## ADB- UNDP-GEF Midterm Review Terms of Reference

*Promoting Climate Resilient Infrastructure in Northern Mountain Provinces of Vietnam* (Project ID - 00075992) (PIMS #3741)

1. **INTRODUCTION**

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the medium-sized project titled *Promoting Climate Resilient Infrastructure in Northern Mountain Provinces of Vietnam* (00075992) (PIMS #3741) implemented through Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam, which is to be undertaken during 2012 and 2016. The project was endorsed by GEF CEO for implementation from June 2012 and actually started in Sept 2012 for ADB components and in Nov 2012 for UNDP components. Overall, the project is in its third year of implementation. In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance on MTRs, this MTR process was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR). This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects:*

**2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In recent years, Vietnam has taken great strides to overcoming economic and human poverty. Yet, despite these overall achievements, poverty persists in some areas, notably in the rural areas of the Northern Mountainous provinces. Poor infrastructure is a key factor limiting poverty reduction - the fifteen provinces of Northern Vietnam have very poor infrastructure compared to the rest of Vietnam. To address these imbalances, the Vietnamese government, with assistance from the international community, plans a series of large infrastructure investments in the rural areas of the Northern Mountainous provinces. Significant national and provincial funds are to be allocated to rural infrastructure development over the coming years. Vietnam is one of the most disaster prone countries in the world, suffering from typhoons, floods, droughts, landslides, etc. Climate change threatens to exacerbate this. Studies suggest that the Northern Mountains of Vietnam is one of the areas the most vulnerable to climate change in Southeast Asia. Disasters, exacerbated by climate change, are likely to have impacts on infrastructure in the Northern provinces, thereby undermining efforts to reduce poverty. This project aims to address these threats by increasing the resilience of infrastructure to climate change in the northern mountains.

To achieve this goal, the United Nations Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), is supporting the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in Vietnam in implementation of the project named: “Promoting Climate Resilient Infrastructure in Northern Mountain Provinces of Vietnam”.

The objective of the project is to increase the resilience and reduce vulnerability of local, critical economic infrastructure in the northern mountains areas of Vietnam to the adverse impacts of climate change and to create a policy framework conducive to promoting resilient northern mountains zone development. In order to achieve this objective, four following outcomes should be delivered:

**Outcome 1**: Climate Change Adaptation integrated into policy, strategy and planning that relates to rural infrastructure – specifically irrigation, rural water and rural roads;

**Outcome 2**: Enhanced capacity to adapt/climate-proof rural infrastructure investments and provincial/local area planning;

**Outcome 3**: Effective climate-resilience measures mainstreamed into the MARD rural infrastructure programs;

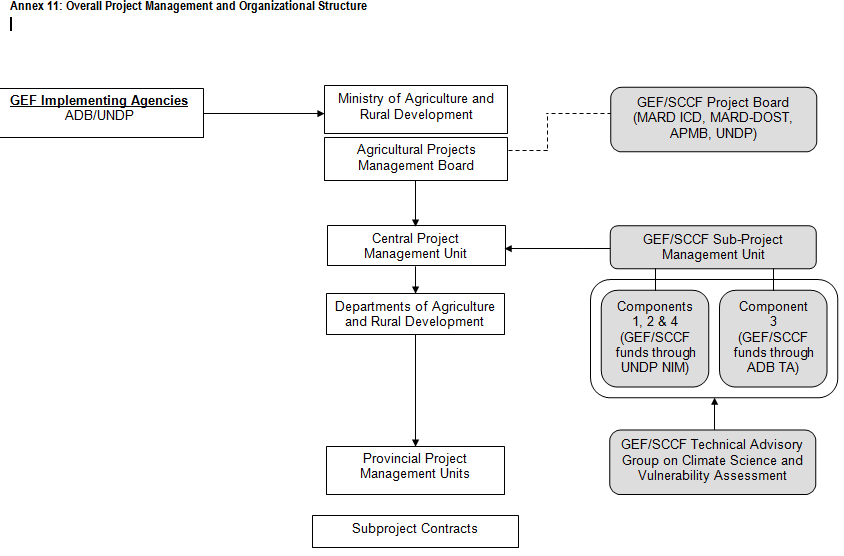
**Outcome 4:** Lessons learnt and best practices from Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 are disseminated to stakeholders and development partners.

**Outcome 5:** Project Management

Based on average allocation, the project budgeting for 04 years is as follows:

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The organizational arrangements of project relations is summarized as below in the Annex 1 of GEF-CEO endorsement and described in Annex 11 of UNDP-MARD project document



**3. OBJECTIVES OF THE MTR**

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project’s strategy, its risks to sustainability.

**4. MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY**

The MTR must provide evidence based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Environmental & Social Safeguard Policy, the Project Document, project reports including Annual Project Review/PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based review). The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Tracking Tool submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Tracking Tool that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach[[1]](#footnote-1) ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office(s), UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisers, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR.[[2]](#footnote-2) Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to *(*MARD, APMB, CPMU, UNDP. ADB, provincial agencies such as DARD, DONRE, DOT and etc. ); executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the MTR team is expected to conduct field missions to at least one demonstration province.

The final MTR report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

**5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE MTR**

The MTR team will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

**i. Project Strategy**

Project design:

* Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
* Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
* Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
* Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
* Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
* If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Results Framework/Logframe:

* Undertake a critical analysis of the project’s logframe indicators and targets, assess how “SMART” the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
* Are the project’s objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
* Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyze beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women’s empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
* Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART ‘development’ indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

**ii. Progress Towards Results**

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

* Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; color code progress in a “traffic light system” based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as “Not on target to be achieved” (red).

Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Project Strategy** | **Indicator[[3]](#footnote-3)** | **Baseline Level[[4]](#footnote-4)** | **Level in 1st PIR (self- reported)** | **Midterm Target[[5]](#footnote-5)** | **End-of-project Target** | **Midterm Level & Assessment[[6]](#footnote-6)** | **Achievement Rating[[7]](#footnote-7)** | **Justification for Rating** |
| **Objective:** | Indicator (if applicable): |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 1:** | Indicator 1: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Indicator 2: |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Outcome 2:** | Indicator 3: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Indicator 4: |  |  |  |  |  |
| Etc. |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Etc.** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Indicator Assessment Key**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Green= Achieved | Yellow= On target to be achieved | Red= Not on target to be achieved |

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

* Compare and analyze the GEF Tracking Tool at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
* Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
* By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

**iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**

Management Arrangements:

* Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
* Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
* Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP and ADB) and recommend areas for improvement.

Work Planning:

* Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved, especially the procurement process.
* Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
* Examine the use of the project’s results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

* Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
* Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
* Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

* Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
* Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Stakeholder Engagement:

* Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
* Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
* Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

Reporting:

* Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
* Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfill GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)
* Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications:

* Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
* Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
* For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project’s progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

**iv. Sustainability**

* Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Management Module are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
* In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

* What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project’s outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

* Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

* Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

* Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

The MTR team will include a section of the report setting out the MTR’s evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report’s executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table.

The MTR team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

**Ratings**

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project’s results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for   
Promoting Climate Resilient Infrastructure in Northern Mountain Provinces of Vietnam

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Measure** | **MTR Rating** | **Achievement Description** |
| **Project Strategy** | N/A |  |
| **Progress Towards Results** | Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) |  |
| Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) |  |
| Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) |  |
| Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) |  |
| Etc. |  |
| **Project Implementation & Adaptive Management** | (rate 6 pt. scale) |  |
| **Sustainability** | (rate 4 pt. scale) |  |

1. **TIMEFRAME**

The total duration of the MTR will be *24 of working days* over approximately *09 weeks* starting *on March27th 2015,* and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TIMEFRAME** | **ACTIVITY** |
| 12/02/2015 | Application closes |
| 25/2-03/03/2015[[9]](#footnote-9) | Select MTR Team/Contract Arrangement |
| 27/03/2015 | Prep the MTR Team (handover of Project Documents) |
| 31/03/2015 – 02 days | Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report |
| 06/04/2015 – 01 day | Finalization andValidation of MTR Inception Report- latest start of MTR mission – Kick off |
| 06/04/2015 - 15/04/2015  10 days | MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits |
| 15/04/2015 | Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings- earliest end of MTR mission |
| 29/04/2015 - 8 days | Preparing draft report |
| 25/05/2015 - 02 days | Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report/Finalization of MTR report |
| TBC at Inception Phase | Preparation & Issue of Management Response |
| TBC at Inception Phase | Expected date of full MTR completion |

Options for site visits should be provided in the Inception Report.

1. **MIDTERM REVIEW DELIVERABLES**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Deliverable** | **Description** | **Timing** | **Responsibilities** |
| **1** | **MTR Inception Report** | MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of Midterm Review | No later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission: by 31/03/2015 | MTR team submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management |
| **2** | **Presentation** | Initial Findings | End of MTR mission: 15/04/2015 | MTR Team presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit |
| **3** | **Draft Final Report** | Full report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes | Within 3 weeks of the MTR mission: by 29/04/2015 | Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFP |
| **4** | **Final Report\*** | Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report | Within 1 week of receiving UNDP and ADB comments on draft: tbc and no later than 25/05/2015 | Sent to the Commissioning Unit |

\*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

1. **MTR ARRANGEMENTS**

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project’s MTR is UNDP Viet Nam*.*

The commissioning unit will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the MTR team. The Project Team in CPMU-APMB of MARD will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

1. **TEAM COMPOSITION**

A team of one international independent consultant and a national consultant hired by UNDP Viet Nam will conduct the MTR - with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions globally. The international consultant cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project’s related activities. The National Assistant will provide full time assistance (logistic, translation, etc.) to the international consultant for all the MTR duration in liaison with the CPMU and UNDP

The selection of the team will be aimed at maximizing the overall “team” qualities in the following areas:

The skills and qualifications required for **International Consultant (Team Leader)**

* Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies (10%);
* Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios (10%);
* Competence in adaptive management, as applied to climate change adaptation (10%);
* Experience working with the GEF or GEF-evaluations (15%);
* Experience working in South East Asia (10%);
* Work experience in relevant technical areas (e.g. climate risk management, soil and water conservation and bio-engineering) for at least 5 years (10%);
* Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and climate change adaptation; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis (5%).
* Excellent communication skills (5%);
* Demonstrable analytical skills (5%);
* Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset( 10%);
* A Master’s degree in development study, environmental engineering, environmental science or other closely related (10%).

The skills and qualifications required for **National Consultant** (team member) are:

* Master degree in economics, development study, environmental engineering, or environment related fields; (20%)
* Experience in the areas of climate change and climate risk management. Certain knowledge or familiarity with climate change-infrastructure issue will be an asset. (15%)
* Knowledge of M&E and evaluation methodology (20%)
* At least 5 years experience in project implementation, management and evaluation for donor-funded development projects in Vietnam; (15%)
* Familiarity and past experience with evaluation of GEF/UNDP projects, especially climate/environment-related projects, will be an advantage (10%)
* Proficient English writing and communication skills, with an ability to act as translator for international counterpart and to translate written documents from/ to Vietnamese are essential (writing sample must be provided for assessment) (20%)

The specific evaluation team tasks:

The main final output of the evaluation will be an independent and comprehensive Mid-Term Evaluation report with annexes as needed. The minimum requirements for the content of the final Mid-Term Evaluation report are given the annexes to this TOR.

The basis for the evaluators’ main conclusions must be clear and the methodology clearly documented within the final report. **The MTE methodology should be included in technical proposal.**

Recommendations made must be based on clearly substantiated findings and stated in operational terms. They must address all issues identified by the evaluation mission, including changes in modalities, processes, strategies, focus and otherwise deemed necessary and appropriate

**International Consultant/ Team Leader**

The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the work and operation of the evaluation team, including the coordination of inputs from national team member. The Team Leader is responsible and overall accountable for the production of the agreed outputs.

In addition to the above, the Team Leader is responsible for the following:

* Desk research of existing management plans, survey/ research/ evaluation reports and databases.
* Conduct fieldwork together with the national counterpart and interview stakeholders, and communities (if necessary) to generate authentic information and opinions.
* Write and compile the information and reports as needed.
* Make a presentation of key findings highlighting achievements, constraints, and make practical recommendations to decision makers and stakeholders.
* Draft and finalize the Evaluation Report

**National Consultant**

The national consultant will assist and collaborate with the Team Leader in all the tasks mentioned above including fieldwork, logistic arrangement in cooperation with PMU, desk-based translation, etc and assist with interpretation in the field. The national consultant will be mobilized several days before the Team Leader in an effort to collect data related to the project beforehand. Specific tasks as following:

* Desk review of project materials and databases.
* Fieldwork participation together with international consultant and national counterpart. Carry out stakeholders interview and do interpretation work (if necessary)
* Write brief notes, or certain parts of the evaluation report as agreed with the team leader.
* Provide inputs either by written or verbally through discussions to international consultants for consolidating a presentation of key findings highlighting achievements, constraints
* Contribute to draft and final Evaluation Report
* Translate the final draft and final report into Vietnamese;

1. **PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS**

10% of payment upon approval of the final MTR Inception Report

30% upon submission of the draft MTR report

60% upon finalization of the MTR report

1. For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see [UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/discussion-paper--innovations-in-monitoring---evaluating-results/), 05 Nov 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For more stakeholder engagement in the M&E process, see the [UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](http://www.undg.org/docs/11653/UNDP-PME-Handbook-(2009).pdf), Chapter 3, pg. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Populate with data from the Project Document [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. If available [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Colour code this column only [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Use the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Alternatively, MTR conclusions may be integrated into the body of the report. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. NB: National Holiday from 17-23 Feb 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)