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| Mid Term Evaluation Report |
| **The Poverty Reduction Programme of the Government of Swaziland/UNDP Country Programme Action Plan 2011-2015** |

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|  BACTHA CONSULTING |

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This report is prepared by Dr Backson Sibanda – BACTHA CONSULTING.

# Acronyms and Abbreviations

***ACMS*** Aid Coordination and Management Section of the MEPD

***CPAP*** Country Programme Action Plan

**CBA** Cost Benefit Analysis

***CSO’s***  Civil Society Organisations

***EU*** European Union

***FAR*** Fiscal Adjustment Road MAP

***MDGs***  Millennium Development Goals

***MEPD*** Ministry of Economic Planning and Development

***M&E*** Monitoring and Evaluation

***NDS*** National Development Strategy

***NGOs***  Non-Governmental Organisations

***ODA***  Overseas Development Assistance

***PRSAP*** Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Programme

***RBM***  Results Based Management

***SACU*** Southern Africa Customs Union

***SAM*** Social Accountability Matrix

***SWAP*** Sector Wide Approach to Planning

***TOR*** Terms of Reference

***UNDAF*** United Nations Development Assistance Framework

***UNDP*** United Nations Development Programme

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mid-Term Evaluation of Poverty Reduction Outcome of the Country Programme Action Plan (“CPAP”) assessed the processes and achievements made during the first two years of implementing CPAP 2011 – 2015. The CPAP 2011 – 2015 is a five year cooperation agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland and UNDP. The evaluation assessed whether the implementation of the CPAP is on track and if it will achieve its planned results by 2015. The evaluation also tried to establish whether the achievement of the poverty reduction outcome will contribute to poverty reduction in Swaziland.

## Major Findings

1. The evaluation found that the partnership between UNDP and the Government of Swaziland was very good. The Government regards UNDP as a valuable partner that supports national priorities and does not have an agenda of its own. Whilst the partnership strategy includes civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, the evaluation did not find any strong evidence supporting the existence of strong partnership with these entities.
2. The institutional arrangements put in place for the implementation of the CPAP and the poverty outcome programmes are good and enable the implementation of CPAP. Notwithstanding, government partners feel that UNDP bureaucracy, especially in areas of procurement, sometimes slows down implementation and thus progress. However it is clear that UNDP has a need to ensure accountability and hence procurement procedures should be adhered to.
3. The evaluation found that the UNDP supports upstream initiatives that are producing valuable policies, strategies and tools which have enabled government to improve planning, analysis and monitoring. These initiatives are yet to produce visible changes to people’s lives and hence their impact on poverty reduction is not yet visible. Downstream activities supported by UNDP on women’s empowerment and on women’s businesses were already producing tangible results that are reducing poverty. Women are already generating income and are managing their businesses more efficiently using the knowledge and skills that they have gained from the training they have received.
4. The Sector Wide Approach’s (“SWAP”) uptake and implementation has been very slow due to coordination challenges and lack of sufficient knowledge and understanding of the concept. Due to staff attrition, capacity gaps have derailed full implementation of the SWAP initiatives. There is lack of progress on the piloting sectors as evidenced by only one sector doing very well while the other three need to upscale implementation. Since it was embraced, no significant resources and buy in have been seen on the side of the government of Swaziland.
5. The implementation of CPAP and the poverty outcome programme have also been impacted by lack of capacity in government and the inability to retain those who have been trained. This is a consequence of trained officials either being reshuffled by government to other functions or leaving when they find better opportunities elsewhere. This has watered down UNDP’s efforts to build capacity improvement and has created an unsatisfied demand for required skills due to large staff turnover. However, those who have been trained in MEPD are making a difference as they are using new tools, skills and knowledge and are producing better results as reflected in the quality of planning, analysis and preparation of MDG reports.

Resources

UNDP has delivered most (90%) of its financial and technical support for the CPAP implementation. The government has also delivered most of its financial contributions towards this cooperation agreement. Downstream activities for the Women Cross Border project have very limited resources, especially funds. UN Women has not been able to provide its full support for the project and has only contributed $96,000 (19%) out of the promised amount of $498,000 for the period 2011 – 2015. This has resulted in the imminent closure of the project in December 2013. UNDP, in collaboration with other partners, will mobilise resources to undertake the remaining project activities.

## Lessons Learned

This evaluation has revealed that there are some lessons that can be learned from the first two years of the CPAP implementation that could help the programme as it goes forward. These lessons are also helpful in improving delivery of the poverty reduction outcome.

1. The Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (“PRSAP”), which is viewed as a tool for the operationalization of the National Development Strategy, was not costed. Consequently, the indicative budgets that were expected to come from the sector ministries did not materialise as there were no identified PRSAP activities from the sectors that would have been budgeted for. This has resulted in the slow implementation of the PRSAP. In turn this has impacted the CPAP implementation. A lesson that needs to be learned is that producing a document without costing it and providing resources for its implementation will not produce the desired results. Sector ministries could not have budgeted for PRSAP when no activities that dovetailed into the PRSAP were identified and agreed to in advance.
2. The slow uptake of the SWAP was a result of lack of proper coordination and lack of a common understanding on what SWAP is and what its advantages are. The lesson to understand is that buy-in cannot just happen without a clear understanding of what people are expected to do. A common understanding of the project is a pre-requisite for success. Consultation and participation in the design and follow up training are critical to creating a common understanding.
3. Formal agreements or Memoranda of Understanding are critical in establishing partnerships. While there is a Letter of Agreement between the two parties (UNDP and UN Women) such an agreement does not seem to have been enough and this has impacted the partnership and has led to a threat of the project being closed.

## Recommendations

1. It is recommended that UNDP and the Government of Swaziland develop a comprehensive capacity development strategy that will ensure that staff capacities are developed and retained. That strategy must also lead to sustainable capacity development and retention.
2. It is recommended that SWAP be reviewed and revised after all sectors have been trained and a common understanding of SWAP has been established. The participation in the review and revision will lead to a fresh understanding and buy in for SWAP.
3. It is recommended that UNDP considers balancing its upstream and downstream support and links the upstream support with downstream/grassroots support in order to produce visible changes to people’s lives, particularly on poverty reduction.
4. It is strongly recommended that UNDP considers fundraising for the downstream activities which are making a difference to people’s lives and are directly reducing poverty. These activities include the girls internship programme and the Women Craft and Industrial produce project both supported by the Business Women Forum and the Women Cross Border project. These activities either have limited or no financial resources and yet are producing tangible resources.
5. Donors should honour the Paris Declaration and provide AID through the ACMS to sector ministries and stop negotiating directly with sector ministries.