**The Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development (2019-2021)**

END OF PROJECT EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

**Acknowledgement**

This final Evaluation was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office (CO) for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for the Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development (2019-2021) implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP). The primary audience and users of the report are UNDP, the MEP, as well as their stakeholders and all interested in the project progress and lessons learned.

The Evaluation was carried out by Cosette Maiky, PhD with active support from UNDP Country Office in facilitating the Evaluation process.

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

**APR** Annual Progress Report

**CEDA** Council of Economic and Development Affairs

**CO** Country Office

**COVID-19** Coronavirus disease 2019

**CPD** Country Programme Document

**CQR**  Consensual Qualitative Research

**DPC** Direct Project Costing

**GDP** Gross Domestic Product

**GEWE** Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

**HDI** Human Development Index

**ICD** Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector

**KIIs**  Key Informant Interviews

**KSA**  Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**MEP**  Ministry of Economy and Planning

**M&E**  Monitoring and Evaluation

**NPM** National Project Manager

**NTP** National Transformation Program

**OECD-DAC** Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee

**PD** Project Document

**RBAS**  Regional Bureau for Arab States

**SDGs**  Sustainable Development Goals

**ToC** Theory of Change

**UN** United Nations

**UNEG** United Nations Evaluation Group

**UNDP** United Nations Development Project

**UNESCO** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**VRPs**  Vision Realization Programs

## Executive Summary

This document presents the report for the final Evaluation commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office (CO) for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for the Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development (2019-2021) funded by the Government and implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP). The primary audience and users of the report are UNDP, the MEP, as well as their stakeholders and all interested in the project progress and lessons learned.

The Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development Project, launched in May 2019, was designed to support mainstreaming social and economic development in the national policies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The ultimate project objective was to strengthen evidence-based policy planning and decision-making to support the realization of Saudi Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As reflected in the project document, the project was designed with a focus on designing policies along three distinct thematic focuses: (a) social and economic development; (b) regional development; and (c) sector-based economic development. The proposed policy support framework was supposed to be created whilst national capacities are nurtured and strengthened within the hosting Ministry as well as across all participating agencies (public sector's institutions, private sector actors, and the civil society). In this connection, diverse advisory services were set to be provided to the Government in several areas of sustainable development. Likewise, statistics and mathematical models were planned to be generated and updated towards powerful decision- making processes across sectors. The project's theory of change (ToC) is captured in detail in the results framework (see Annex III) and is summarily exhibited in a diagram (see Annex II).

The purpose of this exercise was to generate knowledge from the project implementation for the organizational accountability and learning, as well as future planning and implementation. The specific objectives included the assessment performance in the past two years of the project in terms of delivering on: (1) Strengthening MEP capacity for policymaking, policy analysis and evaluation, (2) SDGs monitoring and reporting, (3) Supporting regional development planning, (4) Supporting social and economic development, and (5) Assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 on the Saudi economy. The Evaluation also aimed at addressing the primary issues of concern to the national partners, namely MEP and provide recommendations as to the best course of action that needs to be taken to ensure the achievements of intended results. In addition, the exercise was supposed also provide recommendations as to how the project will, in the future, mainstream gender in development efforts, and, wherever possible, also consider disability issues and the rights-based approach.

The Evaluator utilized a diverse range of data collection methods that included systematic review of existing documentation, mapping of available contextual analyses, data analysis, including UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data, technical analysis, and testing of theories of change/strategies, and semi-structured interviews. For this latter, the Evaluator used Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methods. The Evaluation’s strategy adopted a purposive sampling approach[[2]](#footnote-2) to conduct 15 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. For each criterion, an Evaluation rating was applied as follows: 1 for *needs major improvements* (The project had negative factors with severe defaults or weaknesses), 2 for *needs mild improvements* (The project had negative factors with major defaults or weaknesses)*,* 3 for *acceptable* (The project had moderate to notable defaults or weaknesses),4 for *satisfactory* (The project had positive factors with minor defaults or weaknesses), and 5 for *highly satisfactory* (The project had several significant positive factors with no defaults or weaknesses).

The Evaluation upheld ethical standards in conducting interviews, collecting, managing, analyzing, and disseminating data which draw on the UN Ethical Guidelines (UNEG) for Evaluation[[3]](#footnote-3) (2008), the UNEG Norms and Standards[[4]](#footnote-4) (2017) and the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines[[5]](#footnote-5) (2021). All the necessary measures were undertaken to ensure objectivity and independence of Evaluation.

The overall rating of the project is *Acceptable*, as it that has created outputs and results with impact potential for successor projects, should they be premised on lessons learned and good practices, along with all other pillars since the early stages of project conception. In addition, against all odds, during the fourth quarter of the implementation period (second half of 2021), the project has evidently witnessed a drastic change in performance: with decent liaison and consistent coordination with the national partner, the UNDP team managed to trigger further efforts towards institutionalizing of knowledge in the selected implementation environments, opening up the room for more opportunities of consistent factoring of knowledge products into policymaking and planning under the new agreement signed off between parties in 2021.

The conclusions and corresponding recommendations were detailed after the elaboration of the main findings according to the selected evaluation criteria:

**Conclusions**

* Problem analysis, prioritisation, and adaptability to emerging needs have been performed throughout the implementation period.
* The implemented interventions were aligned with the mandate, strategy, function, roles, and responsibilities of key actors (UNDP and MEP respectively), relevant to the originally identified technical priorities and needs, and well-aligned with national and international priorities (Vision 2030, SDGs).
* The design of the implementation strategy of the project was coherent and consistent with the Country Programme Document during the Programme Cycle 2017-2021.
* In its second year, the project witnessed a notable performance in terms of project management and resource efficiency. The distribution of tasks in the CO increased the efficiency of management and contributed to the swift responsiveness of the project to contextual shifts.
* There is room for improvement in the project’s logical framework and progress indicators.
	+ The project did not have a robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) architecture in place, which has evidently hindered the systematic documentation of progress and achievements.
	+ There is variation in the degree of successfulness and progress of activities under the different components.
	+ Planning and reporting documents did not contain disaggregated data by sex and vulnerable groups. Under the new agreement, there is room to include stand-alone gender and/or human rights criteria or indicators.
* Most interventions (except recruitment processes) were well and timely executed with no significant reported delays.
* The adopted actions and strategies were mostly relevant to achieving the expected results in the concerned areas during the implementation period. With a marked flexibility and ability to adapt to unexpected threats or risks – especially since the onset of the COVID pandemic - the team managed to achieve the desired results during the implementation period.
* Ideally, it would have been extremely useful to interview the individuals (National Project Managers) who managed the project’s interventions from the UNDP and the MEP. This step could have helped in gaining more comprehensive insights about the outcomes. However, this step was not possible since these people were not on board anymore. This is considered to have a significant impact on the consistency of the assessment of progress under the *effectiveness* criterion, which exclusively relied on the insights gathered from both secondary and primary research.
* As work mostly included elements of soft assistance (e.g., standards development, training, policy advocacy) it makes the application of conventional efficiency indicators to these areas not feasible (i.e. procurement of assets, comparative analysis to alternatives…).

**Recommendations**

**a) Recommendations for UNDP**

**Recommendation 1:** Continue supporting the project in resource mobilization and design for the coming phase to reach sustainability of existing successful initiatives considering UNDP’s core role serving scalability and higher impact.

**Recommendation 2:** Maintain, develop, and further systemize standards and procedures (meetings, assessments/situational analysis/contingency plans, etc.) to ensure readiness to quickly identify and address unexpected/emerging issues with a solid documentation and clear formulation of the framework and corresponding tools.

**Recommendation 3:** Activate the project board/ steering committee and recruit a Chief Technical Advisor who can bring to the table the comparative and competitive advantage of UNDP (as part of the UN system) - as compared to private management consulting firms-, and to adopt an implementation approach that is based on a solid system-level analysis which will most likely translate into strategic results and policy-focused interventions.

**Recommendation 4:** Develop rigorous transparent communication processes and mechanisms with the national partner where all credible concerns related to the project’s implementation are investigated and addressed appropriately. In addition, develop an onboarding package for the new staff which includes the organizational mandatory trainings that are related to the rules and regulations and job responsibilities and ensure that the staff always conduct themselves in a professional and disciplined manner.

**Recommendation 5:** Focus future efforts towards improving the business maturity of existing successful initiatives rather than initiating new ones using a phased approach with clear outcome level indicators and exit strategies, unless otherwise is identified based on the continuous assessment of needs or as deemed necessary. Under the new agreement, there is an imminent need for improving business stability, active incentives, and strategies to engage beneficiaries.

**Recommendation 6.** Develop a measurement standard to systematically track the type, quality, and effectiveness of its contribution to gender results that also captures the context of change and the degree of its contribution to that change.

**Recommendation 7.** Establish a M&E system based on a shared understanding of goals and intended results, the architecture of the new agreement and the approved multi-year work plan, in addition to its corresponding quantitative and qualitative reporting tools, in view of monitoring and measuring achievements and progress of the project.

**Recommendation 8:** Support the modernization of knowledge and the transformation of conventional capacity development tools to uphold introduced changes (Prioritization of pilot initiatives through current/available proposals suggested by the MEP to embed knowledge at the institutional level. For example, creation of knowledge hub/repository, community of national economists, pool of experts for potential assignment, gradual production of research outputs).

**b) Recommendations for the MEP**

**Recommendation 1:** Continue enhancing and improving the business/investment environment.

**Recommendation 2:** Assign a thematic division within the MEP as a focal point (keep recruitment and performance appraisal issues within the Directorate of the Human Resources Development Department).

**Recommendation 3:** Support the development of liaison and coordination mechanisms and processes between the MEP and the UNDP, with clear and demarcated lines of reporting and decision-making capabilities across and between established structures, to jointly: 1) Regularly align expectations, 2) Analyze needs/emerging needs, 3) Strategize, prioritize, and plan integration into the broader MEP strategy, 4) Explore partnerships and synergies options, 5) Coordinate mobilization and allocation of resources, 6) Manage, monitor, and evaluate interventions, delivered capacity building interventions, and generated knowledge products, and 7) Agree on information sharing at both the institutional (internal) and large audience (external) levels.

**Lessons Learned Throughout the Evaluation**

* In the extremely specific realities of the KSA, the results-oriented approach and continuously monitoring of internal and external supporting and constraining factors affecting operations are key factors to ensure the conception and implementation of relevant interventions.
* The importance of strategic partnerships between international organizations and national partners on advancing knowledge and integrating evidence at the policy-making level is critical and essential.

## Introduction and Background Infomation

This document presents the report for the final was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office (CO) for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for the Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development (2019-2021) implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MEP). The primary audience and users of the report are the UNDP, the MEP for future planning, as well as their stakeholders and all interested in the project progress and lessons learned.

**Background Information**

Saudi Arabia has achieved and sustained a remarkable socio-economic development in the last four decades. In this respect, the Kingdom has been able to move from an underdeveloped status to a developing economy with prosperous socio-economic indicators that qualified it to be one of the G20 worldwide. The GDP increased from SR 156 billion in 1969 to SR2,398 billion in 2017. Based on the annual ranking of the Human Development Index (HDI) of the Human Development Report, Saudi Arabia has steady moved from the middle-income category in the 1990s to the very high-income category in 2018. Parallel to this, the population of Saudi Arabia increased from 7 million in 1974 to 31.7 million in 2016. According to 2010 national census data, 70% of the population live in urban areas, with almost two thirds living in three regions of Riyadh, Makkah and the Eastern Province. This poses a daunting challenge to the national urge of diversification of the economic base as well as to development sustainability in general.

Since the early 1980s, the Government has expressed intent to achieve socio-economic development with a focus on diversification, balanced regional development, innovation and evidence competitiveness. These were considered as the drivers of long-term development in all sectors of the economy. Certain synergies were also expected to get materialized by better inter- sectoral coordination.

In this framework, Saudi Arabia launched Saudi Vision 2030 in 2016. The vision has three main pillars: to make the country the "heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds", to become a global investment powerhouse, and to transform the country's location into a hub connecting Afro-Eurasia. To achieve the strategic goals and targets of vision 2030, thirteen programs called Vision Realization Programs (VRPs) were established[[6]](#footnote-6). The Vision embraces the concept of development sustainability by anchoring its conceptual firmness on the three themes of a *vibrant society*, a *thriving economy* and an *ambitious nation*. A thorough review of the three themes and their underlying issues of national concern would reveal a holistic approach to development that encompasses the three dimensions of sustainable development: the social, the economic and the environmental. Moreover, the Vision calls for a thriving economy with rewarding opportunities through diversifying the economic base for greater sustainability. This comes in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The plan is supervised by a group of people employed under the National Center for Performance Measurement, the Delivery Unit, and the Project Management Office of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs. The National Transformation Program (NTP) was designed and launched in 2016 across 24 government bodies.

As for commitment to international priorities, the Vision 2030 calls for a bold transformation of its national economy. Saudi Arabia has also committed to the SDGs. The current global crisis caused by COVID-19 has affected all communities but has impacted vulnerable communities disproportionately. The Government of Saudi Arabia has responded to the crisis with a broad package of mitigating measures. However, the situation highlighted the importance of innovative financing such as awqaf in achieving and sustaining progress and ensuring that no one is left behind. We must also consider that the broad impact of COVID-19 is a preview of the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable communities.

The United Nations in Saudi Arabia (UN) and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) identified awqaf as an important source of sustainable financing for advancing Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 and the UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

**Structure of the Report**

This final report includes the Executive Summary and the main body of the report with nine sections:

1. The *Introduction* provides the background and explains the main purpose of the final Evaluation;
2. The *Description of the Intervention Being Evaluated* explains the project in brief;
3. The *Evaluation Scope and Objective* provides a description of the segments of the target population included, the geographic area included, and which components, outputs or outcomes were and were not assessed.
4. The *Evaluation Approach and Methods* comprises the rational for the approach and methodology of the Evaluation as well as the limitations of the chosen methods and cross-cutting issues;
5. The *Data Analysis* includes a description of data analysis methods;
6. The *Findings* details the findings from (a) change analysis over actual progress to complete desired outputs, and (b) contribution analysis across the Evaluation criteria of (a) relevance, (b) effectiveness, (c) efficiency, (d) impact and (e) sustainability;
7. The *Conclusion* section concludes to strategic remarks on the findings;
8. The *Recommendations* lists the recommendations crystalized throughout the Evaluation;
9. The last section, *Lessons Learned* reflects on the major lessons learned from the project during the evaluated implementation period.

At the end of the document, the *Annexes* section provides a list of documents annexed to this report.

## Description of the Intervention

The Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development Project, launched in May 2019, was designed to support mainstreaming social and economic development in the national policies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The ultimate project objective was to strengthen evidence-based policy planning and decision-making to support the realization of Saudi Vision 2030 and the SDGs.

Funded by the Government through a USD 12,000,000 grant, the Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development Project, launched in May 2019, was designed to support mainstreaming social and economic development in the national policies in the KSA. The ultimate project objective was to strengthen evidence-based policy planning and decision-making to support the realization of Saudi Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As reflected in the project document, the project was designed with a focus on designing policies along three distinct thematic focuses: (a) social and economic development; (b) regional development; and (c) sector-based economic development. The proposed policy support framework was supposed to be created whilst national capacities are nurtured and strengthened within the hosting Ministry as well as across all participating agencies (public sector's institutions, private sector actors, and the civil society). In this connection, diverse advisory services were set to be provided to the Government in several areas of sustainable development. Likewise, statistics and mathematical models were planned to be generated and updated towards powerful decision- making processes across sectors. The project's theory of change (ToC) is captured in tiny details in the results framework (see Annex III) and is summarily exhibited in a diagram (see Annex II).

**Implementation Strategy and Expected Results**

UNDP planned to capitalize on its substantive and technical competencies to inform this policy-making process that would greatly be evidence-based and committed to mobilize diverse best practices from around the world to inform the intended socio-economic strategic intervention in Saudi Arabia. In this context, the South-South Cooperation architecture of the UNDP has proven effective, namely in areas of policy coordination, regional integration, interregional linkages, and the development of national productive capacities utilizing technological innovations and exchanges of knowledge, technology transfers, sharing of solutions and experts, as well as other forms of exchanges. Further, capacity development, as a three-layer approach involving individual, institutional, and societal dimensions in improving present practices and align them to the status of worldwide excellence, was supposed to be the focus of all efforts in regional planning policymaking. All possible means of delivering sustainable capacities in the Government were to be considered.

The review of the first year of the project implementation identified a need for additional project efforts to enable the project achieves its objectives. As a result, UNDP and MEP have agreed to revise the Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development Project to increase policy engagement, reinforce capacity development and strengthen monitoring and evaluation. The revised project enabled more coherent and structured support to policymaking, policy planning and assessment. The amendment accounted for the needs for technical support of the various deputyships in MEP as well as the support needed to strengthen national and sub-national partners’ engagement in socio-economic policymaking. The amended project framework covered the following main areas: 1) strengthening MEP capacity for policymaking, policy analysis and evaluation, 2) SDGs monitoring and reporting, 3) support to regional development planning, 4) support the social and economic development, and 5) assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 on the Saudi economy.

**Project Management Structure (see Annex IV)**

According to the PD the selected strategy of the intervention was planned deliver maximum results within the available funds as system-wide coordination is anticipated to reduce costs at downstream level with numerous synergies across sectors. This project was administered from the Ministry of Economy and Planning by the National Project Manager (NPM) in addition to the UNDP's Implementation Support Services to be provided from the UN Premises.

**Stakeholders’ Engagement**

This intervention was 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 were designed to engage all citizens.

## Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Objectives

This is a mandatory final evaluation planned at the end of the life cycle of the project. The project has been ongoing since May 2019 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 and to provide recommendations for the way forward, it was imperative to conduct a final evaluation and ensure the project has delivered. This evaluation will benefit the Ministry of Economy and Planning in their planning for future years to meet Saudi Vision 2030 and highlight the impacts this project has had on the economy sector over the past few years. This evaluation was conceptualized and implemented to assess the performance in the past two years of the project in terms of delivering on: 1) Strengthening MEP capacity for policymaking, policy analysis and evaluation, 2) SDGs monitoring and reporting, 3) Supporting regional development planning, 4) Supporting social and economic development, and 5) Assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 on the Saudi economy.

The evaluation also addresses the primary issues of concern to the national partners, namely MEP and provide recommendations as to the best course of action that needs to be taken to ensure the achievements of intended results. In addition, it also provides recommendations as to how the project will, in the future, mainstream cross-cutting issues wherever possible. The evaluation covers the period from May 2019 till December 2021.

## Evaluation Criteria and Questions

As per UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2021), and the set ToR, the Evaluation was based on a limited number of Evaluation questions (EQs) covering along with Project Design and Project Management, four Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Evaluation criteria: (a) relevance; (b) effectiveness; (c) efficiency; and (d) sustainability. Their relative meaningfulness was assessed, and trade-offs discussed in each case to ensure that key questions were addressed and to avoid unnecessary effort. The following matrix demonstrates the link between the key tasks and the proposed Evaluation Questions (EQs) that were answered/tested by key stakeholders from the UNDP and the MEP during the work that took place between December 1 and 10, 2021.

**Table 1. Link between the key tasks and the proposed Evaluation Questions (EQs)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion** | **Tasks**  | **Proposed related EQ** |
| **Relevance** | * Analyze the relevance and alignment of the project strategy and approaches
* Analyze the relevance of the project’s design
 | 1. To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country project outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
2. To what extent was the project relevant, appropriate, and strategic to the mandate, strategy, functions, roles, and responsibility of the national partner?
3. To what extent did the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country project outcome?
4. To what extent did the design of the project help in achieving its own goals?
5. Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analyzed while designing the project?
6. Were there clear, practical, and feasible project objectives and outputs within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men, and vulnerable groups?
7. Were there clear baseline indicators and/or benchmark for performance?
8. Was the process of project design sufficiently participatory? Was there any impact of the process?
9. To what extent were lessons learned from previous and other relevant projects considered in the design?
10. Was there coherence and complementarity by the project to other entities in the field of capacity-building/support to policymaking?
11. Was there coherence, coordination, and complementarity by the project with other donor funded activities in the field capacity-building/support to policymaking?
12. To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, considered during project design processes?
13. To what extent did the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
14. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?
 |
| **Effectiveness** | * Assess progress towards attaining the project’s objectives
* Assess progress towards the achievement of the project’s outcome
* Review the clarity of roles and responsibilities of the various agencies and stakeholders and the level of coordination between relevant actors in the project implementation
* Document and analyze possible weaknesses in order to improve next steps of project interventions in the focus areas
* Document key lessons learned, good practices, success stories and challenges to inform future work of various stakeholders in addressing the focus area of the project
 | 1. To what extent did the project contribute to the country project outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?
2. To what extent were the project outputs achieved, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?
3. What factors have contributed to achieving, or not, intended country project outputs and outcomes?
4. To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?
5. What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project objectives?
9. To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
10. To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?
11. To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?
12. To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?
 |
| **Efficiency** | * Assess the use of resources in the planning and execution of intended outputs (management arrangements, work planning, finance, value for money, timing and delays, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, coordination, stakeholder engagement, reporting, communications…)
 | 1. To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
2. To what extent were resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?
3. To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
4. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
5. To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
6. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
7. To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?
 |
| **Sustainability** | * Assess the likelihood of continuation of the project outcome and benefits
* Describe key factors that will require attention to improve prospects for sustainability of the project results
* Assess the potential for sustainability of the results and the feasibility of ongoing efforts and commitment to help advance the focus areas of the project
 | 1. Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men, and vulnerable groups?
2. To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
3. To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
4. Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country project outputs and outcomes?
5. Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
6. To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
7. To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development?
8. To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project’s long-term objectives?
9. To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
10. To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension?
11. What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support female and male project beneficiaries as well as marginalized groups?
 |

## Evaluability Analysis

The evaluation was based on a the Theory of Change (ToCs) and the progress on the achievement of results. Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability were examined according to selected verticals (the adopted approach, the executed operations, the selected beneficiaries, and the support processes and mechanisms). At the base, answers to EQs from multiple documents and interviews were synthesized in respect to a specific checklist: 1) A first level analysis first focused on validity and reliability of the data; and then, identification of common threads and outlier views, 2) Afterwards, came the synthesis of answers across multiple questions within a given evaluability dimension. At this level, the analysis identified obstacles and barriers that must be overcome before any other progress can be made; and then, assessed their relative importance. Those were listed in the conclusions with corresponding recommendations.

## Cross-Cutting Issues

It is important to address the dimensions of context, backlash and accelerators of progress when assessing the results of work in Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE). By default, progress in this area is complex and takes longer to achieve since it requires redistribution of power to shift unequal norms, relations, and structures of dis- crimination and inequality. Gender analysis and monitoring the evolution of gender results (including pushbacks and steps forward) within a context is crucial to learning and refining programming for greater effectiveness. Against this backdrop, mainstreaming verticals of Verticals of gender equality, human rights, disabilities, minorities, and vulnerable group issues in the evaluation exercise was extremely challenging given the lack of stand-alone indicators in the design and implementation project documents that were made available to the evaluator. However, the evaluator used diverse range of data sources (with particular emphasis on *probing questions* in interviews[[7]](#footnote-7)), to ensure as much as possible inclusive participation and gathering feedback from both men and women to present a holistic picture of how assistance is perceived amongst key demographics.

## Evaluation Approach and Methodology

1. The Evaluator recruited for this Evaluation exercise holds a PhD in Political Sociology, a Master of Research in Clinical Psychology, and a Master of Advanced Studies in Psychosocial Intervention in War-torn Societies (Lebanese University), and has 14 years of hands-on experience on conflict and post-conflict governance (with emphasis on Monitoring and Evaluation), with international organizations and intergovernmental bodies in more than 20 conflict settings in the Middle East and North Africa, Central, East and Southeast Asia.
2. In accordance with the Terms of Reference (ToR, See Annex I), the present methodology notes for the evaluation define further the main parameters of the exercise such as the conceptual models adopted with a description of data-collection methods, sources, and analytical approaches to be employed, including the rationale for their selection and their limitations. However, final decisions about the specific design and methods for the evaluation emerged from consultations with the project unit, the evaluator, and key stakeholders about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives and answer the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data.
3. The evaluation of the project serves both a *learning function* (forward-looking/formative) and an *accountability function* (historical/summative). The evaluation took into consideration the evolving context of the interventions and its influence on decisions made during each phase of implementation.
4. The Evaluator re-examined the project’s ToC to provide an updated basis on which the evaluation’s activities can be built. As part of this reconstruction process, backwards mapping of the ToC was conducted: the Evaluator worked with the UNDP staff to reconstruct how the project was originally conceived and adapted during implementation. This reconstruction exercise began by understanding how the logic and context within which each component was originally conceived. Subsequently, the evaluation team assessed how and why the project evolved over time in relation to the developing context.
5. The evaluation model blends confirmatory research (determining the extent to which specific, expected results outlined in the logframe were achieved), exploratory research (examining what happened and what is currently happening without preconceived notions), and forward-looking analysis.
6. To provide an objective, evidence-based assessment as well as actionable recommendations, the Evaluator proposed adopting an action-oriented participatory evaluation approach to evaluate selected interventions (scope and nature of engagement depended on the categories of respondents and number stakeholders that agreed to be included in the data collection process).
7. The adoption of indicators to assess the achievements of the project was informed by existing sources of information duly provided by UNDP.
8. To adequately respond to the evaluation criteria laid out in the ToR, the evaluator developed an evaluation matrix to fit her understanding of the assignment and developed a (non-exhaustive) list of questions, with a view to identify lessons, examples of good practice and recommendations (see Annex II). As such, the questions were aligned with the (OECD-DAC) criteria for use in appraisals of development interventions.
9. The main sources for the information were:
10. *Documents and literature* with a direct bearing on the issues of relevance collected in all available formats (see Annex IV), in view of providing the necessary evidence and information to:
	1. develop the evaluation tools - semi-structured interview guide (see Annex VI),
	2. identify information and data gaps as well potential methodological difficulties that could be encountered through the evaluation process,
	3. uncover sources of usable secondary data, thus lessening redundancy during the collection of primary data,
	4. support findings and analysis in the final evaluation report.

Possible gaps in documentation[[8]](#footnote-8) was identified and conveyed to UNDP’s staff.

1. *Qualitative Information collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)*. This approach was applied based on the developed matrix and was particularly helpful to understand what some of the capacity constraints are, as well as the gaps, enablers, and barriers[[9]](#footnote-9).

During the field mission in Riyadh, the Evaluator conducted 15 interviews with key staff from the UNDP and the MEP (see Annex III). The selection of respondents was purposive and done jointly by UNDP staff and the Evaluator taking into consideration: 1) the criteria set in the framework for the evaluation, such as the profiles of persons and institutions to be met/interviewed, ensuring a fair representation of the various target groups, and 2) the timely and positive responsiveness of approached respondents (internal and external), and 3) the limitations of budget, time, and data.

An introductory virtual meeting was scheduled with MEP to help decide on the key stakeholders (from their side) who shall be engaged in the data collection process.

The UNDP CO arranged the schedule of meetings/interviews within the agreed upon field mission dates.

Each interview lasted anywhere from 14 and 45 minutes depending on the depth and significance of the interview to the Evaluation and the responses of the interviewee. The output of interviews was in the form of a near-verbatim write up.

All of the respondents welcomed the participation in the evaluation, and specific sets of questions, particularly those related to the impact level.

No significant outliers or unsuitable data were found in the collected data, after it was cleaned and coded.

1. UNDP CO ensured quality control along the process. She proactively engaged in: (a) providing background documentation at the inception stage in view of aligning the exercise with internal institutional requirements, (b) reviewing, commenting and endorsing the Inception Report, (c) coordinating communication with the MEP teams, and (d) reviewing and commenting on the draft Evaluation Report.
2. The Ethical Protocol and Procedures will draw on the UN Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2008) on the UNEG Norms and Standards (2016), and UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2021).
3. The major limitation of the present Evaluation was related to the nature/limitations of qualitative methods. Based on the nature of qualitative methods, the Evaluator uncovered objective and valid facts by following clear procedures, which included careful documentation of empirical/repetitive phenomena, impartial and logical argumentation, and objective analysis. Concerning generalizability of results, the Evaluation’s results remain context-bound and the significance of the evidence limited to the lifespan of the project.
4. The construction of the final report’s analysis was based on the extracted, clustered, and integrated information.

## Data Analysis

The review of the main documents provided was conducted and guided the formulation of the primary data collection tools used during the primary research phase. Findings from KIIs were extracted and combined with findings from the provided documents – and other secondary sources of information. The triangulation of findings from the three outlined sources of data strengthens the analysis to gain deeper and more accurate insights.

For data analysis, the Evaluator used:

* **Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR)** which is an inductive method that is characterized by open-ended interview questions, small samples, a reliance on words over numbers, the importance of context, an integration of multiple viewpoints, and consensus of the research team. It is especially well-suited to research that requires rich descriptions of inner experiences, attitudes, and convictions[[10]](#footnote-10). The main limitation of this kind of design or methodology is the generalizability (difficulty of measuring effects whether causality or correlation, qualitative research is not statistically representative, in this kind of methods, risks that results are influenced by the researcher's personal biases are greater, etc…)
* **Context-sensitive Contribution Analysis** to explore and validate cause-effect assumptions and conclude about the contribution the project has made or not to both intended and unintended outcomes. Rather than focusing the contribution analysis will on quantification of contribution -which is limited by the nature of Evaluation methods-, the Evaluation was inclined to provide evidence to support reasonable conclusions about the contribution made by the project to the desired outcomes. A 5-point Likert rating scale was used to rate the project against each of the selected Evaluation criteria. An Evaluation rating was applied as follows: 1 for *needs major improvements* (The project had negative factors with severe defaults or weaknesses), 2 for *needs mild improvements* (The project had negative factors with major defaults or weaknesses)*,* 3 for *acceptable* (The project had moderate to notable defaults or weaknesses),4 for *satisfactory* (The project had positive factors with minor defaults or weaknesses), and 5 for *highly satisfactory* (The project had several significant positive factors with no defaults or weaknesses). Table 2 provides an overview of the project rating per Evaluation category. Additionally, the report highlights several lessons learned to be taken into consideration in future planning and progress reporting.

**Table 2. Project rating scale**

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| **Label (point)**  | **Characteristics**  |
| **Highly Satisfactory (5)**  | The project had several significant positive factors with no defaults or weaknesses  |
| **Satisfactory (4)**  | The project had positive factors with minor defaults or weaknesses  |
| **Acceptable (3)**  | The project had moderate to notable defaults or weaknesses  |
| **Needs mild improvement (2)**  | The project had negative factors with major defaults or weaknesses  |
| **Needs major improvement (1)**  | The project had negative factors with severe defaults or weaknesses |

## Findings

**Relevance**

***The relevance of the project is rated as ‘Acceptable’.***

* Problem analysis, prioritisation, and adaptability to emerging needs have been performed throughout the implementation period.
* Most respondents affirmed that the implemented interventions were aligned to the mandate, strategy, function, roles, and responsibilities of key actors (UNDP and MEP respectively), and well-aligned with national and global priorities (Vision 2030, SDGs). In addition, it was found that the design of the implementation strategy of the project was coherent and consistent with the Country Programme Document during the Programme Cycle 2017-2021.

**Effectiveness**

***The effectiveness of the project is rated as ‘Acceptable’.***

* Ideally, it would have been extremely useful to interview the individuals (National Project Managers) who managed the project’s interventions from the UNDP and the MEP. This step could have helped in gaining more comprehensive insights about the outcomes. However, this step was not possible since these people were not on board anymore. This is considered to have a significant impact on the consistency of the assessment of progress under the *effectiveness* criterion, which exclusively relied on the insights gathered from both secondary and primary research.
* Some of the reported achievements (mostly at the activity level) in the 2020 Annual Report:
	+ Experts assigned to support the Minister’s office, particularly in areas of report writing, review of studies and technical reports, presentation of analysis of issues and results, as well as provision of opinions, notes, and advice.
	+ Contribution to economic country reports, including partnership opportunities proposal with the KSA, for official high-level State visits or missions abroad.
	+ Contribution to the KSA participation in the WEF (Feb 2019), the Islamic Summit, Arab Summit, CGC Summit, etc.
	+ Advising the Saudi delegations in diverse events, i.e. participation in the ESCWA high-level meeting in Amman, etc.
	+ Participation in the Citizen’s Account Committee activities.
* With a marked flexibility and ability to adapt to unexpected threats or risks – especially since the onset of the COVID pandemic - the team managed to achieve the desired results during the implementation period. However, the quality of the existing documentation did not provide enough evidence to verifiably demonstrate the effectiveness of planned outputs and their plausible contribution to the expected outcome.
* The adopted actions and strategies were mostly relevant to achieving the expected results in the concerned areas during the implementation period. The elements detailed below in terms of professionalization, strengthening quality and accurateness, engaging experts, were identified:
	+ UNDP provided advice and technical assistance to bring about policy changes towards the desired goals,
	+ UNDP called upon Arab and non-Arab experts for contribution to the produced knowledge materials (although not as systematically as it could have been),
	+ During the last quarter of the 2-year implementation period, UNDP managed to reinforce and diversify partnership strategies (called upon for synergies between the UNDP, the MEP and the General Authority for Statistics),
	+ Customized capacity development activities in a context-specific and culturally sensitive way.

**Efficiency**

***The efficiency of the project is rated as ‘Needs mild improvement’.***

* The project’s annual report followed an activity-based reporting style that did not sufficiently emphasize the multidimensional results of the project.
* According to interviewed stakeholders, most interventions (except recruitment processes) were well and timely executed with no significant reported delays.
* According to most interviewees, there is a need to standardize and systematize content management processes and mechanisms, for implementing partners to significantly reap synergy benefits from well-defined reporting, documentation and monitoring and evaluation processes and mechanisms.
* Efficiency poses the question whether, given the budget, the specified outputs could have been achieved at a lower cost. The Evaluator did not have any comparative data to make a fair cost-efficiency judgment.
* Against the noted challenges, all respondents acknowledged that the project had a “large margin of flexibility and adaptability” both during planning and implementation.
* Starting the 4th quarter of the implementation period, UNDP team started building on lessons learned during the cycle and started shifting towards more strategic and system-level thinking. The dedicated staff have shown to be resilient to the rapid and drastic changes by managing to speed up the coordination pace prior to starting the implementation of the new Agreement. While this observation can be of great significance by means of change, it remains limited to the particular context of the Evaluation exercise and the limited generalizability (due to the qualitative nature of a considerable part of results), and hence, needs further investigation.
* It can be expected that as the project continues through the newly signed off Agreement, the ability of the team to expand through the adequate recruitment of a Chief Technical Advisor – who can bring to the table the comparative and competitive advantage of UNDP as compared to private management consulting firms -, and to adopt an implementation approach that is based on a solid system-level analysis will most likely translate into strategic results and policy-focused interventions.
* As work mostly included elements of soft assistance (e.g., standards development, training, policy advocacy) it makes the application of conventional efficiency indicators to these areas not feasible (i.e. procurement of assets, comparative analysis to alternatives…).
* Communication tools were insufficiently utilized during the implementation period of the project (no quarterly reports or briefs, presentations, visibility products were made available to the evaluator). As such, causality and attribution are yet to be validated and consolidated.
* The project did not have a robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) architecture in place, which has evidently hindered the systematic documentation of progress and achievements.
* Although the project lacked systematic mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues, most respondents acknowledged that along the implementation period, a lot of effort was exerted to reflect on specific issues that may be experienced by women who newly entered the labor market, and the societal forces that shape power relationships. However, considering the documentation of the project (project documents, progress reports), one would find that it does not reach the level of systematic incorporation.

**Sustainability**

***The sustainability of the project is rated as ‘Acceptable’.***

* The available data could not provide a consistent characterisation of how UNDP’s team utilized relevant strategies in pursuing its catalytic role with measurable success indicators and an operational “exit” to ensure that the MEP can sustain and expand their activities independently - or with minimum support.
* The provision of capacity building, capacity development and technical assistance to the MEP introduced an element of sustainability into the interventions implemented. Moreover, the project in many interventions depended on trainers who progressively became agents of change adding to sustainability (a senior expert on board has been actively engaged since 2006).
* Despite the progress in the achievement of a number of activities towards intended results, the contribution of UNDP cannot be quantitatively measured. The project provided a number of achievements which benefited a wide number of beneficiaries. However, the causal relationship attributing this progress to the interventions implemented is challenging and almost impossible to be proven.
* The trade-off between the maturity and extent of impact, time, and cost of the interventions remains a challenge to the project. The previous phases of the project were able to provide an ample number of demonstrations and pilots that could guide future successful interventions. Consequently, the approach through which some interventions are implemented on the ground calls for a change in the model’s mandates in future phases.

## Conclusions

* The Evaluation conclusion was defined based on the answers to evaluation questions and associated findings: the project is an *Acceptable* project that has created outputs and results with impact potential for successor projects, should they be premised on lessons learned and good practices, along with all other pillars since the early stages of project conception.
* Problem analysis, prioritisation, and adaptability to emerging needs have been performed throughout the implementation period.
* The implemented interventions were aligned with the mandate, strategy, function, roles, and responsibilities of key actors (UNDP and MEP respectively), relevant to the originally identified technical priorities and needs, and well-aligned with national and international priorities (Vision 2030, SDGs).
* The design of the implementation strategy of the project was coherent and consistent with the Country Programme Document during the Programme Cycle 2017-2021.
* In its second year, the project witnessed a notable performance in terms of project management and resource efficiency. The distribution of tasks in the CO increased the efficiency of management and contributed to the swift responsiveness of the project to contextual shifts.
* There is room for improvement in the project’s logical framework and progress indicators.
	+ The project did not have a robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) architecture in place, which has evidently hindered the systematic documentation of progress and achievements.
	+ There is variation in the degree of successfulness and progress of activities under the different components.
	+ Planning and reporting documents did not contain disaggregated data by sex and vulnerable groups. Under the new agreement, there is room to include stand-alone gender and/or human rights criteria or indicators.
* Most interventions (except recruitment processes) were well and timely executed with no significant reported delays.
* The adopted actions and strategies were mostly relevant to achieving the expected results in the concerned areas during the implementation period. With a marked flexibility and ability to adapt to unexpected threats or risks – especially since the onset of the COVID pandemic - the team managed to achieve the desired results during the implementation period.
* Ideally, it would have been extremely useful to interview the individuals (National Project Managers) who managed the project’s interventions from the UNDP and the MEP. This step could have helped in gaining more comprehensive insights about the outcomes. However, this step was not possible since these people were not on board anymore. This is considered to have a significant impact on the consistency of the assessment of progress under the *effectiveness* criterion, which exclusively relied on the insights gathered from both secondary and primary research.
* As work mostly included elements of soft assistance (e.g., standards development, training, policy advocacy) it makes the application of conventional efficiency indicators to these areas not feasible (i.e. procurement of assets, comparative analysis to alternatives…).

## Recommendations

**a) Recommendations for UNDP**

**Recommendation 1:** Continue supporting the project in resource mobilization and design for the coming phase to reach sustainability of existing successful initiatives considering UNDP’s core role serving scalability and higher impact.

**Recommendation 2:** Maintain, develop, and further systemize standards and procedures (meetings, assessments/situational analysis/contingency plans, etc.) to ensure readiness to quickly identify and address unexpected/emerging issues with a solid documentation and clear formulation of the framework and corresponding tools.

**Recommendation 3:** Activate the project board/ steering committee and recruit a Chief Technical Advisor who can bring to the table the comparative and competitive advantage of UNDP (as part of the UN system) - as compared to private management consulting firms-, and to adopt an implementation approach that is based on a solid system-level analysis which will most likely translate into strategic results and policy-focused interventions.

**Recommendation 4:** Develop rigorous transparent communication processes and mechanisms with the national partner where all credible concerns related to the project’s implementation are investigated and addressed appropriately. In addition, develop an onboarding package for the new staff which includes the organizational mandatory trainings that are related to the rules and regulations and job responsibilities and ensure that the staff always conduct themselves in a professional and disciplined manner.

**Recommendation 5:** Focus future efforts towards improving the business maturity of existing successful initiatives rather than initiating new ones using a phased approach with clear outcome level indicators and exit strategies, unless otherwise is identified based on the continuous assessment of needs or as deemed necessary. Under the new agreement, there is an imminent need for improving business stability, active incentives, and strategies to engage beneficiaries.

**Recommendation 6.** Develop a measurement standard to systematically track the type, quality, and effectiveness of its contribution to gender results that also captures the context of change and the degree of its contribution to that change.

**Recommendation 7.** Establish a M&E system based on a shared understanding of goals and intended results, the architecture of the new agreement and the approved multi-year work plan, in addition to its corresponding quantitative and qualitative reporting tools, in view of monitoring and measuring achievements and progress of the project.

**Recommendation 8:** Support the modernization of knowledge and the transformation of conventional capacity development tools to uphold introduced changes (Prioritization of pilot initiatives through current/available proposals suggested by the MEP to embed knowledge at the institutional level. For example, creation of knowledge hub/repository, community of national economists, pool of experts for potential assignment, gradual production of research outputs).

**b) Recommendations for the MEP**

**Recommendation 1:** Continue enhancing and improving the business/investment environment.

**Recommendation 2:** Assign a thematic division within the MEP as a focal point (keep recruitment and performance appraisal issues within the Directorate of the Human Resources Development Department).

**Recommendation 3:** Support the development of liaison and coordination mechanisms and processes between the MEP and the UNDP, with clear and demarcated lines of reporting and decision-making capabilities across and between established structures, to jointly: 1) Regularly align expectations, 2) Analyze needs/emerging needs, 3) Strategize, prioritize, and plan integration into the broader MEP strategy, 4) Explore partnerships and synergies options, 5) Coordinate mobilization and allocation of resources, 6) Manage, monitor, and evaluate interventions, delivered capacity building interventions, and generated knowledge products, and 7) Agree on information sharing at both the institutional (internal) and large audience (external) levels.

**Lessons Learned Throughout the Evaluation**

* In the extremely specific realities of the KSA, the results-oriented approach and continuously monitoring of internal and external supporting and constraining factors affecting operations are key factors to ensure the conception and implementation of relevant interventions.

The importance of strategic partnerships between international organizations and national partners on advancing knowledge and integrating evidence at the policy-making level is critical and essential.

## Lessons Learned

The Evaluator identified the following specific lessons learned:

* In the extremely specific realities of the KSA, the results-oriented approach and continuously monitoring of internal and external supporting and constraining factors affecting operations are key factors to ensure the conception and implementation of relevant interventions.
* The importance of strategic partnerships between international organizations and national partners on advancing knowledge and integrating evidence at the policy-making level is critical and essential.

## Annexes

### ANNEX I Terms of Reference of the Evaluation

1. **Background and context**

The Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development Project, launched in May 2019, is designed to support mainstreaming social and economic development in the national policies in Saudi Arabia. The ultimate programme objective is to strengthen evidence-based policy planning and decision-making to support the realization of Saudi Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The review of the first year of the project implementation identified a need for additional programme efforts to enable the project achieves its objectives. As a result, UNDP and MOEP have agreed to revise the Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development Project to increase policy engagement, reinforce capacity development and strengthen monitoring and evaluation. The revised project will enable more coherent and structured support to policy-making, policy planning and assessment. The amendment takes into account the needs for technical support of the various deputyships in MOEP as well as the support needed to strengthen national and sub-national partners’ engagement in socio-economic policy-making. The amended programme framework will cover the following main areas:

• Strengthening MOEP capacity for policy-making, policy analysis and evaluation

• SDGs monitoring and reporting

• Support to regional development planning

• Support the social and economic development

• Assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 on the Saudi economy

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| **PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION** |
| **Project/outcome title** | Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development |
| **Atlas ID** | SAU10- 00113712 |
| **Corporate outcome and output** | **Outcome 1: Improved knowledge-based equitable and sustainable development underpinned by innovation and improved infrastructure.** |
| **Country** | Saudi Arabia |
| **Region** | RBAS |
| **Date project document signed** | 9 May, 2019 |
| **Project dates** | **Start** | **Planned end** |
| 1 May, 2019 |  31 December 2021 |
| **Project budget** | **$ 12,000,000** |
| **Project expenditure at the time of evaluation** | 3,773,458 |
| **Funding source** | **Government** |
| **Implementing party[[11]](#footnote-11)** | **Ministry of Economy and Planning** |

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

This is a mandatory final evaluation planned at the end of the life cycle of the project. The project has been ongoing since May 2019 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 and to provide recommendations for the way forward, it is imperative to conduct a final evaluation and ensure the project has delivered. This evaluation will benefit the Ministry of Economy and Planning in their planning for future years to meet Saudi Vision 2030 and highlight the impacts this project has had on the economy sector over the past few years.

This evaluation will measure the performance in the past two years of the project in terms of delivering on:

1. Strengthening MOEP capacity for policy-making, policy analysis and evaluation
2. SDGs monitoring and reporting
3. Support to regional development planning
4. Support the social and economic development
5. Assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 on the Saudi economy

The evaluation will also address the primary issues of concern to the national partners, namely MEOP and provide recommendations as to the best course of action that needs to be taken to ensure the achievements of intended results.

This evaluation will also provide recommendations as to how the project will, in the future, mainstream gender in development efforts, and, wherever possible, also consider disability issues and the rights-based approach

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

Evaluation questions define the information that the evaluation will generate. To assess the impact of this project in the grand scheme of Outcomes, the following are guiding and crucial, but in no way exclusive, questions the evaluation must answer to provide the information needed in order to make decisions, take actions or increase knowledge.

Questions are grouped according to the four or five OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: (a) relevance; (b) coherence; (c) effectiveness; (d) efficiency; and (e) sustainability.

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| **Relevance/ Coherence** * To what extent is the project in line with national development priorities, country programme 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?
* To what extent were lessons learned from previous and other relevant projects considered in the design?
* To what extent were perspectives of men and women who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, considered during project design processes?
* 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, 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, considering men, women, and vulnerable groups?
* What factors have contributed to achieving, or not, intended country programme outputs and outcomes?
* To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?
* 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 objectives?
* Are the project objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? Do they clearly address women, men and vulnerable groups?
* To what extent have different stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
* To what extent are project management and implementation participatory, and is this participation of men, women and vulnerable groups contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?
* To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents (men, women, other groups) and changing partner priorities?
* To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

**Efficiency*** To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
* To what extent were resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?
* 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, male and female staff, 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?

**Sustainability*** Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men and vulnerable groups?
* To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
* To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
* Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
* Do the 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 did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
* To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
* To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project’s long-term objectives?
* To what extent are lessons learned 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 which include a gender dimension?
* What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support female and male project beneficiaries as well as marginalized groups?
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| **Evaluation questions on cross-cutting issues** **Human rights*** To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

**Gender equality**All evaluation criteria and evaluation questions applied need to be checked to see if there are any further gender dimensions attached to them, in addition to the stated gender equality questions.* 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 assigned to this project representative of reality?
* To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?

**Disability*** Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation?
* What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?
* What barriers did persons with disabilities face?
* Was a twin-track approach adopted? [[12]](#footnote-12)
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1. **Methodology**

This TOR **suggests** an overall approach and method for conducting the evaluation, as well as data sources and tools that will likely yield the most reliable and valid answers to the evaluation questions within the limits of resources. However, final decisions about the specific design and methods for the evaluation should emerge from consultations with the programme unit, the evaluator and key stakeholders about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives and answer the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. This will have to be reflected in the inception report prior to starting the evaluation mission.

Evaluation should employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach that ensures close engagement with the evaluation managers, implementing partners and male and female direct beneficiaries. Suggested methodological tools and approaches may include:

* **Document review.** This would include a review of all relevant documentation, 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.
* **Interviews and meetings** with key stakeholders (men and women) such as key government counterparts, donor community members, representatives of key civil society organizations, United Nations country team (UNCT) members and implementing partners:
	+ **Semi-structured interviews,** based on questionsdesigned for different stakeholdersbased on evaluation questions around relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.
	+ Key informant and **focus group discussions** with men and women, beneficiaries and stakeholders.
	+ All interviews with men and women should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals.
* **Surveys and questionnaires** including male and female participants in development programmes, UNCT members and/or surveys and questionnaires to other stakeholders at strategic and programmatic levels.
* **Field visits** and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions.
* **Other methods** such as outcome mapping, observational visits, group discussions, etc.
* **Data review and analysis** of monitoring and other data sources and methods. To ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use, the evaluation team 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 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 fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, key stakeholders and the evaluators.

1. **Evaluation products (deliverables)**

The TOR should clearly outline the outputs UNDP expects from the evaluation team, with a detailed timeline and schedule for completion of the evaluation products. Where relevant, the TOR should also detail the length of specific products (number of pages). These products include:

* **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 debriefings.** Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.
* **Draft evaluation report (within an agreed length).** A length of 40 to 60 pages including executive summary is suggested.
* **Evaluation report audit trail.** The programme unit and key stakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the evaluator within an agreed period of time, as outlined in these guidelines. Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments.
* **Final evaluation report.**
* **Presentations to stakeholders and/ or evaluation reference group** (if required).
* **Evaluation brief and other knowledge products** or participation in knowledge-sharing events, if relevant to maximise use.
1. **Evaluation team composition and required competencies**

This section details the specific skills, competencies and characteristics required of the evaluator / individual evaluators in the evaluation team, and the expected structure and composition of the evaluation team, including roles and responsibilities of team members. This may include:

* **Required qualifications:** Advanced degree in relevant field, length of experience in conducting/ managing evaluations, relevant knowledge, and specific country/regional experience.
* **Technical competencies:** team leadership skills and experience, technical knowledge in UNDP thematic areas, with specifics depending on the focus of the evaluation, data analysis and report writing etc.
* **Technical knowledge and experience:** Gender expertise/competencies in the evaluation a strong plus. some knowledge and/or experience of disability inclusion. Technical knowledge and experience in other cross-cutting areas such equality, disability issues, rights-based approach, and capacity development.
* **Language skills required:** Fluent English speaking, writing, and reading skills, Arabic is an asset

The provision of evidence will be expected to support claims of knowledge, skills and experience to the above in terms of:

* resumes,
* work samples,
* references

The Evaluator is to clearly state independence from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing, or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation.[[13]](#footnote-13)

1. **Evaluation ethics**

Explicit statement that evaluations in UNDP will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’.[[14]](#footnote-14)

“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.”

1. **Implementation arrangements**

In order to clarify expectations, eliminate ambiguities, and facilitate an efficient and effective evaluation process, the following is the organization and management structure for the evaluation as well as the definition of the roles, key responsibilities and lines of authority of all parties involved in the evaluation process.

1. The evaluation commissioner: Accountable for the quality and approval of final terms of reference (TORs), final evaluation reports and management responses before final submission to the ERC. This is traditionally the head of office, in the case the Resident Representative of UNDP KSA Country Office.
2. The evaluation manager: Lead the evaluation process and participate in all of its stages - evaluability assessment, preparation, implementation, management and use. In this case it is the M&E Officer
3. The programme manager: Support the establishment of the evaluation reference group with key project partners where needed and participate in calls/meetings on request. Provide inputs/ advice to the evaluation manager on the detail and scope of the TOR for the evaluation and how the findings will be used. Provide the evaluation manager with all required data (e.g. relevant monitoring data) and documentation (reports, minutes, reviews, studies, etc.), contacts/ stakeholder list etc.
4. The evaluation partner: Participate in the review of key evaluation deliverables, including the TOR, inception report, and successive versions of the draft evaluation report. Ensure that data and documentation in general, but in particular relating to gender equality and women’s empowerment and other cross-cutting issues, are made available to the evaluation manager
5. The independent evaluator: Fulfil the contractual arrangements under the TOR. Develop the evaluation inception report, including an evaluation matrix and a gender responsive methodology, in line with the TOR, UNEG norms and standards and ethical guidelines. Conduct data collection and field visits according to the TOR and inception report. Produce draft reports adhering to UNDP evaluation templates, and brief the evaluation manager, programme/ project managers and stakeholders on the progress and key findings and recommendations. Consider gender equality and women’s empowerment and other cross-cutting issues, check if all and respective evaluation questions are answered, and relevant data, disaggregated by sex, is presented, analysed and interpreted. Finalize the evaluation report, incorporating comments and questions from the feedback/audit trail. Record own feedback in the audit trail
6. **Evaluation products (deliverables)**

The consultant will be expected to deliver the following:

1. 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.
2. Evaluation findings debriefings. Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Final evaluation report:
	1. Executive summary;
	2. Introduction, including description of the work conducted;
	3. Findings and conclusions;
	4. Recommendations, including, as applicable, a revised work plan to address the pending tasks and eventual corrective action as well as an improved system for measuring the impact of the project in terms of achieved energy savings;
	5. 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.
6. Validation workshop for presentations to stakeholders
7. Evaluation brief and other knowledge products or participation in knowledge-sharing events, if relevant.
8. The consultant should present three hard copies of the report as well as an electronic copy. The draft final report should be submitted no 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.

1. **Time frame for the evaluation process**

**Working day allocation and schedule**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ACTIVITY** | **ESTIMATED # OF 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 contract signing | UNDP or remote  | Evaluation manager and commissioner |
| Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team | - | At the time of contract signing  | Via email | Evaluation manager and commissioner |
| Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed | 7 days | Within two weeks of contract signing  | Home- based | Evaluation Team |
| Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum) | - | Within two weeks of contract signing |  | Evaluation team |
| Comments and approval of inception report | - | Within one week of submission of the inception report | UNDP | Evaluation manager |
| **Phase Two: Data-collection mission** |
| Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews, and focus groups | 10 days | Within four weeks of contract signing | In countryWith field visits | UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff, local authorities, NGOs, etc. |
| Debriefing to UNDP and key stakeholders | 1 day |  | In country | Evaluation team |
| **Phase Three: Evaluation report writing** |
| Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (4-5 pages) | 7 days | Within three weeks of the completion of the field mission | Home- based | Evaluation team |
| Draft report submission | - |  |  | Evaluation team |
| Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report  | - | Within two weeks of submission of the draft evaluation report | UNDP | Evaluation manager and evaluation reference group |
| Debriefing with UNDP | 1 day | Within one week of receipt of comments | Remotely UNDP | UNDP, evaluation reference group, stakeholder, and evaluation team |
| Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office | 4 days | Within one week of final debriefing | Home- based | Evaluation team |
| Submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP country office (50 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes) | - | Within one week of final debriefing | Home- based | Evaluation team |
| **Estimated total days for the evaluation** | **30**  |  |  |  |

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 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 a 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 and analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated. Table 5 provides a sample evaluation matrix template.

Table 5. Sample evaluation matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Relevant evaluation criteria** | **Key questions** | **Specific sub-questions** | **Data sources** | **Data collection methods/ tools** | **Indicators/ success standards** | **Methods for data analysis** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

* **Schedule of tasks, milestones, and deliverables.** Based on the time frame specified in the TOR, the evaluators present the detailed schedule.
* **Required format for the evaluation report.** The final report must include, but not necessarily be limited to, the elements outlined in the template for evaluation reports (see annex 4 below).
* **Dispute and wrongdoing resolution process and contact details** (annex A)
* **Pledge of ethical conduct in evaluation.** UNDP programme units should request each member of the evaluation team to read carefully, understand and sign the ‘Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation of the United Nations system’.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**Annex A**

UNDP Evaluation dispute resolution process

**Dispute settlement**

Should you or a member of the evaluation team feel unduly pressured to change the findings or

conclusions of an evaluation you have been contracted to undertake you are freely able to raise your

concerns with the management within UNDP.

Please send your concerns to the Deputy Director of the Region who will ensure a timely response.

Please also include the Independent Evaluation Office, in your correspondence

(evaluation.office@undp.org).

**Reporting wrongdoing**

UNDP takes all reports of alleged wrongdoing seriously. In accordance with the [UNDP Legal](https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPSubject.aspx?SBJID=315&Menu=BusinessUnit)

[Framework for Addressing Non-Compliance with UN Standards of Conduct](https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPSubject.aspx?SBJID=315&Menu=BusinessUnit), the Office of Audit and Investigation is the principal channel to receive allegations\*.

Anyone with information regarding fraud against UNDP programmes or involving UNDP staff is strongly encouraged to report this information through the Investigations Hotline (+1-844-595-5206).

People reporting wrongdoing to the Investigations Hotline have the option to leave relevant contact information or to remain anonymous. However, allegations of workplace harassment and abuse of authority cannot be reported anonymously.

When reporting to the Investigations Hotline, people are encouraged to be as specific as possible, including the basic details of who, what, where, when and how any of these incidents occurred.

Specific information will allow OAI to properly investigate the alleged wrongdoing.

The investigations hotline, managed by an independent service provider on behalf of UNDP to

protect confidentiality, can be directly accessed worldwide and free of charge in different ways:

[ONLINE REFERRAL FORM](https://secure.ethicspoint.eu/domain/media/en/gui/104807/lang.html) *(You will be redirected to an independent third-party site.)*

**PHONE - REVERSED CHARGES** [Click here for worldwide numbers](https://secure.ethicspoint.eu/domain/media/en/gui/104807/phone.html) (interpreters available 24 hours/day) Call +1-844-595-5206 in the USA

**EMAIL** directly to OAI at: reportmisconduct@undp.org

**REGULAR MAIL**

Deputy Director (Investigations)

Office of Audit and Investigations

United Nations Development Programme

One UN Plaza, DC1, 4th Floor

### ANNEX II Project Theory of Change



### ANNEX III Project Results Framework







### ANNEX IV Project Management Structure



### ANNEX V Evaluation Matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Relevant Criteria** | **Key Questions** | **Sub Criteria** | **Sub Questions** | **Sources of information** | **Stakeholders** | **Methods for Data Analysis** |
| **Relevance/Coherence** | *The extent to which the Outcome activities were suited to the priorities and policies of the country at the time of formulation* **Are we doing the right things?** | Alignment | * 1. Does the project’s structure and objectives address key issues, their underlying causes, and challenges identified in the country? Are they aligned with: national development priorities, country project outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
 | Country policies and strategies, references, UN reports, media | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews  |
| Design | * 1. Was the design of the project adequate to expected objectives, and flexible enough to adapt to potential changes?
	2. To what extent did the project adopt gender-sensitive, human rights-based and conflict-sensitive approaches?
	3. To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?
 | UN reports, project reports, portfolio analysis | UNDP staff | Desk review, interviews |
| **Effectiveness** | *The extent to which the Outcome activities attain their objectives***Are the things we are doing working?** | Credibility | 2.1. What are the main contributions to development for which the project is recognized in the country? | Project & project reports, Comparison of reports to work plans; evaluation reports | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews |
| Achievements  | * 1. How has the project achieved expected outcomes?
 | Project reports, evaluation reports | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews |
| Fallout effect | * 1. What are the unexpected outcomes or consequences they yielded? What are their implications?
 | Project reports, evaluation reports | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews |
| Challenges | * 1. Which were the main weaknesses of the project?
 | Project reports, evaluation reports | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews |
| Good practices | * 1. How effective have been practices and tools used in the project? (good practices, institutional strengthening, partnerships)
 | Project reports, evaluation reports | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews |
| **Efficiency** | *Measurement of the outputs in relation to the inputs***Are we doing things right?** | Organizational Efficiency | 3.1 Was management adequate to the planning and execution requirements? (management arrangements, work planning, finance, value for money, timing and delays, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, coordination, stakeholder engagement, reporting, communications)3.2 To what extent have UNDP practices, policies, processes and decision-making capabilities affected the progress of the project?3.3 To what extent were partnership modalities conducive to the delivery of outputs?3.4 To what extent did monitoring systems provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?3.5 To what extent did UNDP promote gender equality, the empowerment of women, human rights and human development in the delivery of outputs? | Evidence of fund disbursement being appropriate to maximize utility Evidence of decision making, adjustment and learning Evidence of a performance management system having been established and utilized for decision-makingEvidence of coordination  | UNDP staff | Desk review, interviews |
| **Sustainability** | *The benefits of the project related activities that are likely to continue after the project’s fund has been exhausted***Did the project induce direct and/or indirect) and will they last?** | Coordination | 4.1 To what extent did UNDP establish mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes?4.2 To what extent do national partners have the institutional capacities, including sustainability strategies, in place to sustain the outcome-level results?4.3 Have complementarities, collaboration and / or synergies fostered by the project contributed to greater sustainability of results? | Evidence of results from cooperation Project reports, evaluation reports | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews |
| Financial and policy sustainability | 4.4 Have any outcomes of the project been translated into budgeted state projects/ policies? | Integration of project outcomes into national planning, budgeting and monitoring systems Financial flows within institutions to maintain outcomesProject reports, national reports | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews |
| Knowledge sustainability | 4.5 Are knowledge materials produced in the project being still used or disseminated? | Embedding of knowledge material into institutional practices, evidence of use of knowledge material | UNDP staff, national partner institutions | Desk review, interviews |

### ANNEX VI Data Collection Tools

***Email Script***

*The Umbrella Programme for Socio-Economic Development Project, launched in 2019, was designed to support mainstreaming social and economic development in the national policies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The ultimate project objective was to strengthen evidence-based policy planning and decision-making to support the realization of Saudi Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

*As the project reached its end, a final evaluation of the project will be carried out by an independent expert, Dr. Cosette Maiky, between Nov 29th and December 10th in Riyadh. In this evaluation, we are seeking to generate empirically grounded evidence on 1) MEP’s capacity for policymaking, policy analysis and evaluation, 2) SDGs monitoring and reporting, 3) regional development planning, 4)    social and economic development, and 5) the impacts of the COVID-19 on the Saudi economy. The evaluation will also provide recommendations based on validated lessons that can make a difference and bring sustainable improvement in similar successor projects in the future.*

*Your opinions will be an invaluable contribution to the evaluation. If your schedule permits, we would be thankful for no longer than 20-30 minutes of your time to hear your thoughts on these issues (the interview can take place either in Arabic or English).*

*Note that all the information you provide us will be strictly confidential and will not be shared with any third party.*

*If you have any inquiry, do not hesitate to contact us.*

***Topic Guide***

**Disclaimer:** The sample questions presented in the guide below were for the sake of guiding the moderator and shall not be posed in the literal phrasing displayed. The questions were elaborated, broken down, adapted to the interviewee and scope context through probing questions.

*Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this study. I will start with some broad questions around your background as well as the nature of your engagement in the implementation of the project, before moving to specific questions related to the selected evaluation criteria, that will include some questions around barriers and enablers for the implementation of the newly signed off agreement between the UNDP and the MEP. The interview will take no longer than 60 minutes. Before we begin, do you have any question?*

1. Quick introduction about the interviewee (Position/programme/responsibilities
- Activities implemented and supervised)
2. Does the project’s structure and objectives address key issues, their underlying causes, and challenges identified in the country? Are they aligned with: national development priorities, country project outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and the SDGs?
3. Was the design of the project adequate to expected objectives, and flexible enough to adapt to potential changes?
4. To what extent did the project adopt gender-sensitive, human rights-based and conflict-sensitive approaches?
5. To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?
6. What are the main contributions to development for which the project is recognized in the country?
7. How has the project achieved expected outcomes?
8. What are the unexpected outcomes or consequences they yielded? What are their implications?
9. Which were the main weaknesses of the project?
10. How effective have been practices and tools used in the project? (good practices, institutional strengthening, partnerships)
11. Was management adequate to the planning and execution requirements? (management arrangements, work planning, finance, value for money, timing and delays, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, coordination, stakeholder engagement, reporting, communications)
12. To what extent have UNDP practices, policies, processes and decision-making capabilities affected the progress of the project?
13. To what extent were partnership modalities conducive to the delivery of outputs?
14. To what extent did monitoring systems provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?
15. To what extent did UNDP promote gender equality, the empowerment of women, human rights and human development in the delivery of outputs?
16. To what extent did UNDP establish mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes?
17. To what extent do national partners have the institutional capacities, including sustainability strategies, in place to sustain the outcome-level results?
18. Have complementarities, collaboration and / or synergies fostered by the project contributed to greater sustainability of results?
19. Have any outcomes of the project been translated into budgeted state projects/ policies?
20. Are knowledge materials produced in the project being still used or disseminated?

### ANNEX VII List of individuals interviewed

**Ministry of Economy and Planning:**

Mr. Yasser Alkhunain, Deputy Minister for Shared Support Services and the General Offices of Human Resources

Mr. Rakan Al-Sheikh, Assistant Deputy Minister for Economic Policies & Programs

Mr. Fahed Al-Hareth, Director of the Human Resources Development Department

Mr. Fardan Al-Fardan, Director of Planning & Execution - Policies & Econ. Planning

Dr Ali Al-Chabby, Expert (Individual Contractor)

Dr. Ahmad Mryaty, Expert (Individual Contractor)

Mr. Fairouz Khan, Expert (Individual Contractor)

Mr. Abdel-Aziz Al-Matiry, Administration

Mr. Ahmad Al-Ghamidi, Administration

**United Nations Development Programme CO for KSA:**

Dr Adam Bouloukos, Resident Representative

Mrs. Kawtar Zerouali, Acting Deputy Resident Representative

Mrs. Maysam Tamim, Evaluation Manager

Mrs. Sarah Al Hajiri, Programme Analyst

Mrs. Al Anoud AlSaoud, Project Assistant

**United Nations Resident Coordinator Office:**

Mr. David Joy, Head of the RCO

### ANNEX VIII List of Supporting Documents Reviewed

UN Umbrella Program, Proposed governance in context of KSA Sustainability Roadmap (PPT)

UNDP Country Programme Document (2017-2021)

Project Signed Agreement

Project Signed Documents (2019-2021, 20021-2024)

MEP Contribution/feedback to the Project Document

MEP Project Document Revision, May-December 2021

Project Annual Progress Report 2020

Saudi Vision 2030

KSA National Transformation Program Delivery Plan

KSA Voluntary National Review, 2018

Sustainable Development Report, KSA profile, 2021

Status quo Statistical Report, KSA, 2018

Diagnostics paper on Socio-Economic impact of COVID-19 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UN in the KSA, 2020

Ministry of Economy and Planning website, <https://www.mep.gov.sa/en>

1. It is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. selection of respondents was purposive taking into consideration: (1) the number should be 12-15 persons, (2) the profiles of persons and institutions (MEP, UNDP, and others) to be met/interviewed, ensuring a fair representation of the various target groups: type of institution, gender, geographic representation, level of hierarchy, Individual Contractors, and (3) the timely and positive responsiveness of approached respondents during the data collection phase. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/548> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Quality of Life Program, Financial Sector Development Program, Housing Program, , Fiscal Balance Program, National Transformation Program, Public Investment Fund Program, Privatization Program, National Companies Promotion Program, National Industrial Development and Logistics Program, Strategic Partnerships Program, Hajj and Umrah Program, Human Capital Development Program, Saudi Character Enrichment Program [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. **Non-exhaustive** **list of evaluation questions on cross-cutting issues**

**Human rights**

	* To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women, men and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?**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 assigned to this project representative of reality?
	* To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men, or vulnerable groups?**Disability**

	* Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in project planning and implementation?
	* What proportion of the beneficiaries of a project were persons with disabilities?
	* What barriers did persons with disabilities face?
	* Was a twin-track approach adopted? [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Non-exhaustive list of project documents:

Relevant national strategy documents

Partnership arrangements (e.g., agreements of cooperation with governments or partners)

Previous Evaluations

CO Strategy and Annual Plans

Project document/revision to the Project Document

Baseline data

Assessment (s) at the design/inception phase

Annual work plans and progress reports (quarterly, annual, final, etc.)

Theory of change and results framework

Project and project quality assurance reports

Results-oriented monitoring report

Technical/financial monitoring reports

Other documents and materials related to the interventions to be evaluated [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Key enablers and barriers* will be the internal and external influencers when considering the overall effectiveness of the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Hill, C. E. (Ed.). (2012). *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena.* American Psychological Association. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The twin-track approach combines mainstream programmes and projects that are inclusive of persons with disabilities as well as programmes and projects that are *targeted* towards persons with disabilities. It is an essential element of any strategy that seeks to mainstream disability inclusion successfully. Also, see chapter 9 of the Technical Notes. Entity Accountability Framework. United Nations Disability and Inclusion Strategy: <https://www.un.org/en/disabilitystrategy/resources> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For this reason, UNDP staff members based in other country offices, regional centres and headquarters units should not be part of the evaluation team. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. UNEG, ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’, 2020. Access at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866#:~:text=The%20UNEG%20Ethical%20Guidelines%20for%20Evaluation%20were%20first%20published%20in%202008.&text=This%20document%20aims%20to%20support,day%20to%20day%20evaluation%20practice. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)