

PACDE Management Response to the Mid-Term Review of UNDP's Global Thematic Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness (PACDE)

19 October 2012

The mid-term review of PACDE (2008-2013) was conducted in the first half of 2012. The purpose of the review was to take stock of the results achieved by PACDE against its objectives during the first phase of the programme implementation from 2008 to 2011. The review exercise was intended to be forward-looking, which would highlight lessons learnt and present recommendations for improving efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of PACDE's second phase activities.

The mid-term review concluded that PACDE has delivered on all its programme outcomes, and has done so effectively. The review also noted that PACDE has produced an impressive range of outputs within the programme's limited budget of between US\$2 million and US\$3 million per year and has been instrumental in carving UNDP's niche and influence in setting the anti-corruption agenda for development effectiveness. In addition, the review also highlighted the work of PACDE team, including at the regional level.

The review made useful recommendations, which PACDE is and will take into consideration. However, it also contained some recommendations that were beyond the scope of the global programme.

Therefore, it was considered more useful that the recommendation of the review be discussed and analyzed by the broader UNDP anti-corruption community of practice. The report was shared with the participants of the Fifth UNDP Global Anti-Corruption Community of Practice (CoP) meeting.¹ The CoP presented the right opportunity for a critical yet constructive deliberation on the programmatic and institutional context that has a major impact on the achievement of results by PACDE and by anti-corruption projects supported by UNDP at the regional and country level.

The section below provides a consolidated response from PACDE anti-corruption team and broader UNDP Anti-Corruption Community of Practice to the key recommendations on improving the effectiveness and impact of the anti-corruption results achieved by UNDP.

¹ The fifth UNDP Global Anti-Corruption Community of Practice meeting took place in Brasilia, Brazil from November 5 to 6, 2012. It brought together about 100 participants from 45 UNDP Country Office, donor representative, government and civil society partners.

Reporting and Results Management:

The mid-term review of PACDE pointed out that UNDP needs to make organizational level changes to improve programming cycles as well as reporting and knowledge management systems. This would allow for i) coherent priority setting to appropriately respond to the context in which corruption occurs, and ii) capturing outcomes, outputs, and processes. The latter can lead to better learning from both successes and failures and also promote a systematic exchange of knowledge and ideas across countries and regions.

However, UNDP corporate reporting tools (ROAR) focuses on results achieved at the outcome level. UNDP Country Offices noted that anti-corruption work is normally reflected as outputs hence tend to report at the output level. However, when UNDP Country Offices do not report anti-corruption outcomes in the ROAR, then their support to anti-corruption initiatives is not reflected at the corporate level. Furthermore, reporting exclusively at the outcome level could miss out on useful information about the processes supported by UNDP to achieve the outcome, and affect learning from processes such as building synergies between institutions and multi-stakeholder engagement.

Reporting results at the outcome level also raises questions around attribution of the results achieved for several reasons: a) involvement of other stakeholders such as anti-corruption agencies, civil society partners in the implementation of activities b) difficulty in establishing the causality between the activity supported and the outcome achieved with the limited resources invested by UNDP against the vast resources of the national partners.

Cognizant of these constraints, PACDE will continue improving and systematically utilizing existing reporting and knowledge management tools to allow for analysis of anti-corruption programmes (at the output and outcome level); adopt better monitoring and evaluation methods to measure impact; and lastly, invest in long-term learning from processes through a stronger knowledge-feedback loop.

The Global Portal on Anti-Corruption will be a first step in efforts to address current reporting constraints. The portal will be fully functional in 2013 and will provide a platform for Country Offices and partners to share information and exchange ideas. The portal will document various processes that help to achieve key results. As such, the portal will provide a virtual platform for UNDP's anti-corruption Community of Practice.

Synergizing PACDE programming with that of UNDP programming at country level to increase coherence and relevance:

The review recommended that PACDE conceptually frames its programming with that of UNDP Country Office programming cycles to ensure coherence and relevance of its support. There are several problems with this recommendation:

- a. UNDP Country Offices respond to the national context and demands and set their own priorities (within the broader corporate priorities). In other words, UNDP operates in diverse contexts and Country Offices have different (and even divergent) priorities.² It is impossible for a global programme with an annual budget of 2 to 3 million dollars to align itself with such diverse Country Office priorities.
- b. The objective of UNDP Global Programmes are, “to support programme countries in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), by applying global diagnosis and perspectives to development challenges and by catalysing development solutions, ensuring that critical knowledge is shared across and within regions. It was expected to promote a “virtuous cycle” of global networking that brings global knowledge to the country level and brings country realities to global attention”.³

PACDE has indeed played a catalytic role in developing UNDP’s programming coherence in the area of anti-corruption for development effectiveness. It was instrumental in mainstreaming anti-corruption into MDG Acceleration Framework, promote sectoral approach to address corruption bottlenecks in Education, Health, Water sector and in climate change funding mechanisms. It also pioneered the work on anti-corruption and gender to identify and reduce the specific corruption risks faced by women. About 24 Country Office have directly benefitted from PACDE pioneering work in curbing corruption through mitigating corruption risks in sectors. PACDE is providing both technical and financial support to countries to implement activities – building on the conceptual work developed through PACDE support.

² For instance, promoting inclusive participation, responsive institutions and mainstreaming governance principles are the corporate priorities of UNDP within the area of democratic governance. UNDP Country Offices define how they will achieve these priorities within the specific context.

³ UN (2011) ‘Midterm review of the UNDP Global Programme 2009-2013’, presented by the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA, and UNOPS, at the Annual session 2011, 6 - 17 June 2011, New York.

Investing in Long-term planning and division of responsibilities for joint (long-term) planning between headquarters and regional centres:

The review recommended that PACDE invests in long-term planning and prioritization. It also called for joint planning between headquarters and regional centres.

Within the context of a global programme, joint planning at headquarters and regional level for the activities exists and will continue to be utilized when drafting annual workplans. At present it has received multi-year funding commitment from AuSAID till 2015. This allows PACDE to invest in multi-year planning and prioritization as recommended in the review. If this commitment was not received from AusAID, it would have been difficult for PACDE to undertake long-term planning given the current aid environment which is characterized by short-term (often one year) fund commitments.

Overall, PACDE values the useful findings and suggestions made by the mid-term review and will take them into consideration as it continue improving its delivery results. For more details on the discussion about the recommendations of the mid-term at the fifth UNDP Global Anti-Corruption Community of Practice, please see pages 30 to 39 of the CoP report. The report can be accessed on teamworks at: <https://undp.unteamworks.org/node/16856>.