

# SUMMARY EVALUATION REPORT

## Support to Public Administration Project

### RSS/IGAD Regional Initiative for Capacity Enhancement in South Sudan

#### PROJECT BACKGROUND

UNDP is implementing a five-year Support to Public Administration Project - RSS/IGAD Regional Initiative for Capacity Enhancement in South Sudan – Phase II project. The Project aims to support South Sudan in building its civil service capacity for equitable, responsive, and accountable service delivery. It aims to address the three levels of capacity: enabling environment/institutional level (policy, legal, regulatory and institutional level); organizational level (work procedures and operational arrangements); and individual level (skills development).

The design and implementation of Phase II project is based on the recommendations of Phase I project, and is aligned to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the UNDP Country Programme Document (January 2012 - June 2016) Outcome 1: *'Core governance and civil service functions are established and operational.'* Later, the project was realigned to the current Interim Cooperation Framework (ICF)/ Country Programme Document (CPD) (2016-2018) Outcome 3: *'Peace and governance strengthened'*.

#### EVALUATION PURPOSES AND METHODOLOGY

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was conducted at the request of key stakeholders including the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, UNDP and Norway, to assess the project's contribution towards *'supporting South Sudan in building its civil service capacity for equitable, responsive, and accountable service delivery.'* The evaluation is formative in nature, forward looking, and provides recommendations and lessons learned, to enhance operational and programmatic effectiveness for the remaining duration of the project. This evaluation assessed relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, partnership strategies, social inclusion, gender and environmental considerations, and project visibility.

The evaluation was conducted in country from 15 August to 15 September 2017 by a team of two independent consultants. The evaluation is based on two main sources of information, i.e. primary and secondary sources. Triangulation of data and sources was used to minimise the possibility of errors and discrepancy. Reliability and quality of information/data was ensured through a critical review and analysis, cross-checks and probation of respondents while collecting information on programme performance. Impartiality and independence were strictly observed in the selection of respondents for interviews. This approach is an established evaluation methodology and aims to capture all stakeholders' comprehensive views.

#### KEY FINDINGS

##### Relevance

Although subject to undesirable political, economic and security constraints, the project still reflects the strategic considerations of UNDP to build human resources, organisational and institutional level capacities, which remains a critical national priority for recovery, restoring peace and stability, creating

functional institutions, and ultimately support democratic governance, and inclusive service delivery for all.

### **Effectiveness**

The December 2013 crisis delayed the deployment of civil service support officers (CSSOs) in August 2015. Sixty-one over from Phase I had to be evacuated to their respective countries in December 2013. As a result of the crisis, much was not achieved between January 2014 and August 2015.

Several institutional policies and strategic documents have been drafted, and some tabled before state councils of ministers for review and approval. Completion and approvals of targeted policies was delayed due to frequent changes in government's priorities and lack of resources.

Following the abrupt and unforeseen creation of new states, some civil servants in various state ministries, including paired civil servants (twins) were reassigned to the newly created states. This disrupted the mentoring process and the project's capacity to attain the desired results.

Project outcomes have not been realised in full. Whilst this is expected since the project is still ongoing, the slow realisation of outcomes has been attributed to the quality of paired civil servants as South Sudan is still in the process of establishing a fully-fledged civil service and institutions, and therefore recurrent challenges of a young civil service are still prevalent.

### **Efficiency**

The project lost about US\$5 million in exchange rate losses following the depreciation of the Norwegian Kroner (NOK) against the United States dollar during the course of the project. The losses were not reported timely to the donor, resulting in a funding gap and inability to implement planned initiatives like the CSSO Innovative Grant to supplement CSSOs' coaching and mentoring.

The project adopted group-twinning modalities which proved to be more cost efficient, and secured a higher 'critical mass' of twins in the public sector. CSSOs are deployed and work in established government institutions, reducing cost of office rent and other service charges, which also secures national leadership and ownership – a value that cannot be quantified in monetary terms.

UNDP's continued conflict-sensitive analysis and risk management system helped the project to be flexible and context relevant in the management and deployment of CSSOs. The project made use of UNDP's procurement competitive processes, which in turn secured optimal use of funds, and prevented possible misallocation of funds. UNDP adopted highly flexible implementation modalities, which secured a demand rather than a supply driven allocation of technical assistance and financial resources.

### **Partnership strategies**

Apart from existing partnerships, the project team, CSSOs and twins generated a wide array of working partnerships with other UN agencies, faith based organisations, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations. However, these are not well documented or institutionalised.

### **Sustainability**

There are indications that project results will be sustained at the end of the project. Twinned and non-twinned staff in the participating institutions interviewed noted that, because of successful on-the-job coaching and mentoring, most are in position to continue to mentor and coach other civil servants. The project has an inbuilt sustainability mechanisms which include the deployment of qualified and experienced civil servants from the region with cultural affinity to South Sudan as (opposed to hiring consultants) to provide coaching and mentoring (as opposed to training); placement of the project managing unit within the Ministry of Labour Public Service and Human Resource Development

(MoLPS&HRD) as a capacity building measure for the coordinating ministry; and mentoring and coaching civil servants at the technical and managerial levels to ensure continuity at the different levels.

### **Gender considerations**

Gender equality was an integral part of the project design and of great significance to project stakeholders including the donor, Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS), participating Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries and UNDP. The project is progressing towards meeting its gender equity target in terms of deployed CSSOs and twins. However, the project's gender marker in ATLAS<sup>1</sup> is not considered representative and a true reflection of the diverse realities on the ground.

### **Social inclusion and Environmental considerations**

The project registered progress in addressing the needs of disabled persons and visually impaired groups, and ensuring potentially marginalised persons at state levels get access to government services.

The project does not have direct environmental impact. However, during implementation environmental care was taken into consideration by the CSSOs and their twins in the targeted institutions. Since 2013 to late 2016 no explicit mention was made in quarterly and annual reports on progress relating to environmental issues.

### **Visibility**

Significant efforts have been made to enhance project's visibility. UNDP posts human interest stories and project activities in the global and country UNDP websites, as well as in local media (FM radios and newspapers).

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- It is essential to first clear the backlog of pending policies and strategic documents, and those at various levels of approval generated by the project before embarking on drafting additional ones. Implementation should be key to the remainder of Phase II – and beyond.
- The sustainability strategy should be reviewed to align with current context and realities.  
Partnerships forged in specific states should be up scaled to include other states and also taken up at the PMU level for more strategic alliances.
- The project should develop key indicators for gender considerations and social inclusion for gender equality and focused services delivery to vulnerable people groups.
- The project should develop and mainstream environmental indicators that will ensure a strong awareness on environmental issues, and institutionalise it in collaboration with UNEP, together with, *inter alia*, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism, as well as the Ministry of Petroleum and Mining.
- UNDP should strengthen the project's communications strategy so as to broaden the project's visibility and popularise its scope, opportunities and results.

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<sup>1</sup> ATLAS is UNDP's online programme and project management platform

## KEY LESSONS LEARNT

- Strong inter-and intra-institutionalised coordination mechanisms between the coordinating ministry and participating institutions are essential for harmonised and coherent project implementation. This includes corresponding mechanisms between national and sub-national levels, as well as inter-state levels.
- When a country is as fragile and in a way 'unpredictable', such as South Sudan, it becomes extremely challenging to consolidate capacity enhancement results. Fluidity of the context and unexpected political changes take a toll on well-intentioned interventions such as the RSS/IGAD project.
- Post conflict capacity building, especially in a country like South Sudan, is a process - and at times exploratory in nature, and unrealistic to expect tangible results, impact and higher-level outputs to be realised in the short or medium-term.