represent the key guiding document for the future work of the Secretariat until end of 2009.

2. Objectives of the Review

In June 2008 CIDT were commissioned through open tender to conduct a mid-term review of the SIDA funded YEN project. The objectives of this review were:

- To assess what progress the project has made so far
- To identify what has worked well, scope for improvement, success factors and lessons learned
- To clarify the focus of the remaining project duration
- To assist SIDA to take a decision on a possible extension of its support to YEN

Specific research questions were posed in the terms of reference under the categories of:

- Relevance and Strategic Fit
- Project Design
- Project Progress
- Project Management
- Recommendations

3. Methodology

The methodology employed in carrying out the review included desk research, document review, telephone interviews, and on-going consultation with YEN staff throughout the study period.

a. Desk Research

Desk research was conducted across a number of sources of information provided by YEN, including:

- *SIDA Technical Cooperation document June 2006* (basis of the three-year grant)
- the July 2006-January 2008 mid-term report and the 2007 annual report submitted to SIDA
- documentation of the May 2008 Internal Planning Workshop
- the July 2008 and new project logical framework
- minutes of steering committee meetings
- *Youth Unemployment and Regional Insecurity in West Africa* August 2006
- *A Resource Directory for Lead Countries of the YEN* July 2007
- *A Practical Guide for Collaboration for Youth Employment*
- *Final report of Regional Workshop on Business Collaboration for Youth Employment in West Africa* May 2008
- *Final Report of Multi-Bilateral Programme of Technical Cooperation for BMZ* January 2008
- YEN Newsletter April-June 2008
- YEN web section on ILO website
- Youth Employment in Africa: Views and News Issue one October 2006 Addis Ababa
- Establishment of Youth Employment Network Office for West Africa (YEN-WA) Annual Report Nov 2006 – Oct 2007
- Youth Consultative Group Terms of Reference September 2006

b. Interviews and consultation

Consultation with YEN staff comprised of:

- inception meeting with the Secretariat team;
- face to face interviews with three key staff
- telephone interviews with a further 16 stakeholders, including core partners and beneficiaries
- written response preferred by two participants
- a presentation and discussion of provisional findings with the YEN team, including discussion of ways forward using the Force Fields Analysis tool (see appendix C)

The main source of data was telephone interviews. Respondents were contacted by email requesting an interview and once interviews were scheduled, respondents were sent interview questions by email in advance of the interview. Each interview took between 30 and 60 minutes.

c. Respondents

One review respondent noted that: "The YEN network was created to orient donors towards other donors, and was donor driven." This was reflected in the make-up of the respondent group. The review was potentially limited by the fact that few respondents were external to the network.

Following the initial list of 18 proposed respondents supplied by the Secretariat, the review team requested that the respondent pool be widened by addition of beneficiaries and wider stakeholders. Therefore a further nine respondents were suggested by the Secretariat and five of these were selected for interview by the review team. In the final respondent list (see Appendix B) 12 of 21 respondents comprised of Secretariat staff, steering committee members or core agency representatives, four of Lead Countries and two of donors.

d. Limitations of the Review

There were few respondents external to the Secretariat/agencies and few respondents on the 'demand' side interviewed. Some respondents on the beneficiary side had little knowledge of the wider work of YEN Secretariat. There were no end users interviewed or country visits carried out.

Part 2: Findings

1. Relevance and Strategic Fit

a. Relevance to beneficiaries, country needs, global priorities and donor policies

This review confirmed that key stakeholders believe that the comparative advantage of the YEN Secretariat lies in being a fore-runner of the Paris Declaration; joining three significant multi-national agencies through a common platform. The review found that the core partners confer credibility to the network in their relevant areas and that the YEN Secretariat has the advantage of being perceived as neutral and driven by the issue not any individual agency.

YEN gives effect to the global commitment of “developing and implementing strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work”, resolved in the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000. The stated *overall objective* is increased opportunities for young people everywhere to find decent and productive work. The YEN operations are supported by two United Nations General Assembly resolutions (December 2002 resolution on promoting youth employment (A/RES/57/165) and the resolution concerning policies and programmes involving youth (A/RES/58/133) of January 2004.)

The work of YEN is said to underpin and support all the Millennium Development goals. Within this international framework for development, Goal 8 calls for a global partnership for development and YEN was put in place as a mechanism to facilitate the attainment of this target. YEN also aims to contribute specifically under Goal 1, target 1B: to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people (effective 15 Jan 2008.)

An EU statement of support for the YEN by The Commission for Social Development (a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations Feb 2008), called for the strengthening of the YEN “in order to implement the decent work agenda”.... “Their recommendations and guidelines concerning employment of young people should to a great extent be included in strategies for the prevention of social exclusion and poverty.....”

b. Significance of the global youth employment challenge

Young people are on average more than three times as likely as adults to be unemployed globally; and many young people are underemployed with low productivity and low income. Cooperation among governments, local communities, workers’ and employers’ organizations and civil society is therefore essential for confronting the youth employment challenge and improving the lives of young people. Therefore the YEN Secretariat objective to engage, educate and motivate actors to work together to prioritise youth employment on the political, economic and technical agenda is a relevant one.

c. Complementarity and linking to other donors

The Secretariat has had some success in coordinating coherence amongst the YEN core partners and mobilizing additional multilateral and bilateral donors.

The YEN Secretariat works to strengthen policy coherence on youth employment between the Core Partners (UN, the World Bank and the ILO), within the UN system and with other partners. Its location within the ILO, is intended to harmonise the work

of the Secretariat throughout the ILO and through focal points at the World Bank and the UN to ensure Agency coherence and avoid duplication of effort. The YEN promotes the use of Core Agency products/tools in relevant projects in order to multiply their benefits, and describes itself as functioning as a 'network of networks'.

The YEN, in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), began a programme in 2006 to place YEN Associates in Lead Countries. In 2006-2007 8 countries benefitted from this programme; 7 countries were chosen in 2007-2008. Other examples of harmonised activity include:

- Support to Partner Countries of YEN Project funded by BMZ was planned in such a way as to facilitate integration with related activities of the government, employers, workers, ILO, World Bank, GTZ, and others in Senegal and Sri Lanka.
- Collaboration with WB, GTZ, UNICEF, the Arab League and Global Forum on youth training activities in Egypt
- Collaboration with UNIDO, ILO, UNDP and UNOWA on joint action and activities in West Africa with focus on the Mano River Union and Cote d'Ivoire.
- The YEN Secretariat was active in UNICEF MENA regional office on youth issues (June 07)

d. Unique role of YEN

The unique position of YEN stems from its origins by special design of the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and in being a joint initiative of the UN, ILO and World Bank. Inter-agency cooperation is an exceptional feature of the YEN, and the joining of three such significant multi-national agencies through a common platform is infrequent. Of a number of similar harmonisation initiatives between donors, "YEN is the only one to survive the test of time". The perception of neutrality of the YEN Secretariat by many governments and partners is likewise distinctive.

Donor provision of core funding is not common, and Sida's provision of core funds to the Secretariat demonstrates that donors see real merit in the concept of YEN. Enthusiasm for the particular nature of this partnership was echoed by other donors such as Danida.

The prestigious origins of YEN lie in its convening by the SG of the High Level Panel (HLP) which allowed YEN to occupy a unique position. The connected Youth Consultative Group, made up of major international, regional and thematic youth platforms was similarly appointed.

The philosophy of YEN as captured on the website is expressed in the following statements:

- The YEN views young people as partners in devising solutions to a common problem.
- The YEN will ensure that its policy recommendations support the aspirations of young people rather than impose perceived 'needs' upon them.
- The YEN will continue to work to ensure representative youth groups play central roles in the development and implementation of National Action Plans on youth employment.

However without a functioning YCG mechanism, there is not clear evidence that YEN is currently able to practice what it affirms in the statements above.

2. Project Design

The 2006 logical framework (version 1) appeared hard to measure at the level of immediate objectives, as well as assuming a rather complex and unorthodox layout. At the retreat event the logical framework was revised and hence the review team were asked to concentrate their attentions on the new logical framework (version 2), which will be finalised pending the outcomes of this review process.

Logical framework version 2 (see appendix D) is more measurable, clear and workable, however some suggestions for further refinement are made below.

a. Logic and coherence of project design

The newly drafted July 2008 log frame is relatively clear and logical and has been sensibly used to help plan out a programme of required work, with completion dates for activities clearly expressed. However some aspects of log frame 2 in its current form represent relatively limited ambition. For example a key output is that 'three knowledge sharing events have been organized'. Deliverables (outputs) need to be logically linked to the change or outcome the project is trying to bring about. Outputs should be necessary and sufficient to bring about this change.

b. Relevance and clarity of objectives

The log frame results (outputs) are clearly defined, expressed and deliverable and the OVIs are clear in most instances. Wherever possible activities have been helpfully assigned to a designated task leader. The MOV should not all be internally generated (i.e. Secretariat produced reports) and indicators at the higher levels of the log frame should include external verification.

It is the opinion of the review team that the Goal and Purpose of the log frame could be better articulated. An overall objective / mission statement for YEN is needed that is more relevant, "improve opportunities for youth" is rather vague and general. The project outcome/purpose refers to "Innovative and value added services for key stakeholders of the YEN network," which is rather inward looking. The project objective (purpose/outcome) should ideally *describe the change of behaviour or development conditions* resulting from the uptake of the *Outputs* by beneficiaries. i.e. the objective should use 'change' rather than 'action' language, articulating a change in the *development conditions* not a service from the *provider's perspective*.

Regarding the output level:

- Output 3 appears to be an activity
- Output 4, 6 and 7 seems to represent either limited or overly prescribed deliverables and could be broadened

In summary there is scope to moderately refine columns 1 and 2 of the logical framework to increase project impact, realistic ambition and measurability.

c. Definition of beneficiaries

During the course of the review, beneficiary groups were identified as following:

- YEN Secretariat's beneficiaries are the Lead Countries. Lead Countries' beneficiaries are the young people.
- Lead Countries are self selecting, they are never 'turned down'
- Beneficiaries are intermediaries serving youth employment, rather than youth themselves
- Governments are the most important group of beneficiaries

These different levels of beneficiary for the YEN and the Secretariat are not really captured in the log frame. Some review respondents expressed a lack of clarity over who the YEN Secretariat clients are. It was suggested that the Secretariat need to identify partners, services offered and beneficiary commitment/contribution. The Secretariat need to understand and map stakeholder needs by conducting an up to date stakeholder analysis process would be useful. Related issues identified included:

- Ratio of Lead Countries to Secretariat staff
- Divergent needs of each network country
- Lack of transition or completion of the process of being a Lead Country

The identification of beneficiaries is linked to the issue of monitoring and evaluation. The point was made by respondents that it is hard to judge the YEN effect on the level of employment, and therefore hard to claim ultimate beneficiaries. Conversely it is difficult for YEN to claim impact upon indirect beneficiaries i.e. young people. The challenge of demonstrating evidence is being addressed by the Secretariat, for example the 3rd Lead Country meeting recognized and began work on the issue of bench-marking at policy and program level.

d. Risks and mitigation

Within the log frame the major risks have been identified and assessed in a few cases. In total very few risks have been identified, and these appear to be introspective, not reflecting the number of important risks beyond the control of the programme. It is recommended that a formal risk analysis of the YEN project be conducted by the Secretariat.

Refresher training in the logical framework approach or a guided facilitation of the team to finalise the current log frame draft would prove beneficial.

3. Project Progress

The force fields analysis exercise with the YEN Secretariat consolidated the review findings on progress by highlighting those aspects that the team felt were most helpful in progressing the YEN aims. These included:

- Renewed commitment of core partners stemming from the Retreat event
- Clarified responsibilities/deliverables identified in log frame version 2
- Potential to link up activities and stakeholders at a country level is adding value
- Youth Employment is a 'hot topic' and there is high demand in this sphere
- With youth employment on the political agenda there are more best practices available for YEN to draw on
- Core partners are motivated to do more knowledge sharing

A review participant commented as regards to progress that: "If you see YEN as a project it is small, but its power lies in the ability to maximize what partners can do together."

The key barriers to progress were identified as:

- YEN has no identified field presence in all LCs and there is a lack of focal points
- Selection criteria and a clear commitment process for LCs needs to be developed

- The youth representation mechanism needs to be clarified and established and the appropriate operational level (i.e. Steering Group, regional, national)

One review respondent remarked that: "When the project started it was not clear how to add value, and not duplicate what other agencies were doing. This 'conversation' is still on-going but there is a sense that the answer is crystallizing." It was identified that the YEN Secretariat adds value through an approach to NAP development which places stakeholder participation and encouraging ownership at heart. It was stated that "YEN works best at the advocacy level: flying the flag, facilitating events, bringing youth employment to the forefront of development, supporting countries in their work."

It was said that YEN name recognition "is getting stronger, and the reputation is growing". Conversely one review respondent commented that "There is not sufficient demarcation of added value, the Secretariat should develop and market the YEN brand."

a. Youth Representation

The youth representation mechanism has changed during this project's duration and it is an area where many review respondents had suggestions for future ways forward.

The YEN is said to recognise the value of youth engagement in tackling youth employment challenges at all levels and be committed to promoting youth participation. The Network initially institutionalised this commitment through the creation of a constituency within the youth community, which had full and equal participation at the YEN's High Level Panel (HLP) meetings through a standing Youth Consultative Group (YCG). However the mandate of the HLP was completed at the end of 2006 and the Steering Committee of representatives of the core agency partners took on the role of reinforcing and advancing the messages of the HLP. It was reported that the YCG put forward a proposal to be an advisory group to the Steering Committee but nothing came of this. The YCG has thus been in limbo since 2006. As one review respondent commented: "Ironically, tying the YCG to the HLP put it in an ambiguous position." It was also stated that "the YCG was put on one side whilst decisions were made, it was not meant to be got rid of permanently but there are some issues with the legal status of YCG".

The YCG comprised of representatives of a small cohort of large international and regional youth organizations to provide advice and guidance to the work on youth employment. One perception is that the YCG has mostly promoted a high level contact without sufficient impact on the ground and comprised "a very traditional approach". Although it is recognised that the solution for Youth Employment cannot be given by youth alone, it is agreed vital to hear the voice of youth and incorporate youth groups in the work of YEN. If the YCG were to be resurrected, membership would need to be renewed and refreshed, and the mandate of the Rapporteur clarified. A YCG insider declared that the biggest risk to the former YCG success was the lack of clarity of its mandate.

In terms of the way forward, it was recognised that new ways of mobilizing youth are needed "there should be involvement of youth groups at partner level, through YCG or any other means". There was a wide consensus that stakeholders would like to revisit the ways of reaching out to youth and to clarify the legal status of the YCG. There is as yet no shared view as to how best to reach out to youth and the Steering Committee have called for ideas from the Secretariat. Potential mechanisms

suggested by respondents include a sub regional youth advisory body; formulating the YCG as an equal partner within the SC, use of the Web Site and its knowledge community function as a platform for interaction with country level youth networks, for example contemporary fora such as Facebook.

Effective and innovative awareness raising is being extended beyond formal consultations to include community outreach and engagement activities, for example by YENWA. “The Unit co-sponsored a visit by the French football star Mr. Liliam Thuram to 4 West African crisis countries. The visit of Mr. Thuram, the proclaimed Ambassador of African youth, brought maximum media attention and international exposure to the plight of disadvantaged youth and the challenges of youth employment”⁵

One review respondent remarked that “the Grant scheme is an excellent mechanism for youth involvement” This competitive grant scheme for youth NGOs was also noted as a “very innovative idea” at the Retreat. The grant scheme would allow the YEN to make concrete offers of support to youth organizations. It would serve as a ‘laboratory’ to test innovative projects, in order to gain insight from grassroots practitioners who have important contributions to make in addressing youth employment.

Without a formal and active youth representation mechanism “to represent the concerns of young people on the functioning and strategic priorities of the YEN whilst supporting youth participation in the development, implementation and review of youth employment policies at the country level⁶” the voice of the youth is limited and YEN cannot claim to be ‘walking the talk’ of their philosophy outlined in section 2d.

b. Knowledge sharing

YEN has produced some high-quality publications and this product development and knowledge-sharing is a role that core partners and lead countries believe should be expanded. One review respondent articulated that “Partners want to do more knowledge sharing and there was insufficient of this in phase 1.” Topics of mutual interest mentioned including issues of entrepreneurship, vocational training and private enterprise, key tools and modalities, evidence of success etc. This is recognised under Immediate Objective Two: *Institutional capacity for policy development enhanced through knowledge management and product development* in the new logical framework.

The YEN mandate is to develop and disseminate communications and advocacy products to mobilize constituents internationally. “YEN has good potential, after years of advocacy YE is finally on the table, and there are likely to be best practices that can be shared.” One key function of the network is facilitating knowledge sharing within and between the core partners and facilitating knowledge sharing with other partners, stakeholders and relevant networks. One review respondent remarked that “Communication is very important to both WB and ILO, they need to hold the debates about which policies work, what type of M&E is best etc”.

Activities to develop this knowledge sharing function include:

- Identification, sharing or establishment of Databases
- Sharing and dissemination of bibliographies and research results
- Sharing and promotion of innovations as regards impact studies and analysis

⁵ YENWA Annual Report

⁶ YEN website <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/yen/object/index.htm>

- Sharing and promotion of innovations as regards monitoring and evaluation
- Sharing and dissemination of good practices
- Policy approaches on what works and what doesn't
- Training activities

For these purposes YEN is interested in using Information Technology and websites complemented by developing communities of practices and face to face contact between experts and practitioners. One review respondent commented that "a networking platform" would be useful tool as the YEN is "supposed to be acting as a relationship broker, connecting people; it needs an online platform to enable this linking". The core partners are committed to organize conferences or workshops contributing their own resources on behalf of the YEN and as part of YEN knowledge sharing and policy development activities.

The added value of the YEN is said to be that it provides a mechanism for sharing knowledge and experience among its partners "based on the fundamental principle that all partners, irrespective of their country's level of development, has something useful to learn and share"⁷. The YEN can play an important role in facilitating communication and information sharing, linking important initiatives and stakeholders including LCs, and fill a key international coordinating role in operationalising peer partnerships

Some illustrative examples were given by review participants:

- *A Resource Directory for Lead countries of the Youth Employment Network July 2007* revised based on feedback from the field which serves to guide Lead countries through the process of meeting their commitments to youth employment at a national and global level, as well as to assist in strengthening the community of Lead countries.
- Newsletters and recipient community for newsletter has been expanded with over 1000 direct recipients. In addition the Newsletters appear on the websites of the YEN and the UN.
- Information packs on the YEN updated, and distributed to approximately 400 interested stakeholders.
- A Guide "*Joining Forces with Young People: A practical guide to collaboration for youth employment*". for youth participation in policy-making produced (Fr, En, Sp)
- Presentations were made by representatives of Lead Countries Indonesia, Rwanda and UK, sharing their country's experiences in benchmarking youth employment policies and programmes at the third YEN Lead country meeting for representatives of the Ministries of Labour and technicians who play a key role in implementing National Action Plans on Youth Employment (NAPs) in Geneva on June 10th 2008.
- The Secretariat, UNIDO and UNOWA, produced a mapping study: *Best practices, Policy Environment, Tools and Methodologies for Youth Employment in West Africa*
- The YENWA office produced a bimonthly newsletter which had a readership of over 450 individuals based in a range of organisations including NGOs, donors and government offices and UN agencies. The newsletter featured articles on topical issues and best practice, a press revue and an upcoming

⁷ *A Resource Directory for Lead countries of the Youth Employment Network July 2007*

events listing and received significant positive feedback from readers. This has been subsumed into YEN Secretariat newsletter.

c. Impact and attribution

Comments from respondents regarding YEN impact included:

- The YEN Sec has put Youth employment on the Global Agenda. 186 UN member States agreed they needed a youth action plan. There is real interest and commitment.
- There have been achievements in raising the political profile of YE, and boosting government recognition. YEN activities and products have definitely contributed to this. This awareness by Governments has led to “a mental shift” regarding youth employment.
- YEN has been a major contributor to awareness raising - if you view YEN as ‘adding up’ of what ILO, WB etc does.
- YE is a high profile issue and YEN has managed to provide focus.

An example of the high level of impact work undertaken re YE was given by one respondent as follows: “YEN participates in UN resolutions at the Commission for Social Development & ECOSOC and provided inputs to speeches for Mark Malloch Brown, UN Sec General & ILO DG”.

The approach taken by YEN has contributed to the impact described. Policy design by Lead Countries with YEN support “is more holistic and robust being inter-ministerial and more co operational leading to sustainable solutions.” Another respondent commented that “YEN piggy-backed on things happening in country such as active youth groups or active government agencies, which gave local credibility.”

However concern has been raised by a review respondent regarding the lack of completed NAPs and the rate of implementation. “There are relatively few LCs who have completed, hardly any have been implemented.” There are NAPs of 4 Lead Countries on the YEN website: Brazil, Indonesia, Senegal and Sri Lanka.

The YEN presence ‘on the ground’ in West Africa is seen as a key success of YEN by many stakeholders. An annual budget of \$100,000 specifically for YENWA was leveraged from the UK government, on the back of Sida funding. However this budget for operations in West Africa is still relatively small, when balanced against the weight of stakeholder expectations.

In terms of attribution it was stated that YEN is co-responsible with countries themselves; ‘every year unemployment comes more onto the radar’ Regarding the NAPs, it was stated that “Progress has been coordinated rather than YEN being responsible directly – YEN allows process to happen in parallel with other non-YEN countries, (some non-LCs have YE policies e.g. Sierra Leone).”

To summarise it would appear that YEN has taken a catalytic role in terms of impact. As regards NAPs, which are not restricted to YEN LCs alone – it appears that progress is quicker, more holistic and participatory in YEN-assisted countries. As one LC respondent remarked: “Without YEN it would have been ad hoc, it would happen but it would take a long time.”

Significantly it was also noted that of a number of similar harmonisation initiatives between donors, “YEN is the only one to survive the test of time; it is able, functioning and provides information”.

4. Project Management

There is a reported lack of clarity over YEN Secretariat TORs which was linked to criticism of the YEN Secretariat being “too flexible, too adaptable” and seeming to provide reactive not proactive support – “it waits for countries and reacts to high levels of interest”. However with the limited human resources of the Secretariat, a demand driven approach is one way of maximising resources.

The recent focus on deliverables means the Secretariat has become more and more selective. This focus is given by the new draft log frame 2 which will represent the key guiding document for the future work of the Secretariat.

YEN needs to find creative ways of bringing together partners for joint work, in areas where there is genuine political will. The YEN Secretariat’s role is to look at specific countries and find ways for partners to work together. This coordination role was said to be “very effective at country level but weaker with core partners.”

Related specifically to YENWA, it was stated by a review respondent that “the old log frame and work plan was not specific enough and not targeted, hence hard to monitor.” Another view was that “YENWA is not moving on as well as expected.” Two reasons were given:

- Insufficient funding
- Bureaucratic hurdles - UNOWA management and channelling of funds

The move incorporating YENWA into the Geneva based Secretariat away from YENWA as an “isolated” office“ is viewed as positive. “Now we have regular meetings, team approach – this helps to maximize the impact of our work.”

A threat to the future of the YENWA is the hosting agreement with UNOWA which only lasts till June 2009; likewise UK funding currently expires June 2009.

Across the whole Secretariat a major weakness identified is the lack of long-term planning. “There is no five year plan; everything moves one step at a time. We get to the end of one stage, we think about what do next. There is a need for forward planning that countries can commit to and sign up to.” This naturally reflects the insecurity of funding in place.

a. Size/ Staffing/ Structure

A concern was expressed that the YEN Secretariat “is not big enough, given the scale of the problem it is trying to tackle; it needs more personnel”. It was noted that at the moment “Working in Secretariat is very labour intensive with only four staff.” However: “Although it is a small team there is no reason why the YEN Secretariat can’t be effective brokers, of both knowledge and delivery, working through a culture of collaboration.

Several important issues were raised regarding staffing: staff are only given short term one year contracts or in Dakar employed on local contracts, which is seen to restrict appointment of high calibre candidates, but attract motivated young professionals who want to prove themselves. Given the temporary nature of the contract there are few opportunities for staff development or training. This combination of factors may have contributed to a relatively high staff turnover.

Two recent vacancies were filled: sub regional coordinator West Africa based in Dakar (Maria McLaughlin) and technical officer based in Geneva focusing on event management and communication (Drew Gardiner).

b. Monitoring & Evaluation

The demand driven nature of the work of the YEN Secretariat means that questions of M&E are raised. In the Sida technical cooperation document INT/06/06/SID YEN Secretariat realised that given their constituencies and field of work “there are difficulties in setting targets and indicators on progress made.” This is reflected in the following questions asked by one review respondent: “How do we measure impact? How do we show/communicate this? This respondent also highlighted the difficulty of capturing data: “There are no accurate statistics on youth employment – under-employment, inactive etc. They are not reflected in statistics.” Use of case studies and stories could be considered.

There is evidence that the newly drafted July 2008 log frame has prioritised monitoring and evaluation more than log frame version 1. It remains an important ongoing area for improvement illustrated by one of the Retreat participants in the June 2008 newsletter who stated that “monitoring and evaluation has to be improved. This holds true for the Secretariat which has to come up with clear indicators of success for its own work as well as for the assistance provided to governments or other partners”.

These points were reflected in statements from an international donor: “Sustainability will depend on the outcomes the YEN Secretariat achieve, which can be demonstrated at output level. They should have thought of impact assessment from the outset (the impression is they did not.) A solid evaluation of their work could be very convincing.”

More specifically, concern was raised by a LC respondent about the management of Interns/ CIDA associates and this may be an aspect worthy of internal evaluation.

c. Resource Mobilisation

The Steering Committee Minutes state that resource mobilisation can be seen as a fourth function of the partnership and of the YEN Secretariat, but should be viewed as a means rather than an end in itself. The objective is to raise funds for all the functions and for sustaining these efforts at the country level in Lead Countries

The UN Review of NAPs on Youth Employment - Putting Commitment into Action 2007 suggests that “Member States should be encouraged to provide additional financial resources to strengthen and expand the work of the YEN at the national, regional and international levels”. As yet there is no mechanism to encourage this.

Core funding is seen to be a major obstacle/weakness for the YEN Secretariat. A number of respondents commented on the lack of core funding from the three core partners, “no ‘common pot’”. For example one respondent stated that a “hurdle is that the three core partners have not put their money where their mouth is. Without this ‘entrance fee’ YEN was undermined from the beginning. Had each agency put in an equal amount of money they would have more of a stake in YEN and more incentive to make it work.” Another respondent stated that “If the UNSG could bring the Heads of the three core agencies back to the table to talk about money around strengthening YEN that would be great and would increase YEN chances of being successful”. A higher level of ambition could be achieved if this took place.

The lack of funding from the three core partners creates difficulties as one review respondent illustrated: “When fund-raising the Secretariat is often asked: ‘What are the three agencies putting in? We’ll match it’”. Conversely, there is also a structural barrier to fund-raising – for some donors this would signify an increase in aid allocation to the World Bank which for some countries has to be authorised through parliament.

Sustainability is jeopardized by the low resource base. It was suggested that “The three core partners should commit to co-funding the manager’s position”. To summarise dependency on external funding is a limiting factor in this project.

However YEN Sec has had some success in resource mobilisation:

July 2006 to Jan 2008

- Internship Program of Canadian CIDA (approx. USD 280.000),
- UK Funding for Private Sector Initiative of YEN WA (USD 300.000),
- German Funding for Youth Employment Policy advice in Sri Lanka and Senegal (USD 900.000, committed in 2004)

The YEN Secretariat was also able to leverage its UK support to YEN-WA start-up activities by agreeing with CIDA on the provision of additional human resource support to the Office through their YEN Associates programme

2008-present

- YEN will get 400.000 USD from UNIDO’s youth employment program for the Mano River Union Countries to set up a competitive grant scheme for youth NGOs.
- YEN will get 250.000 USD from the World Bank’s Development Grant Facility on Youth Employment and Employability

It is clear that the use of Sida seed funding to leverage further funds has been critical.

e. Communication

Poor communication from core partners is an area of concern. For the latest newsletter the Secretariat received no information from ILO/WB/UN and in general it appears information is not sent very often to the YEN Secretariat. This restricts the Secretariat to working with that which they are given. Regarding information flow in the opposite direction, one respondent remarked that “core partners need to know what is going on but not be overloaded – it is a fine line to tread”. At the Retreat it was agreed that the YEN manager produce bimonthly reports for the Steering Committee to overcome any communication barrier on the Secretariat side. This has been implemented since June.

At present communication channels with stakeholders seem to be limited to YEN Newsletters, and a comprehensive interactive website is badly needed.

f. Role / Changing Mandate

The Youth Employment Network (YEN) was established to bring together policymakers, employers and workers, young people and other stakeholders to pool their skills, experience and knowledge in order to find new, innovative and sustainable solutions to the youth employment challenge. The Network is therefore flexible, evolving and constantly exploring different ways and areas of collaboration

Clarity of the mandate and roles of YEN and the YEN Secretariat was highlighted in the October 2007 Steering committee meeting, when it met to pin down functions and objectives; which clarified the network function of the Secretariat. These distinctions are still an issue. One review respondent commented that “The biggest challenge is

of how to have clear distinctions between the YEN Secretariat and the Yen project". There is a tendency to look at YEN as the Secretariat, "which is a mistake."

One review respondent explained this tension: "Originally the Yen Secretariat was operating at a high level, but in the mode of building a separate institution, and not paying attention to the core partners. As the WB and ILO have the core mandate and knowledge for Youth Employment, they are the place to start and to build circles of partnership from there". There still exists a perception from some LCs and external donor agencies that the YEN Secretariat is a separate institution; this clearly contradicts the internal vision of YEN Secretariat as a coordinator and network-builder.

There seems to be a residual tension between different views of the mandate of YEN Secretariat by different core partners. In the current log frame the Purpose expresses a service delivery/technical assistance role, however this facet of the YEN's scope of work is queried by one core partner, who sees YEN Secretariat as playing a purely coordinating role. "There has been too much emphasis on engaging at the technical level, this is not good use of resources. The YEN Secretariat should not engage in NAPs, only possibly in the role of coordinating and networking between different agencies at country level, but not starting the dialogue process, at the risk of jeopardising continued support from ILO." However on the positive side, a recent work plan has been set, which all core partners signed up to.

Whilst some respondents are still wondering whether YEN Secretariat "need to be technical or to only facilitate", others are seeing YEN Secretariat as YE 'Experts' with the ability to respond quickly to requests. The review team believe that although YEN Secretariat is playing a facilitatory role, they need technical expertise in order to be able to play this role effectively. This is supported by comments from LCs that stated: "a structured scheme of technical assistance needs to be put into place, the Secretariat need to make stuff happen".

g. Commitment by core partners

Trans-institutional working is known to be challenging, particularly when each agency has a different constituency. Working across agencies was said to be "risky" and one review respondent explained that the YEN Secretariat is the "first to feel these divergent points of views. It can mitigate this through communication". It was suggested that a clearly developed work programme was needed, "to understand what agencies will do together and separately, and to progress in a coordinated manner." However the indication that these institutions want to attempt to work together at all is seen as positive.

As the YEN Secretariat is hosted by the ILO, ILO is often seen as the dominant agency by 'clients'. One review respondent commented that "it is natural to have better relationship with ILO; geographically it is harder to reach out to WB departments and regions." It was suggested that the YEN Secretariat Manager would benefit by spending time in Washington, to allow WB to learn about YEN, and bring YEN to WB attention. This would help the WB as its role in YEN is seen by some stakeholders to be "unclear and ambiguous". It is important to note that the WB feels there is now a workable governance structure in place.

As discussed in section 4, it has been stated that "there is not enough buy in from Core partners" in terms of 'walking the talk'. Country level delivery is also challenging as YEN does not have an identified presence in all LCs. This reflects the complexity

of WB and ILO coordination on the ground. For example the WB is decentralised so there is no direct line from the steering committee to the WB team in specific countries.

There has been an evolution of relationships within the YEN partnership that is beyond the timescale of this review, and has at times been somewhat turbulent. However to some extent this 'history' has impact upon the current management of the Secretariat. One review respondent stated that "for a long period of time poor relationships defeated the purpose of the Yen"; including "bickering" between the 3 core agencies, core agencies "arguing with High Level Panel" and with a "lack of commitment from core agencies." This period also saw a "lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities", and accusations that the Secretariat was 'personality-driven', all of which inhibited the close working of the partners.

It seems that there were tensions between the previous management of the Secretariat and members of the Steering Committee. These were resolved with the appointment of a Manager through a competitive recruitment process and unanimous agreement of the selection committee. Respondents agreed that: "The recent retreat was a productive and fruitful exercise – it clarified the political commitment of the core agencies, and the new vision of need to deliver, what the partnership is about". A shared positive outlook has now emerged across the partnership, with will and momentum to move forward.

Appendices

Appendix A**MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE YEN/Sida Project (2006-2009)**
CONSULTING SERVICES – TERMS OF REFERENCE**1. Introduction and Rationale of the Review**

The Youth Employment Network (YEN) is an inter agency partnership uniting the UN, the ILO and the WB to pool their skills, experience and knowledge to find solutions to the youth employment challenge.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) provided a three-year grant supporting the work of the YEN Secretariat from mid 2006 to mid 2009 under the title “Promoting decent and productive work for young women and men through support to the UN Secretary-General’s Youth Employment Network Secretariat”. It is the second phase of funding provided by Sida.

Within the context of this funding agreement, YEN and Sida agreed to conduct a midterm review to assess what progress the project has made so far and what should be the focus of the remaining project duration. The review will also serve Sida to decide on a possible extension of its support to YEN.

Adhering to internationally established good practices in evaluations, the review will be done independently by an external evaluator. ILO intends to implement this assignment in close coordination with the YEN core partners and Sida as described below.

2. Brief background on YEN and the project

YEN is a partnership between UN, ILO and World Bank established in 2001 to jointly address youth employment challenges. The YEN Secretariat is currently hosted by the Employment Sector of the ILO.

YEN started with a High Level Panel⁸ that developed policy recommendations on youth employment. The YEN Secretariat then focused on supporting lead countries in developing national action plans on Youth Employment (NAPs)- a vehicle to prioritize and operationalize youth employment. The YEN operations are supported by two United Nations General Assembly resolutions.⁹

The Sida/YEN project builds on this partnership and mandate. As overall objective, the project wants to contribute to increased opportunities for young people to find decent and productive work.

The project includes two major components:

- I. Support to lead countries in developing their National Action Plans on Youth Employment establishing four immediate objectives:
 1. Progress of Lead Countries in the development of their NAPs is facilitated and accelerated;
 2. Institutional capacity for policy development enhanced through knowledge management and product development;
 3. Partnerships and networks for youth employment expanded and deepened; and
 4. Increased resource mobilization for country level activities.
- II. Support to the YEN-UNOWA unit for youth employment and regional security unit in West Africa with the following three immediate objectives:

⁸ In 2001, the UN Secretary-General appointed a High-Level Panel (HLP) of twelve experts and practitioners on youth employment whose role was to advise the heads of the UN, World Bank and ILO on youth employment policy as well as to mobilize opinion and action in favour of youth employment worldwide. The mandate of the HLP was completed in December 2006.

⁹ December 2002 resolution on promoting youth employment (A/RES/57/165); and the resolution concerning policies and programmes involving youth (A/RES/58/133) of January 2004.

1. partnerships and networks identified and strengthened;
2. Institutional capacity for policy development strengthened;
3. Resources mobilized and leveraged.

Besides funding of activities related to the two components, the project also provides direct support to the YEN secretariat which has allowed the secretariat to continue its mandate of working toward creating opportunities for decent and productive employment for youth.

3. Purpose, Scope and Clients of the Review

The purpose of the midterm review is to evaluate what progress the project has made so far, to identify what has worked well and where is scope for improvement, and to derive success factors and lessons learned that can be applied looking forward.

The review covers the first half of the Sida/YEN project going from 06/2006 to 12/2007. The present phase is scheduled to end in 06/2009. It does not cover previous project phases of YEN.

As the project supports the core operations of the Secretariat, as well as the direct funding of activities on youth employment undertaken by a wide-range of partners, the review will have to assess the performance of the secretariat itself and the results of the activities. There are no previous internal or external reviews of YEN or related projects.

Key clients of the review are the YEN secretariat, the core partners of YEN, and Sida.

4. Analytical Framework of Review

The key evaluation questions to be addressed are:

Relevance and Strategic Fit

- To what extent is the project in line with beneficiary requirements, country needs, global priorities and donor policies?
- How significant is the project with regard to the global youth employment challenge?
- How well does the project complement and link to activities of other donors?

Project Design

- Is the project design logical and coherent?
- Are intended outputs, outcomes and impact relevant, realistic, and clearly identified? Are there systems put in place to ensure adequate results measurement?
- Are direct and indirect beneficiaries defined?
- Have risks, assumptions and possible mitigation strategies been defined?

Project Progress

- What progress has the project made so far in achieving its outputs and outcomes? Will the project be likely to achieve its planned objectives upon completion?
- Is the project likely to have a sustainable impact?
- Which types of interventions or products have yielded the best results? In which areas does the project have the least achievements?
- Are the results of the project recognized by core partners and direct beneficiaries (governments, youth organizations)
- How well does YEN share its knowledge and information?

Project Management

- To what extent are the roles and responsibilities of the core partners defined?
- How have direct beneficiaries been selected and why?
- How does the YEN Secretariat as the key coordinator perform to achieve the intended results?
- Are the current structure of YEN and the staff mix of the Secretariat the most optimal to deliver?
- How is YEN helping to develop scalable and replicable projects?
- How reasonable are the costs in relation to the results under the prevailing circumstances and given possible alternatives?
- How successful was YEN in mobilizing other resources?
- To what extent is YEN playing a unique role?

Recommendations

- What are strengths of the project to build on?
- What corrective actions should be taken for the remaining project duration?
- How could synergies among core partners be enhanced?
- Should the project be extended? What should be the framework for an extension?

5. Methodology

The requested services would include and depend on:

- Desk reviews of the project document submitted and approved by Sida, all project documentation, and any other relevant data sources,
- On-site interviews with YEN Secretariat, YEN field staff, YEN core partners, selected direct beneficiaries, and Sida (partly by phone interview or written),
- Review of YEN's support provided to two selected lead countries (Rwanda, Jamaica¹⁰) in order to make an assessment of the lead country process and the adoption of national action plans on youth employment being one of the key products of YEN, no field visits are foreseen.
- Review of the YEN/UNOWA unit for youth employment and regional security in West Africa being an important component of the project. A field visit to Dakar, Senegal, is foreseen.

It is expected that all conclusions by the external evaluator would be based on solid evidence that could include a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The consultant will work closely with the evaluation manager at the ILO throughout the review in order to agree on the approach before and during the assessment.

6. Management Arrangements, Deliverables and Timeline

The evaluator will report to Michiko Miyamoto, Management Support Unit, Employment Sector, ILO, who will be the evaluation manager. The main deliverable of the review will be a report (max. 25 pages excl. annexes) for the key clients of the review. A debriefing meeting will be organized after submission of the final report.

The preliminary timetable for the review is:

- First week of May 2008: call for proposals
- May 23rd 2008: Selection of Consultant
- June 2nd, 2008: Start of the assignment with briefing at YEN Secretariat in Geneva
- June 16th, 2008: Submission of outline on the approach and work plan,
- July 31st, 2008: submission of draft report

¹⁰ Selection criteria are regional diversity, lead country process initiated by different stakeholders (Rwanda: Employers, Jamaica: Government), Canadian CIDA interns that can provide useful information

- August 31st: submission of final report

7. Required Skills and Selection Process

The evaluator should have:

- At least 10 years of professional experience in conducting external reviews for bi- or multilateral donors in technical cooperation,
- Working experience in employment/youth employment in developing countries,
- Fluency in English and French

The external consultant will be identified through a tender. Selection criteria can be taken from the following table.

	Percentage		
Technical Evaluation			
Specific experience of the consultants related to the assignment	30		
Adequacy of the proposed work plan and methodology in responding to the Terms of Reference	30		
Qualifications and competence of the key staff for the assignment	20		
Technical Evaluation Sub Total	80		
Financial Evaluation Sub Total	20		
TOTAL	100		

8. Confidentiality

All data and information received from YEN and its core partners for the purpose of this assignment are to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to YEN. The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the expressed advance written authorization of YEN.

April 30th, 2008
YEN Secretariat
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Appendix B**Details of interview respondents**

A. Respondent groups

<i>Respondent group</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Question set</i>
Steering Committee members	3	A
Donors	2	
Focal Persons in partner agencies	3	
Lead country representatives	4	B
YENWA private sector project stakeholders	2	
YEN Dakar staff	2	C
Ex-YEN personnel	2	D
YEN Secretariat	3	
YCG Rapporteur	1	
TOTAL	22	

B. Respondent details

No.	Name	Organisation / institution	Interview type	Date interviewed
1	Laura Brewer	YEN Secretariat	Face to face	2.07.08
2	Markus Pilgrim	YEN Secretariat	Face to face	7.07.08
3	Sara Spant	YEN Secretariat	Face to face	7.07.08
4	Drew Gardiner	YENWA	Telephone	8.07.08
5	Tendai Pasipanodya	YENWA	Telephone	9.07.08
6	Justin Sykes	Ex - YEN Secretariat	Telephone	8.07.08
7	Regina Monticone	Ex - YEN Secretariat	Telephone	10.07.08
8	José Manuel Salazar	ILO	Telephone	15.07.08
9	Robert Holzmann	World Bank	Telephone	14.07.08
10	Johan Scholvink	UNDESA	Written response	15.07.08
11	Jean Fares	World Bank focal point	Telephone	06.08.08
12	Claudia Coenjaerts	ILO focal point	Telephone	29.07.08
13	Sarangerel Erdembileg	UN focal point	Written response	15.07.08
14	Ramin Hassan	UK	Telephone	15.07.08
15	Emmanuel Bigenimana	YEN Rwanda	Telephone	14.07.08
16	Jacqueline Coke Lloyd	YEN Jamaica	Telephone	17.07.08 resched 05.08.08
17	Anna Rahm	SIDA	Telephone	10.07.08
18	Budi Tjahjono	YCG	Telephone	06.08.08
19	Deepthi Lamahewa	YEN Sri Lanka	Telephone	14.07.08
20	Theo Ib Larsen	Min Foreign Affairs, Denmark	Telephone	30.07.08
21	Ciré Kane	Synapse Centre, Senegal	Telephone	16.07.08 / resched 29.07.08 / canc
22	Julius Ayuk Tabe	CISCO Networking Academy, Nigeria	Telephone	18.07.08

Appendix C

Force fields analysis with YEN Sec team

Helping forces	Hindering forces
<p>Fore-runner of Paris Declaration / 3 main agencies joined forces in common platform / Coordinating and mediating partners to work on key issue</p> <p>Renewed commitment / Clear responsibilities in logical framework 2 / Deliverables recently clarified</p> <p>Potential to link up at a country level is added value / More best practices available / Partners want to do more knowledge sharing</p> <p>YE hot topic, high demand / Use of Sida seed funding to leverage further funds</p> <p>'Experts' staff Secretariat / Ability to respond quickly to requests</p>	<p>Dependency on external funding / without Sida funding Sec would not exist / Not yet evidence that impact reached end beneficiaries</p> <p>Much better collaboration between partners needed on work plans etc. / Different conceptions of role/competition for funds with ILO / New UN partner needed</p> <p>No field presence in all LCs or low capacity in country / Need selection criteria and clear commitment from LCs /</p> <p>Poor communications from agencies / restricted to that which given to Sec</p> <p>Youth representation - need to decide at what level operate (SG, regional, national)</p> <p>Short term contracts – restricts high calibre candidates</p>

Note: points in bold were highlighted during the exercise as being the most significant

Appendix D

Logical Framework for the 2nd Half of the YEN/Sida Cooperation (05/08 to 06/09)

Intervention logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators of Achievement	Sources and Means of Verification	Assumptions
<p><u>Overall Objective:</u> Improved employment opportunities for youth</p>	<p><u>Expected Impact:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Number of jobs for young people 	<p>Will not be measured during this phase as the remaining duration of the current project phase is too short. But, YEN has started providing technical assistance to lead countries in reporting on outcomes and impacts of their policies and programs. Based on the expected result No 1 (template and guide for reporting on key performance indicators), the network should be in a position to report on impact in the next phase.</p>	<p>Attribution gap can not be solved</p>
<p><u>Project Objective:</u> The YEN Secretariat has become a provider of innovative and value-added services for key stakeholders of the network. A specific focus will be given to West Africa</p>	<p><u>Expected Outcomes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of new and revised services provided (<i>By 06/09 Secretariat has introduced 4 new/revised services, 3 of these 4 services are also being offered in West Africa</i>) Client/partner satisfaction (<i>A client/partner satisfaction survey to be run in 06/09 shows that at least 60% of key partners and clients of YEN Secretariat are satisfied with the services provided</i>) No of YEN Lead countries regularly reporting on benchmarks (<i>8 YEN Lead countries have reported based on new YEN template before mid 09</i>) Amount of mobilized resources (<i>YEN has risen USD 5 Mio until 06/09 including new core funding for the Secretariat as well as funding for additional projects</i>) 	<p>Final report to Sida</p> <p>Own satisfaction survey</p> <p>Report on peer review meeting</p> <p>Final report to Sida, contracts with donors</p>	<p>Mid-term evaluation confirms re-orientation of project</p> <p>Donors are willing to provide institutional support (funding)</p>

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<p><u>Project results:</u></p> <p>1. The lead country process as YEN's most important tool for advocacy on youth employment has been revised and focused.</p> <p>2. A competitive grant scheme for youth NGOs as the network's youth NGO window has been launched in West Africa</p> <p>3. Three knowledge sharing events have been organized</p> <p>4. An innovative pilot on networking key youth employment players has been conducted and evaluated</p>	<p><u>Expected Outputs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report that takes stock of progress in developing and implementing National Action Plans (10/08) • Concept note that defines support offered by YEN, identifies prerequisites for becoming a lead country, and selects 2 to 3 lead countries to focus on in the future (11/08) • A template and guide for reporting on key performance indicators (09/08) • Yearly peer review/benchmarking meetings on the lead countries' performance (06/09) • One inter-agency cooperation project initiated supporting a lead country (before 06/09) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize mapping on youth employment initiatives (08/08) • Additional resources mobilized (USD 0,5 Mio before 12/08) • One call for proposal launched (before 06/09) • All resources mobilized before end of 08 have been committed for projects until 06/09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three event reports published on YEN's website before 06/09 • Participants' satisfaction (<i>at least 60% of participants state that they would recommend the event to others</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concept note on how to effectively match cooperation requests of key youth employment players (by 12/08), • Number of partners participating in pilot (<i>has to be defined in concept note</i>) • Evaluation of pilot (by 04/09) • Proposal for scaling up (06/09) 	<p>document</p> <p>document</p> <p>template available</p> <p>meeting report</p> <p>project document</p> <p>database</p> <p>letter of agreement with donor</p> <p>YEN website</p> <p>Bookkeeping files</p> <p>YEN website</p> <p>Participants' evaluations</p> <p>document</p> <p>report to steering committee</p> <p>see above</p> <p>see above</p>	<p>Donors agree with West Africa focus</p>
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<p>5. New funds for a next phase of the Secretariat have been secured</p> <p>6. UNDP has joined the core partners of YEN</p> <p>7. The Secretariat's communication tools (newsletter, website) have been revised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of mobilized resources (<i>YEN has risen USD 5 Mio until 06/09 including new core funding for the Secretariat as well as funding for additional projects</i>) • Letter of agreement from UNDP (<i>before 04/09</i>) • Revised website and newsletter (<i>10/08</i>) • Newsletter has regularly appeared (<i>quarterly issues</i>) • Website has been regularly updated (<i>at least every two months</i>) 	<p>Letter of commitments</p> <p>Written commitment</p> <p>YEN website Quarterly appearance YEN website</p>	
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<p><u>Indicative Activities:</u></p> <p>1.1 Prepare a report that documents progress in developing and implementing NAPs in YEN Lead Countries</p> <p>1.2 Develop a concept note that a) defines support offered by YEN, b) identifies prerequisites for becoming a supported lead country, and c) selects 2 to 3 lead countries that have met the prerequisites to focus on in the future</p> <p>1.3 Develop a concept note on key performance indicators for agreement amongst Lead Countries and core agencies</p> <p>1.4 Design a template and guide for</p>	<p>10/08</p> <p>11/08</p> <p>08/08</p>	<p>TASK LEADER: Laura Brewer</p> <p>Input from ILO/Trends needed</p>	
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reporting on key performance indicators	09/08	s.a.	
1.5 Pilot: test the template in 1 or 2 Lead Countries	11/08	s.a.	
1.6 Conduct coaching/training sessions on using the template	01/09 – 03/09	s.a.	
1.7 Organise an annual peer review/benchmarking meeting for Lead Countries	06/09		
1.8 Facilitate one inter-agency cooperation project in a YEN Lead Country	before 06/09	cooperation with World Bank (presently the Secretariat is discussing with WB to select one major YE program in a lead country and to assist the government in doing a rigorous evaluation)	
2.1 Take stock of 2 to 3 existing schemes, e.g. WB development market place	Completed by 08/08	TASK LEADER: Sara Spant	
2.2 Initiate fundraising	Project outline sent to 3 potential donors before 09/08		
2.3. Design application package with clear eligibility and selection criteria	Completed by 09/08	Should build on experiences of ILO micro insurance grant scheme and on WBs development grant facility	
2.4. Organize selection committee	10/08		
2.5. Issue grant contracts with selected applicants	11/08		
2.6 Supervise implementation	Progress reports received, monitoring visits conducted (01/09 – 05/09)		
2.7 Come out with lessons learned	Final report on first round of grant scheme (06/09)		
2.8 Start next round of scheme	06/09		

<p>3.1 Conduct survey, focus group or expert interviews in order to identify YE knowledge gaps and topics of interest</p> <p>3.2 Come out with concept note on 1st event and mobilize resources from core agency partners</p> <p>3.3 Conduct 1st event and use evaluation to revise topic and evaluation of 2nd event</p> <p>3.4. Disseminate results of event</p> <p>3.5. Go through same cycle for 2nd and 3rd event</p>	<p>document (09/08)</p> <p>Concept note (10/08)</p> <p>Event report (12/08)</p> <p>To be decided (website, conference reader)</p> <p>s.a.</p>	<p>TASK LEADER: Drew Gardiner</p> <p>Close coordination with focal points of core partners, cost sharing needed</p> <p>s.a.</p>	
<p>4.1 Analysis of existing networking platforms</p> <p>4.2 Concept note on how to effectively match cooperation requests of key youth employment players,</p> <p>4.3 Videoconference discussion with secretariat and core partners to select pilot</p> <p>4.4 Pilot implementation</p> <p>4.5 Review of pilot</p> <p>4.6 Proposal for scaling up (06/09)</p>	<p>Documentation of web links (08/08)</p> <p>Concept note (09/08)</p> <p>Video conference (09/08)</p> <p>Implemented by 01/09</p> <p>Internal Evaluation Report on Pilot (04/09)</p> <p>Written Outline (06/09)</p>	<p>TASK LEADER: Tendai Pasipanodya</p>	

<p>5.1 Finalize mid term review and submit it to Sida as a basis for discussions on next phase</p> <p>5.2 Organize meeting with Sida on mid term review and next phase</p> <p>5.3 Submit funding request for competitive grant scheme to UNIDO, UNDP, DANIDA and others</p> <p>5.4 Continue and expand cooperation with UK Department of Work and Pensions</p> <p>5.5 Negotiate with WB participation in the Bank's Development Grant Facility on Youth Employment</p> <p>5.6 Submit funding request on one specific project to private corporation or foundation</p>	<p>Final version submitted in 09/08</p> <p>10/08</p> <p>Outline on scheme submitted (06/08)</p> <p>Agreement on log frame for 3rd tranche (08/08)</p> <p>07/08</p> <p>Request submitted (12/08)</p>	<p>TASK LEADER: Markus Pilgrim</p>	
<p>6.1 Ask steering committee what they need from Secretariat and deliver</p> <p>6.2 Steering Committee will initiate discussions with UNDP</p>	<p>08/08</p> <p>10/08</p>	<p>TASK LEADER: Markus Pilgrim</p>	

7.1 Draft a log frame of the project "revision of YEN newsletter"	Available in 08/08	TASK LEADER: Drew Gardiner (newsletter: Ruxandra Matthia)	
7.2 come out with first issue of revised newsletter	09/08		
7.3 ensure regular quarterly appearance	Three issues of newsletter in 12/08, 03/09, 06/09		
7.4 organize internal workshop on new structure of website	Internal documentation (09/08)		
7.5 write new content for website	Document (10/08)		
7.6 revise lay out of website	Lay out proposal (11/08)		
7.7 launch revised website	12/08		
7.8 update website regularly	Once a month starting from 01/09		