Terminal Evaluation

Of

The MDG-based PRSP II for the Gambia Project

(Final Report)

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Section One: Introduction

1.1 Background and context of the project.

The Gambia, with a population of 1,641, 504 and a total area of 11300 square kilometers, is the smallest country in the African Continental mainland. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country was about US$ 296 million in 2010 with a per capita GDP of US$ 570. Since 1997 the country has shown consistent growth, but as of yet this has not translated into significant reduction in poverty. The Gambia ranked 168th out of 187 countries assessed in the UN Human Development Index 2011 and the country continues to face diverse challenges for its future growth and poverty reduction.

As a heavily indebted poor country (HIPC), The Gambia received the equivalent of US$403 million in ODA from 2007 to 2011. Despite the seemingly high amount of Aid inflows into the country, the management of development assistance remains fragmented and loosely coordinated, particularly given the lack of an overarching aid co-ordination policy. With an inadequate and fragmented Aid co-ordination mechanism, effective intervention to reduce poverty became a major challenge.

The Government of the Gambia formulated and implemented its Second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP 11) during the period 2007-2011. PRSP 11 had five development pillars with an overall objective to enhancing growth, reducing poverty and attaining the MDGs. The Government and the United Nations Development Programme agreed on a project called “Support for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of MDG- based poverty reduction and growth strategy for The Gambia” project (2009-2011). This project was signed by the two parties in August 2009 in support of the development of the Gambia’s second poverty reduction strategy paper for 2007-2011.

The project was conceived within the framework of PRSP II and is aimed at supporting the implementation, coordination and monitoring of an MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy for the Gambia.

The goal of the project is to provide support to pro-poor reform, implementation, coordination and monitoring capacity and mobilize resources and strengthen partnerships required to achieve the MDGs/PRSPII.

The project was executed using national execution (NEX modality, and was implemented by the National Planning Commission under the Office of the President, later (July 2010) by the then Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development and by October 2010 it was under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA). The project was carried out in close collaboration with other national partners in government (at central and decentralized levels), UN system and other development partners.

The Project Document was signed between UNDP and The Gambia Government in August 2009. The project was meant to support the implementation, coordination and monitoring of an MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (with support to pro-poor policy reform, implementation, monitoring and coordination of capacity and mobilize resources and strengthen partnerships required to achieve the MDGs/PRSP. Specifically, the project was to focus on:

MDG needs assessment and re-costing;

Building capacity for pro-poor policy analysis, programming, budgeting and poverty monitoring/tracking system;

Resource mobilization and Aid coordination and management;

Comprehensive institutional capacity development for NPC; and

Support to decentralized planning and monitoring, capacity and localizing MDGs

To achieve the above objectives, the project had the following outputs/activities:

\* Up dated MDG needs assessment and costing 2009-2011`

\* MDG-needs assessment and costing for 2011 to 2015 completed;

\*PRSP II, including participatory budgetary process, and MDG/poverty monitoring, tracking system in place;

\* Resource Mobilization and Aid Coordination and Management

\*A comprehensive institutional capacity development strategy and programme for NPC developed and broad based support from the development community for the commission secured;

\*Improved regional and local government structures for planning, fiscal management & service delivery especially women and youth, and improved capacity for implementation of local government policies, legislation and local government reform strategy;

\*Project implementation unit effectively functional

The Government of the Gambia to formulated a Second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP 11) called the MDG-based poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (PRGS) for implementation during the period 2007-2011. PRGS is the medium term plan for the socio economic development of the country and it was a subject of discussion in a Donor Round Table Conference (RTC) organized by the Gambia in February 2008 in London, United Kingdom. Since the London conference in 2008, aid inflows into the country have been as expected. Current annual review of progress and the PRGS and the attainment of MDG indicate that the country is faced with a number of challenges in meeting the MDG goals which include: limited external assistance, weak institutional capacity and system for planning and implementation and to monitor and track poverty and MDG; uncoordinated interventions and passive action of local actors at decentralized levels. In recent years, the Government of the Gambia in collaboration with donors following extensive studies developed a decentralization and local government reform strategy under which the provision of basic services is to be provided by local government authorities. Adequate and qualitative provision of such services is essential if the MDGs are to have a realistic chance of being attained by 2015;

The United Nations System and the United Nations Development Programme have committed to a policy to help reduce poverty, develop and enhance National capacities in the initiation, implementation and conclusion of the developmental undertakings such as the efforts to achieve the MDGs and any other undertakings in which it is involve as a partner. This is reflected in the use of the UNDP’s National Execution (NEX) modality in an increasing number of programmes and project initiatives

 As per UNDP standard key drivers of development effectiveness, the project will make sure that the activities focus on (i) developing national capacities (ii) enhance national ownership (iii) advocating and fostering an enabling policy environment and (iv) forging partnerships for results. On the other hand the project took into account the wealth of UNDP’s global experience in the field of pro-poor policy reform to achieve MDG targets.

**1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Terminal Evalu**ation

Purpose of the Study

As noted from the terms of reference for this arrangement the overall objective of the terminal evaluation exercise is to assess the performance of the MDG based poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy for the Gambia project (2009-2011) in relation to the objectives as stated in the project document, asses the outputs and developmental outcomes of the project, as well as determine the sustainability of benefits accrued.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the terminal evaluation covers the implementation of the MDG, poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy project from August 2009-2011. The terminal evaluation (TE) is to be a comprehensive exercise covering all facets of the project: design, relevance, implementation, and overall development results achieved. An examination will be made as to what extent the capacity of the target beneficiary has been strengthened for the management of MDG related projects within the proper framework, the coordination and management of technical cooperation. The evaluation is to be a forward looking exercise as the TE will contribute to the strategy for the next Country programme activities. The TE will make a complete assessment of the project as it has come to an end, identify weaknesses/challenges and analyze project management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to make recommendation for the way forward. As such the evaluation will assess performance and non performance issues within the project, identify underlying factors.

**1.3 Methodology and Approach**

The terminal evaluation (TE) was conducted between February 24th- March 25th 2012 by an individual consultant: The Methodology and work plan of TE consisted of three principal activities: (1) initial consultation and documentary review (2) information gathering and field investigation and (3) analysis and reporting. The work schedule of the TE is presented in Annex Two: schedule of the Terminal Evaluation. A brief description of the principal activities of the TE consultant is presented below:

Initial consultation and documentary review:

The TE consultant was initially briefed by representative of the UNDP The Gambia on the status of the project and key issues which had arisen during its implementation. Key issues discussed included identifying the way forward for the project in the UNDP the Gambia‘s programming and project initiatives. Discussion was also held with former Planning Commission Officials and current Ministry of finance staff.

The TE consultant was also provided with a number of key documents regarding the project for review. A complete list of documents reviewed is presented in Annex 4: Documents Reviewed.

Following the initial briefing and document review, the TE consultant began to develop and refine the methodology and analytical framework for information gathering. To give context to the information gathered from the relevant UNDP officers, the designated government agencies, and other project stakeholders, field visits were also organized for all MDG-based Poverty Reduction Projects to conduct in-depth interviews with intended beneficiaries.

Information gathering and field Investigation:

The terminal evaluation consultant employed participatory methodology in gathering information on the MDG poverty Reduction Project implementation and the project outcomes. Interviews were conducted with a wide variety of stakeholder’s involved different levels of project implementation, as identified in Annex 3: List of persons met.

The participatory methodological tools used in interviewing the stakeholders included key informant interviews, semi structured interviews and focus group discussions, in addition to better understand participatory involvement and ownership of project results by the designated government institutions, the TE consultant conducted a number of field visits and conducted focus group discussions with a sample of MDG-based Poverty Reduction Projects and their intended beneficiaries;

Analysis and Reporting:

The TE consultant conducted a detailed analysis of the information gathered. Particular attention has been paid during the analysis to reviewing the following aspects of the MDG-based Poverty Reduction Project:-

The extent to which the project supports the resource mobilization process and enhances the coordination, reporting and effective management of all external assistance.

The projects contribution to strengthening national institutional capacity, for the national planning commission to formulate, implement, monitor, account for and audit.

Support to decentralized planning and monitoring capacities and localizing MDGs.

An assessment of the Government capacity to coordinate, manage and execute programmes using the NEX modality and an identification of the capacity gaps and underlying reasons for these gaps.

The continued relevance of the project to the problems it was intended to address and if it has created a robust framework for national execution and coordination of external aid.

The sustainability of the project outputs / outcomes

The potential value of the approaches, method and content of the project if applied to another context or project.

Lessons learnt from the project and recommendations on the way forward.

**Section Two: Analysis: Observations and Findings**

2.1 Review of Project Design

This section of the Terminal Evaluation report responds to the direction from the TOR for the TE consultant to assess the design of the project in relation to project objectives. Specifically, this section of the report addresses:

1. The relevance of the project objectives

2. The appropriateness and adequacy of the project design for improving the capacity of key government agencies and other stakeholders for managing the implementation of the project.

3. An assessment of the extent to which the objectives are achievable in the context of MDG-Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Implementation.

2.1.1 Relevance of Project Objectives

The goal of the Project is to provide support to pro-poor policy reform: implementation, co-ordination and monitoring capacity and mobilize resources and strengthen partnerships required to achieve the MDGs / PRSP. The following five immediate objectives are in the project document:

1. Improved implementation and monitoring of MDG based PRSP programmes' and poverty monitoring tracking system in place.

2. Build capacity of NPC/ MEPID /MOFEA/ partner institutions and other relevant ministries.

3. Aid and Donor co-ordination mechanisms.

4. Update MDG-Based PRSP Needs Assessment and costing for 2009-2011.

5. Support for the development of the programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE).

 6. Support national planning and budgeting process including MTEF, PERs SWAPs (the later was not implemented fully due to un preparedness of government counterpart institutions.

The identified project objectives are very relevant to the context of the Gambia as the issue of achieving MDGs and poverty reduction through capacity building and the ability to harmonize, co-ordinate, manage and monitor development assistance is a critical pre-requisite for improving the alignment of external assistance with GOTG identified priorities, promoting government ownership of the development agenda and improving the effectiveness of development assistance.

Moreover one of the objectives of the project which is institutional capacity building is aligned with the strategy of the UNDP Assistance Framework 2007-2011 of the UNDP country programme document (CPD) which promotes gradually the increasing utilization of the NEX modality assistant with local capacity.

In discussions with the stakeholders, agencies of the government, it was expressed to the TE consultant that the project objectives were highly relevant.

2.1.2 Appropriateness and Adequacy of Project Design

The MDGs-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Project builds on several earlier UNDP-GOTG initiatives to address poverty including:

- The Economic Management Capacity Building I

- Economic Management Capacity Building II

- Capacity Building for National Execution (NEX)

- National Technical Cooperation Assessment and Programmes

-PRSP1 &11

The Project Strategy is geared towards effectiveness between National Institutions with UNDP for broad based growth leading to reduction of poverty and attainment of MDG with growth. This makes the design appropriate. However, trying to accomplish so many activities at one go without adequate resources and capacity prove too inappropriate. Consultations with CSOs and the NGOs on the required structural reforms at the design stage prove to be quite effective. This is further buttressed by the inclusion of Non Governmental Organization in the Project Steering Committee such as Pro-PAG which proves to be desirable.

The Project Strategy includes the following:

- Focusing on activities on developing national capacities

- Linking the design of the project to PRSPII

- Holding consultation at all levels under the PAGE and launching Management

Information System for the LGAs from design to implementation.

- Popularization of PRSPII by Pro-PAG and localization of MDG, funded by the project

- Production of annual progress report by NPC teaming up with Pro-PAG.

- Enhancing National Ownership

- Advocating and fostering an enabling policy environment

- Forging partnerships and linkages and

- Advocacy and communication especially with government agencies, such as GBOS and MLGL, the private sector and civil society and community organizations.

- Supporting decentralized planning and budgeting

On the other hand, the project took into account, the wealth of UNDPs Global experience in pro-poor policy reform to achieve MDG-based PRSP targets.

Project Focus:

The project has four primary themes (1) supporting the GOTG to meet the MDG targets (2) Reduce Poverty (3) supporting the GOTG in establishing an agency that would ensure the responsibility of overall aid co-coordination, development planning and (4) Developing Capacity institutionally for the execution of the project.

Project outputs are diverse. However generally the expected output is that the National planning Commission (NPC) now Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MFEA) is to be strengthened to discharge its core functions, and in addition mobilize resource for the MDG needs and to put in place an effective co-ordination and monitoring systems.

Project Management Arrangements

The project is nationally executed (NEX) and the National Planning Commission (NPC) is the implementing partner (IP) for the project. It is implemented through the NPC and is under the responsibility of the chairman of NPC and in his absence, the Director General. In this regard, the Chairman of the NPC serves as the Project Director and the Accounting Officer of the Project and in his absence, the Director General. He is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the project, accounting for the use of resources and the achievement of overall project objectives. Such responsibilities moved to the ministry of finance with National Planning functions in October 2010. The project is executed using the National execution modality (NEX) using HACT mechanism. In order to ensure alignment of project activities with MDG based planning strategies, the project established a Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC is the overarching body which oversees overall project implementation and is co chaired by the UNDP Resident Representative and chairman of NPC. Membership of the steering committee consist of representatives from government, development partners, civil society, the private sector and other partners with a stake in the objectives of the project. The PSC meets at least quarterly and review and approve the specific activities that are supported by the project based on the project objectives, annual work plan and availability of funding. The project strictly adheres to UNDP applicable regulations, rules, policies and procedures. Below is the schematic diagram of the project structure

The project unit is established to ensure the smooth implementation and day to day management of the project,

Project Management Structure

Project Assurance

 Project Steering Committee

UNDP

UNDP Support

UNDP Programme

Specialist Poverty Reduction

Project Director

Chairperson

National Planning

Commission

Project Support

PMU Poverty

MDG ENV

Poverty

NPC Project

Co-coordinator

Implementing Partner Responsible Parties

 National Planning Commission GBOs, MOF,

and the project has a dedicated NPC staff as the project co-coordinator as well as a capacity development advisor and or poverty monitoring specialist. The Capacity Development advisor provides technical advisory services to the NPC in particular the Chairman.

For management of project funds, a financial management system, which is in line with HACT, is adopted. Once the capacity of NPC is assured, quarterly advance funds modality is employed based on the standard Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditure (FACE); UNDP Gambia country office provides support services for the project as laid out in the standard agreement between UNDP and Government of the Gambia.

NPC was established by an Act of Parliament in December 2006 and its raison d’être is to co-ordinate the implementation of poverty Reduction Strategy including the PRSP and governments planning activities. However NPC and later the Planning Directorate of MOFEA were inadequately staffed to carry out effectively its existing mandate, let alone the project management responsibilities of the project.

Risk Mitigation

The project document identifies the risk to project implementation as" high attrition rate in the government, jeopardizing the capacity building effort of the project”. This is a very valid risk and is noted as one of the factors seriously undermining performance of other initiatives, such as National Technical Cooperation Assessment and programees. To mitigate this risk senior personnel have been identified to support project implementation especially the PMU staff that performs backstopping roles for the IPs.

Role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC)

The TOR developed for the PSC provides instruction for it to act as the overarching body which oversees overall project implementation and should meet at least quarterly and review and approve the specific activities that are supported by the project based on the project objectives, annual work plan and availability of funding.

2.1.3 Expected End of project status.

The project document outlines four scenarios being established and effective by the end of the MDG Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Project.

1. The main outcome is the establishment of Poverty Reduction and social protection strategies and systems that enable the poor, vulnerable women and youth to increase their productive capacities and generate sustainable livelihoods while protecting the environment.

2. Resource mobilization and aid co-ordination and management.

3. Comprehensive institutional capacity development for NPC and

4. Support to decentralized planning and monitoring capacity and localizing MDGs.

2.14 Institutional framework in place.

The National Planning Commission and later the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs were de-factor the main implementing agency for the project. In the context of the project, the project management unit is responsible on behalf of the NPC/MOFEA for execution of the project. However, according to the second quarter progress report the role of the PMU was not clearly defined in the TOR. There is therefore a need for reorientation on both sides - i.e. UNDP and IPs in future undertaking. The TOR for the PMU should be clarified and its responsibilities should be clearly spelt out. An operational guide lines should be prepared for it by UNDP

Beneficiary / Supporting Institutions

GBOs, MOF, MOLG, PMU, NPC, Civil Society, private Sector, Development Partners, MDI, and National Assembly are identified as beneficiary and supporting Institutions. MDI benefited through provision of electronic equipment and stationeries. MDI could have supported the project by providing training in core areas of project management. No training course has been provided by MDI and:

-The focus of MDI training has shifted from public sector management training to training of the private sector. The training of senior local Government official is still to materialize particularly in planning, budgeting and statistic areas targeted by the project.

- The National Planning Commission was also a beneficiary and supporting institution. The MDG-Poverty Reduction Growth Strategy Project aimed to strengthen NPC capacity through the training of its staff, supply of such as stationary, equipment: computers, laptops and photocopiers and a project vehicle. NPC also received sponsorship for short term training for several staff. Challenges identified by the NPC included (a) high level of turn over in its staff-many officials who benefited from sponsors by the project have migrated to the private sector. (b) Capacity development support has been adhoc and there has been no overall plan on how to fully equip the NPC.

The project did a lot to institutionalized NPC by building its capacity of NPC as the national apex planning authority however, NPC was later disband and its functions mainstreamed in MEPID and later to MOFEA.

2.2 Review of Institutional Arrangements and Project Implementation.

2.2.1 Institutional Arrangements

Executing Agency

The project supported the NPC and the PMU through increased human resources but there has been some staff turns over within the NPC and PMU. Since the inception of the NPC the unit has been headed by three different Directors who render support to provide government direction but who are currently serving different agencies. The M&E officer of the PMU who started with the project has also been replaced. The IPs and ministry has also been similarly affected. The reason for this included the temptation for people to move to jobs, re-designation, sacking, administrative and personal factors. The solution includes improved dialogue and advocacy for capacity retention, team work, motivation of staff and transparency/accountability by UNDP, the office of the Secretary General and the IPs. The high attrition rate led to the lack of institutional memory especially where there is a poor record management system and information sharing and where there is a lack of institutional capacity. To counter this, in addition to creating a conducive working environment, periodic office visits should be undertaken to ensure proper record keeping and documentation facilitation to promote use of consistent e-filling for project documentation of all IPs.

In spite of the limited manpower available, the NPC/MOFEA and PMU were involved in a range of activities and functions which may divert them from their core active activities and responsibility of the project.

 This brings the wrong perception of IPs that the project was seen as an added on task to their normal duties. The project was meant to support IPs in discharging their normal functions and not to be seen as additional task.

Beneficiary / Supporting Institutions

Community Based Organization / Non Governmental Organization

CBOs and NGOs were also to benefit from this project. At the design stage they were involved, but later when upstream issues were focused on little attention was given to them. There is very little indication of any CBOs or NGOs involvement in the project implementation. However Pro-PAG and EFA Network did most of the Grassroots consultation on the PRSP annual reviews and advocacy

Role of the Project Steering Committee (PSC)

The PSC is designed for the provision of overall guidance and gave technical advice to the project. PSC should meet quarterly but in actual fact it met only twice during the lifetime of the project.

Role of the UNDP

The MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Project was the second large scale Poverty Reduction intervention undertaken by the government of the Gambia. UNDP support to the national second PRSP was through this project. UNDP provided financial, technical and advisory service support to strengthen national capacity in Pro-poor planning, budgeting, and tracking of progress, better aid targeting and utilization.

2.2.2 Cost Effectiveness of the project components/outputs.

At this point it is difficult to assess the cost effectiveness of the projects components and outputs.

It is generally noted however, that the significant expenses for training and capacity development of personnel has had a low output level as some of those trained through the project have taken their enhanced skills elsewhere. But on a positive note the system and material support is still there. This is an overall benefit which could be related to the cost of the project.

2.2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

There is a formal mechanism for monitoring the achievement of the project outputs and objectives. Progress reporting quarterly has been established to highlight the achievements and challenges and possible solutions. Work plans and budgets were also prepared (which were contingent for release of funding advances) regularly. Consistent identification of issues highlighted in the projects annual audits were for the most part acted upon. During the first two years of the project the M & E was poor. But with the appointment of an activity co-coordinator significant improvement in this area has been registered during 2011. Annual reviews and field visits enhanced the performance of the project.

2.2.4 Financial Management and Accountability

The project has gone through numerous budget revisions. The reason for such a high number of revisions is to relate to realities on the ground as revealed by the activity co-coordinator and in the preparation of the annual work plans.

2.3 Review of project Activities and Results

This section of the terminal evaluation report provides an analysis of the project progress towards its objectives

2.3.1 Progress towards Objectives

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Constraints / ReasonsNot achieving the targets. | Achievements / Results / Output | Output Indicators /Activity Targets | Intended Objectives/ Planning Activities |
| Some base line and targets to be completed. | M & E system for PAGE developed and ready for operation | Poverty Monitoring System (PMS) made operational  | Immediate Objective One: Improved implementation and monitoring of MDG-based PRSP programmes and Poverty Monitoring Tracking system in place. |
|   | An international consultant hired and M&E result based framework with manual prepared and validated; M&E capacity assessment for all sectors conducted. | Hiring of an international consultant to set up the PMS- M & E system for PAGE developed; M & E Capacity assessed and M&E manual prepared. | Activity 1.1.1 finalize, validate and establishment of the PMS  |
|   | Economic Summit held. | Review of budget | 1.1.2 Economic Summit  |
|   | Consultant analyzed the IHS data and IHS 2010 report produced. Soft ware and computer equipment procured for GBOS and seven GBOS staff was trained on analysis and report writing. | IHS Consultant hired and data analyzed  | 1.1.3 Mobilize resources for up-coming events like census and finalize the IHS and statistics / Data |
|   | 2009 and 2010 PRER but sector PRER was not done. |   | 1.1.4 Expenditure on Poverty Reduction activities (PRER) across the key sectors (PERS) Health, Education Agriculture etc. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Computerized Financial Management information system installed in LGA. Two Staff in each LGA were trained and system is operational in all regions.  | Enhance Technical and planning capacity for MOFEA Sectoral ministries and Partners  | Immediate objectives Two: Build Capacity of MEPID / partner institutions and other relevant ministries |
|   | This activity shifted to PSRICD project | Need assessment and development of curriculum for the training developed and implemented  | Activity 2.1.1 need assessment and development of curriculum for the training |
|   | Putting in place Software and train council personnel of all LGAs. | Train local councils on financial management.  | 2.1.2 Training on planning and data management |
|   | This activity shifted to PAU project. | (HILEC) for improve policy decision | 2.1.3 Production of policy briefs of high HILEC” holder for policy informed decision (funded under PAU project)  |
|   | A separate project developed under Strengthen Planning Capacity for MOA  |   | 2.1.4 Strengthen Planning Capacity for MOA  |
|   | For the first time chapter on the Gambia on aid co-ordination in OECD report on aid co-ordination effectiveness.  | Aid and Donor co-ordination mechanisms strengthened  | Immediate objective Three: Aid and donor co-ordination mechanisms  |
| Poor Planning and lack of time for key actors.  | 2 donor coordination meeting conducted | 6 donor co-ordination meetings were organized  | 3.1.1 Organized 6 donor coordination meetings |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| This activity was supposed to have been undertaken by ADB. This activity was achieved partly. | Not achieved Preparatory meeting for Bussan meeting attended by aid co-ordination focal person. A high level government delegation attended. | Policy on aid for the Gambia developed. Attained high level aid co-ordination meeting. | 3.1.2 Develop aid policy for the Gambia (software, High-level Aid Co-ordination Meeting and Paris Declaration) |
|   | Data collection exercise conducted and country report validated and summitted to OECD | Paris Declaration survey for the Gambia conducted and forwarded to OECD | 3.1.3 Conduct Paris declaration survey for the Gambia |
|   | 5 Government and NGO staff visited Tanzania to learn best practice on aid co-ordination. Preparatory meeting for Bussan meeting attended by aid co-ordination focal person. A high level government delegation attended the Bussan meeting. | South-South cooperation to Tanzania conduced | 3.1.4 Conduct Capacity building, training and South-South cooperation |
|   | The PAGE priority action plan (PAP) was costed and PAP document produced and circulated  | Updated MDG Needs Assessment and Costing Exercise for PAGE | Immediate objective four: Update MDG Based PRSP Needs Assessment and Costing for 2009-2011. |
|   | 3 local consultants recruited for local level needs assessment and community exercise for the PAGE | International / local consultant recruited  | Activity 4.1.1 Recruitment of international / local consultant |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| More than 50 participants from different government and Non government Institutions were trained on costing of PAGE | Stakeholders trained on costing of the PAGE -social sectors (Health and Education)  | Activity 4.1.2 consolidate the MDG costing  |
| MDG based PAGE costing framework developed and validated | MDG costing framework produced and validated Production of two national reports: 2009, 2010. | Activities 4.1.3 validate the MDG costing framework and MDG tracking.  |
| Financing framework (PAP) prepared and validated. | Financing framework developed (PAP) | Activity 4.1.4 Development of Financing framework |
| 2 International UNVs recruited (one senior planning specialist and one Regional planning Specialist). Both of them participated in preparation of PAGE. | 2 International UNVs recruited  | Activity 4.1.5 (2) international UNVs  |
| Preparation of the current PAGE which is a national medium term development strategy plan (2012-2015) for the Gambia. |  5.1 PAGE completed | Immediate objective five: support for the development of the programme for Acierated Growth and Employment (PAGE)  |
| An International consultant was recruited by UNECA for preparation of draft PAGE | International consultant recruited | Activity 5.1.1Recruitment of international consultant in collaboration with ECA (funded by ECA)  |
|   | Working groups formed and operational for preparation of PAGE 13 Working Groups with more than 100 government and Non government members formed and participated in preparation of the PAGE  | Activity 5.1.2 Facilitation of operation of PAGE working group |
|  | Document prepared and validated, PAGE document prepared and validated. The PAGE was launched by His Excellency The President Of The Gambia.  | Activity 5.1.3support to the finalization of PAGE  |

Sustainability of Project Results

At present there is little indication of the sustainability of the project results particularly in relation to the original formulation of this project. However there are some more promising new developments in the restructuring of key agencies within the GOTG, notably the possible re-institutionalization of a National Planning Commission. Some of the project results have been internalize by benefiting institutions and helped greatly in improving public service delivery. Upstream issues are focused upon and the key challenge is the continuous implementation and maintenance of supported institutions.

2.4 Underlying Factors Affecting Project Performance

Staff Turnover

The Project document recognizes the risk of the high rate of attrition in the civil service. Staff turnover has been a major challenge during the project implementation. A fundamental cause of this attrition is the low salaries paid to government civil servants. No major measures have been taken to address attrition within the government agencies covered by the project, particularly the prevision of special incentives. There is need to command high priority within the Public Service Commission and team work in a transparent and accountable manner.

Poor planning.

The organization of 2 instead of 6 donor co-ordination meetings and the untimely processing of FACE and ICE during the first two years of the project affected implementation of the 1st two years. Poor planning is also reflected in the late approval of FACE/ ICE and disbursement of budget in the 1st quarter. This was compounded by the change of procedures in the access of funds and inadequate information for implementation. The original project document also took a lot on-board which could not be delivered during the project implementation period. With better planning process, some of the ambiguities activities were dropped e.g. MTEFs, SWAPs, PERs

Role of the Project Management-Unit-Not clearly defined

Like most national and donor funded projects the MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Project has a project management unit. However it is not clear whether it is directly answerable to UNDP or the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

**Section three: Lessons learned and Key Recommendations**

3.1 Lessons Learned

Mitigating Against Attrition in the Executing Agencies

Because of staff turnover and the process of FACE and ICE, the activities were moved to 2nd and 3rd quarters which resulted in too many activities in these quarters. This should be avoided in future to ensure proper distribution of project activities that will be implemented on a timely basis.

Criteria for Selecting Consultants

The good practice was the involvement of all stakeholders in the recruitment of consultants. These had resulted in the quality service delivery.

Preserving the Benefits of Capacity Building

Training efforts should be institutionally based rather than with individuals in institutions. Since Capacity needs are assessed, training should be brought to the institution rather than members of the institution going for external training. Serious consideration should be put in the possible use of locally based training target. This will enhance enrollment which should eventually address attrition related problems and ensure continuity of business provision.

Strengths of the Project

Generally the project was found to be very useful and promoted and support national capacity building on managing and implementing the PRSP11. It further helped in institutionalizing planning in the country, supported key institutions to facilitate the delivery of their mandates. It supported evidence-based planning by improving data availability in the country; it supported the LGAs with robust financial information management system to improve on financial performance and service delivery. The project did not only support the implementation and monitoring of the PRSP11 but facilitated the formulation of its successor National Development strategy-the programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE). The project had low delivery performance during the first year but improved very well in subsequent two years that followed as the delivery rates were 68% in 2009, 805 in2010 and 98% in 2011. This is as a result of better planning and the development of a clearer M/E framework.

The following present some of the deliverables of the project:

 - PAGE and M&E framework preparation:

- One of the major achievements of this project is the preparation of the highly participatory PAGE and M/E framework. The document which was prepared through horizontal and vertical consultation among all stakeholders is accepted and owned by all including His Excellency The President and Government, the private sector, the NGOs as well as development partners.

- IHS data analysis as a success of the project:

- The analysis of the 2010 IHS data and the production of the two IHS reports provide up to date data on the Gambia’s poverty, employment and other socio economic and MDG related data. This ensures that the country does not use out dated 2003 data for planning and reporting purposes. Furthermore GBOS staffs were trained in the process on data analysis and report writing which led to capacity building of such staff meaning that GBOS capacity in this area has also been developed. Finally the produced IHS reports were used in the preparation of the PAGE as up to date base line information and for setting future targets.

Weakness/Challenges of the Project

- Late approval of FACE / ICE disbursement of budget in the 1st quarter

- Change of procedure in access of funds for implementation

- Lack of clarity with respect to some project activities in the project document resulted in some difficulties in the implementation process.

- Over loaded and unclear activities embodied in the project document rendered difficulties in operationalizing them practically in the first year of the project. This coupled with capacity in use of FACE/ICE compounded the project implementation process in the inception part of the project.

-The funding gap of UNDP (as indicated in the project at the beginning) disallowed certain measures to be undertaken to strengthen capacities in planning and M/E in most sectors.

-The erratic change of project location at the National Planning Commission at first under the President office, then under MEPID and finally under MFEA makes it difficult for the gains of the project to be fully institutionalize to the optimum.

-Inadequate capacitization of GBOS because it is not linked to the creation and strengthening of the sectoral planning and M/E functions. Improved quality of corporation between GBOS and strengthened planning capacities of sectors should be addressed.

-Addressing the lack of sectoral planning functions should include emphasis on filling M/E capacity gaps. This is likely to empower other institutions to have quality data for planning purposes.

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3.2 Key Recommendations

The following are the recommendations based on the above findings:

1. To ensure proficiency and efficiency in the management, implementation of the MDG-based Poverty Reduction Growth Strategy Project; it is strongly recommended that a tailor –made training course be institutionalized at the MDI of the University of the Gambia. The course should provide training on NEX modality procedures and process as well as those of UNDP. A UN volunteer could be recruited to provide assistance in this area. The target group should be selected officials from stakeholders / beneficiaries, who have direct responsibility for management of some project activities.

2. There is the need to develop an aid management policy for the country. This is most urgent and timely especially if it entails the regular production of an aid information bulletin and providing support to the establishment of a computerized and information management system. There should also be support to the implementation of the action plan on the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness.

3. Capacity building of GBOS staff already initiated during the IHS data analysis should be continued. Similarly capacity strengthening for PAGE result based planning and budgeting including sectoral capacity building for results planning and budgeting leading MTEF should be continued.

4. The project support PAGE. Therefore it is recommended that there should be a development of a result and social mobilization strategy to support PAGE implementation. The project should help co-ordinate effectively PAGE implementation and monitoring through organizing meetings of planning units quarterly to discuss PAGE implementation as well as share best practice. Given the very positive inputs that PMU, UNDP, M&E specialists played in the preparation of the PAGE, results based M&E framework and co-ordination and management and entire IHS process, their roles in the next country programme should be continued to support PAGE implementation and monitoring as well as the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness.

5. Existing project steering committee should be more proactive and should play a more effective role. We should avoid frequent changes of members in the meetings and there should be regular meetings. All meetings should be preceded by submission of well documented progress report. Stakeholders should be represented at the highest level in the meetings of the committee.

6. The full time project manager should be supported and empowered to have full control and the responsibility for the day to day management of the project. At the level of the UNDP, an officer with appropriate expertise and capacity should be designated to supervise and monitor the progress of the project. The present agreement is woefully adhoc and loose and frequent changes of personnel in government and in UNDP has adverse effects on the efficient co-ordination and management of the MDG-based poverty reduction and growth strategy project.

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**ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference**

**CONSULTANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Job Title: Terminal Evaluation of the MDG– based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy for the Gambia Project**

**Contract Type: Individual Contract**

**Start of Consultancy: Wednesday 18th January 2012**

**Background**

The Government of the Gambia and the United Nations Development programme agreed on a project called "Support for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of MDG-based poverty reduction and growth Strategy for The Gambia project (2009-2011). This project was signed by the two parties in August 2009 in support of the development of the Gambia’s second poverty reduction strategy paper for 2007-2011.

The project was conceived within the framework of PRSP II and is aimed at supporting the implementation, coordination and monitoring of an MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy for the Gambia.

The goal of the project is to provide support to pro-poor reform, implementation, coordination and monitoring capacity and mobilize resources and strengthen partnerships required to achieve the MDGs/PRSP.

The project was executed using national execution (NEX modality, and was implemented by the national planning commission under the office of the president, currently it is under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MOFEA). The project was carried out in close collaboration with other national partners in government (at central and decentralized levels), UN system and other development partners.

**1. Brief description of the project**

The Project Document was signed between UNDP and The Gambia Government In August 2009. The project was meant to support the implementation, coordination and monitoring of an MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (with support to pro-poor policy reform, implementation, monitoring and coordination of capacity and mobilize resources and strengthen partnership required to achieve the MDGs/PRSP. Specifically, the project will focus on:

MDG needs assessment and re-costing;

Building capacity for pro-poor policy analysis, programming, budgeting and poverty monitoring/tracking system

- Resource mobilization and Aid coordination and management;

- Comprehensive institutional capacity development for NPC; and

- Support to decentralized planning and monitoring, capacity and localizing MDGs.

- To achieve the above objectives, the project had the following outputs/activities:

- Updated MDG-needs assessment and costing 2009-2011`

- MDG-needs assessment and costing for 2011 to 2015 completed;

- PRSP 11, including participatory budgetary process, and MDG/poverty monitoring, tracking system in place;

- Resource Mobilization and Aid Coordination and Management

- A comprehensive institutional capacity development strategy and programme for NPC developed and broad based support from the development community for the commission secured;

Improved regional and local government structures for planning, fiscal management & service delivery especially women and youth, and improved capacity for implementation of local government policies, legislation and local government reform strategy;

Project implementation unit effectively functional.

**2. Basic background information on the MDG-based poverty Reduction Strategy for the Gambia Project**

The government of the Gambia formulated a Second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) called the MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (PRGS) for implementation during the period 2007-2011. PRGS is the medium term plan for the socio-economic development of the country and it was a subject of discussion in a donor Round Table Conference (RTC) organized by The Gambia in February 2008 in London, United Kingdom. Since the London RTC in 2008, aid inflows into the country have been as expected. However, of recent certain donors have expressed interest to provide assistance in the form of a General Budget Support mechanism in addition to other projects being currently supported. The arrangements for the general budget support mechanism are at advance stage.

Current annual review of progress on the PRGS and the attainment of MDGs indicate that the country is faced with number of challenges in meeting the MDG goals which include; limited external assistance; weak institutional capacity and systems for planning and implementations and to monitor and track poverty and MDGs; uncoordinated interventions and passive action of local actors at decentralized levels. In recent years, the Government of the Gambia in collaboration with donors following extensive studies developed decentralized and local Government authorities. Adequate and qualitative provision of such services is essential if the MDGs are to have a realistic chance of being attained by 2015.

Not with standing these challenges, the Government of The Gambia continues to commit itself to the attainment of the PRSP objectives and the MDGs as enshrined in the MDG-based PRGS. In order to strengthen implementation, coordination and monitoring of the PRGS, the Government established a National Planning Commission (NPC) by an act of National Assembly in December 2006. Through its mandate for coordinating the implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies including the PRGS and government’s planning activities, the NPC is by design the primary Agency charged with the overall tracking and reporting on the MDG targets amongst others.

In the light of these endeavours, the Government of The Gambia made a request to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for support in the process of developing and strengthening its planning structures, and to ensure that the MDG-based PRGS adequately resourced, implemented, and well coordinated with sound monitoring and evaluation systems. The UNDP support for the establishment and setting-up of the National Planning Commission was a preparatory phase towards such broader MDG support programme. The support envisaged in this initiative represents the broader project proposal on key support areas for which UNDP has extensive experience and in-depth technical expertise and will consolidate and expand on the gains made in the earlier support for resource mobilization., MDG needs assessment, costing and sequencing, capacity building for planning entities tasked with the implementation of programmes and monitoring progresses towards the MDGs at both national and sub-national levels.

As per UNDP standard key drivers of development effectiveness, the project will make sure that the activities focus on (i) developing national capacities; (ii) enhancing national ownership; (iii) advocating and fostering an enabling policy environment and (iv) forging partnerships for results. On the other hand, the project will also take into account the wealth of UNDP’s global experience in the field of pro-poor policy reform to achieve MDG targets.

**3. Objectives of the Evaluation**

The objective of the evaluation is to assess progress of UNDP’s interventions towards achievement of the MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (PRGS) for The Gambia project in terms of its objectives and to evaluate the efficacy of the strategies employed in contributing to the achievement of the outputs as well as generate lessons and recommendations that could be applied in reorienting or enhancing the interventions towards achievement of the outcomes(s) of the previous country cooperation framework. The evaluation should also generate lessons and experiences that could provide inputs or feed into the development of the next support.

**4. Scope of the Evaluation**

The evaluation will cover all activities supported by UNDP in the project and, where appropriate, in collaboration with other development partners that have contributed to the achievement of the outputs. The evaluation is expected to generate lessons learnt, findings, conclusions and recommendations in the following areas for each project:

1. An assessment of the adequacy of the project design, including adequacy of the situational analysis and indicators for achievement of outputs/activities;

2. An assessment and analysis of outputs: whether they have been achieved in part or full as was intended, the reason for any shortfall in their achievements and whether any unexpected results or outcomes have occurred. The evaluation should appraise their relevance to the intended overall project objectives;

3. An analysis of factors within and beyond UNDP’s control that influenced performance and success of the project (including the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) in contributing to the realization of the outputs;

4. an analysis of whether UNDP’s interventions can be credibly linked to achievement of the overall objectives, including the key outputs and assistance provided, both soft and hard as well as how the support has influenced the capacity development

5. whether UNDP’s partnership strategy has been appropriate and effective including the range and quality of partnership and collaboration developed with government, civil society, donor, the private sector and whether these have contributed to improved project delivery. The degree of stakeholder and partner involvement in the various processes related to the objectives. How can synergies be built with other projects within the UNDP Country programme and those of other of other development partners (donor);

6. whether cross-cutting issues such as gender, ICT etc were adequately addressed in the interventions and have contributed to the achievement of the objectives; and if not, establish the reasons for not addressing the cross-cutting issues and suggest the appropriate remedial measures to be taken into account under the next support.

7. explore whether the activities being implemented would contribute to smooth exist strategy or/and sustainability

**5. Expected outputs of the Evaluation**

The findings are expected to feed into development process for any possible future support and provide valuable insights into the implementation of the Country Action Plan and in particular for the achievement of the output related to the outputs described above. The expected product from this terminal evaluation is an evaluation report for each project that provides findings, recommendations, and lessons learned from the following:

- Qualitative and quantitative assessment of progress made towards the achievements of the intended objectives

- Qualitative and quantitative assessment of relevant outputs;

- A rating on the relevance of the objectives and outputs

- Assessment of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as possible partnerships for resource mobilization;

- It should include but not be limited to the following;

- Lessons learned concerning best and/or less than ideal practices in producing outputs and achieving the objective;

- Strategy and recommendations for exit or continued UNDP assistance towards the achievement of the objectives; and

- A monitor able action plan for follow-up.

**6. Methodology or Evaluation Approach**

The evaluation may employ relevant and appropriate methods to conduct evaluations including review of documents, individual and group interviews/discussions with stakeholders and partners, field visits, use of questionnaires etc.

**7. Composition of the Evaluation Team**

The evaluation team shall consist of one consultant who must be knowledgeable in the management of development programmes and strategies and project management in general with understanding of The Gambia’s MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy. The evaluation will last for a period of 14 days effective 18th January 2012. The final report should be submitted latest Tuesday 31st January 2012 by 14:00 hrs.

The selected consultant will have the responsibility for the overall co-ordination of the evaluation and for the final coherence of the reports, both in terms of content and presentation. The consultant must have at least a masters’ degree in development studies, or any of the social sciences relevant to task and should have extensive experience in leading evaluations and report writing.

The areas of expertise needed by the consultant: (i) development issues (ii) knowledge of results based management and (iii) in-depth knowledge of the poverty and local development and management issues being evaluated. Additional requirements include;

- The consultant should have not less that 5 years of professional experience in poverty related development, project design, monitoring and management.

- Experience with organizational capacity building, programming and delivery mechanisms

- Qualifications in development planning, environmental/natural sciences, or related fields

- Knowledge and competencies/experience in organizational development, policy analysis,

- Experience in technical cooperation programmes and projects would be an added advantage

- Knowledge of UNDP procedures and programme implementation strategies will be additional advantage

**8. Implementation Arrangements**

The evaluation process will be overseen by the project coordinator, Manager GAMJOBS and the programme Specialist-UNDP. The support of the project Steering Committee is also envisaged during the execution of the evaluation assignment.

**9. Evaluation Timeframe**

The evaluation team shall work under the supervision of the Project Coordinator, Manager, MDGs project and the Programme Specialist-UNDP project coordinator-according to the following timeframe: The evaluation will be undertaken over a period of two weeks commencing on 18th January 2012 in accordance with the following time frame

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Main Activity | Time Frame |   |
| - Desk Review and consultations with MOFEA/PMU/UNDP and stakeholders - Submission of a short inception report to the MOFEA and UNDP  | 5 days | 1. |
| - Field Visits- Preparation of Reports- Presentation of draft reports, validation and production of two final evaluation reports. | 9 days | 2. |

**Submission of Applications**

Interested candidates should send a one-page cover letter explaining their and suitability for this position, as well as an updated CV to the UNDP Country Office:

**The Resident Representative**

**UNDP Office**

**5 Kofi Annan Street**

**Cape Point, P.O.Box 553, The Gambia**

Or through email: registry.gm@undp.org, indicating “Consultancy for the Terminal Evaluation of MDG-based Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy for The Gambia Project” in the subject field.

Closing date for applications is **Monday 16th January 2012 by 14:00 hrs**. Any applications received after this date will not be given consideration. Only short-listed candidates whose applications correspond to the above criteria will be contacted for an interview.

Annex Two: Schedule of the Terminal Evaluation Consultant.

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| --- | --- |
| ACTIVITY | DAY |
| Initial Consultation meeting with UNDPInitial briefing from the project management unit, MFEA Preparation of meeting arrangements with stakeholders Document review Document reviewMeeting with project managerMeeting with Assistant Financial Analysis Meeting with Director of Planning MFEAMeeting with Principal Economist and Aid Coordination Meeting with Activity Co-coordinator, NPC Meeting with the Programme Specialist UNDP Document ReviewPreparation of Stakeholders briefing Meeting with Director GBOS Meeting with Director Pro-PAG Meeting with CEO Brikama Area Council Meeting with CEO KMCMeeting with the Principal Decentralization Officer MLGLMeeting with the Head of Policy and Campaign AATG  Document Review Preparation of Draft Report  Validation Workshop Comments  Submission of Final Report   | Feb 25th Feb 26th Feb 27th Feb 28th, 29th, Mar 1st, 2nd,& 3rdMar 4thMar 5th Mar 6th Mar 7th Mar 8thMar 9th Mar 10th, 11th, 12thMar 13thMar 14th Mar 15th Mar 16th Mar 17th Mar 18thMar 19thMar 20th & 21stMar 22nd Mar Mar Mar  |

Annex Three: Persons Met During the Assignment

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Position | Person | Organization  |
| Programme Specialist Programme Associate Project ManagerFinancial and Administrative Assistant PMU Director of Planning Activity Co-coordinator/Director M&EPrincipal Economist Aid Coordination Directorate  Statistician GeneralStatisticianDirectorChief Executive Officer Acting Finance DirectorChief Executive Officer Finance Director Finance Manager Principal Decentralization Officer and Resource Mobilization Head of Policy and Campaign  | Mr. Abdou TourayMrs. Adama NjieMr. Abdoulie .M. NjieMr. Abass Kinteh  Mr. Fadara Mrs. Juldeh CeesayMr. Lamin Bojang   Mr. Alieu Ndow Mrs. T.Deen Mr. JobeMr. M. Jallow Mr. Jeng Mr. Tapha NjieMr. Ebrima FofanaMr. Moro Keita  Mr. Darboe   Mr. L. Nyangado  | UNDP, The Gambia     Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs   Gambia Bureau of Statistic Pro-PAGBrikama Area Council Kanifing Municipal Council     Ministry for Local Government and Lands Action Aid The Gambia  |

Annex Four: List of Document Review

- Annual Project Report (2010) Jan-December 2010 Submitted by Mod ALC Secka Permanent Secretary Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development.

- MDG Status Report, 2010, The Gambia Final Report Ministry of Economic Planning and Industrial Development September 2010.

- Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs Support to the MDGs. Based PRSP II work plan for 2011.

- Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs Support to the MDGs Based PRSPII work plan for 2011

- National Planning Commission Annual Report 2009 for the UNDP Support to the MDG Based PRSP Project.

- (ODA AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE GAMBIA IN 2007 - 2011) National Aid Bulletin of the Gambia.

(PRSP) in aid Dissemination of the 2008 Annual Progress Report from 15th—20th November 2009.

- PRO-PAG Partners:”National Report on the Popularization of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and Dissemination of the 2008 Annual Progress Report from 15th to 20th November 2009.

- The Republic of the Gambia: Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) 2012-2015.

- UNDP The Gambia, Budget Format: Capacity Building for National Execution Project: (98/001/03 NEX) “2006

- UNDP The Gambia, Project Document: Capacity Building for National Execution Project (GAM/98/001/03 NEX)". 1999.

- United Nations Development Programme…………..of the Gambia “December 2000.

- United Nation System in the Gambia “Desk Review of the Public Financial Management Environment of the Government of the Gambia”.

- United Nations System in the Gambia.”Harmonized Cash Transfer (HACT) Detailed Work Plan” August 2006.

- United Nations System in the Gambia: United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Republic of the Gambia: 2007-2011. March 2006

- UNDP Second Quarter Progress Review meeting 27th—28th July 2010.

- UNDP Human Development Report 2009

- UNDP Human Development Report 2011

- World Bank Operations Evaluation Department. An Independent review of World Bank Support for Capacity Building in Africa. March 2005.