

Summary of:

Mid-Term Review of the Partnership for Gender Equity Project - Phase III (2011-2015)

The objective of the Mid Term Review (MTR) of the Partnership for Gender Equality Phase III (2011-2015) project is to assess the overall progress towards the intended objectives of the project, and to inform Ministry of Women's Affairs and UNDP of necessary adjustments and future directions with a view to the improvement of the project's sustainability, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. This report analyses the project's results and achievements to-date, considers the issues and challenges that presently confront the project, and offers recommendations for future directions for the consideration of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and UNDP.

The environment in which the project operates has changed rapidly in the past few years, and it is appropriate that the project responds to those changes. Cambodia currently is undergoing rapid transformation from a low income to a lower middle income country. The government has declared its intention to be self-reliant by the Year 2020 which implies that MoWA, and other ministries, will increasingly need to rely on the national budget. It also implies that UNDP, and other Development Partnerships, need to heighten efforts to support self-sufficiency. Moreover, it will be vital to ensure that MoWA, in the context of the whole national machinery for women, is organized in such a way that it can deliver good policy and legislative work, and persuade other ministries to allocate resources to implement these deliverables.

The major findings of the report are divided into three main chapters – results and achievements, issues and challenges, and major recommendations and future directions.

Results and Achievements. Overall, the project has made considerable achievements and appears to be largely on-track towards achieving a large number of the predetermined targets, as they are articulated in the programme results framework. There were ten predetermined output level targets set to be achieved by 2015, and of the ten a total of six were deemed to either have been achieved or 'on track'.

Evidence is presented to suggest that the project has made substantial contributions to the development in the areas of analytical, policy and strategy processes and documents; namely Cambodia Gender Assessment, Neary Rattanak IV, the Ten Year Gender Policy and the Millennium Acceleration Framework on Women's Economic Empowerment.

Building on previous phases of PGE, the project has progressively supported MoWA to mainstream gender into national policies and plans, into government reform programmes, and cross cutting issues. It has been observed that MoWA is now well positioned to lead on some aspects of this work, with less support from the project being required. While progress towards a Programme Based Approach (PBA) towards Gender Equality has been slow, important ground work has been established. The project has taken steps that have

contributed to the development the capacity of MoWA, and a Capacity Development Strategy towards a PBA was developed to guide future work. Overall, MoWA and the PGE project team are to be commended for its progress as are UNDP and SIDA for their consistent technical and financial support.

Issues and Challenges. There are numerous issues and challenges confronting the project, as perceived by the MTR consultant. While substantial progress was made by MoWA and the PGE project team, it was found that the project design included numerous and disparate activities, some with high transaction costs, and it lacked a clear overarching strategy or clear impact as a project. Key deliverables were not sufficiently prioritised, and major works were delayed. The project's strength in macro policy and planning and institutional gender mainstreaming, has been somewhat undermined in the proliferation of micro activities. Despite progress being made toward a PBA, as it stands the project is one of several projects within MoWA and is contributing to a project mentality and inefficient management practises. Furthermore, two key components were designed with a narrow focus with support from MoWA in service provision, which would not normally be within the remit of MoWA.

While progress is being made in policy development, the gap between gender policy development and implementation persists. There are issues with the project's strategy to support line ministries, with a general lack of limited systematic engagement by MoWA with priority sector ministries. Some achievements also have corresponding challenges. While the capacity of MoWA is reported to have developed, the project impact only extends to selected counterpart staff of MoWA. The development of the Capacity Development strategy also was delayed, and there has been little attention given to systematic organisational development. There are also several major issues with the institutional and programme management arrangements, and it is recommended they are re-considered.

Major Recommendations and Future Directions. Forty four recommendations are put forward as a response to the strengths and challenges that confront the project (as presented below). However the consultant came to the conclusion that there are major issues that must be addressed before these project oriented recommendations are considered. For this reason it is proposed that the project is given a major reformulation to ensure its relevance within the current reform agendas of MoWA and the government as a whole to ensure it progressively moves towards supporting a PBA. To that end, the report also presents several overarching recommendations and identifies three priority areas that can be explored in more depth in a project reformulation process. All recommendations presented are based on the assumption that the project be extended for five years (2014-2018).

As an extension of that proposal, it is recommended that the scope of the project is narrowed and the number of outputs and activities be significantly reduced. In some cases, this is justified because MoWA has demonstrated the capacity to lead the work with less, or minimal support from the project. In other cases, activities could be phased out because they are no

longer relevant or effective, or because they have been completed. Implicit in this reduction in scope and the number of activities, is that the project ceases to support any form of direct service provision by MoWA, and thereby supports its transition away from direct implementation towards policy making and gender mainstreaming.

It is further proposed that the project focuses only on the macro dimensions of gender policy development and mainstreaming through research, policy development, coordination and capacity development. Indeed, the entire thrust of the project should be to support MoWA to focus on upstream policy analysis and formulation (rather than project implementation and service delivery), and to reach out across government in a systematic and carefully executed manner.

Three priority areas are proposed for the possible inclusion in the reformulated project for the next 5 years:

- Long term and high level gender policy, planning and programme development: post NRIV (2019-2029).
- Gender and Economic Policy Making, including support to the development a women's economic empowerment programme.
- A Core Programme for Capacity Development for a PBA, beginning with a full organisational development and institutional review exercise of the whole national machinery.

Each of the three priority areas would be major undertaking, and a determination will need to be made as to whether the project supports one, two or all three of them. Consideration must also be given to funding modality options, and how the project can best support the transition to a full PBA, which implies the use of national systems. Finally, recommendations are proposed for the UNDP Country Office to give consideration as to how UNDP more broadly can make strategic interventions to advance the gender equality agenda in Cambodia in pursuit of the CMDGs.

It is intended that the recommendations presented in this report will help MoWA and UNDP to reformulate the project, and be ready to support the government and its delivery on commitments to the realisation of women's rights and gender equality, while supporting the government's quest to become self-sufficient by 2020.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Output 1: Gender-responsive policies, plans and budgets of key sectors developed and their implementation monitored.

- That, for the remainder of the NRIV preparation period, the project intensifies efforts to strengthen the capacities of relevant MoWA Departments to take the lead to develop NRIV.
- That, for the remainder of the NRIV preparation period, that a comprehensive consultation process is undertaken, ensuring stronger outreach/participation to civil society groups and line ministries.
- That MoWA assumes full responsibility for managing the development of CGA4 and NRV.
- That the development of the next CGA be more cost effective with fewer consultants and that MoWA assumes responsibility for recruiting consultants. Consider also that the next CGA be fully funded by the project, be developed in a more cost effective way (e.g. as an 'update' with policy briefs), and that the CGA process starts at least 18 months ahead of next NSDP and NRV (2019-2023).
- That MoWA/UNDP considers scaling back its financial and technical support to engender the next NSDP (2019-2023) in light of MoWA's increased capacity.
- That for the remainder of the current NSDP preparation process, close attention is paid to ensuring a robust and coherent monitoring and evaluation framework is created, strengthening linkages between different sector strategies and policies, and that key gender actions are costed.
- That the project considers scaling back direct support to engendering national reform programmes to allow MoWA to fully assume responsibility. And that the project makes a budget provision for advisors/consultants to support contributions to reform programmes.
- That future work on gender responsive budgeting be synchronized with the budgeting work be conducted through NRIV and the NSDP processes, and there be a focus on supporting and monitoring line ministries to make allocations in accordance with these plans.
- That MoWA assumes full responsibility for its partnership with RSA, and the project phases out its financial support.
- That the partnership approach between RSA and MoWA be considered a good practice model which could be applied in other contexts, and with other institutions.
- That the project supports a review of the GMAGs as part of the proposed institutional review exercise.
- That the project identifies strategic ways to support gender mainstreaming, including only providing high level support to ministries with a national and sub national planning and budgeting oversight function i.e. Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Economy and Finance and Ministry of Interior.
- That an immediate priority is to ensure the NRIV formulation process includes opportunities for more robust dialogue between MoWA and the relevant ministries.

Output 2: Increased access to gender-sensitive business development services for women small-business entrepreneurs

- That the WEE component, in its current form be phased out by end of 2013. This means the project would no longer provide direct financial and technical support to the WDC in Kampong Speu.
- That MoWA/PGE considers exploring alternative options for the future management of the WDCs; ensuring consistency with MoWA's policy making mandate (e.g. establishing WDCs independent institutions, the feasibility of Public-Private Partnerships, or transferring management to MLVT).
- That project's approach to women's economic empowerment be re-oriented towards broader dimensions of gender and economic policy making and gender mainstreaming-research, policy development, coordination and capacity development.
- That an immediate priority is given for the project to support MoWA to engage in high level dialogue with each economic related ministry with a view to ensuring they make budget allocation to implement their actions identified in the MAF.
- That the project, in coordination with UN Women, JICA and other DPs, considers supporting the development of a WEE Programme which would be the basis of the PBA from 2016 onwards (when the MAF expires).
- That the project provides high level support to MoWA to assume a leadership and coordination role, including through the TWGG-WEE sub group, and continuation of the WEE Expert Group.
- That the project considers that support be given to MoWA and MEF to implement the UNDP high level tailor made capacity development programme for gender in economic policy: the Global Gender and Economic Policy and Management Initiative.
- That UNDP (not PGE) makes a determination as to whether it will assume the role of co-facilitator of the TWG-G WEE Sub Group. And if UNDP assume this role, it invest in its own internal capacity. Alternatively, UNDP should consider handing over the co-facilitator role to another Development Partner.
- That an informal meeting of DPs is held prior to the TWG-G sub group of WEE meetings, to promote coordination among development partners prior to the formal meetings.

Output 3: Preventive and remedial responses to Gender Based Violence are scaled up.

- That the GBV component is phased out, and that the financial and technical support to Community Capacity Enhancement initiative ends after the remaining 20 villages are completed and a report is prepared.
- That UNDP Country Office, separate from the project, identifies high level ways to promote women's personal and physical safety in its country programme and actively participates in government and non-government GBV related forums. And that additional measures be considered in the context of the CPAP review which is currently underway.

Overall effectiveness

- That the MoWA and the PGE project team is credited for achieving, or is on track in achieving, the majority of the pre-determined objectives and output of the project as they are articulated in the project document.

- That the future design of the project capitalises on the strength of the project in macro level policy making, monitoring of government commitments and institutional strengthening.
- That the project's scope and approach be redefined, consolidated, and based on a clearly articulated strategy.
- That the number of project supported activities is significantly reduced, and there is a corresponding reduction in outputs and deliverables.
- That the outcome indicators be revised as the project is reformulated to ensure they are fully relevant measures of outcome.
- That CPAP review process maintains gender an outcome and a cross cutting issue, and provides guidance on how PGE can best feed into UNDAF/CPAP outcomes in the coming years.

Capacity Development and Coordination

- That the project broadens the focus from individual level capacity development of selected MoWA staff, to include high level institutional development of the national machinery.
- That the strategy for capacity development presented in NRIV becomes the basis for the project's strategy for the coming years.
- That the project supports a full organizational development and institutional strengthening exercise which will provide possible re-structuring recommendations across the national machinery, and clarity about the roles and responsibilities for each MoWA department.
- That the project progressively supports the development of a *Core Programme for Capacity* Programme for the national machinery for the advancement of women, which is fully costed for inclusion in NRV (2019-2024).
- That the project continues to provide high level guidance to the MoWA PBA Committee and Secretariat.
- That UNDP takes a more proactive role as co-chair of TWG-G in support of a PBA approach. And that UNDP initiates regular 'informal meetings' of DPs to promote coordination and harmonisation among DPs, and that they are held prior to the TWG-G meetings.
- That UNDP has sufficient human resource capacity to assume its' leadership role and support DP coordination towards a PBA.

Institutional and Programme Management Arrangements

- That the MoWA institutional management arrangements be reconsidered as part of the project reformulation process in terms of implementation modality and staffing schedule.
- That the UNDP project staffing arrangements are reconsidered as part of the project reformulation process.
- That the number of UNDP contracted staff based in MoWA is gradually reduced. And that prior to the UNDP Programme Management Specialist position being filled, the position description is reviewed to ensure there is no overlap with the MoWA Programme Manager position.

- That project funding be made available for expert national and international consultants to provide inputs at peak periods, and that these consultants are managed by MoWA.
- That the Policy Advisor should be recruited without further delay, and that the advisor is based full time in MoWA providing a high level planning and policy oversight function.
- That the staffing needs of UNDP are investigated during the project reformulation process to ensure it has sufficient capacity to perform its function.
- That beyond 2015 UNDP gives consideration to the different ways in which the project could be managed and delivered, including the creation of a pooled fund or a UN Joint Programme for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.