**Mid-Term Evaluation   
Institutional Support to Statistics Project  
Saudi Arabia**

**(2017-2024)**

**FINAL REPORT**

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| **PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION** | | |
| **Project/outcome title** | Institutional Support to Statistics | |
| **Atlas ID** | SAU10-100619 | |
| **Corporate outcome and output** | Improved knowledge-based equitable and sustainable development underpinned by innovation and improved infrastructure. | |
| **Country** | Saudi Arabia | |
| **Region** | RBAS | |
| **Date project document signed** | 16/01/2017 | |
| **Project dates** | **Start: 05/02/2017** | **Planned end: 31/12/2024** |
|  |  |
| **Project budget** | **$ 5,784,480** | |
| **Estimated Project expenditure at the time of evaluation** | **$1,728,004** | |
| **Funding source** | **Government** | |
| **Implementing party** | **General Authority for Statistics** | |

# ACRONYMS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus Disease |
| CPD | Country Programme Document |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| ERG | Evaluation Reference Group |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| GASTAT | General Authority Of Statistics |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| IDI | In-Depth Interview |
| KII | Key Informant Interview |
| KSA | Kingdom Of Saudi Arabia |
| M & E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MSC | Most Significant Change |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-Operation And Development |
| OH | Outcome Harvesting |
| PD | Project Document |
| SDGS | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SMART | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, And Timely. |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| TOR | Terms Of Reference |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |

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# Executive Summary

"Institutional Support to Statistics" Project is funded by the Government of Saudi Arabia with technical support from UNDP at the cost of $ 5,784. Since its launch in 2017, the project has continued to provide an effective cooperation framework for strengthening the statistical capacities in support of Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030. The project is implemented by the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) in Saudi Arabia. GASTAT is the official body responsible for providing public entities, private establishments, individuals, and international organizations with official statistics in accordance with statutory procedures to support policy and decision-makers in these entities to move forward in implementing the developmental plans.

GASTAT strategically aims to create a framework for all statistical needs supporting the National Vision 2030[[1]](#footnote-2), National Transformation Program 2020[[2]](#footnote-3), and the Sustainable Development Goals’ (SDGs')[[3]](#footnote-4) agreed-upon targets and indicators of relevance to the national context. The project is aligned with the UN and UNDP Strategic Plan in Saudi Arabia. The project is also aligned with the United Nations Common Country Strategic Framework (UNCCSF, 2017-2021) wich is the Strategic Framework for Cooperation between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UNCT. Specifically, it is aligned with UNCCSF Pillar 1 on knowledge-based equitable and sustainable economic development, underpinned by technology, innovation, and improved infrastructure; and Pillar 2 on Equitable, accountable, effective, and efficient public sector.

**The Theory of Change (ToC) is hinged on the following; *If*** GASTAT has a modernized ICT infrastructure to ensure timely delivery of quality products and services to various beneficiaries; and ***If*** there is a continuous capacity development program involving GASTAT and all participating parties with a specific focus on institutional coordination across all sectors and regions; and ***If*** GASTAT has an institutional framework that promotes efficiency and effectiveness; ***Then***, GASTAT will be able to produce relevant, high quality and marketable statistical products and services.

# The project is implemented under the National Implementation (NIM) modality (NIM) with activities implemented through UNDP NIM modality, whereby GaSTAT assumes implementation responsibility with UNDP Implementation Support Services for recruitment of international and national advisors and other activities as noted in the Annual Work Plan. All activities under the project are done through standard Project Board mechanism that serves as a steering committee between GaSTAT, UNDP and UN Agencies to ensure coherence of all activities under the project. This intervention is grounded in a host of national and international partnerships. Therefore, Policy-makers and implementation officials at the sectoral level who constitute the core functioning body in adapting and implementing the SDGs in Saudi Arabia, are engaged through workshops designed to elicit stakeholders' views and to forge consensus around major decisions.

# A National Project Manager is designated by GaSTAT and has the authority to run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Project Board within the constraints laid down by the Project Board. The Project Board is the group responsible for making on consensus basis management decisions for a project when guidance is required by the National Project Manager, including recommendation for approval of project revisions. The Project Assurance role supports the Project Board by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions and ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed.

## Project Background

# The Saudi vision 2030 and the National Transformation Program 2020 has identified clear tracks of the comprehensive development in Saudi Arabia. The transformation took place in the light of the rapid changes towards social and economic change, huge data and information revolution and non-stop leaps in technology and solutions. It started with the transformation of the "Central Department of Statistics and Information" to the "General Authority for Statistics" with administrative and financial independence by the Royal Decree No. 64283, dated 26/12/1436 H, to begin a journey of responding to changes and meeting the needs of private and public entities of data that support current and future national development operations, information sources consolidation, ease of access and providing more innovative statistical products, in addition to the requirements of this stage in establishing effective collaborations with all data users.

# The ultimate change of this intervention is supposed to contributed, at the upstream policy level, to the three pillars of the Country Programme Document (2017-2021), which are: sustainable economic and social development; public sector efficiency; and sustainable natural resource management. The geographical coverage of the project is the whole Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The project's overall objective is to apply policy design as an approach whereby evidence-based decision-making takes precedence. The statistical data and products developed are beneficial to all citizens, regardless of gender, age, people living in rural/urban areas, and/or those living with disabilities.

# The intended outcome of this intervention is the creation of a national statistical system that can adequately respond to the data needs of development planning, policy-making, and monitoring in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the technical support is delivered under the following revised outputs:

# Output 1: GASTAT capabilities to produce statistical data and information in light of the Kingdom's 2030 statistical vision strengthened.

# Output 2: GASTAT capacities to integrate statistical analysis into decision-making processes enhanced with a focus on achieving the SDGs and Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030.

# Output 3: Modernization of the statistical systems enabled

# Output 4: Capacities for statistics governance and quality control strengthened

# Output 5: Nowcasting solution developed and preliminary early estimates of GDP and economic activity in KSA produced.

# Scope and Purpose of the Evaluation

The project has been ongoing since February 2017 and has, thus far, never been evaluated. Drastic changes have been taking place in the country, and the project has had to adapt to the changes over recent years. This included changes in Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Project staff, resulting in changing project directions. To ensure the project has delivered its intended objectives thus far and to provide recommendations for the way forward, it is imperative to conduct a mid-term evaluation and ensure the project delivery is on track. This evaluation will benefit the General Statistics Authority and UNDP in planning for future years to meet Saudi Vision 2030 and highlight the impacts this project has had on the Statistics sector over the past few years. This MTR covers the project period between (2017 & 2021) and all the components/outputs of the project including the revised outputs and their impact on the sector in the whole country.

# Evaluation Findings

**Relevance:** The project is relevant and appropriate to the country context, needs, and priorities of key stakeholders, in line with the national development priorities,the national plans, strategies and budgets, particularly those dictated by the Vision 2030 and the subsequent implementation mechanism of the National Transformational Plan as well as the country programme’s outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs. The statistics and information sector in Saudi Arabia has received plenty of demands due to its significant position and leading role internationally and regionally. Saudi Arabia’s continuous progress in the developmental path requires more accurate, comprehensive, timely statistics to support decision-making, monitor the progress, and evaluate impact and performance. Therefore, this sector is an important priority to the country. In addition, the GASTAT transformation plan and the remarkable progress in information and communication technologies have accelerated the demand for timeless, comprehensive, reliable, and accurate statistical information.

**Effectiveness**: The project has contributed to setting the institutional framework in terms of national policies to mainstream data generation by all sectors in line with the elevated significance accorded by the Saudi Vision 2030 to the Key Performance Indicators (KPls) to be maintained by all public sector's institutions. The capacity of GASTAT technical staff from different directorates and departments has been enhanced. The project supported GASTAT to develop statistical capacity indicator for monitoring SDGs. Technical staff drawn from the agriculture statistics department (Spatial and Resource Statistics directorate) were trained on the mechanisms of cross-checking data technically following given guidelines and conducting surveys annually to provide data of agricultural plant and animal sector, which helps generate high-quality results that serve decision-makers, researchers, and users of agricultural data in general, as well as clarifying how to adopt the results in accordance with target data on the level of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its regions.

GASTAT technical staff were also trained on how to estimate data in the event of late survey results or postponing surveys and the mechanism for verifying the results technically. The capacity of staff (especially the new staff) in the department of national accounts (economic statistics directorate) was enhanced to understand and implement the SNA 2008 with the best practices. GASTAT developed strong ties with the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) in terms of raising statistical and technical awareness about understanding the methodology and procedures for acquiring accurate statistics on foreign direct investment, based on the importance of foreign direct investment statistics as one of the most vital KPIs for decision-makers in SAGIA is of utmost importance in arriving at policies and strategies to attract more foreign investments to the Kingdom in the future.

GASTAT Staff from Tourism, Hajj, and Umrah Statistics were trained on the definition and importance of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) system and the data sources of TSA tables. The project experts also prepared a training manual and provided it to stakeholders in the Department of Energy Statistics, including the survey stages and the guidelines for its implementation.Energy statistics staff were trained on how to extract the tables and form these tables according to administrative regions and how to develop their capabilities in this field. They were also trained on automated data checking and survey edit rules. The experts also prepared and gave capacity-building presentations on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA), Monitoring Framework for Water: The System of Environmental-Economic Accounts for Water (SEEA-Water), and the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS), and the Hybrid Accounts of SEEAW.

The project experts provided technical support and training to the GIS team. For example, approximately 7,000,000 (7 million plots of land) were processed at the level of 13 administrative regions in Saudi Arabia. The project experts supervised survey data processing of poultry (mothers, broilers, the number of birds during the year, production and distribution of table eggs and hatching eggs, etc.); Survey data processing of cattle farms (number of cows by breed, gender, and age, Milk, etc.); Survey data processing of vegetables, crops and fruit trees (e.g., land uses, cultivated and harvested areas of field crops and fodder, etc.); Survey data processing of livestock; and Survey data processing of beehives (e.g., beehives, production and distribution of honey and royal jelly, preparing bee cults, etc.).

The annual survey form was revised to align with the latest international practices and according to the sixth edition of the IMF's Balance of Payments Manual. Further technical support was given in revising and adjusting the primary data file on Excel, in which the financial statements of the companies are entered, where iterations were removed, reviewing all the commercial registry records of the companies, and sending it to the Investment Authority so that the names of companies and other adjustments are identified, given the current importance of this file to start establishing a platform system in the future.The project experts prepared the methodology of the energy survey in the transport sector. They designed survey questionnaires that include the government vehicles’ questionnaire, the organization’s vehicles questionnaire, the individuals’ vehicles questionnaire, and the agricultural and construction vehicles’ questionnaire.

**Efficiency:** Most of the challenges observed during the project implementation result from gaps in the project design (e.g., lack of effective accountability mechanisms) and the ongoing transformation agenda at GASTAT. Besides the PSC (which held regular meetings), the implementation arrangements as defined in the project document are not very effective. There has been a relatively slow transfer of knowledge from the experts partly due to a lack of a clear capacity building or staff development plan for employees, resulting in ad hoc requests for experts. The project did not have a comprehensive and effective M & E system to measure the performance of indicators and maintain a monitoring database. At the same time, the project documentation and reporting mechanisms had significant gaps.

There is limited ownership of the project by key stakeholders (GASTAT), and UNDP value addition is not visible. Stakeholders have a wrong perception that UNDP was just a recruitment agency providing the needed technical experts. Most of the key GASTAT staff, especially at the senior level, are new and unaware of the project (including some who had been there for ten months). Though the transformation at GASTAT is a path in the right direction and is appreciated by most of the senior staff, to a large extent, it has affected the morale of technical staff. If not well managed, the gains already made by the project could be lost. The lack of clarity of the GASTAT transformation plan has resulted in administrative and operational challenges such as staff turnover, some resistance to change, and low staff motivation due to uncertainty about their future. According to most of the stakeholders interviewed, the roles and responsibilities of technical teams were not very clear.

**Sustainability**: The key stakeholders, mainly from GASTAT, support the project’s long-term objectives, particularly the technical support and capacity building to enhance its institutional capacity. The technical support provided, such as developing key indicators (e.g., SDGs, gender statistics indicators to reflect vision 2030 and SDG goals-on women, etc.), research instruments, and other knowledge products, will continue being used within GASTAT in the long term. Most of the project's accrued benefits, including capacity building and knowledge products produced, would continue being used within GASTAT. Some innovative approaches such as nowcasting and preliminary early estimates of GDP and economic activity will continue being implemented by GATAT. In addition, the technical staff who benefited from different capacity-building initiatives acquired knowledge and skills that may be applicable in future actions. However, there were no mechanisms such as training of trainers (ToT) to ensure cascading of skills acquired to other technical staff.

The limited ownership of the project, lack of mutual accountability and inclusivity, managerial and coordination gaps threaten the sustainability of the project benefits. Though the MTR has not established any economic, environmental, social, financial, or political risks and challenges that may jeopardize the sustainability of the project results, the institutional support provided to GASTAT has not created adequate capacities for sustainable results. For instance, partnerships and linkages with external stakeholders such as Policy-makers and implementation officials at the sectoral level, the private sector, academia, CSOs, etc., were minimal. Though the experts documented some lessons learned from the technical perspective, the best practices and lessons learned from the project implementation have not been documented for future programming.

**Impact:** There are good initiatives such as providing technical support, building the capacity of GASTAT and its staff, responding to statistical demand, and creating statistical awareness to the public and different sectors.Despite the good progress and some positive outcomes, the MTR has not identified any real impact of this project in terms of having an institutional framework that promotes efficiency and effectiveness to produce first-class statistical products of relevance to the national context and a modernized ICT infrastructure to ensure timely delivery of quality products and services to various beneficiaries. The project period since project inception is not adequate to generate results at the impact level.

## Recommendations

## Promote project ownership through inclusive implementation (the involvement of internal and external stakeholders) and mutual accountability. The project should conduct a stakeholder mapping and analysis to identify all stakeholders and how each is affected by the project. Based on this analysis, identify the key stakeholders and develop a strategy on how to partner with them or seek their contribution to the project activities. GASTAT should seek “buy in” by promoting inclusiveness and participation of all internal stakeholders.

## The project architecture needs some adjustments /realignments to be more effective. The project theory of change and results framework needs restructuring to show the logical link of each output with the respective outcome. This should be done by reconstructing the Theory of Change to show the domains of change and revising the results framework indicators to include outcome-based SMART indicators.

## Address gaps in management and coordination mechanisms to deal with reduced morale of the staff. This can be done by regularly updating/communicating with GASTAT technical staff about the ongoing transformation plan which is good but not well communicated to staff.

## Improve project documentation and reporting of progress through quarterly, biannual and annual performance reports. UNDP project team through the CTA should ensure project implementation is well documenent in regular quarterly progress reports

## Establish an effective M & E framework to regularly measure project indicators. UNDP project team should develop an M & E plan and work closely with GASTAT to ensure attention is given to all the components/outputs/outcomes and indicatore are regularly monitored and measured against targets.

## South-South and Triangular Cooperation not fully implemented. The project should open channels of communication and knowledge sharing with other regional and international organizations and institutes. This can be done by identifying countries with best practices in statistics and organizing experience sharing forums and visits.

## Recruited experts should domesticate good practices and lessons learned. This can be agreed with the experts during recruitment and included in their contracts

## Recruit technical experts(service providers) on long term contracts instead of short term. Directorates/department needs shold be strategically identified e.g through a needs assessment and come up with best strategies to effectively respond to those needs. To establish the statistical needs of GASTAT, the project CTA should work closely with each directorate/department heads to conduct a needs assessment.

## Enhancing the transfer of knowledge from technical experts to –staff. Training and capacity building should be done systematically and there is a need to develop a staff development plan.

## There is need for honest and transparent collaboration between many entities with statistical authority in the country. In Foreign Investment case, the success of GaStat would require the support and help from SAGIA, SAMA and foreign investment companies in Saudi Arabia.

## Develop a gender implementation strategy and develop/update gender statistics indicators to reflect vision 2030 and SDG goals-on gender equality and women empowerment.

# INTRODUCTION

## Overview of the Evaluation Subject

"Institutional Support to Statistics" Project is funded by the Government of Saudi Arabia with technical support from UNDP at the cost of $ 5,784,480 (estimated Project expenditure at the time of evaluation is $1,728,004). Since its launch in 2017, the project has continued to provide an effective cooperation framework for strengthening the statistical capacities in support of Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030. The project is implemented by the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) in Saudi Arabia. GASTAT is the official body responsible for providing public entities, private establishments, individuals, and international organizations with official statistics in accordance with statutory procedures to support policy and decision-makers in these entities to move forward in implementing the developmental plans. On the other hand, statistical censuses such as the general population, housing, and establishments’ census are considered the most important products of GASTAT and the periodic statistical indicators and indices in the economic, social, health, educational, and agricultural, and workforce fields.

GASTAT strategically aims to create a framework for all statistical needs supporting the National Vision 2030[[4]](#footnote-5), National Transformation Program 2020[[5]](#footnote-6), and the Sustainable Development Goals’ (SDGs')[[6]](#footnote-7) agreed-upon targets and indicators of relevance to the national context. The project is alighned with the UN and UNDP Strategic Plan in Saudi Arabia. Though a formal United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is not mandatory in Saudi Arabia, the United Nations Common Country Strategic Framework (UNCCSF, 2017-2021) is the Strategic Framework for Cooperation between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UNCT. The project is aligned with UNCCSF Pillar 1 on knowledge-based equitable and sustainable economic development, underpinned by technology, innovation, and improved infrastructure; and Pillar 2 on Equitable, accountable, effective, and efficient public sector, particularly Output 2.1. National capacities enhanced and integrated towards local adaptation and implementation of the SDGs and the national transformation plan (Related strategic plan outcome (from strategic plan, 2014-2017) No. 3. Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services).

The project is also aligned with UNDP CPD (2017-2021), focusing on institutionalizing mechanisms for planning and monitoring, and evaluation at the programme level. UNDP’s efforts to build the capacity of GASTAT will strengthen the ability of the Saudi Country Office (CO) to capture needed data and relevant statistics in evaluating the various programmes. It will also deepen the strategic partnership between UNDP and GASTAT to support national capacities in data collection. The project is also in line with SDGs Goal 17. To strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, especially data, monitoring, and accountability (17.18 and 17.19)

According to the ToC, the desired change in the current statistical practices would be induced by a continuous capacity development program involving GASTAT and all participating parties, with a specific focus on sectoral coordination. The core pillar is an institutional framework that promotes efficiency and effectiveness to produce first-class statistical products relevant to the national context. In addition, a modernized ICT infrastructure is to be put in place to ensure the timely delivery of quality products and services to various beneficiaries. The institutional framework is founded on a continuous capacity development project and an updated ICT infrastructure. In this respect, institutional coordination across all sectors and regions should be in place to ensure the production of marketable statistical products and services. But as such coordination is a daunting task in financial and operational aspects, the present intervention limits itself to the provision of capacity development required for cross-sector coordination at national and sub-national levels.

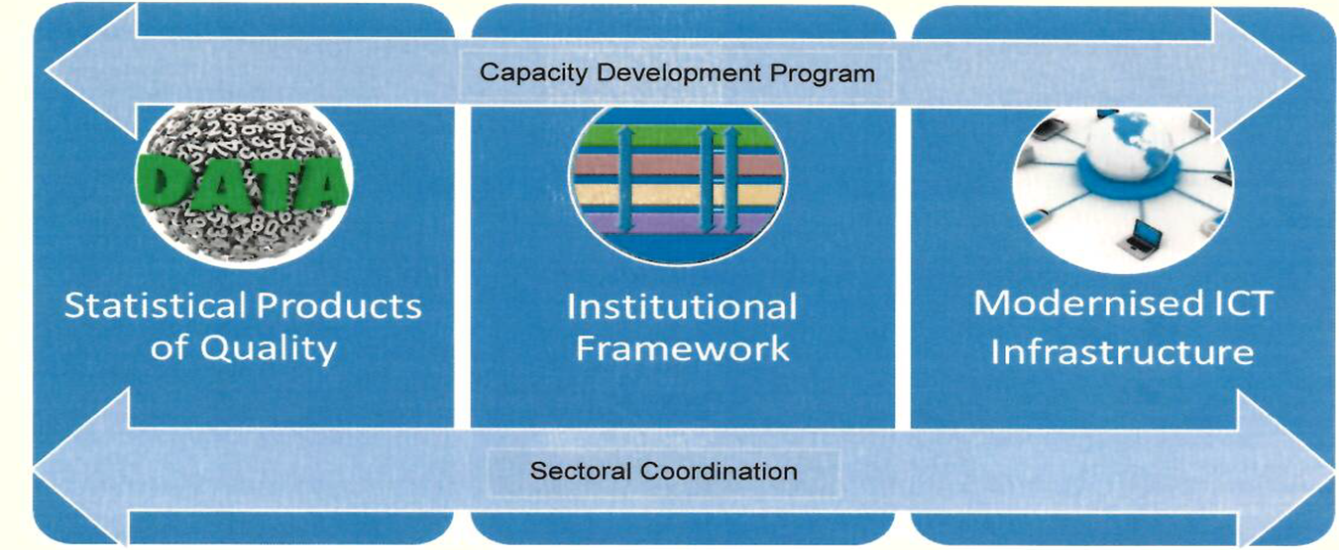
The project has been ongoing since inception and has, thus far, never been evaluated (The original implementation period of the project was February 5, 2017, to March 31, 2020). Drastic changes have been taking place in the country and the project has had to adapt to the changes over recent years, this included changes in Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Project staff, resulting in changing project directions. To ensure the project has delivered its intended objectives thus far and to provide recommendations for the way forward, it is imperative to conduct a mid-term evaluation and ensure the project delivery is on track. This evaluation will benefit the General Statistics Authority in their planning for future years to meet Saudi Vision 2030 and highlight the impacts this project has had on Statistics sector over the past few years.

The project organized several consultations to understand the technical needs of the statistical system and also reviewed its success elements and the drawbacks to improve cooperation and achieve better impact. The feedback and the needs of the statistical system convinced GASTAT and UNDP to amend their cooperation to further strengthen the statistical system in Saudi Arabia through a substantive revision of the Institutional Support to Statistics project. Therefore, the project extension period (January 2021 to December 2024) provides the necessary time for the project to complete ongoing activities and deliver the revised outputs to achieve a more significant impact.

**The Theory of Change (ToC) is hinged on the following;**

***If*** GASTAT has a modernized ICT infrastructure to ensure timely delivery of quality products and services to various beneficiaries; and ***If*** there is a continuous capacity development program involving GASTAT and all participating parties with a specific focus on institutional coordination across all sectors and regions; and ***If*** GASTAT has an institutional framework that promotes efficiency and effectiveness; ***Then***, GASTAT will be able to produce relevant, high quality and marketable statistical products and services.

## Project Theory of Change



## Country Context

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia lies at the furthermost part of southwestern Asia. It is bordered by the Arabian Gulf, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar in the east; the Red Sea in the west; Kuwait, Iraq, and Jordan in the north; Yemen and Oman in the south. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupies about four-fifths of the Arab Peninsula, with a total area of around 2,000,000 square kilometers.[[7]](#footnote-8) The country shares maritime borders with Bahrain, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran, and Sudan. The sparsely inhabited country has a population of 34.8 million inhabitants (in 2020), the capital and largest city is Riyadh, the spoken language is Arabic. Saudi Arabia has a predominantly Muslim population; the state religion is Wahhabism, the ultraconservative form of Sunni Islam. 85–95% of Saudi Arabian citizens are Sunni Muslims, 10–15% are Shia. The country is home to Mecca, Islam’s holiest city and the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad. The Kingdom is ruled by the house of Saud along traditional Islamic lines. Saudi Arabia is the largest oil producer in the Middle East. The petroleum sector accounts for roughly 75% of budget revenues, 45% of GDP, and 90% of export earnings.[[8]](#footnote-9) About 40% of GDP comes from the private sector.[[9]](#footnote-10)

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. [[10]](#footnote-11) Saudi Arabia was hit by two shocks during the COVID-19 crisis—the spread of COVID-19 and the sharp decline in oil prices. The authorities implemented a range of measures to limit the spread of the virus encompassing curfews; travel restrictions (including on international flights and internal public transportation and taxis); suspending prayers at mosques; closing all schools, universities, and shopping malls; suspending employee attendance at government and private workplaces (except for critical staff); and increasing testing. New makeshift hospitals were built to accommodate any potential surge in patients. Temporary housing accommodation and repatriation flights were offered to expatriate workers. The government also restricted last year's Hajj season to only around 1000 pilgrims. Real oil GDP contracted by 6.7 percent in 2020 as the OPEC+ group agreed to substantial production cuts to help rebalance the market. After contracting sharply in 2020Q2, non-oil growth rebounded as the lockdown eased. Real non-oil GDP declined by 2.3 percent in 2020 but grew by 5.6 percent in 2020H2 (compared to 2020H1) and by 2.9 percent year-over-year in 2021Q1. The rebound continued in early 2021Q2—the PMI picked up again in April and May after easing somewhat in February and March from a 15-month high in January.

As countries across the world kick start their recovery journeys, the government of Saudi Arabia has accelerated the implementation of its Vision 2030 plans. Indeed, IT leaders in the Saudi government are delivering new and enhanced public services using efficient, trusted, highly responsive, inclusive, and convenient technologies and methodologies.[[11]](#footnote-12) Moreover, as the Kingdom aggressively pursues its digital ambitions, an enabling regulatory and policy environment maturity and accountability has significantly improved in supporting service providers’ and end-users’ need to innovate while staying secure. [[12]](#footnote-13)

## Project Background

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus Resolution 70/1: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda). The Resolution states that "realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will make a crucial contribution to progress". The prioritization of gender equality and women’s rights is reflected in a cross-cutting manner throughout every part of the 2030 Agenda, including the declaration, goals, targets, and indicators, means of implementation, global partnership and follow-up and review. The project supports Saudi Arabia in implementing the 2030 Agenda by providing statistical data on SDGs through better production, accessibility and use of quality gender data and statistics. It seeks to increase the quality, comparability, and regularity of gender statistics to address national data gaps and meet reporting commitments under the SDGs; and ensures that gender statistics are accessible to users in governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector, to strengthen adequate demand for their production.

The Saudi vision 2030 and the National Transformation Program 2020 has identified clear tracks of the comprehensive development in Saudi Arabia. It was accompanied by a transformation in the statistical sector as it described its output as the base upon which the development decisions build on and the solid structure that decision and policy makers rely on. The transformation took place in the light of the rapid changes towards social and economic change, huge data and information revolution and non-stop leaps in technology and solutions. It started with the transformation of the "Central Department of Statistics and Information" to the "General Authority for Statistics" with administrative and financial independence by the Royal Decree No. 64283, dated 26/12/1436 H, to begin a journey of responding to changes and meeting the needs of private and public entities of data that support current and future national development operations, information sources consolidation, ease of access and providing more innovative statistical products, in addition to the requirements of this stage in establishing effective collaborations with all data users.

The ultimate change of this intervention is supposed to contributed, at the upstream policy

level, to the three pillars of the Country Programme Document (2017-2021), which are: sustainable economic and social development; public sector efficiency; and sustainable natural resource management.The General Authority of Statistics put the client, quality and statistical sector development as the main pillars of work through six major tracks: development of a client focus strategy; development and harmonization of products and services; improvement of processes and methodologies; improvement of the IT and infrastructure quality; dissemination of the statistical culture; capacity building and structuring all General Authority for Statistics’ functions, tasks and departments and move forward towards achieving institutional development and excellence.

The geographical coverage of the project is the whole Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The project's overall objective is to apply policy design as an approach whereby evidence-based decision-making takes precedence. In this respect, policy design and implementation are viewed as an iterative cycle that starts with understanding the issue as a precursor to setting the objectives of the policy. The necessary policy instruments are then designed, and an implementation process is developed. This ideally starts with staff training to allow the operation of the policy instrument. The revised project provides a framework to deliver demand-driven technical support and timely capacity development interventions aligned with the National Statistical Development Strategy. It also addresses the statistical needs triggered by the context of COVID-19. The statistical data and products developed are beneficial to all citizens, including vulnerable groups such as the gender, age, people living in rural/urban areas, and/or those living with disabilities. Survey and other data produced is disagragregated by different groups of people.

The intended outcome of this intervention is the creation of a national statistical system that can adequately respond to the data needs of development planning, policy-making, and monitoring in Saudi Arabia. Specifically, the technical support is delivered under the following revised outputs:

* **Output 1:** GASTAT capabilities to produce statistical data and information in light of the Kingdom's 2030 statistical vision strengthened.
* **Output 2:** GASTAT capacities to integrate statistical analysis into decision-making processes enhanced with a focus on achieving the SDGs and Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030.
* **Output 3:** Modernization of the statistical systems enabled
* **Output 4:** Capacities for statistics governance and quality control strengthened
* **Output 5:** Nowcasting solution developed and preliminary early estimates of GDP and economic activity in KSA produced

## Implementation Arrangement

The project is implemented under the National Implementation (NIM) modality (NIM) with activities implemented through UNDP NIM modality, whereby GaSTAT assumes implementation responsibility with UNDP Implementation Support Services for recruitment of international and national advisors and other activities as noted in the Annual Work Plan. UNDP is expected to mobilize a number of UN Agencies to serve as cooperating agencies in the project for provision of international advisors and other activities as noted in the Annual Work Plan. All activities under the project are done through standard Project Board mechanism that serves as a steering committee between GaSTAT, UNDP and UN Agencies to ensure coherence of all activities under the project. UNDP provides technical advisory support to all activities through the UNDP Country Office in Riyadh, UNDP Regional Service Centre and various units in UNDP Headquarters in New York, as well as support for overall project management activities. Other UN agencies/bodies may also be invited to contribute to specific activities in the project.

This intervention is grounded in a host of national and international partnerships. As the overall impact of the intervention is projected to reach all population of Saudi Arabia and in terms of both the existing generation and the future ones, the public awareness campaigns are planned to engage all citizens. Moreover, Policy-makers and implementation officials at the sectoral level who constitute the core functioning body in adapting and implementing the SDGs in Saudi Arabia, whether at the macro level or from the provincial perspective are to be engaged through workshops designed to elicit stakeholders' views and to forge consensus around major decisions.

The Project Board is the group responsible for making on consensus basis management decisions for a project when guidance is required by the National Project Manager, including recommendation for approval of project revisions. Project reviews by this group are made at biannual basis in Riyadh, or as necessary when raised by the National Project Manager. This group is consulted by the National Project Manager for decisions when management tolerances (i.e.constraints normally in terms of time and budget) have been exceeded. This group contains three roles: executive representing the project ownership to chair the group, senior Supplier role to provide guidance regarding the technical feasibility of the project, and senior Beneficiary role to ensure the realization of project benefits from the perspective of project beneficiaries. Project Assurance is the responsibility of each Project Board member, but the role can be delegated to staff within each agency. The Project Assurance role supports the Project Board by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions and ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed. The Team Leader for Governance UNDP Saudi Arabia holds the Project Assurance role for the UNDP, and a similar level government representative undertakes this role for GaSTAT. A National Project Manager is designated by GaSTAT and has the authority to run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Project Board within the constraints laid down by the Project Board. The National Project Manager is responsible for day-to-day management. The National Project Manager's prime responsibility is to ensure that the project produces the results specified in the project document, to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost.

The project is administered from the Head Office of the General Authority for Statistics through thematic working groups (in addition to the UNDP's Implementation Support Services). However, the success of the thematic working groups relies on well-functioning focal point mechanism at the sectoral and regional levels. Thematic working groups are expected to establish their respective national and sub-national modus operandi and lists of partners to assist in achieving the results of the group. The governing principle dictated by the SDGs, which calls for leaving 'no one behind, is the core of the institutional structures of the groups and their partners.UNDP Country Office provides support to the working groups to ensure that the intervention reaches its targeted outputs and outcome. A detailed focal point mechanism is developed by each working group following the inception and inter-sectoral workshops planned at the initial stage of implementation. Direct UNDP Country Office Support Services are budgeted to cover all costs incurred as a result of fast mobilization of support from the UN System and elsewhere. Direct Project Costing is applied to cover UNDP's extensive work dedicated to the various stages of this project's lifecycle.

# EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND OBJECTIVES.

The project has been ongoing since February 2017 and has, thus far, never been evaluated. Drastic changes have been taking place in the country, and the project has had to adapt to the changes over recent years. This included changes in Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and Project staff, resulting in changing project directions. To ensure the project has delivered its intended objectives thus far and to provide recommendations for the way forward, it is imperative to conduct a mid-term evaluation and ensure the project delivery is on track. This evaluation will benefit the General Statistics Authority and UNDP in planning for future years to meet Saudi Vision 2030 and highlight the impacts this project has had on the Statistics sector over the past few years.

This MTR covers the project period between (2017 & 2021) and all the components/outputs of the project including the revised outputs and their impact on the sector in the whole country. In addition, the evaluator has considered the Saudi Vision 2030 objectives and other GASTAT- Initiatives in formulating the report, which can improve the sustainability of benefits from this project and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP Goals.

**The main objectives of the evaluation are to assess:**

* How GASTAT capabilities to produce statistical data and information have been strengthened by the project
* Provide proof to how GASTAT capacities were enhanced to integrate statistical analysis into decision-making processes with a focus on achieving the SDGs and Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030
* How was the statistical system modernized? How has data related to social inclusion been integrated?
* Report on how statistics governance and quality control have been strengthened
* Establish solutions developed and estimates of GDP forecasted

# APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation approach and methodology was drawn from the goal, scope, and objective of the evaluation/study outlined in the Terms of Reference(Annex 1). The evaluation process has been participative and inclusive. The evaluator used qualitative methods to address the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and answer the evaluation questions using credible and reliable data collection methods and analysis techniques. Using qualitative methods helped the evaluator deep dive to project activities and results to gather evidence-based information on the performance of the various dimensions of the project interventions, outputs, and outcomes. Though the evaluation mainly applied qualitative methods, quantitative data from secondary data such as training participants has been analyzed and referenced.

The evaluator carried out a thorough desk review of project documents, including progress reports and relevant literature. The evaluator also held consultative meetings with key stakeholders to measure the project achievements against the expected results and identify implementation gaps and factors that contributed to or hindered planned results. Stakeholder consultations were conducted through face-to-face and/or virtual Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and face-to-face Focus Group Discussions with direct beneficiaries. To measure outcomes and change induced by the project interventions and gaps, KII question guides included specific questions to describe outcomes and how and to what extent the project interventions contributed to those outcomes (Outcome Harvesting). Outcome Harvesting involved collecting (“harvesting”) evidence of what has changed (“outcomes”) and, then, working backwards to determine whether and how the project has contributed to these changes. The evaluator summarized the outcomes harvested from each KII for analysis and triangulation.

To evaluate cross-cutting issues, (gender and human rights), the evaluation matrix and evaluation questions included gender and human rights-related questions, the data to be gathered, the source of the data, and methods for data collection and data analysis. The evaluator also conducted a literature review of gender-based studies and sex-disaggregated databases related to the project's objectives. The analysis compared information about men and women, about different categories of women and men (e.g., vulnerability, sexual orientation, age, etc.). The MTR examined how the identified gender differences limited or facilitated the desired changes and identified gender-based constraints and opportunities that can either impede or facilitate project objectives.

Generally, the evaluation focuses on deepening understanding and explaining how planned results have been achieved; Establishing change induced by the project interventions and gaps; Identifying failure and success factors and their respective contributions to the expected and unexpected results; Lessons learned; and recommendations for sustainability and future programming. The list of stakeholders consulted were determined using purposeful sampling in consultation with the UNDP project team and GASTAT.

## 3.1 Evaluation Criteria and Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation was guided by OECD/DAC criteria and, therefore, sought to answer the following questions, focused around the evaluation criteria of Relevance/Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact Sustainability, and Cross-cutting issues (Gender equality and Human rights). Accordingly, the evaluation findings have been presented under each of these criteria, and performance ratings for each criterion are provided.

**The following indicative evaluation questions outlined in the ToR were organized into an evaluation matrix (Annex 2).**

1. **Relevance/Coherence**
2. To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme’s outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
3. To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome especially in addressing the statistics in Saudi Arabia?
4. To what extent has the project enhanced knowledge on behaviour change
5. To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
6. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, environmental, institutional, etc., changes in the country?
7. **Effectiveness**
8. To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?
9. To what extent were the project outputs achieved especially in achieving desired outcome
10. What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
11. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
12. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
13. What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project’s objectives?
14. Were the project’s objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame?
15. To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation? Or to what extent do they feel they own the actions they are taking.
16. To what extent are project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?
17. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights? To what extent women were involved in the implementation of the actions indirectly or directly.
18. **Efficiency**
19. To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
20. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
21. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
22. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
23. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
24. To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?
25. **Impact**
26. How have the project deliverables impacted GASTAT’s ability to carry on its mandate?
27. Has the project helped make a significant impact on the way the national partners perform their expected objectives?
28. **Sustainability**
29. Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs?
30. To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
31. Are there any social, economic, environmental, or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project’s contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
32. Do the institutional and legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
33. To what extent are institutional and human resource capacities strengthened to provide effective technical support to national partners and stakeholders for energy efficiency actions
34. What is the risk that the level of stakeholders’ ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained? To what extent the project was effective to enhance integration of statistics in public and private sector actions
35. To what extent do stakeholders support the project’s long-term objectives?
36. To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
37. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies?
38. What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?
39. **Cross-cutting issues (Human rights)**
40. To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?
41. To what extent does the project ensure that no one is left behind in regard to project benefits? What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities? What barriers did persons with disabilities face?
42. **Cross-cutting issues (Gender equality)**
43. To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?
44. Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality?
45. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any positive or negative unintended effects?

Accordingly, as indicated in the ToR, the evaluator further refined the above indicative questions and developed the following **seven key evaluation questions** that guided the evaluation process. The refined evaluation questions were agreed on with UNDP at the inception phase.

1. How appropriate and relevant is the project **(Relevance)?**
2. To what extent is the project successful in achieving its planned outcomes and targeted results **(Effectiveness)?**
3. How efficient is the project implementation**(Efficiency)?**
4. How sustainable are project interventions and results**(Sustainability)?**
5. How coherent is the project with other projects/programmes and actors**(Coherence)?**
6. What are the intended and unintended changes that have occurred as a result of the project interventions **(Impact)?**
7. To what extent has the project strategy and implementation integrated cross-cutting issues **(Gender equality and Human rights)**?

## 3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

As indicated above, both primary and secondary data collection methodologies were applied during the data collection phase. The evaluator ensured the data collection process was participative and inclusive by working in close consultation with the project team and the GASTAT. In addition, the evaluation used participatory approaches where key stakeholders involved or impacted by the project (directly or indirectly) were consulted/interviewed. This approach included engaging the stakeholders through interactive meetings where discussions on the evaluation issues/questions were held. Approved interview question guides for various categories of stakeholders/respondents were used during primary data collection. At the end of the data collection phase, a debriefing session was organized whereby the evaluator shared the preliminary findings and get input from the project team and GASTAT.

In general, the evaluation was undertaken in three phases.

***i) Phase One: Evaluation Planning Phase***

This phase included (a) The preliminary desk review of relevant literature and project documents, Evaluation design, methodology, work plan, and sampling frame (the list of stakeholders to be interviewed). The evaluator also considered the entire internal and external environment of the project implementation. (b) development of the inception report alongside data collection tools/Key Informant Interview question guides (Annex 3).

***ii) Phase Two: Data Collection/Validation Phase***

Several data collection methods mentioned above (KIIs/OH and documentation review, ) enabled the evaluation process to establish the project performance and contribution and identify the best practices and key lessons learned during the project implementation. The evaluator conducted a comprehensive document synthesis and analysis of the project document, Theory of Change (ToC) and results frameworks as the main tools during the evaluation design. However, since the project document, ToC and the results frameworks could not capture the interplay of factors that determine why change occurs, a thorough literature review was done to provide partial answers to some of the evaluation questions and assess the quality of policy and strategy of project documents.

**Secondary data (Desk review):** This included a review of inter alia; Relevant literature; Project document (contribution agreement); Theory of change and results framework; Programme and project quality assurance reports; Annual work plans; Activity designs; Consolidated quarterly and annual progress reports; Results-oriented monitoring report; Highlights of project board meetings; Technical/financial monitoring reports; GASTAT National Strategy; Vision 2030 and corresponding transformation plans related to the statistics sector (National Transformation Program - Vision 2030).

**Primary data (Stakeholder consultations):** Primary data collection was guided by approved interview guides for each category of respondents. The consultant interviewed and held consultative face-to-face and virtual meetings with key stakeholders, including the UNDP-GASTAT project team, service providers, GASTAT staff (technical and statistical analysis experts), direct beneficiaries, thematic working groups, etc. The methodology used was gender-sensitive, conflict-sensitive, and respected the principles of Do No Harm. This approach enabled the evaluator to assess many aspects of the project, particularly the perceptions of key stakeholders and their recommendations.

***iii) Phase 3: Analysis, Debriefing, and Report Writing***

A debriefing session was conducted at the end of the data collection phase, whereby the consultant presented the preliminary findings and emerging issues to UNDP/GASTAT teams. Data collected from different sources has been synthesized, analyzed, and key findings triangulated to draw recommendations and lessons learned. The evaluator ensured interpretation was not influenced by own judgment and perspectives during data analysis.

During consultations with key stakeholders, the evaluator accurately took notes of feedback from the respondents and thereafter keenly read through and summarized the data to identify key findings that directly answer the evaluation questions. The consultant then identified broad ideas, phrases, and themes, looking for the most common responses to questions, identifying observations or patterns that can answer the evaluation questions, and including areas that can be explored further.

**Sampling and Sample size determination:** Purposeful sampling was used to select KII respondents for the evaluation. However, the consultant ensured selection of individuals whose responses most likely provided helpful information to answer the evaluation questions. Quantitative data was only used to gather information from beneficiaries of the capacity-building initiatives. In addition, aspects of gender and human rights were considered. This was done by ensuring representation of men and women during the selection of key informants. Though the evaluator did not encounter any vulnerable individuals/groups during data collection,he obtained fully-informed consent before proceeding with the KII..

## 3.3 Evaluation Ethics

This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The evaluation process also adhered to global evaluation standards and evaluator obligations of independence, confidentiality, impartiality, credibility, honesty, and integrity. The evaluator did not disclose respondents' real names and personal details during and after interviews. The consultant was sensitive to identifying potential ethical issues and approaches that might compromise the evaluation process. Before Interviews, the evaluator clearly explained the MTR and data collection objective to respondents and sought their informed consent.

## 3.4 Ensuring Quality

The evaluator used best evaluation practices to ensure quality, including adherence to the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, revised UNDP evaluation Guidelines (June 2021) and conducting regular consultations with the evaluation manager and the established internal ERG. The evaluation was guided by the ToR, the approved inception report, and qualitative questions guides. Throughout the evaluation process, the evaluator remained independent from UNDP and GASTAT.

## 3.5 Limitations to the Methodology

The methodology faced some limitations, in terms of stakeholder feedbacks. Most of the GASTAT staff were new in their positions and therefore there was limited ownership and institutional memory of the project. There were major gaps in documentation and reporting since progress reports were not available. The evaluator mainly relied on stakeholder consultations, experts’ activity reports, the project document and relevant literature to measure the project performance. These limitations did not derail or significantly affect the evaluation findings.

# EVALUATION FINDINGS

## Overall Rating

## Overall Project Performance (0= Lowest rating , 5=Highest rating)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Ratings:** | | | |
| **1. Monitoring and Evaluation** | ***rating*** | **2. IA& EA Execution** | ***rating*** |
| **M&E design at entry**  Project design did not include a comprehensine M & E plan. Monitoring of project implementation had gaps | **3/5** | **Quality of UNDP Implementation:** Implementation was passive, progress reports missing | 3/5 |
| **M&E Plan Implementation:** M & E system was not reliable and effective | **1/5** | **Quality of Execution - Implementing Partner:** Limited ownership,implementation structures not effective, and gaps in documentation and reporting | 3/5 |
| **Overall quality of M&E:** Weak system and no M & E plan | **1/5** | **Overall quality of Implementation** Average | 3/5 |
| **3. Assessment of Outcomes** | **rating** | **4. Sustainability** | **rating** |
| **Relevance:** Relevant to country context, needs and priorities of key stakeholders and direct beneficiaries | **5/5** | **Financial resources:** Not fully utilized, no deficits | 5/5 |
| **Effectiveness:** Results framework was output based and due to gaps and documentation, the contribution of the project could not be fully established. The Covid 19 affected implementation | **3/5** | **Socio-political:** There is political goodwill for GASTAT transformation plan. Covid 19 affected im[lementaion | 4/5 |
| **Efficiency**: Limited ownership, gaps in coordination and management of project implementation | **2/5** | **Institutional framework and governance:** Organizational structure in place though most staff are new | 4/5 |
| **Overall Project Outcome Rating:** Some progress made at output level. | **3/5** | **Environmental:** There is no major environmental factor that could jeopardize implementaion | 4/5 |
|  |  | Overall likelihood of sustainability: Average | 4/5 |

## Relevance

**The project is relevant and appropriate to the country context, needs, and priorities of key stakeholders,** in line with the national development priorities,the national plans, strategies and budgets, particularly those dictated by the Vision 2030 and the subsequent implementation mechanism of the National Transformational Plan,; the country programme’s outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs**.** According to the ToC, The end-result of the project is well-functioning statistical operations and services to boost implementation of both the Saudi Vision 2030 and the SDGs (Output 1)**.** This is to be done through the creation of the necessary institutional arrangements, including the establishment of the SDGs Follow-up Mechanism with thematic working groups within GaStat. According to Output 1 of the revised results framework, capacity development initiatives have been designed and delivered throughout the lifecycle of this intervention targeting the technical teams of GaSTAT. Such teams are expected to deliver the second component of the project targeting sectoral coordination in which participating agencies will be trained in the standardised data generation systems (System of National Accounts and guiding data systems). The ultimate change of this intervention is supposed to contributed, at the upstream policy level, to the three pillars of the Country Programme Document (2017-2021), which are: sustainable economic and social development; public sector efficiency; and sustainable natural resource management.

The statistics and information sector in Saudi Arabia has received plenty of demands due to its significant position and leading role internationally and regionally. Saudi Arabia’s continuous progress in the developmental path requires more accurate, comprehensive, timely statistics to support decision-making, monitor the progress, and evaluate impact and performance. Therefore, this sector is an important priority to the country. In addition, the GASTAT transformation plan and the remarkable progress in information and communication technologies have accelerated the demand for timeless, comprehensive, reliable, and accurate statistical information.

The long-term vision established for the statistics and information sector in Saudi Arabia aims to establish an “effective statistical and information sector that meets the needs of beneficiaries with professionalism, credibility and high quality.” Remarkable progress has been made in statistical production, mainly on administrative records, population census, field surveys, and research. There is also advancement in using statistical systems, dissemination methods, and the latest technologies. However, the country has a lot of fragmented data and information that has not been tested for accuracy and/or consolidated. In addition, some of the crucial data and information that should be relied upon to make policy decisions is either not available or has gaps.

The project architecture appropriately responds to the main obstacles and challenges that affect GASTAT and Saudi’s statistics and information sector in general. These challenges include lack of statistical awareness, statistical analysis by non-specialists, not referring to the primary sources in some cases, lack of some information in administrative records, lack of providing the required data by some international groups and organizations such as G20, where Saudi Arabia is a member, as well as inability in drafting and publishing statistical reports, etc.

The project is aligned with the UN and UNDP Strategic Plan in Saudi Arabia. Though a formal United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is not mandatory in Saudi Arabia, the United Nations Common Country Strategic Framework (UNCCSF, 2017-2021) is the Strategic Framework for Cooperation between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UNCT. The project is aligned with UNCCSF Pillar 1 on knowledge-based equitable and sustainable economic development, underpinned by technology, innovation, and improved infrastructure; and Pillar 2 on Equitable, accountable, effective, and efficient public sector, particularly Output 2.1. National capacities enhanced and integrated towards local adaptation and implementation of the SDGs and the national transformation plan *(Related strategic plan outcome (from strategic plan, 2014-2017) No. 3. Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services).*

The project is also aligned with UNDP CPD (2017-2021), focusing on institutionalizing mechanisms for planning and monitoring, and evaluation at the programme level. UNDP’s efforts to build the capacity of GASTAT will strengthen the ability of the Saudi Country Office (CO) to capture needed data and relevant statistics in evaluating the various programmes. It will also deepen the strategic partnership between UNDP and GASTAT to support national capacities in data collection. The project is also in line with SDGs Goal 17. To strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, especially data, monitoring, and accountability (17.18 and 17.19)

**Project Design and Focus:** The project intervention logic and components are plausible and realistic, and the project document((PD) is designed with clear objectives and outputs. As a good practice, the project document was signed between UNDP and GASTAT; the evaluation assumes there was adequate consultation during the project design, especially at the upstream level. However, most key informants indicated there was limited consultation with other key stakeholders such as GASTAT technical teams, the Private sector, academia, CSOs, etc. This shows the project design did not fully promote ownership, inclusivity, mutual accountability, external partnerships, and linkages to ensure the project implementation, results and achievements are sustainable beyond the project period. In addition, there was a perception that UNDP was just a recruitment agency for professionals/experts, and therefore its value addition was not very clear to most of the key stakeholders.

## The project document gives a brief narrative of the project theory of change and its simplified graphic representation. While this is commendable, the logical flow and causal linkages of the results chain and the underlying assumptions have several gaps. The entire results chain, especially the domains of change from outputs to outcomes, and impact is not explicit. The MTR finds that, to a large extent, the RBM principles ((learning, flexibility, and accountability) did not inform the project design, results framework, and articulation of indicators for baseline and targets. In addition, the project design did not put in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure external coherence with similar projects supporting GASTAT e.g project implemented with support from the World Bank (WB)

## The results framework is output-based, limiting the project scope and flexibility to adapt to changing contexts and emerging statistical needs. In addition, some of the baseline data and end-line targets are missing. Overall, the Results Framework reflects a good example of systematic mapping and aligning project outputs to respond to national statistical needs. Still, the project architecture did not practically consider other key factors that may influence the achievement of planned results, e.g., implementation arrangements, internal and external factors, etc.

## Focus areas in the remaining project period

## Promote project ownership among the key stakeholders expecialy GASTAT technical teams by consulting and involving them in project implementation. In addition, engage other key stakeholders such as the Private sector, academia, CSOs, etc

## UNDP and GASTAT should consider reconstructing the ToC to clearly show the intervention logic and causal linkages across the results chain. The project indicators should also be reviewed using the SMART criteria. Should also consider revising the results framework to have an outcome-based results framework or develop some outcome level indicators

## Review and make adjustments to the project implementation structures and arrangemens to make them effective.

## 

## Effectiveness -Progress towards achievement of results

The project has contributed to setting the institutional framework in terms of national policies to mainstream data generation by all sectors in line with the elevated significance accorded by the Saudi Vision 2030 to the Key Performance Indicators (KPls) to be maintained by all public sector's institutions. Though some some progress has been made, the project outputs have not fully achieved the intended outcome, which is the creation of a national statistical system that can adequately respond to the data needs of development planning, policy making, and monitoring in Saudi Arabia.

## The project has contributed to SDG Goal 17 which seeks to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, particulally data, monitoring and accountability. The project supported GASTAT to develop statistical capacity indicator for monitoring SDGs. The project builds on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in KSA. The highly contributes to UNDP CPD (2017-2021) particularly to institutionalize mechanisms for planning and monitoring and evaluation at the programme level. It contributes to UNDP effort to build the capacity of GASTAT which in tern strengthens the ability of the CO to capture needed data and relevant statistics in evaluating the various programmes. It also deepens UNDP’s strategic partnership with the GASTAT and Information sharing to support national capacities in data collection.

## Capacity building

The capacity of GASTAT technical staff from different directorates and departments has been enhanced. This is linked to output 1 of the original results framework and Outputs 1.1(GASTAT capacities for data collection reinforced); 1.2 (improved capacity for statistical management-classification and accounts management and 1.3 (improved capacity for statistical management( analyzing and publishing of data including economics and business statistics) of the revised results framework.Technical staff drawn from the agriculture statistics department (Spatial and Resource Statistics directorate) were trained on the mechanisms of cross-checking data technically following given guidelines and conducting surveys annually to provide data of agricultural plant and animal sector, which helps generate high-quality results that serve decision-makers, researchers, and users of agricultural data in general, as well as clarifying how to adopt the results in accordance with target data on the level of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its regions. This task has been very effective and beneficial to the authority. It seeks to develop foreign direct investment statistics, one of the most important economic indicators for the Kingdom's 2030 vision.

GASTAT technical staff were also trained on how to estimate data in the event of late survey results or postponing surveys and the mechanism for verifying the results technically through practical and theoretical training and clarification of how processing of data in terms of its logic and the methods of covering missing data from the field as they were trained to design output tables Publishing, auditing and linking to targeted data. In addition, the capacity of staff (especially the new staff) in the department of national accounts (economic statistics directorate) was enhanced to understand and implement the SNA 2008 with the best practices. This included training on compiling the supply and use tables, compiling the sequence of accounts, constant prices, production for activities, accounting procedures, and using final statements in national accounts. The training was also provided on the tools used to control data quality, clarify concepts for drawing accuracy, and rely on easy-to-work tools in the applications used.

GASTAT developed strong ties with the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) in terms of raising statistical and technical awareness about understanding the methodology and procedures for acquiring accurate statistics on foreign direct investment, based on the importance of foreign direct investment statistics as one of the most vital KPIs for decision-makers in SAGIA is of utmost importance in arriving at policies and strategies to attract more foreign investments to the Kingdom in the future. As a result, a two-day training workshop was held at the General Investment Authority’s headquarters for the SAGIA team for foreign investments attraction in the presence of some of the authority’s employees from Riyadh, Eastern, and Makkah and those responsible for granting licenses to foreign investment companies in the Kingdom. In addition, the workshop explained how to read foreign investment data for non-specialists and non-financials.

Workshop sessions were held for permanent colleagues and collaborators (12 employees) in the Foreign Investment Unit of the Money and Investment Department in GaStat. The workshops introduced the work procedures on the financial statements to extract and compile foreign direct investment data from the accounting items and introduced the most important products that were extracted and published from the items of foreign investment and how they can be shared with the General Investment Authority and the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency. In addition, an action plan was proposed to amend historical data from 2011 to 2015 using data extracted from GaStat work for the years 2016, 2017 to form a time series for foreign investment data using an economic methodology to enable Saudi Arabia Monetary Authority to amend Balance of Payment (BOP) and International Investment Position (IIP) historical data in the IMF bulletins.

GASTAT Staff from Tourism, Hajj, and Umrah Statistics were trained on the definition and importance of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA) system and the data sources of TSA tables. The project experts also prepared a training manual and provided it to stakeholders in the Department of Energy Statistics, including the survey stages and the guidelines for its implementation. It also included the definitions, method for data completion, and a detailed explanation of the statistical questionnaires. Energy statistics staff were trained on how to extract the tables and form these tables according to administrative regions and how to develop their capabilities in this field. They were also trained on automated data checking and survey edit rules. The experts also prepared and gave capacity-building presentations on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA), Monitoring Framework for Water: The System of Environmental-Economic Accounts for Water (SEEA-Water), and the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS), and the Hybrid Accounts of SEEAW.

Technical staffs were trained on methodologies to support the administration on the skills required to build statistical quality guides; how to develop the measurement tools of quality procedures applied in surveys and administrative data; and on quality labs on the correct techniques to identify field mistakes, report them for corrective action as part of the documentation that can be used to improve surveys quality.

The table below is a summary of capacity building beneficiaries and the topics covered.

**Table 1: List of capacity building participants**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NO** | **TOPIC** | **NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS** |
| 1 | Statistics quality | 19 |
| 2 | Design questionnaire | 20 |
| 3 | Database security | 10 |
| 4 | Building statistical index | 11 |
| 5 | Training course and on innovation indicators | 9 |
| 6 | Measuring non-profit business indicators | 10 |
| 7 | Installing the financial accounts for the economic sectors | 12 |
| 8 | Oracle database | 16 |
| 9 | Linking commercial accounting with national accounting | 20 |
| 10 | Preparing and composing the current account for economic accounts | 20 |
| 11 | National Income Accounts (IMF Methodology) | 20 |
| 12 | ISO 27001 Lead Implementer | 20 |
| 13 | Training course in environmental economic accounting | 20 |
| 14 | Statistical frameworks and methodologies | 20 |
| 15 | Training course on biodiversity  (collecting methods, calculation methods & table preparation) | 20 |
|  | **TOTAL** | **247** |

## Technical support

This supports corresponds to Output 2 (original results framework): Capacity developed to enhance the technical and statistical analysis machinery through provision of subject matter experts on the core specialties; instituting benchmarks and best practices to guide performance excellence; extensive staff training and continuous learning. It is also in line with Output 2 (Activity 2.2.2) of the revised results framework: provide information and technical support to MEP and other planning entities to set targets for SDGs indicators (provide analysis of National Accounts and other economic data forecast etc.)

The project experts provided technical support and training to the GIS team. For example, approximately 7,000,000 (7 million plots of land) were processed at the level of 13 administrative regions in Saudi Arabia. This was done in several stages based on the General Census of Population 2020. All the processing was done using the GIS technique and through national staff trained by the project experts. All technical work related to the development of the geospatial database was done by a GASTAT team working in various disciplines in the field of geographic information systems technologies according to the standards and using the latest technologies in geographic information systems. The geospatial database was linked with the main database in GASTAT, enabling the use of the database in all researches, studies, and censuses carried out by GASTAT.

The project experts supervised survey data processing of poultry (mothers, broilers, the number of birds during the year, production and distribution of table eggs and hatching eggs, etc.); Survey data processing of cattle farms (number of cows by breed, gender, and age, Milk, etc.); Survey data processing of vegetables, crops and fruit trees (e.g., land uses, cultivated and harvested areas of field crops and fodder, etc.); Survey data processing of livestock; and Survey data processing of beehives (e.g., beehives, production and distribution of honey and royal jelly, preparing bee cults, etc.).

The annual survey form was revised to align with the latest international practices and according to the sixth edition of the IMF's Balance of Payments Manual. Further technical support was given in revising and adjusting the primary data file on Excel, in which the financial statements of the companies are entered, where iterations were removed, reviewing all the commercial registry records of the companies, and sending it to the Investment Authority so that the names of companies and other adjustments are identified, given the current importance of this file to start establishing a platform system in the future. All files of the financial statements were entered and re-named according to the commercial registry number of companies and organized in a shared folder that all the teams can view and work on to save time.

The project experts prepared the methodology of the energy survey in the transport sector. They designed survey questionnaires that include the government vehicles’ questionnaire, the organization’s vehicles questionnaire, the individuals’ vehicles questionnaire, and the agricultural and construction vehicles’ questionnaire. They also prepared statistical tables of the survey and indicators and gave their input on each table and its content. With technical support from experts, the national accounts statistics department conducted flash estimates and nowcasting 2020/2021 and financial accounts which is the first in the region

## Knowledge products and development of statistical tools developed

The first report on foreign direct investment in Saudi Arabia was completed and published based on annual survey data and companies' financial statements for the fiscal year ending in December 2017. This report displays inward FDI statistics in an analytical manner and deals in detail with all variables related to foreign investment statistics, such as sectoral distribution, geographical distribution, and distribution according to financial instruments and countries. This report follows the latest methodology of the International Monetary Fund and is used by SAMA in relation to the items of the financial accounts, the balance of payments, and the issuance of the Coordinated Direct Investment Survey (CDIS) to enable the Kingdom’s participation in the G20 gap initiative for the SDDS. The report also helps clarify an analytical picture of foreign direct investment in front of decision-makers in SAGIA. In addition, it helps effectively explain areas of strength and weakness, sectoral and geographically, for distributions of FDI stock and flows in Saudi Arabia.

Experts reviewed and assessed the Environmental Statistic Report 2018, including Environmental Indicators, and finalized the introduction and guidance tables. In addition, they evaluated the Sustainable Development Indicator report and made recommendations. They also reviewed and redesigned the transport and storage survey questionnaire, including defining transport and storage statistics indicators. In addition, the experts reviewed the guidelines of automated auditing. They also prepared the training manual of the survey, which includes the definitions used, the method of completing the data by the field staff (data collectors), and a full and detailed explanation of all types of questionnaires.

Six working groups of employees were formed, each consisting of two employees to carry out the process of extracting data, entering and reviewing it, and verifying the data's quality. This method doubled the monthly completion rate of more than 500 financial statements per month as it was working on the largest companies in terms of the foreign shareholders’ equities. The required works are distributed to each employee weekly or bi-weekly, depending on the nature of the work and the target setting for completion after review and audit, where the achievement is evaluated, and the accuracy of the entered data is verified.

**Focus areas during remaining implementation period**

1. The CTA should actively engage all key stakeholders especially at GASTT to identify needs, challenges and recommend measures to address them within the scope of the project.
2. The transfer of knowledge from contracted experts should be better organized and planned
3. Put in place an effective monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to monitor implementation progress and performance of indicators.
4. Consider having a roster or experts in key statistical areas who can be mobilized when ned arises.
5. Activate the focal mechanisms and thematic working groups

## Efficiency-Implementation arrangements

The project document outlines the implementation arrangements for the effective delivery of planned results. The project is administered from the Head Office of the General Authority for Statistics through thematic working groups (in addition to the UNDP's Implementation Support Services). All activities under the project are done through standard Project Board mechanism that serves as a steering committee between GaSTAT, UNDP and UN Agencies to ensure coherence of all activities under the project. UNDP provides technical advisory support to all activities through the UNDP Country Office in Riyadh, UNDP Regional Service Centre and various units in UNDP Headquarters in New York, as well as support for overall project management activities. However, the success of the thematic working groups relies on well-functioning focal point mechanism at the sectoral and regional levels. Thematic working groups are expected to establish their respective national and sub-national modus operandi and lists of partners to assist in achieving the results of the group. The governing principle dictated by the SDGs, which calls for leaving 'no one behind, is the core of the institutional structures of the groups and their partners.UNDP Country Office provides support to the working groups to ensure that the intervention reaches its targeted outputs and outcome. A detailed focal point mechanism is developed by each working group following the inception and inter-sectoral workshops planned at the initial stage of implementation. Direct UNDP Country Office Support Services are budgeted to cover all costs incurred as a result of fast mobilization of support from the UN System and elsewhere.

Besides the PSC (which held regular meetings), the implementation arrangements as defined in the project document are not very effective. For example, the success of the project and different thematic working groups relied on a well-functioning focal point mechanism at the sectoral and regional levels. Therefore, a detailed focal point mechanism was to be developed by each working group following the inception and inter-sectoral workshops planned to take place at the initial stage of implementation. However, this did not seem to have been fully operationalized. Most of the challenges observed during the project implementation result from gaps in the project design (e.g., lack of effective accountability mechanisms) and the ongoing transformation agenda at GASTAT.

There is limited ownership of the project by key stakeholders (GASTAT), and UNDP value addition is not visible. Stakeholders have a wrong perception that UNDP was just a recruitment agency providing the needed technical experts. Most of the key GASTAT staff, especially at the senior level, are new and unaware of the project (including some who had been there for ten months). Though the transformation at GASTAT is a path in the right direction and is appreciated by most of the senior staff, to a large extent, it has affected the morale of technical staff. If not well managed, the gains already made by the project could be lost. The lack of clarity of the GASTAT transformation plan has resulted in administrative and operational challenges such as staff turnover, some resistance to change, and low staff motivation due to uncertainty about their future. According to most of the stakeholders interviewed, the roles and responsibilities of technical teams were not very clear

There has been a relatively slow transfer of knowledge from the experts partly due to a lack of a clear capacity building or staff development plan for employees, resulting in ad hoc requests for experts. The few staff and/or lack of specific technical capacities in some departments left little or no time for staff to participate in training and other capacity-building programmes. Some directorates and departments felt the distribution of experts to different directorates was unbalanced. Though competent experts were recruited, some failed to adapt best practices acquired elsewhere to Saudi country context and uniqueness, affecting the quality of knowledge transfer. Though staff across directorates/departments were willing to collaborate more, most of them indicated there were no clear coordination mechanisms across the departments. Though the demand for data was high as they received many requests, data sharing policies were unclear. They also faced data acquisition challenges.

The project did not have a comprehensive and effective M & E system to measure the performance of indicators and maintain a monitoring database. At the same time, the project documentation and reporting mechanisms had significant gaps. For example, the progress reports (quarterly/annual) were not consistently prepared, and therefore the MTR relied on experts activity reports. Consequently, it was impossible for the MTR to accurately and reliably track the implementation of the MYWP since consolidated monitoring data was missing. In addition, there were significant delays (2 to 4 months) after departments/directorates submitted expert requests, mainly due to the lengthy recruitment process to identify the right experts. Some experts worked remotely, and some lacked bilingual competence (fluent English/Arabic), which affected the transfer of knowledge to GASTAT staff.

There seems to be a slow use of funds provided. There is no evidence to show project financial resources are inadequate. For instance by Dec 2020, the project had unspent amount of USD 878,488 out of the initial budget of USD 2,966,667. Additional funds (USD 4,905,992.00) were added to the unused amount to increase the total budget to USD 5,784,480.

Focus Areas

1. Effective structures to address gaps in management and coordination mechanisms
2. Develop a comprehensive and effective M & E system to measure the performance of indicators and maintain a monitoring database.
3. Have a staff capacity building/development plan to avoid ad hoc requests for experts

## 4.5 Sustainability

The key stakeholders, mainly from GASTAT, support the project’s long-term objectives, particularly the technical support and capacity building to enhance its institutional capacity. The technical support provided, such as developing key indicators (e.g., SDGs, gender statistics indicators to reflect vision 2030 and SDG goals-on women, etc.), research instruments, and other knowledge products, will continue being used within GASTAT in the long term. Most of the project's accrued benefits, including capacity building and knowledge products produced, would continue being used within GASTAT. Some innovative approaches such as nowcasting and preliminary early estimates of GDP and economic activity will continue being implemented by GATAT. In addition, the technical staff who benefited from different capacity-building initiatives acquired knowledge and skills that may be applicable in future actions. However, there were no mechanisms such as training of trainers (ToT) to ensure cascading of skills acquired to other technical staff.

The limited ownership of the project, lack of mutual accountability and inclusivity, managerial and coordination gaps threaten the sustainability of the project benefits. Though the MTR has not established any economic, environmental, social, financial, or political risks and challenges that may jeopardize the sustainability of the project results, the institutional support provided to GASTAT has not created adequate capacities for sustainable results. For instance, partnerships and linkages with external stakeholders such as Policy-makers and implementation officials at the sectoral level, the private sector, academia, CSOs, etc., were minimal. Though the experts documented some lessons learned from the technical perspective, the best practices and lessons learned from the project implementation have not been documented for future programming. At the same time, the project design did not include appropriate sustainability and exit strategies to secure results.

## 4.6 Impact

Some progress has been made, especially at the output and outcome level of the results chain. There are good initiatives such as providing technical support, building the capacity of GASTAT and its staff, responding to statistical demand, and creating statistical awareness to the public and different sectors. Staff capabilities have been developed by teaching them how to estimate data in the event of late survey results or postponing surveys and the mechanism for verifying the results technically through practical and theoretical training and clarification of how processing of data in terms of its logic and the mechanism of covering missing data from the field as they were trained to design output tables Publishing, auditing and linking to targeted data. In addition,the technicians in the authority were trained on the mechanism of checking the data technically through the rules and adopting fixed surveys implemented annually to cover the data of the agricultural plant and animal sector, which helps on high-quality results that serve decision-makers, researchers and users of agricultural data in general, as well as clarifying how to adopt the results in accordance with target data on the level of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its regions. The impact of increasing statistical knowledge contributes as a key factor in statistical innovation and development.

In terms of technical support, GaStat needed and were assisted in determining the sources of data, coordinating with the related governmental entities (such as Saudi General Investment Authority (SAGIA) and Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA)), improving methods of data compilation, data processing and analyzing using the latest methodology of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) regarding the foreign investment statistics, known as the Balance of Payment manual, Sixth edition (BPM6). Experts recuited by the project worked on revising and adjusting the basic data file on Excel, in which the financial statements of the companies are entered, where iterations were removed, reviewing all the commercial registry records of the companies, and sending it to the Investment Authority so that the names of companies and other adjustments are identified, given the importance of this file at the present time in order to start establishing a platform system in the future. The project has been very beneficial to GASTAT as it seeks to develop foreign direct investment statistics that are one of the most important economic indicators for the Kingdom's 2030 vision.

However, despite the above positive outcomes, the MTR has not identified the real impact of this project in terms of having an institutional framework that promotes efficiency and effectiveness to produce first-class statistical products of relevance to the national context and a modernized ICT infrastructure to ensure timely delivery of quality products and services to various beneficiaries. The project period since project inception is not adequate to generate results at the impact level.

## 4.7 Cross-Cutting Issues

The project did not fully integrate the four principles of Human Rights-Based Approach[[13]](#footnote-14), Approach, specifically the aspect of inclusive participation in the project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Though, according to the project document, the ultimate change of this intervention is supposed to contribute at the upstream policy level,the involvement and participation of key stakeholders at different levels would have accelerated the achievement of this goal. Most of the GASTAT staff who had worked for the organization for over 10 months were either not aware about the project or did not understand the intervention logic and implementation arrangements. As a result, there was limited inclusiveness and participation of some key stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of the programme. There were no mechanisms to intergrate gender during the project implementation.

# CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIOSN

5.1 Gaps and Challenges

* Short contract duration for some key experts affected technical support quality and knowledge transfer.
* The covid-19 pandemic and the resultant travel restriction prevented some experts from traveling to Saudi to offer face-to-face training and technical support. Instead, this was provided remotely, which may not have been very effective.
* Language barrier whereby some experts were unable to speak Arabic fluently
* Resistance to change, lack of technical capacity, and some staff preferring to continue using old methods and statistical systems such as ms excel instead of the latest statistical software such as R, Python, SARs, etc. For instance, most staff use traditional statistical methods in international trade statistics instead of modern software.
* The lengthy recruitment process causes delays when experts are urgently needed or after submitting requests.
* Besides the upstream level, there is limited ownership of the project
* Most of the directorates and departments at GASTAT are understaffed
* The project lacks an effective M & E framework to measure implementation progress and indicators.
* There are no clear accountability mechanisms for to track implementation of the multi year work plan.
* There was no clear gender strategy developmed and followed during project implementation

## Lessons learned

## The establishment of comprehensive agricultural and animal surveys with an agricultural statistical methodology using agricultural terminology in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

## Using the central product classification guide in addition to designing tables for the results of the results. The forms were also designed in clear and studied scientific methods that cover the objectives of agricultural surveys.

## Active networking and collaboration with partners is rewarding in terms of timely and credible statistics.

## Good governance of statistical processes has statistical / significance for quality statistical products.

## It is important to make strategic collaborations with the GIS specialized entities to unify efforts and guarantee having a unified database kingdom-wide.

## It is necessary to have national work force who can manage the geo-databases in order to update them constantly.

## It is significant to choose the technologies that are used in development. GIS environments must be used as they have the ability to deal with the geo-databases in accordance with the standard criteria.

## Data quality issues need to be handled carefully in order to obtain credible population projections.

## Coordination with stakeholders in terms of gathering of death and birth registration data to a good level of completeness and quality is important.

## The data sources is strong but still need working to be more accurate and comprehensive

## Knowing how to compile TSA tables (TSA methodological framework)

## Realizing the importance of cooperation between main players in Saudi tourism sector.

## The Department of Environmental Statistics characterized by highly qualified personals in the field of Statistics, and preparation of environmental publications, which requires continuous capacity building especially in the technical environmental issues and regional and international environmental conventions through continuous training workshops inviting other organizations producing environmental data to participate.

## 1 Obtaining realistic estimates of energy consumption by knowing:Vehicle Size (Engine Capacity) type of use, Vehicle age

## Recommendations

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Recommendations** | **Timeline** | **Responsibility** |
| **1** | Promote project ownership through inclusive implementation (the involvement of internal and external stakeholders) and mutual accountability. The project should conduct a stakeholder mapping and analysis to identify all stakeholders and how each is affected by the project. Based on this analysis, identify the key stakeholders and develop a strategy on how to partner with them or seek their contribution to the project activities. GASTAT should seek “buy in” by promoting inclusiveness and participation of all internal stakeholders. | Immediately | GASTAT/UNDP |
| **2** | The project architecture needs some adjustments /realignments to be more effective . The project theory of change and results framework needs restructuring to show the logical link of each output with the respective outcome. This should be done by reconstructing the Theory of Change to show the domains of change and revising the results framework indicators to include outcome-based SMART indicators. | Immediately | UNDP/ GASTAT |
| **3** | Address gaps in management and coordination mechanisms to deal with reduced morale of the staff. This can be done by regularly updating/communicating with GASTAT technical staff about the ongoing transformation plan which is good but not well communicated to staff. | Next 6 months | GASTAT |
| **4** | Improve project documentation and reporting of progress through quarterly, biannual and annual performance reports. UNDP project team through the CTA should ensure project implementation is well documenent in regular quarterly progress reports | Immdiately | UNDP/GASTAT |
| **5** | Establish an effective M & E framework to regularly measure project indicators. UNDP project team should develop an M & E plan and work closely with GASTAT to ensure attention is given to all the components/outputs/outcomes and indicatore are regularly monitored and measured against targets. | Next 6 months | UNDP/GASTAT |
| **6** | South-South and Triangular Cooperation not fully implemented. The project should open channels of communication and knowledge sharing with other regional and international organizations and institutes. This can be done by identifying countries with best practices in statistics and organizing experience sharing forums and visits. | Next three months | UNDP/GASTAT |
| **7** | Recruited experts should domesticate good practices and lessons learned. This can be agreed with the experts during recruitment and included in their contracts | GASTAT | Gastat |
| **8** | Recruit technical experts(service providers) on long term contracts instead of short term. Directorates/department needs shold be strategically identified e.g through a needs assessment and come up with best strategies to effectively respond to those needs. To establish the statistical needs of GASTAT, the project CTA should work closely with each directorate/department heads to conduct a needs assessment. | Ongoing | UNDP/GASTAT |
| **9** | Enhancing the transfer of knowledge from technical experts to –staff. Training and capacity building should be done systematically and there is a need to develop a staff development plan. | Ongoing | GASTAT/UNDP |
| **10** | There is need for honest and transparent collaboration between many entities with statistical authority in the country. In Foreign Investment case, the success of GaStat would require the support and help from SAGIA, SAMA and foreign investment companies in Saudi Arabia. | Ongoing | GASTAT/UNDP |
| **11** | Develop a gender implementation strategy and develop/update gender statistics indicators to reflect vision 2030 and SDG goals-on gender equality and women empowerment. | Immediately | GASTAT/UNDP |

# CONCLUSIONS

The project is relevant and appropriate to the country context, needs, and priorities of key stakeholders, in line with the national development plans, strategies and budgets, particularly those dictated by the Vision 2030 and the subsequent implementation mechanism of the National Transformational Plan. The project is aligned with the UN and UNDP Strategic Plan in Saudi Arabia. The project is also aligned with the United Nations Common Country Strategic Framework (UNCCSF, 2017-2021) wich is the Strategic Framework for Cooperation between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UNCT. The project is also aligned with UNDP CPD (2017-2021), focusing on institutionalizing mechanisms for planning and monitoring, and evaluation at the programme level.

The project intervention logic and components are plausible and realistic, and the project document((PD) is well designed with clear objectives and outputs. However, there is limited inclusivity, mutual accountability, external partnerships and linkages to ensure the project implementation, results and achievements are sustainable beyond the project period. There is also limited ownership of the project by key stakeholders (GASTAT), and UNDP value addition is not visible. Stakeholders have a wrong perception that UNDP was just a recruitment agency providing the needed technical experts. Most of the key GASTAT staff, especially at the senior level, are new and unaware of the project (including some who had been there for ten months).

The logical flow and causal linkages of the results chain and the underlying assumptions have several gaps. The entire results chain, especially the domains of change from outputs to outcomes, and impact is not explicit. To a large extent, the RBM principles ((learning, flexibility, and accountability) did not inform the project design, results framework, and articulation of indicators for baseline and targets.The results framework is output-based, limiting the project scope and flexibility to adapt to changing contexts and emerging statistical needs. Still, the project design did not practically consider other key factors that may influence the achievement of planned results, e.g., implementation arrangements, internal and external factors, etc.

The capacity of GASTAT technical staff from different directorates and departments has been enhanced. The project document outlines the implementation arrangements for the effective delivery of planned results. Besides the PSC (which held regular meetings), the implementation arrangements as defined in the project document are not very effective. There has been a relatively slow transfer of knowledge from the experts partly due to a lack of a clear capacity building or staff development plan for employees, resulting in ad hoc requests for experts.The project did not have a comprehensive and effective M & E system to measure the performance of indicators and maintain a monitoring database. At the same time, the project documentation and reporting mechanisms had significant gaps.

Most of the project's accrued benefits, including capacity building and knowledge products produced, would continue being used within GASTAT.the MTR has not identified the real impact of this project in terms of having an institutional framework that promotes efficiency and effectiveness to produce first-class statistical products of relevance to the national context and a modernized ICT infrastructure to ensure timely delivery of quality products and services to various beneficiaries.

## Annex 1: Terms of Reference

**Institutional Support to Statistics**

**Terms of Reference**

**Mid-Term Evaluation**

**December 2021**

1. **Background and context**

The General Authority for Statistics GASTAT is a governmental entity that enjoys an independent legal personality. GASTAT is the only official statistical reference for statistical data and information in Saudi Arabia. It executes all the statistical work, in addition to the technical oversight of the statistical sector, which includes a multiple system of centers and statistical units established within the administrative structures of government agencies and some private sector institutions as well.

GASTAT supervises the implementation of the national strategy for statistical work in coordination with the relevant entities. It also designs and implements field surveys, conducts statistical studies and researches, analyzes data and information, in addition to the documentation and archiving works of information and statistical data that cover all aspects of life in Saudi Arabia from its multiple sources. Data are written, classified, and analyzed; their indicators are extracted as well.GASTAT prepares statistical classifications and guides according to international standards to be used and updated. It also prepares statistical bulletins and reports of field surveys as well as statistical researches for publishing purposes. Moreover, it also supervises the formation of a comprehensive system of national databases ofthe various statistical fields available at the data sources. It also works to spread knowledge and statistical awareness, and provides recommendations to public entities to develop all the information systems and methodologies of the statistical work.

The General Authority for Statistics is the official body responsible for providing public entities, private establishments, individuals and international organizations with official statistics in accordance with statutory procedures; in order to support policy and decision-makers in these entities to move forward in implementing the developmental plans. On the other hand, statistical censuses such as the general population, housing and establishments’ census are considered the most important products of GASTAT, in addition to the periodic statistical indicators and indices in the economic, social, health, educational, agricultural, and workforce fields.

GASTAT also provides its services and statistical products through a huge digital base for data, indicators and statistics of various development fields in the Kingdom in different forms and multimedia. That is to facilitate the obtaining of the statistical data and information by the clients in a quick and efficient way, and at the highest level of transparency, accuracy, and integration between the components of the statistical sector.[[14]](#footnote-15) Statistics and information sector in Saudi Arabia has also received a plenty of demands due to its important position and main role internationally and regionally. Nationally, the continuous progress in the developmental path in Saudi Arabia also requires more accurate, comprehensive, timeless statistics to support decision and policy making, monitor the progress, and evaluate the impact and performance.

The analysis of the current situation of the statistics sector in Saudi Arabia, which is the base and starting point of preparing the strategy, has showed that this sector is an important priority to the country. The sector has also witnessed a remarkable progress in the statistical production- whether in administrative records or field work for census, surveys, and researches- in addition to the progress in the statistical systems, dissemination methods, and using the latest technologies. However, there are some obstacles and challenges that may face the statistical work and need to be solved in order to achieve a notable improvement in record time, these challenges include: lack of statistical awareness, numbers analysis by non-specialists, not referring to the main sources in some cases, lack of some information in administrative records, lack of providing the required data by some international groups and organization such as: (G20) where Saudi Arabia is a member, as well as inability in drafting and publishing statistical report,, etc.[[15]](#footnote-16)

Since its launch in 2017, the Institutional Support to Statistics project continues to provide an effective cooperation framework for strengthening the statistical capacities in support of Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030.The project organised several consultations to understand the technical needs of the statistical system. The project also reviewed its success elements and the drawbacks to improve cooperation and achieve better impact. The feedback and the needs of the statistical system convinced GASTAT and UNDP to amend their cooperation to further strengthen the statistical system in Saudi Arabia through a substantive revision of the Institutional Support to Statistics project. The revised project provides a framework to deliver demand-driven technical support and timely capacity development interventions aligned with the National Statistical Development Strategy. It also addresses the statistical needs triggered by the context of COVID-19. Specifically, the technical support will be delivered under the following outputs:

**Output 1:** GASTAT capabilities to produce statistical data and information in light of the Kingdom's 2030 statistical vision strengthened.

**Output 2:** GASTAT capacities to integrate statistical analysis into decision-making processes enhanced with focus on achieving the SDGs and Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030.

**Output 3:** Modernisation of the statistical systems enabled

**Output 4:** Capacities for statistics governance and quality control strengthened

**Output 5:** Nowcasting solution developed and preliminary early estimates of GDP and economic activity in KSA produced

The project extension period (January 2021 to December 2024) provides the necessary time for the project to complete ongoing activities and deliver the revised outputs to achieve a more significant impact. The project document will be provided amongst documents to be shared with the evaluator.

Basic Project information is included in the table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION** | | |
| **Project/outcome title** | Institutional Support to Statistics | |
| **Atlas ID** | SAU10-100619 | |
| **Corporate outcome and output** | Improved knowledge-based equitable and sustainable development underpinned by innovation and improved infrastructure. | |
| **Country** | Saudi Arabia | |
| **Region** | RBAS | |
| **Date project document signed** | 16/12/2020 | |
| **Project dates** | **Start: 01/06/2021** | **Planned end: 31/12/2024** |
|  |  |
| **Project budget** | **$ 5,784,480** | |
| **Estimated Project expenditure at the time of evaluation** | **$1,728,004** | |
| **Funding source** | **Government** | |
| **Implementing party** | **General Authority for Statistics** | |

1. **Evaluation purpose, scope, and objectives**

The project has been ongoing since February 2016 and has, thus far, never been evaluated. Drastic changes have been taking place in the country and the project has had to adapt to the changes over recent years, this included changes in Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Project staff, resulting in changing project directions. To ensure the project has delivered its intended objectives thus far and to provide recommendations for the way forward, it is imperative to conduct a mid-term evaluation and ensure the project delivery is on track. This evaluation will benefit the General Statistics Authority in their planning for future years to meet Saudi Vision 2030 and highlight the impacts this project has had on Statistics sector over the past few years.

This evaluation should cover the project period between (2017 & 2021) and all the components of the project, and their impact on the sector in the whole country. However, the evaluator shall consider the Saudi Vision 2030 objective’s and other GASTAT- Initiatives in formulating the report which can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP Goals.

Especially regarding the intended Outputs:

* How has GASTAT capabilities to produce statistical data and information been strengthened
* Provide proof to how GASTAT capacities were enhanced to integrate statistical analysis into decision-making processes with focus on achieving the SDGs and Saudi Arabia's Vision for 2030
* How was the statistical system modernized? How has data related to social inclusion been integrated?
* Report on how of statistics governance and quality control have been strengthened
* Solutions developed and estimates of GDP forecasted

1. **Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions**

Evaluation questions define the information that this evaluation will generate. Questions should be grouped according to the four OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: (a) relevance; (b) effectiveness; (c) efficiency; (d) impact and (e) sustainability (and/or other criteria used).

The mainstream definitions of the OECD-DAC criteria are neutral in terms of human rights and gender dimensions and these dimensions need to be added into the evaluation criteria chosen (see page 77, table 10 of [Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616)).

Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Ratings:** | | | |
| **1. Monitoring and Evaluation** | ***rating*** | **2. IA& EA Execution** | ***rating*** |
| M&E design at entry |  | Quality of UNDP Implementation |  |
| M&E Plan Implementation |  | Quality of Execution - Implementing Partner |  |
| Overall quality of M&E |  | Overall quality of Implementation |  |
| **3. Assessment of Outcomes** | **rating** | **4. Sustainability** | **rating** |
| Relevance |  | Financial resources: |  |
| Effectiveness |  | Socio-political: |  |
| Efficiency |  | Institutional framework and governance: |  |
| Overall Project Outcome Rating |  | Environmental : |  |
|  |  | Overall likelihood of sustainability: |  |

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| --- |
| **Relevance/ coherence**   * To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme’s outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs? * To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome especially in addressing the statistics in Saudi Arabia? * To what extent has the project enhanced knowledge on behaviour change * To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach? * To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, environmental, institutional, etc., changes in the country?   **Effectiveness**   * To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities? * To what extent were the project outputs achieved especially in achieving desired outcome * What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness? * In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements? * In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome? * What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project’s objectives? * Were the project’s objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame? * To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation? Or to what extent do they feel they own the actions they are taking. * To what extent are project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the project objectives? * To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights? To what extent women were involved in the implementation of the actions indirectly or directly.   **Efficiency**   * To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results? * To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective? * To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes? * To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective? * To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner? * To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?   **Impact**   * How have the project deliverables impacted GASTAT’s ability to carry on its mandate? * Has the project helped make a significant impact on the way the national partners perform their expected objectives?   **Sustainability**   * Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs? * To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project? * Are there any social, economic, environmental, or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project’s contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? * Do the institutional and legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits? * To what extent are institutional and human resource capacities strengthened to provide effective technical support to national partners and stakeholders for energy efficiency actions * What is the risk that the level of stakeholders’ ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained? To what extent the project was effective to enhance integration of statistics in public and private sector actions * To what extent do stakeholders support the project’s long-term objectives? * To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project? * To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies? * What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability? |

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| **Evaluation cross-cutting issues sample questions**  **Human rights**   * To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country? * To what extent does the project ensure that no one is left behind in regard to project benefits? What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities? What barriers did persons with disabilities face?   **Gender equality**   * To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project? * Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality? * To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any positive or negative unintended effects? |

Guiding evaluation questions can be further refined by the evaluator and agreed with UNDP and the- evaluation stakeholders in the inception report.

**Evaluation Approach and Methodology**

The methodology of work will consist of desk review of relevant project documentation and direct consultations with the project management, staff and other key local stakeholders during 5 days site visit to Riyadh in November 2021.

The overall duration of the assignment is expected to consist of a site visit of 5 days includes a corresponding amount of desk work to pre-review the required project documentation and to finalize the reporting. This makes the total working days to be 20 working days, the timeframe detailed shall be as stipulated below.

In carrying out the evaluation task, the consultant will pay particular attention to the following:

* Evaluation should employ a combination of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments;
* Document review of all relevant documentation. This would include a review of inter alia;
* Project document (contribution agreement);
* Theory of change and results framework;
* Programme and project quality assurance reports;
* Annual workplans;
* Activity designs;
* Consolidated quarterly and annual reports;
* Results-oriented monitoring report;
* Highlights of project board meetings;
* Technical/financial monitoring reports;
* GASTAT National Strategy
* Vision 2030 and corresponding transformation plans related to the statistics sector ([National Transformation Program - Vision 2030](https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/v2030/vrps/ntp/))
* Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (men and women) including key government counterparts, donor community members, representatives of key civil society organizations, UNCT members and implementing partners: All interviews should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity under the support of the Project Management. The mid-term evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals
* Development of evaluation questions around relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and designed for different stakeholders to be interviewed.
* Surveys and questionnaires including male and female participants in development programmes, UNCT members and/or surveys and questionnaires involving other stakeholders at strategic and programmatic levels.
* Field visits and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions.
* The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach that ensures close engagement with the evaluation managers, implementing partners and direct beneficiaries including industry partners and general public on awareness.
* Other methods such as outcome mapping, observational visits, group discussions, etc.
* Data review and analysis of monitoring and other data sources and methods.
* Ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use; the evaluator will ensure triangulation of the various data sources.
* **Gender and human rights lens**. All evaluation products need to address gender, disability, and human right issues

The evaluator must use gender-based methodology and tools and ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, inclusion of vulnerable groups as well as other cross-cutting issues and the SDGs, are included in the final evaluation report and the new project document.

The evaluation must provide factual information that is credible, reliable and useful. The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the evaluators.

As of 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all regions of the world. Travel to and in the country is constrained by COVID-19. If it is not possible to travel to or within the country for the evaluation then the evaluator should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of evaluation virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, survey and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the inception report and agreed with the Evaluation Manager.

When the evaluation is to be carried out virtually, consideration should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability, or willingness to be interviewed remotely. In addition, their accessibility to the internet/computer may be an issue as many government and national counterparts may be working from home. These limitations and any others must be reflected in the evaluation report.

**Evaluation products (deliverables)**

An evaluation report and an associated power point presentation summarizing the findings of the evaluation and the proposed follow-up actions in a new UNDP Project Document format.

The consultant will be expected to deliver the following:

* Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages). The inception report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP after the desk review and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits) and prior to the country visit in the case of international evaluators.
* Evaluation findings debriefings. Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.
* Draft evaluation report (60 pages including executive summary). The programme unit and key stakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report and provide a set of comments to the evaluator within an agreed period of time, addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in the evaluation guidelines.
* Evaluation report audit trail. Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how he/she has addressed comments.
* Final evaluation report:
  + Executive summary
  + Introduction, including description of the work conducted
  + Findings and conclusions
  + Recommendations, including, as applicable, a revised work plan to address the pending tasks and eventual corrective action
  + Annexes providing a brief summary of the documents reviewed and persons interviewed with the description of the key content / conclusions drawn and any other relevant materials.
* Validation workshop for presentations to stakeholders and/or the evaluation reference group including GASTAT
* Evaluation brief and other knowledge products or participation in knowledge-sharing events, if relevant.

The consultant should present three hard copies of the report as well as an electronic copy. The draft final report should be submitted not later than three weeks after the end of the on-site mission and the final report within two weeks from receiving the comments of the project management and UNDP on the draft reports.

* Standard templates that need to be followed are provided in the Annexes section. It is expected that the evaluator will follow the UNDP evaluation guidelines and UNEG quality check list and ensure all the quality criteria are met in the evaluation report.
* In line with UNDP’s financial regulations, when determined by the Country Office and/or the consultant that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactory completed due to impact of COVID-19 and limitations to the evaluation, that deliverable or service will not be paid. Due to the current COVID-19 situation and its implications, a partial payment may be considered if the consultant invested time towards the deliverable but was unable to complete to circumstances beyond his/her/their control.

**Evaluation consultant required competencies**

The consultancy will be conducted by one international evaluator.

The evaluator shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects and have sufficient experience in statistics related to initiatives and main national and international development operations.

The evaluator selected should not have been involved in designing, executing, or advising any aspect of the project in order to avoid any conflict of interest with the project related activities.

The evaluator must present the following qualifications:

* Advanced university degree in Statistics
* Minimum 15 years of relevant professional experience in the area of statistics
* Familiar with UNDP approaches to development assistance
* Demonstrated understanding of issues related to human rights and gender; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis in a development project; Previous experience with results‐based formulating, monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
* knowledge and/or experience of disability inclusion
* Strong communication and analytical skills
* Strong command of English language, both written and spoken
* Previous work experience in the region is an asset

**Evaluation ethics**

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.”

**Implementation arrangements**

UNDP Saudi Arabia Country Office will select the consultant through a transparent process in consultation with GASTAT. UNDP will be responsible for the management of the consultant and will in this regard designate an evaluation manager. The project management unit will assist in facilitating the process (e.g., providing relevant documentation, arranging visits/interviews with key informants, participate in reviewing the evaluation deliverables and arrange for the consultant all necessary site visits and meetings in Saudi Arabia according to the ToR). UNDP country office in coordination with the project management unit shall arrange logistics for the mission including hotel reservation and transportation during the mission.

The evaluation manager will convene an evaluation reference group comprising of technical experts from UNDP, donors and implementing partners. This reference group will review the inception report and the draft evaluation report to provide detailed comments related to the quality of methodology, evidence collected, analysis and reporting. The reference group will also advise on the conformity of processes to the UNDP evaluation guidelines. The evaluator needs to show how he/she addressed the comments

The consultant will take responsibility, with assistance from the project team, for conducting the meetings and the review, subject to advanced approval of the methodology submitted in the inception report. Project staff will not participate in the meetings between the consultant and the evaluation participants.

The consultant will report directly to the designated evaluation manager and work closely with the project team.

If it is not possible for the consultant to travel to Saudi Arabia or project locations due to COVID-19 restrictions, a methodology that considers the conduct of the evaluation virtually and remotely should be developed. This should be detailed in the inception report and agreed with the evaluation reference group and the evaluation manager. support during the implementation of remote/ virtual meetings will be provided by the evaluation manager when needed. An updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email) will be provided by the country office to the consultant.

The final report will be approved by the evaluation commissioner.

UNDP with support of relevant stakeholders will develop a management response to the evaluation within 2 weeks of report finalization.

**Time frame for the evaluation process**

The detailed evaluation workplan will be agreed upon between the UNDP and the selected consultant. The Project evaluation will take place between 15 November-12 December 2021, including a combination of home-based work and one (1) in-country visit.

The evaluation will be carried during 20 working days over a maximum period of two months**:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | Timing/working days | Estimated Completion Date | Note |
| **Desk Review** | 5 | 15 November 2021 | In home country |
| **Evaluation Mission** | *5* | 22 November 2021 | In KSA |
| **Draft Evaluation Report** | 8 | 5 December 2021 | In home country |
| **Final Report** | 2 | 12 December 2021 |
| **Total** | 20 | November – December 2021 | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY** | **ESTIMATED # OF WORKING DAYS** | **DATE OF COMPLETION** | **PLACE** | **RESPONSIBLE PARTY** |
| **Phase One: Desk review and inception report** | | | | |
| Meeting briefing with UNDP (programme managers and project staff as needed) | - | At the time of the Mission Started 22 November | UNDP or remote | Evaluation manager and commissioner |
| Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team | - | At the time of contract signing  3 November 2021 | Via email | Evaluation manager and commissioner |
| Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed | 5 | Within two weeks of contract signing  18 November 2021 | Home- based | Evaluation Consultant |
| Submission of the inception report  (15 pages maximum) | - | By 22 November2021 |  | Evaluation Consultant |
| Comments and approval of inception report | - | By 24 November 2021 | UNDP | Evaluation manager |
| **Phase Two: Data-collection mission** | | | | |
| Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews and focus groups | 4 | 22-30 November 2021 | In country  With field visits | UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff, local authorities, etc. |
| Debriefing to UNDP and key stakeholders | 1 | 30 November 2021 | In country | Evaluation Consultant |
| **Phase Three: Evaluation report writing** | | | | |
| Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (5 pages) and Draft Report submission | 8 | Within Two weeks of the completion of the field mission  5 December 2021 | Home- based | Evaluation Consultant |
| Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report | - | By 10 December2021 | UNDP | Evaluation manager and evaluation reference group |
| Finalization and submission of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office | 2 | by 17 December2021 | Home- based | Evaluation Consultant |
| **Estimated total days for the evaluation** | **20** |  |  |  |

**EVALUATION DELIVERABLES**

**The Evaluator is expected to deliver the following:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Deliverable** | **Content** | **Timing** | **Responsibilities** |
| **Inception Report** | Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method | On arrival Day (22 November 2021) | Evaluator submits to Project Management and UNDP CO. |
| **Debriefing presentations** | Initial Findings | End of evaluation mission (5 December 2021) | To Project Management and UNDP CO. |
| **Draft Final Report** | Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes | Within 2 weeks of the evaluation mission (30 September 2021) | Sent to Project Management and UNDP CO, reviewed by GASTAT. |
| **Final Report\*** | Revised report | Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft (12 December 2021) | To Project Management and UNDP CO. |

\*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report

**Payment modalities and specifications**

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| % | Milestone |
| *20%* | Acceptance of Inception Report prior to the field visit. |
| *30%* | Following draft report |
| *50%* | Following approval of the final Evaluation Report. |

In accordance with UNDP's financial regulations, where the country office and/or the consultant determine that a deliverable or service cannot be provided satisfactorily due to the impact of COVID-19 and limitations on evaluation, that deliverable or service will not be paid. Due to the current situation and the implications of COVID-19, a partial payment may be considered if the consultant has invested time in the production of the deliverable but has not been able to ensure its full supply due to circumstances beyond his control.

1. **Application submission process and criteria for selection**

As required by the programme unit.

1. **TOR annexes**

Annexes can be used to provide additional detail about evaluation background and requirements to facilitate the work of evaluators. Some examples include:

* **Intervention results framework and theory of change.** Provides more detailed information on the intervention being evaluated.
* **Key stakeholders and partners.** A list of key stakeholders and other individuals who should be consulted, together with an indication of their affiliation and relevance for the evaluation and their contact information. This annex can also suggest sites to be visited.
* **Documents to be consulted.** A list of important documents and web pages that the evaluators should read at the outset of the evaluation and before finalizing the evaluation design and the inception report. This should be limited to the critical information that the evaluation team needs. Data sources and documents may include:
  + Relevant national strategy documents,
  + Strategic and other planning documents (e.g., programme and project documents).
  + Monitoring plans and indicators.
  + Partnership arrangements (e.g., agreements of cooperation with Governments or partners).
  + Previous evaluations and assessments.
  + UNDP evaluation policy, UNEG norms and standards and other policy documents.
* **Evaluation matrix** (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report). The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

**Table 1. Sample evaluation matrix**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Relevant evaluation criteria** | **Key questions** | **Specific sub questions** | **Data sources** | **Data-collection methods/tools** | **Indicators/ success standard** | **Methods for data analysis** |
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* **Schedule of tasks, milestones and deliverables.** Based on the time frame specified in the TOR, the evaluators present the detailed schedule.

1. **Required format for the evaluation report.** The final report must include, but not necessarily be limited to, the elements outlined in the quality criteria for evaluation reports (). The standard template can be found in the following link ([Evaluation report](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/Template/section-4/Sec%204%20Template%206%20Standard%20evaluation%20report%20content%20full%20details.docx)).

* [**Code of conduct**](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100)**.** UNDP programme units require each member of the evaluation team to read carefully, understand and sign the ‘Code of Conduct for Evaluators in the United Nations system’*,* it should be made available as an attachment to the evaluation report.
* [Inception report](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/Template/section-4/Sec%204%20Template%204%20Evaluation%20Inception%20report%20content%20outline.docx)
* [Audit trail](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/Template/section-4/Sec%204%20Template%207%20Evaluation%20Audit%20trail%20form.docx)
* [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/index.shtml)
* [Evaluation Quality Assessment](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-6.shtml) (the final report should address all the questions in the checklist pages 8- 11)

## Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Relevant evaluation criteria** | **Key questions** | **Specific sub-questions** | **Data sources** | **Data-collection methods/tools** | **Indicators/ success standard** | **Methods for data analysis** |
| **Relevance/ coherence** | To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country project’s outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs? | How has the institutional framework for statistics been reviewed and aligned with Saudi development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs? | * Project documents * Relevant literature * Key stakeholders | * Desk review * Key Informant Interviews(KIIs) * Literature review | How the project is aligned with the relevant national and international development priorities and normative frameworks. | * Data synthesis and Triangulation * Context analysis |
| To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country project outcome, especially in addressing the statistics in Saudi Arabia? | How does the project intervention logic/strategy contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country project outcome, especially in addressing the statistics in Saudi Arabia | * Project document (PD) * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk Review-PD, UNDP CPD, progress reports * Key Informant Interviews(KIIs) | If the project Theory of Change (ToC) is plausible and realistic. | * Data synthesis and Triangulation * Context analysis |
| To what extent is the project results framework (indicators) plausible and doable (SMART Criteria)? | * Were the project’s objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame? | * Project document (PD) and results framework * Key stakeholders | * Desk Review-PD, UNDP CPD, progress reports * Consultations with key stakeholders | * + Whether the results framework has SMART indicators and targets. | * Review of intervention logic/strategy * Evaluability analysis |
| To what extent is the project responsive to the defined needs and priorities of the stakeholders? How has the project enhanced knowledge on behaviour change? | How has this project contributed to addressing statistics gaps, needs, and priorities of stakeholders | * Project document (PD) * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review of Project documents * Key Informant Interviews(KIIs) * Online survey (Survey monkey) | Positive contribution /outcomes-Project responds to stakeholder needs and priorities | * Review of intervention logic/strategy * Triangulation |
| To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, women's empowerment, and the human rights-based approach? | How has the project;   1. Created an enabling environment for addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality and women marginalization?   ii) Contributed to the progressive realization of HRBA in terms of protecting human rights and refraining from retrogressive measures. | * Project document (PD) * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review of Project documents * Key Informant Interviews(KIIs) | How the project is responsive to the needs and priorities of men and women, boys and girls | * Document synthesis * Review of intervention logic/strategy * Triangulation |
| How has the project adapted to changes in context and emerging challenges (political, legal, economic, environmental, institutional, etc.) during its implementation? | How has the project adapted to changes in context and emerging challenges during its implementation? | * Project document (PD) * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review- PD and progress reports * Review of relevant literature/Context analysis * Key Informant Interviews(KIIs) | * Project design flexibility * Project risk management and mitigation measures | * Document synthesis * Review of intervention logic/strategy * Triangulation |
| **Effectiveness** | To what extent did the project achieve its intended objectives, outputs, and outcomes? | * Is the project being implemented as designed? * To what extent have the project outputs and outcomes been achieved? * In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements? * What challenges (if any) emerged during the project implementation? * What could have been done differently to increase the quality and results of the project? | * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review- progress reports * Indicator analysis * Consultations with key stakeholders | * Project results (Outputs and outcomes) * Results framework indictor performance | * Triangulation * Outcome harvesting * Most significant change and/or success stories |
| To what extent did the project contribute to the country's outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities? | * How has the project contributed to national development priorities, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan/CPD? * To what extent did the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and original assumptions informing the design hold up throughout the project's implementation period? | * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review- progress reports * Indicator analysis * Consultations with key stakeholders | Project Contribution to UNDP CPD, strategic plan, national development priorities, and SDGs | * Triangulation * Outcome harvesting * Most significant change and/or success stories |
| Were there any unintended or unexpected results achieved by the project that can be documented as lessons learned? | * Did the project achieve any unintended or unexpected results? * What factors contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of unintended or unexpected results | * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review- progress reports * Indicator analysis * Consultations with key stakeholders | Unintended or unexpected results | * Contribution analysis * Triangulation * Outcome harvesting * Most significant change and/or success stories |
| To what extent have gender and human rights been integrated into the project implementation and monitoring of the results? | * To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, women's empowerment, and the realization of human rights? * To what extent were women involved in the implementation of the actions indirectly or directly. | * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review- progress reports * Consultations with key stakeholders | Gender equality and human rights principles are taken into consideration during project implementation. | * Contribution analysis * Outcome harvesting * Most significant change stories |
| **Efficiency** | To what extent is the project management structure and coordination mechanism, as outlined in the project document, efficient in generating the expected results? What specific modes of engagement have been most efficient? | To what extent has the project management structure and coordination mechanism been efficient in generating the expected results? What specific modes of engagement have been most efficient? | * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-PD, progress reports * Consultations with key stakeholders | The efficiency of Project management and coordination mechanisms | * Document synthesis and triangulation * Review of implementation arrangements |
| To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? | * Are there enough resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.)? * Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve project results? * Is expenditure according to the planned budget? Was there over/under expenditure? | * Progress reports * Budget and financial statements * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-PD, progress reports, implementation of multi-year work plans * Review resource utilization * Consultations with key stakeholders | * Is expenditure according to the planned budget? Was there over/under expenditure? * Value for Money (VfM) in terms of cost-effectiveness? |  |
| To what extent do the  M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management? | * To what extent does the project have an effective, efficient, reliable, and cost-effective M & E strategy/system? * How do you intend to measure the indicators (i.e., is an M&E methodology in place?) * Are additional mechanisms/ tools needed? | * Progress reports * M & E framework * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-PD, progress reports, results framework, etc * Review of monitoring data * Consultations with key stakeholders | Effectiveness and efficiency of project monitoring systems and project data management protocols. | * Document synthesis and triangulation |
| **Sustainability** | To what extent are the processes and systems established in the project sustainable in supporting the continued implementation of the project interventions? | * To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation (to what extent are they feel they own the project interventions? * To what extent does the project design promote ownership, mutual accountability, inclusivity, and managing for results to ensure the sustainability of efforts and benefits? | * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-PD, progress reports, relevant literature * Review of monitoring data * Consultations with key stakeholders | * Involvement, commitment, and ownership of project interventions by key stakeholders * Collaboration among different actors | * Context analysis. * Document synthesis and triangulation |
| Are there any economic, financial, social, or political risks, challenges and limitations that may jeopardize the sustainability of the project results and the project’s contributions to country project outputs and outcomes? | * How have the benefits of the project interventions been secured? * Has the progress made so far faced, led to, or could in the future lead to, potentially adverse impacts/risks that could threaten the sustainability of the Project results? * How are these risks being managed and minimized? | * Progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-PD, progress reports * Relevant literature * Consultations with key stakeholders | Risks, threats, challenges and limitations that may affect the sustainability of project initiatives, results and contributions | * Document synthesis and triangulation * Context and situation analysis |
| Do the institutional and legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits? | * To what extent has the project strengthened or created adequate institutional capacities for sustained results? * What policy frameworks, institutional capacities, strategies, systems, linkages and practices are likely to be sustainable? * To what extent was the project effective in enhancing the integration of statistics in public and private sector actions | * Project document (PD) * Progress reports * Standard operating procedures(SOPs) * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-PD, SOPs, progress reports * Review of relevant literature * Consultations with key stakeholders | Management, coordination, governance and legal challenges and limitations that may affect the sustainability of project initiatives, results and contributions | * Document synthesis and triangulation * Context and situation analysis |
| To what extent are good practices and lessons learned continually documented by the project team and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project? | * What are the best practices and lessons learned from the project that have been documented for future programming? * How have good practices and lessons derived from the Project implementation been documented, shared, and disseminated with key partners? | * Progress reports * Consultations with key stakeholders. | * Documentation review * Consultations with key stakeholders | Good practices, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations have been documented. | Document synthesis and triangulation |
| To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies? | * Does the project have a well-designed and well-planned exit strategy? * What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability? | * Project document (PD) * Key stakeholders | * Desk review of PD and ToC * Progress reports * Consultations with key stakeholders | Project exit strategy | Document synthesis and triangulation |
| **Impact** | What identifiable changes have occurred as a result of the project? | * How have the project deliverables impacted GASTAT’s ability to carry on its mandate? * Has the project helped make a significant impact on the way the national partners perform their expected objectives? | * Project documents and progress reports * Relevant literature * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-project documents * Literature review * Consultations with key stakeholders | Long term effects of the project interventions | * Document synthesis and triangulation * Outcome harvesting * Most significant change |
| **Cross-cutting Issues** | To what extent have gender and human rights been integrated into the project design, implementation, and monitoring of the results? | * To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country? * To what extent does the project ensure that no one is left behind regarding project benefits? What proportion of the beneficiaries of a project were persons with disabilities? What barriers did persons with disabilities face? | * Project documents and progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-progress reports * Consultations with key stakeholders | Gender equality and Human rights-based approach (HRBA) principles are taken into consideration during project implementation. | * Document synthesis and triangulation * Outcome harvesting |
| To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any positive or negative unintended effects? | * Was the designing, implementation, and monitoring process of the project inclusive and participatory? * Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality? | * Project documents and progress reports * Key stakeholders | * Desk review-progress reports * Consultations with key stakeholders | Positive changes in gender equality and women empowerment as a result of the project | * Document synthesis and triangulation * Outcome harvesting |

## Annex 3: Data Collection Tools/Interview Guides:

## *(Refined and harmonized for each category of stakeholders)*

## How has the institutional framework for statistics been reviewed and aligned with Saudi development priorities, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?

## How does the project intervention logic/strategy contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country project outcome, especially in addressing the statistics in Saudi Arabia? Were the project’s objectives and outputs clear, practical, and feasible within its frame?

## How has this project contributed to addressing statistics gaps, needs, and priorities of stakeholders?

## Is the project being implemented as designed? How has the project adapted to changes in context and emerging challenges during its implementation?

## To what extent have the project outputs and outcomes been achieved? In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?

## How has the project contributed to national development priorities, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan/CPD? What could have been done differently to increase the quality and results of the project?

## To what extent did the project's Theory of Change (ToC) and original assumptions informing the design hold up throughout the project's implementation period?

## Did the project achieve any unintended or unexpected results? What factors contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of unintended or unexpected results

## To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, women's empowerment, and the realization of human rights?

## To what extent has the project management structure and coordination mechanism been efficient in generating the expected results? What specific modes of engagement have been most efficient?

## Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve project results? Is expenditure according to the planned budget? Was there over/under expenditure?

## To what extent does the project have an effective, efficient, reliable, and cost-effective M & E strategy/system?

## To what extent does the project design promote ownership, mutual accountability, inclusivity, and managing for results to ensure the sustainability of efforts and benefits?

## How have the benefits of the project interventions been secured? Has the progress made so far faced, led to, or could in the future lead to, potentially adverse impacts/risks that could threaten the sustainability of the Project results?

## To what extent has the project strengthened or created adequate institutional capacities for sustained results?

## To what extent was the project effective in enhancing the integration of statistics in public and private sector actions

## How have good practices and lessons derived from the Project implementation been documented, shared, and disseminated with key partners?

## Does the project have a well-designed and well-planned exit strategy? What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?

## How have the project deliverables impacted GASTAT’s ability to carry on its mandate? Has the project helped make a significant impact on the way the national partners perform their expected objectives?

## To what extent does the project ensure that no one is left behind regarding project benefits? What proportion of the beneficiaries of a project were persons with disabilities? What barriers did persons with disabilities face?

## Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality?

## 

## Annex 4: List of Stakeholders Interviewed

1. Sarah Al Hajri (UNDP- project manager)
2. Dakhil Abdulaziz Aldakhil (Business Statistics)
3. Dr. Omar Hafez (Energy Statistics)
4. Dr. Mohammed Nasser Alshahrani (Quality , Methodology and Innovation Manager)
5. Dr. Khaled M. Alqahtani (Data Acquisition and Management Manager)
6. Ammar Albluwi (Economic Statistics)
7. Dakhil Abdulaziz Aldakhil (Business Statistics)
8. Dr. Omar Hafez (Energy Statistics)
9. Mr. Ali Hamd
10. Abdullah Alsayari (National Accounts)
11. Dr. Amani Albaqshi (Labour market statistics)
12. Waleed Abdulqadar (International trade statistics)
13. Abdulaziz Almudaifer (Living Conditions statistics)

1. https://www.vision2030.gov.sa [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
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3. https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://www.vision2030.gov.sa [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. https://www.sustg.com/saudi-arabias-national-transformation-plan-released/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/page/259 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. CIA Factbook 2021; https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/saudi-arabia/ [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
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10. Socio-Economic impact of COVID-19 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and how to Build Back Better United Nations, Saudi Arabia; Diagnostics paper; UN in KSA, November 2020- https://saudiarabia.un.org [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. International Data Corporation; https://www.idc.com/mea/events/68859-idc-public-sector-congress [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Non-discriminatory, transparency, participation, and accountability [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/page/114 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/page/63 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)