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| **UNDP Management Response to the Recommendations of Mid-Term Evaluation Report on** |
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| **UNDP-GEF “Elimination of obsolete pesticide stockpiles and addressing POPs contaminated sites within a sound chemicals management framework” full sized project - PIMS: 4905** |
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| **Mid-Term Evaluation date:**  | **February 2018 - June 2018** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| **General comments:** The project Mid-term Review (MTR) mission conducted from February to June 2018, reviewed and evaluated the project implementation status and progress for the period of June 2015 to February 2018. The overall project progress was rated as: "Based on this review of the M&E function of the project, it is rated as **moderately satisfactory**. There are too many indicators to monitor the progress made by the project producing long progress reports; the PIR-2017 contains 34 pages to report on progress made toward the objective and outcomes. These reports are not reader-friendly and do not present clearly and concisely the progress made to “eliminate obsolete pesticide stockpiles and addressing contaminated sites within a sound chemicals management strategy”. The project has lost one year due to failed international procurement. The full completion of the project by May 2019 should be ruled-out; it will take more time to complete the project and a time extension is recommended. Adaptive management was used regularly to adapt to changes that occurred almost regularly since the outset of the project. Overall, the adaptive management was used to keep project expenditures as low as possible to keep the budget in line with the slow progress, in order to keep the GEF grant resources available for when the large clean-up phase will go ahead. It is noted that stakeholders are engaged in the project despite the slow progress made so far.  |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 1.** |
| It is recommended to extend the project to November 2020.  |
| **Management response:** Given the waste excavation and packaging is a seasonal work, it is anticipated that the 1,052 tones obsolete pesticides waste disposal, 4,100 tones high contaminated soil treatment and site restoration works will not be completed by the end of 2020. The project will need a closure period by the end of November 2021.  |
| **Key Action(s):** Prepare and submit justifications for project extension with an end date 31 December 2021. | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 30/03/2019 | Project team/ RTA unit | Comments: Justifications submitted. Additional documents are being requested after the submission. The project provided necessary information. The project no-cost extension received by 31 December 2021. | Status: Completed  |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 2.** |
| It is recommended to organize a high-level meeting in order to provide a forum for high level discussions on how to address/resolve the current issues. |
| **Management response:** For the high-level coordination and effective solutions the Deputy Prime Minister/PM/ or PM's level should be involved in discussions and addressing important issues. |
| **Key Action(s):**Request a formal meeting at the Deputy PM/PM's office, inform the new nominated officials on the project specifics and issues, request close coordination for timely decision making. | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 31/08/2018 | Project team | Comments: A letter has been sent to PM’s office, UNDP management met Vice-PM and discussed important challenges of the project. | Status: Completed |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 3.** |
| It is recommended to constitute an “Executive” Committee as a sub-set of the PMB with quarterly meetings. |
| **Management response:** By its governance arrangement the project is executed by three government bodies - the Prime Minister's Office of Armenia, Ministry of Environment (former Ministry of Nature Protection) and Ministry of Emergency Situations. To follow-up the recommendation, the "Executive" group of the Project Management Board will be formalized through the PMB next meeting.  |
| **Key Action(s):**Agenda of the next PMB meeting includes the suggestion of specifying the "Executive" group.  | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 31/12/2019 | Project team, PMB meeting | The project document refers to the Government of Armenia (Deputy Prime Minister /DPM’s/ staff), Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Emergency Situations as institutions with project’s Executive role. The PMB will define formally that this institutions will form an “Executive group” with more frequent interactions with the project team. The project will keep regular communication with these three agencies informing on the project issues/challenges, discussing/agreeing intermediate potential solutions. High importance aspects and issues will be raised and discussed at the PMB meetings. | Status: Completed |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 4.** |
| It is recommended to strengthen the link between the project through the PMB and the Stockholm Convention Inter-Agency Committee /SCIAC/ on the Implementation of the Stockholm Convention /SC/. |
| **Management response:** The recommendation will be discussed with the Stockholm Convention SCIAC focal point with intention to strengthen the link between the project/PMB and the SCIAC.  |
| **Key Action(s):**  Communicate and discuss the recommendation with the SCIAC focal point and agree what additional reporting or communicating mechanism-channel can be applied to improve the coordination. . | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 30/06/2018 | Project team /impl. partner | Comments - The recommendation has been communicated to the SC focal point with indication to strengthen potential coordination between the PMB and SCIAC. It was agreed that the activities are well synchronized. The nominated members of the SCIAC from the MES, MoFA, MoH, NGO, MoA are also involved in the PMB and/or project advisory committee (PAC). Moreover there are the same members from the Ministry of Defense, Police, MNP, Yerevan Municipality involved in the PAC and SCIAC. The PMB members have higher decision maker status, that the SCIAC members. It was agreed that the project will more regularly deliver presentation at the SCIAC meetings and disseminate information on the project progress, provide written reports and clarifications to the members of the SCIAC. | Status: Completed |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 5.** |
| It is recommended to update the Delegation of Authority (DOA) to be in line with the current status of the project and its options to move ahead. |
| **Management response:** The project Regional Technical Advisor will be contacted for guidance/technical support and the DOA will be updated as needed. |
| **Key Action(s):** Contact Regional Technical Advisor to process the DOA revision. The RTA didn't recommend to re-issue the DOA. The required changes shall be discussed at and approved by the Project Management Board Meeting and captured by PMB meeting minutes. | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 31/12/2019 | Project team/PMB meeting | Updating of the DOA was not recommended by the RTA. All conditionalities reflected in the DOA are closely tracked and followed. The only non-compliance of commitments to DOA statements was exceeding of the limitation of 18 months allocated for the inception and detailed planning phase, however the limit of $500,000 was not exceeded in that phase. Each year the project revised-budget was agreed with and signed by the project Implementing Partner. The project also agreed with the PMB before applying for the project’s no-cost extension, issued by GEF-UNDP for the period till 31 December 2021. | Status: Completed |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 6.** |
| It is recommended to locate the project office within a related government department.  |
| **Management response**: The recommendation was considered, however the project has been located separately to enhance its neutral operations. |
| **Key Action(s):**Not applicable  | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 30/06/2018 | Project team /impl. partner | Comments: The recommendation is considered, however to minimize potential inter agency tensions over the ownership of the project between Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Emergency Situation and Prime Minister office the project has been located in neutral premises. | Status: Not applicable |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 7.** |
| It is recommended to streamline the number of performance indicators and targets.  |
| **Management response:** Project Results Framework (PRF) will be updated.  |
| **Key Action(s):** Review and update the PRF. | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 30/06/2018 | Project team /impl. partner | Comments: The PRF was updated, shared with the project executive bodies for comments. No comments received. | Status: Completed  |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 8.** |
| It is recommended to increase the communication with Stakeholders using information accumulated by the project in order to develop a more unified vision on what the project should do. |
| **Management response:** The recommendation to use quarterly information sharing with the PMB is acceptable.  |
| **Key Action(s):** Preparation and sharing of quarterly information updates with the PMB and PAC. | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 26/11/2020 | Project team  | Comments: Accepted. The quarterly update to the PMB will be provided throughout the project lifetime (including the extended period).  | Status: Completed |
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| **MTR Recommendation on Issue 9.** |
| It is recommended to review and consolidate the risks of this project.  |
| **Management response:** The risks are identified based on PD and the SESP framework. |
| **Key Action(s):**Project will revisit its risks log for possible consolidation. | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| 31/12/2019 | Project team  | The Risk Log undergoes periodic review and updating, will be consolidated, as appropriate. | Status: Completed |