

ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION

THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM



HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION
efficiency COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP sus
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP relevance MANAGING FO
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THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF
VIET NAM

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FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to present the Assessment of Development Results (ADR) for the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. This is the second ADR conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) in the country, and covers two programme periods 2006–2011 and 2012–2016. The ADR was conducted in close collaboration with the Government of Viet Nam, the UNDP country office, and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

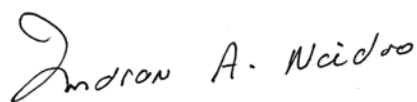
During the periods under review, Viet Nam's economy continued to grow, clearing many of the Millennium Development Goals. The country entered the group of lower middle-income countries in 2010, marking a significant development milestone. That prompted development partners to shift their traditional support modalities to meeting the country's emerging needs, including greater attention on inclusiveness in development; addressing ethnic minority issues; implementing rigorous institutional reforms to strengthen governance; ensuring effective management of natural resources and disaster risks; and addressing growing climate change challenges. The provision of upstream, policy-oriented support became the core of UNDP's work in the country.

As a pilot country for the UN Delivering as One, the UNDP programme in Viet Nam has been guided by the UN-level programme framework, e.g. One Plan. In close collaboration with other UN partners, UNDP offered programmes that were aligned with national priorities, successfully engaged government agencies, and facilitated national debate on critical development issues through its policy work. In each thematic programme, UNDP contributed to the establishment of relevant legal, technical and policy

frameworks. It raised awareness among decision-makers and developed the capacities of relevant partners. The evaluation also found challenges, for example, in the measurability of UNDP's performance against the intended outcomes and outputs; project design, management, and reporting processes; inter-agency collaboration; and the integration of gender in programmes and projects. UNDP's overall policy-oriented approach could further benefit from institutionalization of inputs and collaboration among all players engaged in policy support and a more programme-focused approach.

The stakeholder workshop was held on Tuesday 19 January 2016 in Hanoi. More than 70 people from the government, UN agencies, civil society organizations, donors and UNDP staff participated. Following IEO's presentation of key results from the ADR, as well as the UNDP country office's outline of its management response, the participants engaged in enthusiastic dialogue on ways forward for UNDP in the next country programme cycle.

I would like to sincerely thank the Government of Viet Nam, colleagues at UNDP, national partners and development partners for their participation and support to the evaluation. It is my hope that the results of the evaluation are useful in formulating the next country programme in Viet Nam.



Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Evaluation Office

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
AECID	Spanish International Cooperation Agency for Development
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CBDRM	Community-based Disaster Risk Management
CBO	Community-based Organization
CCFSC	Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control
CCPD	Common Country Programme Document
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEMA	Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs
CFBA	Committee for Financial and Budgetary Affairs
CLE	Clinical Legal Education
CO	Country Office
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CPV	Communist Party of Viet Nam
DaO	Delivering as One
DARD	Provincial Department of Rural Development
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
DONRE	Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment
DPO	Detailed Project Outline
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECNA	Economic Committee of the National Assembly
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
GACA	Government Aid Coordinating Agencies
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF-SGP	GEF Small Grants Programme
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
GI	Government Inspectorate
GNI	Gross National Income
GPT	Governance and Participation, UNDP
GSO	General Statistics Office
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HPPMG	Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guidelines

ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IEG	Inclusive and Equitable Growth, UNDP
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	Institute for Legislative Studies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JPG	Joint Programme Group
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFEM	MDG Acceleration for Ethnic Minorities
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, UNDP
MPSAR	Master Plan for Social Assistance Reform
MRV	Measurement, Reporting, Verification
NA	National Assembly
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NTP-CCR	National Target Program on Response to Climate Change
NTP-PMEI	National Target Program on Pollution Management and Environmental Improvement
NTP-SPR	National Targeted Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction
NTP-PR	National Targeted Program on Poverty Reduction
ODA	Official Development Assistance
P135	Programme 135
P135/II	Programme 135 Phase II
PAPI	Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PAT	Policy Advisory Team
PEP	Poverty Environment Programme

PMU	Project Management Unit
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PRPP	Poverty Reduction Policies and Programme
PSPMOs	Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organizations
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
ROAR	Results Oriented Annual Report
SAP	Social Assistance System
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategies
SIPAS	Satisfaction Index of Public Administration Services
SP-RCC	Support Program for Response to Climate Change
TP-CCR	Target Program for Climate Change Response
TP-PEI	Target Program for Pollution and Environmental Improvement
TOT	Training of Trainers
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignment from the Core
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention on Anti-Corruption
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UPS	Urban Poverty Survey
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VFF	Viet Nam Fatherland Front
VHLSS	Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey
VLA	Viet Nam Lawyers' Association
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPPA	Center for Women in Politics and Public Administration
WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam was conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2015. The objectives of the ADR were to:

- Support the development of the next UNDP country programme document.
- Strengthen UNDP's accountability to national stakeholders in the programme country.
- Strengthen UNDP's accountability to the Executive Board.

The ADR was conducted in close collaboration with the Government of Viet Nam, the UNDP Viet Nam country office and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP). The evaluation looked at UNDP's country programme for two programme cycles (2006–2010/2011 and 2012–2016) and examined its contributions to development results by programme outcome, quality of its contributions. It also considered UNDP's strategic positioning in a country that achieved lower middle-income country status in 2010.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on the current programme structure, results were presented in three thematic areas, covering a total of eight outcomes: Inclusive and Equitable Growth; Governance and Participation; and Sustainable Development. The overall programme budget was \$21 million in 2006 and \$27 million in 2014. The programme delivery rate fluctuated during the period under review, but has stabilized at around 85 percent in recent years. The Governance programme has historically had the largest programme expenditures financed by regular funds, but the Sustainable Development programme has expanded its resource base through non-core resources over time and has become the

largest programme (at about \$15 million at the time of the evaluation). UNDP was expected to support the national goals in close collaboration with other UN agencies in Viet Nam, which is a Delivering as One pilot country. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the One Plan served as the fundamental platforms for collaboration.

Between 2006 and 2011, UNDP's country programme aimed to extend and deepen the *Doi Moi* reform process and to support national socio-economic development targets. After Viet Nam attained middle income status in 2010, UNDP's programmatic goals – stemming from the UN's One Plan – have shifted to supporting the country's transformation, which faced various development challenges, such as widening inequalities, limited institutional capacity and climate change. The evaluation found that the UNDP programmes were in alignment with challenges identified in various national frameworks, such as the Socio-Economic Development Strategy, the corresponding five-year plans, and relevant sector-specific policies and priorities. Through its programmes and projects, UNDP has effectively engaged key relevant government agencies. It has achieved a high level of government trust, which has allowed UNDP to lead international dialogue on various policy matters.

One of the key initiatives taken by the UNDP country office in response to the country's emerging needs was the establishment of the Policy Advisory Team (PAT), a group of international advisors specializing in various sector-specific issues and funded by the One Plan and donors, as the foundation for its policy work. The innovative intervention approaches and research work provided by the PAT were vital to both UNDP and the UN, and opened dialogue on sometimes politically sensitive reform issues. UNDP's strong application of upstream policy-oriented approaches in

its programme was recognized by many partners as one of the UNDP's strong comparative strengths.

The three programme clusters made significant contributions in their respective areas by, for example, establishing necessary technical, legal and policy frameworks; raising awareness of relevant partners; and supporting their capacity building efforts. In the Inclusive and Equitable Growth cluster, achievements included contributions to improving the quality of national poverty programme documents; increased awareness of urban multidimensional poverty among policy-makers; a strengthened national statistical system and monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals and Viet Nam Development Goals; and realization of high-level policy dialogue on poverty focusing on ethnic minorities. Under the Governance cluster, achievements included improved oversight functions by elected bodies; integration of human rights' principles in legal/regulatory frameworks; increased awareness of accountability in the public administration and justice reforms; and wider public participation in decision-making processes. In Sustainable Development, the programme produced significantly increased awareness; technical information and analysis; and capacity development related to climate change, green growth, energy efficiency, disaster risk management, UN-REDD, contaminated sites and pesticides management, biodiversity conservation and protected areas management. Technical/policy frameworks were established to address international conventions and national directives. Key factors contributing to those results included the government's strong commitment, the long-term and close relationship between the government and UNDP, and use of internationally accepted standards.

At the same time, various challenges were identified when assessing programme effectiveness, including, for example, limited clarity in how the outcomes/outputs as defined in the country programme document/One Plan were supposed to be measured; projects existing in isolation rather than as part of a well-defined coherent programme; and uncertainties about the sustainabil-

ity of national institutions' capacity. There was also room for greater partnership with development partners, when implementing programmes/projects and discussing policy options.

The national implementation modality was recognized by many national partners as important for project implementation, helping them to increase ownership of the development process and results. At the same time, the ADR found several challenges in the projects reviewed in terms of the quality of project design and management and reporting processes. For example, some projects were highly activity-based; lacked critical stakeholders in design (e.g. civil society); and/or lacked an efficient project management mechanism that can quickly resolve and respond to day-to-day challenges. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices were relatively limited and weak, primarily focusing on activity- or financial-based reporting. Coordination between implementing partners and relevant national agencies was also an issue in some cases.

On policy-related work, while the PAT's flexible approach was crucial in addressing complex issues, its long-term strategy to contribute to a given development programme goal was not always clearly defined. In the last two programme cycles, different advisors had different approaches in the way they selected focus areas and how much and in what ways they worked with programme managers and teams. In UNDP's policy work, there was also more focus on policy formulation than policy implementation support, even though there's much concern over national partners' limited capacity to adopt and implement many of the innovations and good practices advocated by the policy advisors. The evaluation noted that numerous policy-related research and studies conducted during the period under review contributed to policy discussions in the country. The question of how those important knowledge products have been used by intended users has not yet been fully assessed.

On the gender front, UNDP has been part of the Joint UN Programme Group on Gender. At the programme level, under Governance, UNDP

contributed to the integration of gender principles in national laws and promoted women's participation in national decision-making forums. Overall, however, the incorporation of gender in project design across three UNDP programmatic clusters was relatively limited.

Inter-agency coordination and collaboration issues were highlighted as having affected the quality and timeliness of some programmes/projects. Key issues included a lack of a clear joint implementation strategy, management structure, and roles and responsibilities.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. UNDP's work during the periods under review was relevant and timely as Viet Nam transitioned into a new middle-income country. The objectives of its programmes and projects were fully aligned with national priorities and policies, and UNDP has successfully engaged key national agencies.

Conclusion 2. UNDP was responsive to the country's emerging needs through its strong application of an upstream policy-oriented approach to its work.

Conclusion 3. In each thematic programme, UNDP has contributed to the establishment of relevant legal, policy, and technical frameworks; awareness raising; and capacity development of national partners. However, the overall programme implementation approach was relatively weak, lacking a strategy to achieve the CCPD/One Plan outcomes and outputs. Challenges included inherent limitations in the measurability of performance against goals; sustainability; and insufficient collaboration with development partners working in the same sectors.

Conclusion 4. The national implementation modality was particularly valued for its promotion of national ownership of development processes and results. But significant challenges exist in project design, management, administration and reporting.

Conclusion 5. With its flexible/exploratory stature, the current framework of the Policy Advisory Team lacks clarity in its long-term strategy and approaches. The team's linkages with the existing programme operations have been selective, and limited in strategies for policy implementation. Numerous knowledge products were produced through their work, but the extent of their reach and utility is yet to be fully determined.

Conclusion 6. The integration of gender principles in programme/project design was generally limited, except for some dedicated projects.

Conclusion 7. Challenges in inter-agency coordination and collaboration affected the quality and timeliness of some programmes/projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. UNDP should continue to focus on upstream policy work as its core country programme strategy, but revisit its overall policy praxis/approach to develop a comprehensive strategy that will ensure that all efforts link to the CCPD/One Plan outcomes and outputs.

***Management Response.** The recommendation is accepted. Policy work will continually be central to UN/UNDP development results in 2017–2021. Upstream policy work and integrated programming to ensure that policy work contributes to the One UN Strategic Plan Outcomes will be the focus of the next country programme. We will also maintain the existence of the Policy Advisory Team (PAT) as a UNDP global best practice, and strengthen the linkages between the PAT and the programme/projects by ensuring the use of PAT expertise in quality assuring programme/project design, implementation and reporting of results. An emerging priority for our work in 2017–2021 is to address policy implementation gaps, in addition to policy development.*

To increase UNDP's role and contribution at the UN level, we will implement agreed actions in 2016 to promote issue-based, multi-disciplinary programming through sectoral work by Joint Programming Groups (JPGs) and contribute actively to defining

UN-level policy visions and approaches in the formulation of the One UN Strategic Plan 2017–2021.

Recommendation 2. In close consultation with the government and UN agencies, UNDP should further strengthen its programme approach.

Management Response. *The recommendation is accepted and being taken on board. We are reviewing our programme approach and planning a shift away from project-focused to a more programme-focused approach in the formulation of 2017–2021 One UN Strategic Plan and Country Programme Document (CPD). This is facilitated by the current review of the Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guideline (PPMG) together with UNICEF, UNFPA and Government Aid Coordinating Agencies (GACAs) and the revision of the ODA regulations, under which the non-project assistance is very likely to be accepted. The PAT, programme units and the M&E Team are actively contributing to all pillars of the 2017–2021 One UN Strategic Plan, with a focus on ensuring clarity of statements, objectives and means of verification.*

With the support from the regional bureau, UNDP Viet Nam is developing a clear, logical pathway (Theory of Change) for each thematic area under its next country programme. This will articulate how UNDP is going to deliver outcome results across the sectors in collaboration with other UN agencies. Based on the longer-term perspective in achieving results and the programme theory of change, we will develop an improved design of UNDP projects/assurances that support the achievement of the planned results.

Recommendation 3. UNDP, in close consultation with national partners and the Regional Bureau, should strengthen its M&E practices in its projects and policy efforts.

Management Response. *The recommendation is accepted. Under the DaO context, the monitoring and evaluation of the UNDP country programme will be an integral part of the One UN Strategic Plan (2017–2021), and aligned to its overarching Results Monitoring Framework. As results-based management (RBM) will continue to be an essential*

component of Delivering as One, results planning, monitoring, reporting, review and evaluation of the One UN Strategic Plan will continue to be strengthened to ensure evidence-based decision-making and enhanced accountability. Particular attention will be given to measuring the results of UNDP's support to upstream policymaking. UNDP will contribute to the development and monitoring of relevant inter-agency Joint Programming Groups' annual work plans, using UNDP's expertise and agency-specific monitoring tools, while building synergies with the UN agencies in Viet Nam. To ensure harmonized approaches to results-based management, UNDP will make use of UNDG-endorsed tools and guidance in line with Standard Operating Procedures. Joint monitoring and evaluation as well as RBM capacity development will be supported in coordination with the Government and other UN agencies.

The monitoring and evaluation of the UNDP country programme will also be based on indicators, baselines, and targets defined in the corporate UNDP Strategic Plan (IRRF). Indicators will be disaggregated by sex and other variables, where applicable. National data and monitoring and evaluation systems will be used to the fullest extent possible.

UNDP will strengthen its M&E practices in project and policy efforts to generate information and produce data for evidence and analysis through specific actions mentioned below.

Through the use of Theories of Change (ToC) at the programme level, M&E will play a key role in validating the assumptions that are vital to the ToCs, thereby providing inputs for necessary adjustments of programme design during the implementation.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should build more effective partnerships with development partners within the UN system and with international financial institutions when taking an issue-based approach to its interventions, to enhance programme complementarity and a leadership role for UNDP.

Management Response. *This recommendation is accepted and being addressed. UNDP is strengthen-*

ing partnership at all levels to address the common development challenges. We are also actively participating in the JPGs and currently the convener of two JPGs (Governance and Rule of Law, and Climate Change and Environment) as well as facilitating development partners' policy coordination in select areas (e.g. in ethnic minority development, legal reform, human rights, climate change). In addition, UNDP will prioritize the mobilization of domestic resources for development cooperation in line with Viet Nam's status as a middle income country.

We are also drawing important lessons on management of joint programmes/projects with other UN and government agencies and will apply these lessons in the next programme cycle.

Recommendation 5. UNDP, in close consultation with the government and the UN agencies, should facilitate innovations in inter-ministerial coordination to address specific problems associated with overlapping mandates and programmes. It should engage non-government organizations to enhance delivery of government services.

Management Response. This recommendation is accepted. Inter-ministerial coordination is a system-wide bottleneck that transcends UN/UNDP programmes; UNDP's response has been to bridge institutional gaps and promote whole-of-government action, but this has not always been possible due to institutional mandates. In the coming time, we will focus our efforts on bringing different actors together to address institutional fragmentation and overlaps and promoting the role of civil society as an important partner in development.

The next country programme will place a high priority on promoting a whole-of-government approach to tackling the increasingly complex development challenges that Viet Nam faces, along with supporting a framework for measuring and reporting on national SDG performance.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should develop and implement a clear office-wide gender plan/strategy with accountability mechanisms in

place for implementation and achievement of set objectives.

Management Response. This recommendation is accepted and being taken on board. The Viet Nam country office has identified gender as a priority for alignment with the corporate UNDP Strategic Plan, and will develop a Gender Strategy and Action Plan for the new country programme document. We are also undergoing a rigorous Gender Seal certification programme to strengthen gender equality programming, and promote gender mainstreaming across development and organizational goals. A Gender Seal Action Plan has been drafted, encompassing 37 mandatory benchmarks, and implementation is expected to continue through October 2016. A Country Office Gender Focal Team, with representation across all programme and operational units and headed by the Country Director, has been appointed.

Recommendation 7. UNDP should assess existing knowledge development options, including South-South cooperation practices and research/analytical work produced by the PAT and the projects, and develop an effective knowledge management strategy for the country office.

Management Response. This recommendation is accepted and being addressed. Knowledge management and innovation are key aspects of re-thinking UN comparative advantage in the middle income country context of Viet Nam. An UN-wide examination of appropriate modalities is underway. The country office has planned to capitalize on numerous knowledge products and exchange with different stakeholders through improved online access and reach using IT solutions, applications and social media. A knowledge management strategy will be developed, possibly in partnerships with other UN agencies for the implementation of the 2017–2021 One UN Strategic Plan. The next country programme will include a more strategic approach to South-South cooperation and exchange on knowledge products and innovations on priority themes linked to One Strategic Plan and CPD outcomes, with support from the Bangkok regional hub and headquarters.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a country programme evaluation, or Assessment of Development Results (ADR), in Viet Nam in 2015. The purpose of the ADR is to:

- Support the development of the next UNDP country programme document;
- Strengthen the accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders; and
- Strengthen the accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board.

Following the first ADR in 2003, this is the second independent country-level evaluation conducted by IEO in Viet Nam. Viet Nam is a pilot country for the Delivering as One (DaO) initiative. The evaluation was conducted in close collaboration with the Government of Viet Nam, UNDP Viet Nam country office (CO), UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Viet Nam, and UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP).

1.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The ADR examined UNDP's country programme for two periods: 2006–2010/2011 and 2012–2016. Guided by its terms of reference (Annex 1), it examined a total of eight programme outcomes as defined by the Common Country Programme Document (CCPD) 2012–2016, which includes projects from the previous programme cycle 2006–2010/2011. The outcomes covered three

thematic clusters, reflecting the programme structure of the current CO: (i) Inclusive and Equitable Growth (IEG); (ii) Sustainable Development; and (iii) Governance and Participation (GPT). The assessment of the HIV and AIDS portfolio, which was discontinued at the start of the previous programme cycle, was not included in the ADR. As UNDP prepares its next country programme (starting in 2017), the evaluation was expected to provide forward-looking recommendations, based particularly on lessons drawn from current programme and operational practices.

The assessment included the role of the Policy Advisory Team (PAT), a group of international advisors specializing in economics, climate change and governance, reporting to the UNDP Deputy Country Director. Funded by the UN One Plan Fund and select bilateral donors, the team is responsible for “building policy advisory capacity in the UN in Viet Nam”,¹ and its support has been extended to UNDP and all other UN agencies in Viet Nam, as required. While the team's mandate is broadly at the UN level, the ADR focused primarily on the team's work as it related to UNDP's efforts in strengthening its programme activities (and in supporting policy dialogue in the country) and its contribution to the achievement of the outcomes under review.

1.3 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACHES

1.3.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation assessed UNDP's contribution to development results by programme area and the

1 PAT, 'Issue Based Policy Advisory Services: Experience from the Policy Advisory Team in UNDP Viet Nam,' 2013.

quality of its contribution. A set of criteria were used for each:

- UNDP's contribution by programme area. The ADR examined the overall effectiveness of UNDP in helping the country achieve development results by analysing its support in reducing poverty, inequality and exclusion, as well as furthering gender equality and women's empowerment. It examined the role of policy advisory services and guidance, reflecting the particular context of Viet Nam, which has achieved middle-income country status.
- Assessment of the quality of its contribution. Assessment of the quality of UNDP's contribution is based on:
 - the relevance of UNDP's outcomes and projects to the country's needs and priorities;
 - the efficiency of UNDP's interventions in terms of use of human and financial resources; and
 - the sustainability of the results to which UNDP contributed.

The ADR also examined UNDP strategic positioning from the perspective of the organization's mandate and development needs and priorities in the country, with particular reference to the DaO environment and the associated 'One Plan' as the foundation for the UN's work.

1.3.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data were collected by: (i) desk reviews of reference materials, including programme/project related documents, country programme documents, past evaluation reports, monitoring reports and data on the One Plan outcomes available from the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, plus knowledge products and publications; (ii) face-to-face or telephone interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, national implementing partners, UNDP staff (including former policy advisors), development partners,

donors, and beneficiary groups; and (iii) visits to project sites (Da Nang, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Nghe An and Quang Ngai Province). The lists of people consulted and documents reviewed are attached as Annexes 2 and 3, respectively.

Projects for in-depth review were selected from each outcome. The selection criteria included balance in issue areas, budget, and availability of lessons to be learned. Data and information collected from various sources were triangulated to strengthen the validity of findings.

The overall assessment of outcomes relied on a contribution analysis. To understand the complex nature and structure of the thematic programmes under review, a theory of change model was examined with programme staff for each outcome. This helped to assess the level of plausible associations between programme elements and to determine the extent to which UNDP has contributed to the outcomes.

1.3.3 EVALUATION PROCESS AND MANAGEMENT

The Evaluation Manager conducted a preparatory mission in Viet Nam between 4 and 8 May 2015. The main objectives of the mission were to ensure that CO staff and national stakeholders are familiar with the purpose and process of the evaluation; to assess the evaluability of the country programme; and to discuss the scope, approaches, timeline and other parameters. A national reference group of key national stakeholders in the country programme was set up by the CO. Following the mission, the evaluation's terms of reference were developed. Three external evaluation team members were recruited to assess the thematic programmes.

A data collection mission was conducted between 3 and 21 August 2015 by the entire evaluation team. During the evaluation, outcome analysis papers were prepared and synthesized into a draft report. The draft ADR report was reviewed internally by IEO, then shared with the CO and the RBAP for comments on 10 November, 2015.

A stakeholder workshop was organized in Hanoi on 19 January 2016, co-chaired by the Government of Viet Nam, CO, and IEO. The report was finalized after comments from the stakeholders were examined and CO submitted the final management response.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

The evaluation had the following limitations:

There was a limited number of prior outcome evaluations available for the ADR. Likewise, the level and quality of project midterm and completion reports and independent evaluations varied.

The synchronization of data collection activities (e.g. conduct of interviews) with the other two evaluations being conducted in parallel in the country, i.e. the One Plan Evaluation and the country evaluation by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), was not possible to the

extent initially hoped for, due to changes in the evaluations' schedules.² That limited this ADR's opportunities to learn and reflect on the results of the other evaluations.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report has six chapters. Chapter 2 presents an overview of Viet Nam's development context, national responses to the challenges and the development architecture in which UNDP has operated. Chapter 3 provides a summary of the UNDP country programme, its strategies and approaches in addressing national development needs and challenges. Chapter 4 presents results of the assessment of UNDP's contribution to development results through its programmatic interventions. Chapter 5 presents results of the assessment of UNDP's strategic positioning in the country. And Chapter 6 offers a set of conclusions and recommendations from the ADR, drawing on its findings presented in the previous chapters.

2 However, the ADR team continued to be in touch with the other evaluation teams and shared information obtained from its field work, as well as results of its analyses for their information and use.

Chapter 2

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

This chapter provides an overview of the country and its development challenges for the reviewed periods. It also presents a summary of the country's response through its national development strategies and the role of development cooperation in Viet Nam.

2.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

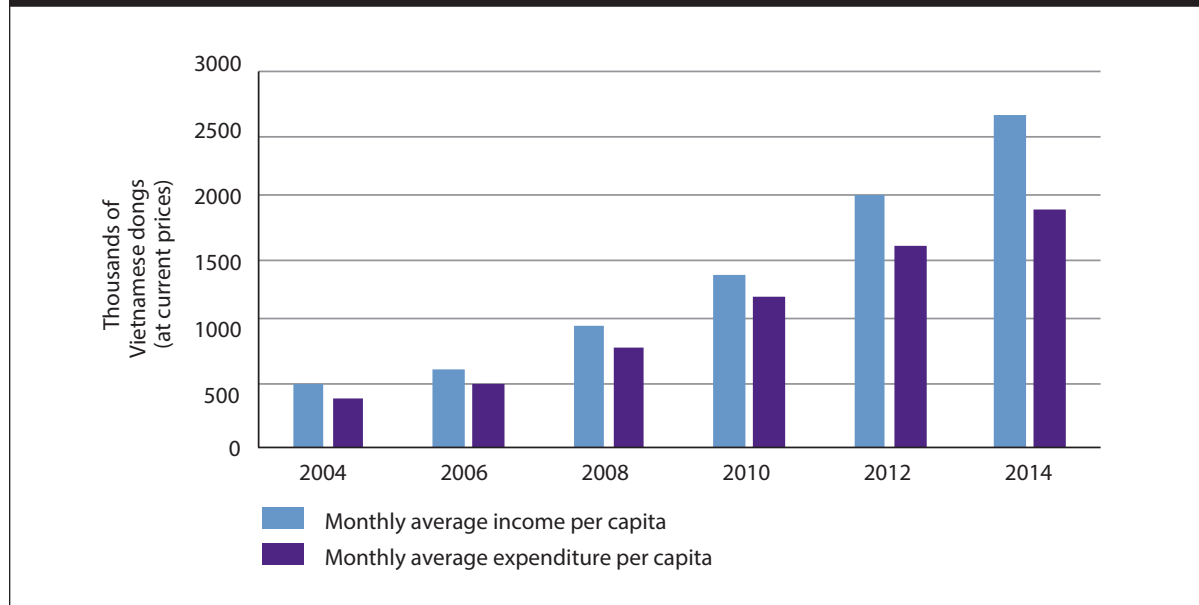
The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is a lower middle-income country with an estimated population of 92 million. The country is bordered by China to the north and Lao PDR and Cambodia to the west, and covers an area of 330,957 square kilometres. After the country's reunification in 1975, and with intensive political and economic reforms launched in 1986 known as *Doi Moi*

(‘renovation’), Viet Nam has experienced significant developmental change.

Economic and political context

Shifting from a centrally planned economy to a socialist-oriented, market-driven economy through the historic political and economic reform in the mid-1980s while pursuing a stable macroeconomic policy, Viet Nam is an emerging middle-income country with per capita income increasing more than five-fold between 2004 and 2014 (Figure 1). Between 2002 and 2013, GDP grew by an average of 6.4 percent per year. After that slowed to 4 percent in 2014, the rate has been on the rise again, accelerating to 6.28 percent in the first half of 2015, the fastest first half of year growth rate in the last five years.³

Figure 1. Monthly average income and expenditure per capita, 2002-2014



Source: General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (2015)

³ World Bank, ‘Taking Stock: An Update on Vietnam’s Recent Economic Developments,’ July 2015.

Viet Nam is one of the world's largest exporters of rice, rubber, coffee, pepper, cashew nuts, wood products and fish. The agriculture sector, which used to account for one-third of GDP in the early 1990s, has declined in recent years, while the industry and services sectors have grown to make up a large majority of economy (Table 1). Viet Nam is one of the six dynamic emerging economies known as CIVETS (Columbia, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa), the next generation of tiger economies after BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).

Viet Nam is divided into 63 cities and provinces. The provinces are further divided into districts and wards/communes, and are led by a people's committee as the local organ of state power. Each

level of government has corresponding people's councils and elected bodies, which are increasingly active in oversight work. The Communist Party of Viet Nam (CPV) is the country's only political party. The Constitution designates the National Assembly as the highest organ of the state.

Millennium Development Goals and human development

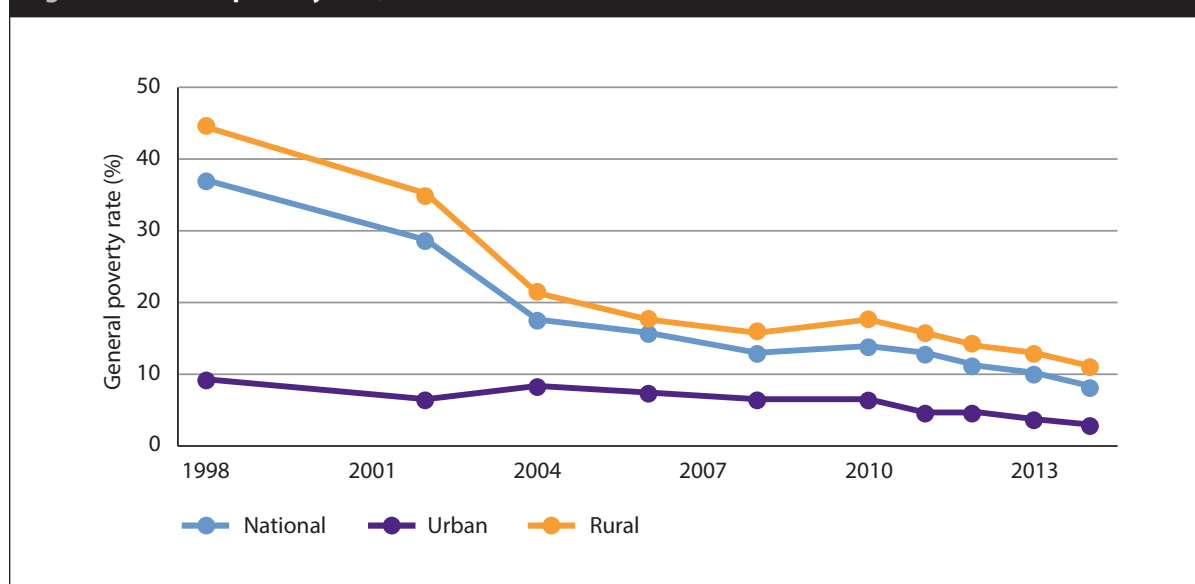
With strong economic growth, Viet Nam has dramatically improved many people's quality of life. For a poverty headcount ratio of \$2 a day, Viet Nam successfully reduced poverty from 68.73 percent in 2002 to 12.45 percent in 2012. Over the same period, a poverty headcount ratio of \$1.25 a day achieved a 38 percent reduction from 40.07 percent in 2002 to 2.44 percent in

Table 1. Structure of the Economy, 1992-2014 (% of GDP at current prices by economic sector)

	1992	2002	2011	2014 ⁴
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	33.94	23.03	19.57	17.7
Industry and construction	27.26	38.49	32.24	33.21
Services	38.8	38.48	36.73	39.04

Source: General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (2015)

Figure 2. General poverty rate, 1998-2014



Source: General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (2015)

4 Preliminary figures for 2014 (General Statistics Office of Viet Nam, 2015).

Table 2. Poverty rate using government poverty line for 2006–2010 and 2011–2015

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rate (%)	22.31	17.01	14.75	12.10	11.30	14.20	11.76	9.60	7.80	5.97

Source: MOLISA, National Portal on Sustainable Poverty Reduction, 2015.⁵

2012. For the periods 2006–2010 and 2011–2015, government data show a decline in the national poverty line from 15.5 percent in 2006 to 8.4 percent in 2014.⁶ The reduction has been achieved across all regions, but particularly in the South East and the Red River Delta regions. The standard of living for households has improved drastically with household expenditure more than tripling. UNDP's Human Development Report notes that 6.4 percent of the population are multi-dimensionally poor in Viet Nam, with an additional 8.7 percent near multidimensional poverty.⁷

Despite the significant progress in poverty reduction, the country has been faced with a growing socio-economic gap and inequality. Viet Nam is a diverse country with 54 ethnic groups. Ethnic minorities account for about 15 percent of the national population. Social inequality and disparity in the poverty level continue to be higher among ethnic minorities than in the majority Kinh.⁸ The poverty rate by expenditure was 66 percent in 2010 for ethnic minorities, compared to 13 percent for the Kinh. Significant inequalities exist between the two in terms of access to public utilities, such as the national electric power grid and improved water, and education. The average income of ethnic minority households in poor and remote areas is only one-sixth of the national average. Poverty rates are higher in regions such as North West, North East and

Central Highlands where ethnic minorities live. The pace of poverty reduction among ethnic minorities is also reported to be far below the national standard and the Kinh's.⁹ Urban poverty, triggered by a high influx of rural migrants and rapid urbanization, as well as children's multidimensional poverty (which reached 29.6 percent in 2010, equivalent to 7 million children) are also considered emerging issues that require attention.

With a significant commitment by the government to integrate the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into its national framework, the country has successfully met targets or has made progress towards their achievement. At the time of the evaluation, Viet Nam has fully achieved a number of MDGs, such as those on poverty reduction (Goal 1), universal primary education (Goal 2), and gender equality (Goal 3); and made progress on some targets under reduction in infant mortality (Goal 4), maternal mortality (Goal 5), and HIV/AIDS and malaria (Goal 6).¹⁰ Further efforts are needed on environmental sustainability (Goal 7) and global partnership (Goal 8).

Viet Nam's Human Development Index value is 0.638 (2013), which places the country in the medium human development category, ranking it 121st of 187 countries and territories.¹¹ The HDI value had an average annual increase of about 0.7 percent between 1990 and 2013.

5 <http://giamngheo.molisa.gov.vn/VN/NewsDetail.aspx?ID=857&CateID=56>.

6 Compared with poverty figures modelled by the World Bank, poverty headcount at the national poverty line was still at 17.2% in 2012 (<http://data.un.org/>). This significant discrepancy is attributed commonly to Vietnam's "basic needs" poverty line established in 1990s and considered low by international standards.

7 UNDP, HDR 2014, Multidimensional Poverty Index.

8 National MDG Report 2013, December 2013.

9 National MDG Report 2013, p.26.

10 Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 'Country Report: 15 Years Achieving the Viet Nam Millennium Development Goals,' September 2015.

11 UNDP Human Development Index, 2014.

The country has made progress in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, as their importance for socio-economic development has been acknowledged by the government. The Gender Equality Department was established in 2008 under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). It is tasked with the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality, the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011–2013, the National Program for Gender Equality 2011–2015 and reporting on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).¹²

Viet Nam's Gender Inequality Index is 0.322, ranking the country 58th of 149 countries (2013).¹³ Female participation in the labour market is 73 percent, compared to 82 percent for men. About 47 percent of central and government positions have women in leadership positions. Women's representation in the National Assembly has improved significantly over the last two decades. It currently stands at 24 percent (2011–2016). The percentage of women holding the highest position in enterprises increased from 20.8 percent in 2009 to 24.7 percent in 2011.¹⁴

But Vietnamese women continue to face challenges, such as inequality, discrimination, and limited economic opportunities.¹⁵ Many women (58 percent) are reported to have experienced some type of domestic violence.¹⁶ Women are exposed to an income gap, where, for example, men earn 50 percent more than women in the informal sector where women are over-represented. They are more vulnerable to labour exploitation, abuse and trafficking with high levels of migration.¹⁷ Implementation of legislation

and policy, including more awareness-raising and stronger gender analysis, monitoring and reporting, has remained a challenge.¹⁸

Institutional reforms

Viet Nam has undertaken various institutional reforms following the *Doi Moi*, including measures to strengthen the role of elected bodies, enhance the rule of law, improve performance of the administrative apparatus, reduce corruption, and enhance the scope of popular participation in governance.

Viet Nam's transition from central planning went hand-in-hand with reform of the public administration system. The fundamental task here was to separate state management from economic management and public service delivery functions, all of which were merged under central planning. Parallel to the reform of the state economic sector and service delivery was public administration reform (PAR). At the national level, Viet Nam's ministries were merged and a number of key ministries underwent a restructuring process in the 1990s and 2000s. That was followed by a restructuring of specialized departments and offices at the province and district levels. By 2010, within the context of decentralization, the subnational executive had become the key player. However, the roles and functions of ministries, departments, and agencies have remained unclear, and administrative procedures cumbersome. For example, key public service sectors have remained partially or fully under government management. Despite efforts to decentralize, local government effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability has been limited. While the Law on Anticorruption was enacted in 2005 and some progress has been

12 UN Women, 'Gender in Viet Nam,' <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/vietnam/gender-in-viet-nam>.

13 UNDP HDR Report, 2014. The country ranks higher than Thailand (70th) or the Philippines (78th).

14 National MDG Report, 2013.

15 UN Women in Asia and the Pacific, 'Gender in Viet Nam,' <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/vietnam/gender-in-viet-nam>.

16 UN Women, 'Vietnam: National Study on Domestic Violence Against Women,' www.unwomen.org/mdgf/a/vietnam_a.html.

17 UN Viet Nam, www.un.org.vn/en/component/content/article.html?Itemid=&id=1081:cross-cutting-themes-gender.

18 Ibid.

made, many challenges are still ahead.¹⁹ According to Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perception Index, Viet Nam ranked 119th of 175 countries worldwide.²⁰ Overall, and despite considerable reform efforts, public administration performance has lagged behind Viet Nam's development needs.²¹

Viet Nam's judicial reform strategies have set out agendas to further institutional reforms of the courts, procuracies, and other agencies, plus reform of criminal, civil and administrative procedures. But implementation of these reforms has remained challenging. There are inconsistencies, conflicts, and overlaps within the legal system. Duty bearers are unaware of rights and their application remains low in some population groups. The judicial system has limited independence, and political influences often affected judicial outcomes.²²

The 2013 Constitution represents a milestone in enhancing the roles of elected bodies in review, oversight, and representation. Since 2001, within the framework of the Law on the Organization of the National Assembly, the National Assembly has taken on a more prominent role in holding the government accountable. Increasingly, it vets and approves cabinet member nominations, supports the rule of law concept through debates and legislation, and oversees the allocation of the state budget. Management decentralization has necessitated an increasingly active role from elected bodies at the subnational level. However, the capacities of the National Assembly and people's councils to perform their functions have remained limited. In addition to the National

Assembly and the people's councils, Viet Nam has created the State Audit of Viet Nam and revived its inspectorate system, both of which serve to enforce compliance with existing rules and regulations in finance and management.

Viet Nam has increasingly integrated participatory mechanisms into its political system. Traditional social-political organizations such as mass organizations or umbrella professional organizations have been given channels to participate in policy processes. There are also new types of socio-political organizations, professional organizations, associations, and non-governmental organizations, which have been able to consolidate the space for their operation. At the national and provincial levels, government units drafting legal and policy documents are now required to seek public comment. The Law on Anti-Corruption (2005) includes a clause on popular participation in anti-corruption work.

Several factors have precipitated these changes. These include Viet Nam's need for legal frameworks to govern domestic social, economic and cultural activities as well as to support its integration into the regional and international scene. Additionally, there is continuing international pressure on Viet Nam to bring its national legal frameworks in line with international standards.

Environment

The environmental costs of rapid economic growth in Viet Nam have long been recognized. The key drivers of environmental degradation include rapid growth of industry and urban expansion, agricultural intensification and

19 World Bank, 'Corruption,' 2012.

20 Transparency International, 'Corruption by Country.' www.transparency.org/country#VNM (accessed Feb 2015)

21 For a review of performance, see for example, David Dapice, *Choosing Success: The Lessons of East and Southeast Asia and Vietnam's Future: A Policy Framework for Vietnam's Socio-Economic Development, 2011-2020*. Dept. of Economics, Tufts Univ., 2008. More recently, the results of the Ministry of Home Affairs' PAR Index, that measures PAR implementation, and the results of PAPI, that measures citizen experience with PAR in 2014, suggest that the 10 best provinces in the area of PAR implementation did not do well in the six governance dimensions measured by PAPI.

22 One Plan 2012-2016, and the Resolution 49-NQ/TW of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Vietnam on the Judicial Reform Strategy to 2020 (2 June 2005).

23 Asian Development Bank, *Viet Nam: Environment and climate change assessment*, Philippines, 2013.

encroachment.²³ Pollution issues reached a concern so that in 2004 the government decided to increase public environmental protection expenditures to 1 percent of the overall budget. Despite progress, air and water quality and waste management in particular have fallen short of targets and performance suffered from hesitant enforcement. The most serious polluters have been targeted, but industrial and municipal pollution is dominated by the rising absolute volume of discharges and waste of all kinds despite some improvements in waste recovery and discharge quality.²⁴ Priority environmental concerns include inland water pollution, air pollution from mobile sources, inadequate solid waste management, forest resources, threats to biodiversity, threats to coastal zone, and climate change.²⁵ Between 2000 and 2010, official figures showed an increase in forest area, but this is explained by more plantation forest and poor quality secondary forest.²⁶

The country has continued to suffer from dioxin contamination stemming from the American war, which has polluted the environment and food crops. Studies on Agent Orange/dioxin pollution began in 1994, leading to support for a major dioxin hotspots rehabilitation programme from the Government of Viet Nam, Global Environment Facility, UNDP and USAID.²⁷

Development of the National Target Program on Pollution Management and Environmental Improvement, the National Strategy on Environment Protection to 2020 with Visions to

2030, and the National Biodiversity Strategy by 2020, also helped drive the environment agenda. Commitments to international environmental agreements have been a factor in pushing for action, along with the growing recognition of the impacts on human health and livelihood of pollution and the over-exploitation and degradation of natural resources.

Climate Change

Viet Nam is among those countries that are most vulnerable to extreme weather events and sea-level rise.²⁸ Climate change increases the severity of environmental stress associated with rapid modernization and economic development. A recent study reported increasing trends in the projected number of hot days and heat waves in the central region; heavy rainfall with landslides in mountainous areas; frequent and severe floods with wider area of impact; droughts; strong typhoons; and average sea level rise.²⁹ These events significantly hinder development in Viet Nam. Economic losses from these climate-related events have been significant and continue to pose a threat to the country's development. Viet Nam ranked seventh in estimated global annual GDP losses and casualties to climate-related disasters from 1994 to 2013.³⁰

The 2008 approval of the National Target Program in Responding to Climate Change was a key decision that set in motion several initiatives under the National Strategy on Climate Change of 2011 and the National Green Growth Strategy and Action Plan for 2014–2020.

24 World Bank, 'Review and analysis of pollution impacts from Vietnamese manufacturing sectors,' 2008.

25 UNEP/MONRE, 'Vietnam National Environmental Performance Assessment Report,' 2008.

26 Asian Development Bank, *Viet Nam: Environment and climate change assessment*, Philippines, 2013.

27 World Bank, Agent Orange and Dioxin Hot Spots in Vietnam, www-esd.worldbank.org/popstoolkit/POPsToolkit/POPSTOOLKIT_COM/ABOUT/ARTICLES/AODIOXINHOTSPOTSVIETNAM.HTM.

28 For example, the 2013 MDG report noted that, Viet Nam ranked fifth in terms of extreme weather direct risks and eighth in terms of sea level rise direct risks, according to a 2011 Center for Global Development impact study covering 233 countries and other political jurisdictions in the world.

29 IMHEN and UNDP, Summary for Policy Makers in Vietnam Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation, Vietnam Publishing House of Natural Resources & Environment & Cartography, Hanoi, 2015, pp. 2-27.

30 *ibid.* 2015, p. 11.

Energy conservation and efficiency have been major elements of the climate change strategy in Viet Nam. Viet Nam's growing population, rising living standards, and overall pace of development are driving increased energy demand, with per capita energy consumption projected to reach 5,400 kilowatt-hours by 2030, a more than five-fold increase from 2010.³¹ The rise in commercial energy demand has been driven by three key factors: (i) increasing industrialization; (ii) expansion of motorized transport; and (iii) increasing household use of modern fuels, especially electricity. About 65 percent of final energy demand is fuel – mainly coal and petroleum products – while electricity accounts for about 35 percent. In addition to the electric power industry, the key target areas for energy conservation include: (i) fuel and electricity use in industry; (ii) fuel use in transportation; and (iii) residential electricity use. Energy use in all four of these target areas has been growing faster than GDP.³²

2.2 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Viet Nam has defined its long-term strategic visions and goals for development in the Socio-Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) 2001–2010 and 2011–2020, which are operationalized through the five-year Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDPs). The latest SEDS focus on structural reforms, environmental sustainability, social equity and macroeconomic stability in three key areas: (i) promoting human resources and skills development; (ii) improving market institutions; and (iii) infrastructure development (Table 3).

2.3 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Official Development Assistance Viet Nam is among the world's foremost recipients of official development assistance (ODA).³³ Between 1993 and 2012, the country received \$80 billion

Table 3. Viet Nam's Socio-Economic Development Plans for 2006–2010 and 2011–2015

2006-2010	2011-2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate economic growth with increased efficiency and sustainability of development to take the country out of the current under-development state. • Improve people's material, cultural and spiritual life. • Speed up industrialization and modernization and develop a knowledge-based economy, forming the basis for making Viet Nam a fundamentally industrialized country in the direction of modernization by 2020. • Maintain political stability, social order and safety. • Firmly defend national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. • Continue strengthening and broadening foreign relations, enhancing Viet Nam's position in regional and international arenas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop economy in a rapid, sustainable manner coupling with innovating growth model and restructuring the economy towards better quality and higher competitiveness efficiency. • Ensure social welfare and social security while material and spiritual life of the people continue to be improved. • Enhance diplomatic activities to promote the efficiency of international integration. • Firmly defend independence, sovereignty, unification and territorial integrity and maintain political security and social order and safety, thus creating a foundation for the country to become a modernity-oriented industrial nation by 2020. • During the first two or three years, focus on realizing the objectives of stabilizing the macro-economy, ensuring social security, achieving a proper growth rate and strongly expediting economic restructuring and growth model shifting.

Source: Excerpts from 'Overall objectives,' Socialist Republic of Viet Nam Government Portal, SEDPs 2006-2010 and 2011-2015

31 Asian Development Bank, Viet Nam: Environment and climate change assessment, Philippines, 2013, p. 9.

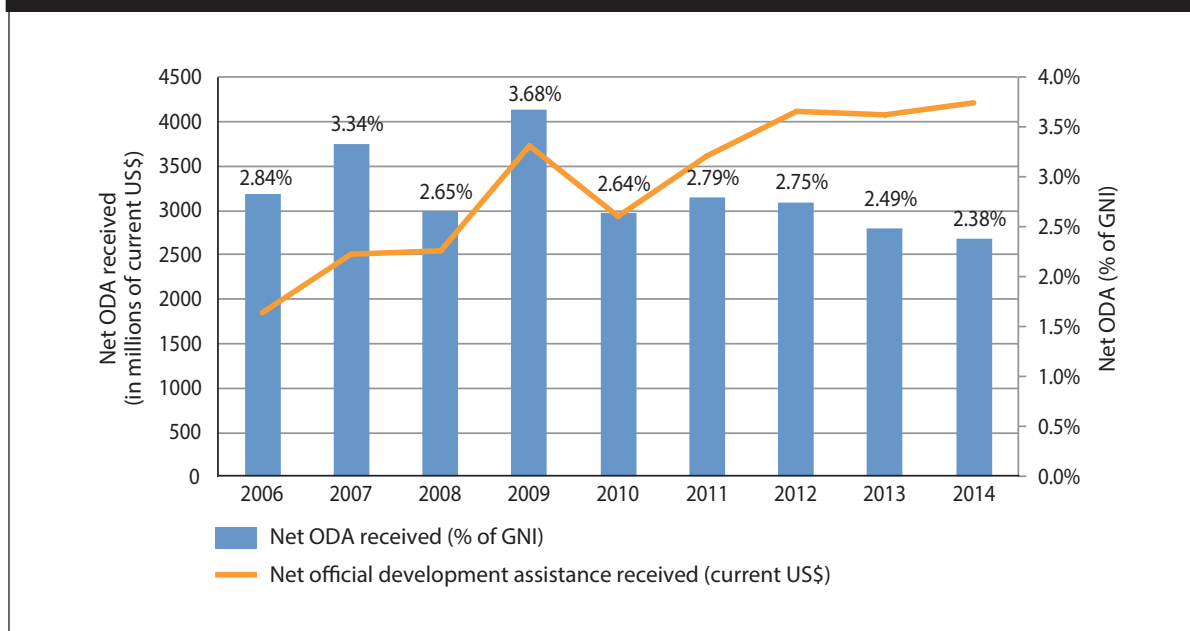
32 World Bank, Vietnam – Expanding Opportunities for Energy Efficiency, 2010.

33 OECD, 'Managing Aid for Trade and Development Results: Viet Nam Case Study,' 2012.

in assistance, with a surge in 2008 from major development institutions (Japan International Cooperation Agency, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank), after the global financial crisis.³⁴ The amount of ODA received has declined in recent years, particularly since the

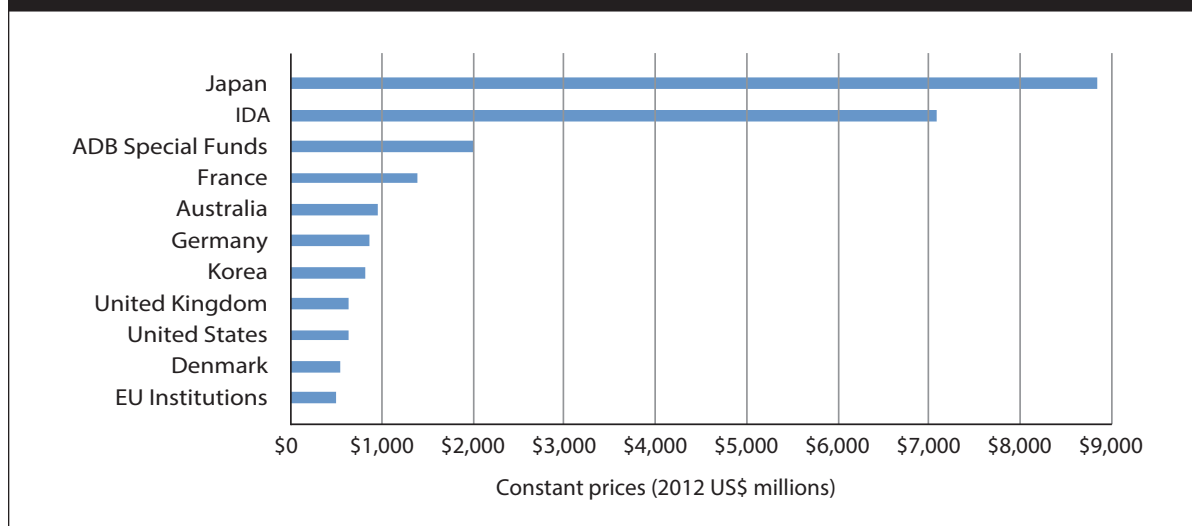
country became a lower middle-income country in 2010. Over the years, the ODA has been used for infrastructure, agriculture and rural development, energy, health, education and training, and environment, significantly contributing to socio-economic development and poverty

Figure 3. ODA trends, 2006–2013



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators (WDI), 2015

Figure 4. Major multilateral and bilateral contributors of ODA, 2006–2013



Source: OECD, QWIDS (2014)

³⁴ UN Viet Nam, EU and MPI, 'Development Finance for Sustainable Development Goals in Middle-Income Viet Nam,' Hanoi, December 2014.

reduction.³⁵ In reviewing the last two decades, Viet Nam acknowledged the importance of ODA to its development and noted the need for a more efficient utilization of the ODA.³⁶

One Plan The One Plan 2012–2016 recognizes the changing environment within which the UN system operates in Viet Nam.³⁷ The country's shift to a lower middle-income country implies a reduced level of development assistance expected from donors, as well as changes in the type of funding, with fewer grants and less concessional assistance. As the country is expected to require different types of support, the UN in Viet Nam seeks to “function as a cohesive unit with a well-defined leadership and management structure... [provide] the highest quality policy advice on short notice... [and have] greater selectivity of programme priorities.”³⁸ It puts particular emphasis on “best practices, high quality policy advice on how best to respond to challenges associated with the middle-income countries, including widening inequalities and disparities, persistent poverty among specific regions and population groups and climate change and natural disaster risks.”³⁹

The financial contribution from the UN has been relatively small, representing less than 1.5 per-

cent of the total aid (\$7.9 billion) for Viet Nam in 2010. But the UN in Viet Nam has pledged to continue providing assistance to the country and its people by using its comparative advantages, such as its “convening power and normative role to ensure resources are utilized effectively and in the interests of the ultimate beneficiaries” and by playing a unique role in its support to the government to leverage resources.

Inclusive and equitable growth In the area of poverty reduction, Viet Nam has undertaken a number of National Target Programs (NTPs), including the NTP on Poverty Reduction (NTP-PR), Program 135/Phase II (P135/II), NTP for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (NTP-RWSS) between 2006 and 2010; and Program 30A, the NTP on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP-SPR)⁴⁰, the New Rural Development Program between 2011 and 2015. The Social Protection Strategy (2011–2020)⁴¹ was drafted by MOLISA and was widely discussed from 2010, but has not been officially approved by the government. Resolution 15-NQ/TW⁴² on social protection policy issues between 2012 and 2020 and the Resolution 70 Action Plan for implementation of the Resolution 15-NQ/TW⁴³ were issued by the Party as a direction toward social protection reform.

35 MPI, “Overview of ODA Mobilization and Usage in Vietnam: Period 1993–2007,” <http://oda.mpi.gov.vn/english/ODAinVietnam/StateManagementofODA/tabid/242/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

36 Nhan Dan, <http://en.nhandan.org.vn/business/item/3536502-oda-important-to-vietnam%E2%80%99s-development-deputy-pm-ninh.html>; International conference reviewing 20 years of ODA organized by the Party Central Economic Committee in Da Nang, 7 Aug, 2015, www.vir.com.vn/vietnam-looks-back-on-20-years-of-receiving-official-development-assistance.html.

37 UN Viet Nam, ‘One Plan 2012–2016.’

38 Based on principles from ‘Development cooperation with middle-income countries: Report of the Secretary-General,’ UN General Assembly, A/68/265, 5 August 2013.

39 UN Viet Nam, ‘One Plan 2012–2016.’

40 Resolution 80/NQ-CP, dated 19 May 2011 by GOV, providing new directions for sustainable poverty reduction for 2011–2020, aiming at accelerating poverty reduction in the poorest districts, communes and villages of the country. The NPT-SPR 2012–2015 was approved in early October 2012 to accelerate poverty reduction in Viet Nam’s poorest districts, communes and villages and improve the well-being and livelihoods of the poor, particularly those in mountainous and ethnic minority areas.

41 ILO, Analysis of the Viet Nam National Social Protection Strategy (2011–2020) in the context of Social Protection Floor objectives – A rapid assessment, ILO 2012 www.socialprotectionfloor-gateway.org/files/Vietnam_Analysis_of_SP.pdf.

42 Communist Party of Vietnam, Resolution 15-NQ/TW, 2012 (Vietnamese only). <http://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Van-hoa-Xa-hoi/Nghi-quyet-15-NQ-TW-nam-2012-hoi-nghi-lan-thu-nam-Ban-chap-hanh-Trung-uong-150877.aspx>.

43 ILO, Building social protection floor with ILO, 2013, www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=51889.

From 2006 to 2010, almost all bilateral and multilateral donors participated in the general budget support scheme led by the World Bank and used a Policy Matrix as a tool to support policy dialogue and negotiation with the government.⁴⁴ Since 2013, the World Bank has changed its support approach by launching the first Economic Management and Competitiveness Credit (EMCC 1) for Viet Nam (2013–2015) to help the country with economic management reforms for higher productivity and competitiveness.⁴⁵ Between 2006 and 2010 AusAid, CIDA, DANIDA, DFID, EU, FINIDA, GIZ (GTZ), Irish Aid, NORAD, Sida and SDC were among the major donors in the area of inclusive and equitable growth area. Their programmes/projects have significantly contributed to the application of a participatory approach, sector-wide approach, results-based planning, decentralization, grass-roots democracy, local development funds, livelihood improvement, pro-poor value chains, and more. They were active at local levels, bringing in good practices, models and lessons to the policy dialogue at a national level. In recent years, key bilateral donors have been phasing out their ‘traditional’ development cooperation and introducing new types of cooperation (e.g. new funds for climate change or promotion of mutual benefits). The World Bank, with the Second Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction Project (NMPRP-2; \$110 million)⁴⁶, the Central Highlands Poverty Reduction Project (\$150 million),⁴⁷ Social Assistance System Strengthening Project for Viet Nam (\$60 million),⁴⁸ and the Viet Nam 2035 Report,⁴⁹ is one of the country’s top development partners, together with Japan and ADB.

Governance: The key national frameworks developed by the government for its governance reforms are those for legal and judicial reform, public administration reform, and combating corruption. In 2005, Viet Nam issued a development strategy for its legal system along with a strategy for judicial reform. The Prime Minister promulgated the Public Administration Reform Master Program for 2001–2010 and from 2011 to 2020. Viet Nam’s National Assembly passed the Law on Anti-Corruption in 2005, and in 2009 the government launched the National Anti-Corruption Strategy to 2020. Viet Nam has ratified seven international human rights conventions and two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The country’s reform efforts have been supported by development cooperation partners. In the area of parliamentary development, Sweden organized a joint project between the Office of the National Assembly and the *Riksdag* Administration between 1998 and 2000 with the aim of transferring knowledge to improve the National Assembly’s supervisory and public information functions. DANIDA funded a bilateral project to strengthen the National Assembly as the policy- and law-making entity in the political system.

Donor support has focused on aspects of legal and judicial reform, ranging from legal needs’ assessments and legal harmonization to capacity building for justice institutions. CIDA has been active in supporting the development of Viet Nam’s legal system. In early 2000, DANIDA supported work by the Supreme People’s Court

44 The participating donors included ADB, AusAID, CIDA, DANIDA, DFID, EC, GTZ, Irish Aid, JBIC, KfW, New Zealand, Netherlands Directorate General for International Cooperation (DGIS) Spain, Sida, and SDC. A similar cooperation framework was also applied in the Support Programme for Response to Climate Change (SP-RCC).

45 www.worldbank.org/projects/P122793/economic-management-competitiveness-credit-1?lang=en.

46 <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2015/02/23980566/vietnam-second-northern-mountains-poverty-reduction-project>.

47 www.worldbank.org/projects/P128072/vn-central-highlands-poverty-reduction-project-chpov?lang=en.

48 www.worldbank.org/projects/P123960?lang=en.

49 <http://dsi.mpi.gov.vn/vietnam2035/en/>.

and Supreme People's Procuracy on access to justice issues. From 2010 to 2014, the Justice Partnership Programme – jointly funded by the EU, Sweden, and Denmark – supported judicial reform efforts at the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), the Supreme People's Court, and the Supreme People's Procuracy. It also supported efforts to strengthen the Bar Association, along with a component called Justice Initiative Fund Facility, which provided grants for NGOs working on access to justice. The EU is in the process of finalizing its agreement with the MOJ on another phase of support for justice-sector reform. Its Strategy Dialogue Facility (2013–2016) supports international exchanges related to human rights and legal system development.

In the 1990s, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden played an active role in supporting public administration reform and anti-corruption efforts both at national and subnational levels. Five donors, including Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Canada, supported the Government Inspectorate through the project on the Strengthening of the Capacity of the Inspectorate Sector from 2009 to 2014. The key objectives were to build sectoral capacity in handling inspections, petitions and denunciations, as well as anti-corruption activities.

Support to civil society participation in the policymaking and legal drafting process, as well as direct engagement in providing services to citizens and communities, has been provided by programmes funded by the EU, Irish Aid, DFID and DANIDA.

Sustainable development: The Support Programme for Response to Climate Change (SP-RCC) began in 2008 with nine ministries and the co-financing of six development partners (JICA, AfD, Australia, Canada, Korean EXIM Bank, World Bank). Separate climate change programmes have been implemented by the World Bank, ADB, EU, DFID UK, USAID, GiZ, Danida, Belgium (BTC), Australia (AusAid), Canada (CIDA), Mekong River Commission (MRC) and others. Viet Nam

was a pilot country for UN-REDD: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (with financial support from Norway, Denmark, EU, Japan, Luxemburg and Spain, and executed by UNDP, UNEP and FAO). Phase 2 continues and aims to reduce emissions in six provinces, working with provincial, district and commune authorities, local communities, and the private sector. The community-based disaster risk management programmes (CBDRM) have been funded by the World Bank, Australia and UNDP. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), USAID and other partners have supported contaminated sites management projects and biodiversity/protected areas projects. The recent GEF 5 programme cycle has included projects on biodiversity, climate change, international water, land degradation and POPs subsectors. About two-thirds of the \$60 million SDC portfolio funding originated from GEF-managed trust funds (2009–2016).

All these programmes either support the development of (or are guided by) strong policies and national strategies on climate change, green growth, disaster risk management, action plan on POPs, strategies for biodiversity conservation, etc.

2.4 DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

With improvements in its economic performance, the country has steadily increased its regional and global integration in recent decades. Viet Nam joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2007. The country had established strategic partnerships with 15 countries by 2015, and is increasingly recognized as a development partner. It has joined a number of free trade agreements, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership and ASEAN Economic Community.

As more countries graduate to middle-income status, UNDP at a regional level has focused on innovation and scaling-up approaches to improve

its programme quality and impact.⁵⁰ COs in the region are expected to use them, for example by exploring resource mobilization opportunities,

such as government cost-sharing and by expanding partnerships with both traditional and new development partners.

50 UNDP, 'Achieving Development Results in Asia and the Pacific: 2013-2014.'

Chapter 3

UNDP'S RESPONSE AND STRATEGIES

Viet Nam is a DaO pilot country, under which all agencies in the UN System are expected to work together under the 'five plus one' principles of the UN reform: One Plan, One Budget, One Leader, One set of Management Practices, One House (Green One UN House), and One Voice. This chapter presents a summary of UNDP's programme of work within the UN system, as well as its operational structure.

3.1 UNDP'S STRATEGIES AND COORDINATION WITH THE UN SYSTEM

There are currently 17 UN agencies operating in Viet Nam. UNDP's work during the two periods under review has been guided by the two corresponding UN-level programme frameworks: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2006–2010/2011 and the One

Plan 2012–2016, which support the implementation of Viet Nam's SEDs and SEDPs.

During the period 2006–2010/2011, the UNDAF articulated three areas of work for the UN system. Two were pursued by UNDP in its Country Programme Document (CPD) and the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP), in the areas of equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth; and governance. Between 2012 and 2016, the UN One Plan set out 12 programmatic outcomes and 43 outputs in three focus areas: inclusive, equitable and sustainable growth; access to quality, essential services and social protection; and governance and participation. UNDP has engaged in eight outcomes covering all three areas, as defined in its CCPD signed with UNFPA, UNOPS and UNICEF. There are eight Joint Programme Groups (JPGs) under the One Plan.⁵¹

Box 1. Twelve One Plan Outcome areas: 2012-2016

- Outcome 1.1 Evidence-based Development Policies in a MIC Viet Nam*
- Outcome 1.2 Opportunities for Decent Work
- Outcome 1.3 Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management*
- Outcome 1.4 Natural Resources and Environmental Management*
- Outcome 2.1 Social Protection*
- Outcome 2.2 Health
- Outcome 2.3 Education and Training
- Outcome 2.4 Gender Equality and HIV
- Outcome 3.1 Elected Bodies and the Legislative Process*
- Outcome 3.2 Legal and Judicial Reform and Access to Justice*
- Outcome 3.3 Public Administrative Reform*
- Outcome 3.4 Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organizations (PSPMOs)*

* UNDP-contributing outcomes. The total budget of the One Plan is \$479 million, of which \$253 million is budgeted among UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.

51 Economic Growth and Decent Work; Climate Change and Environment; Social Protection; Health; Education; HIV and AIDS; Gender; and Governance and Rule of Law. UNDP works with five groups, as convener (Governance), alternate convener (Climate Change and Environment), and member (Economic Growth; Gender; and Social Protection).

3.2 UNDP'S PROGRAMMES AND OFFICE ORGANIZATION

3.2.1 PROGRAMME PORTFOLIOS

The programmes in the two periods are summarized as follows:

2006–2010/2011

- National pro-poor policies and interventions that support more equitable and inclusive growth (Outcome 1);
- Viet Nam has adequate capacity to effectively reduce risks of, and respond to, climate-related disasters, particularly among the most vulnerable groups (Outcome 2);
- Economic growth takes into account environmental protection and rational use of natural resources for poverty reduction (Outcome 3);
- A system of governance based on the key principles of accountability, transparency, participation and equity, and consistent with the rule of law and democracy (Outcome 4); and
- National and subnational policies and laws are in place to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS and minimize impacts on people living with HIV and AIDS (Outcome 5).

2012–2016

Cluster 1: Inclusive and Equitable Growth

- Key national institutions formulate and monitor people-centred, 'green' and evidence-based socio-economic development policies to ensure the quality of growth in Viet Nam as a middle-income country (Outcome 1.1); and
- A more effective national social protection system provides increased coverage, quality, and equitable access for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Outcome 2.1).

Cluster II: Sustainable Development

- Key national and subnational agencies, in partnership with the private sector and

communities, have established and monitor multi-sectoral strategies, mechanisms and resources to support the implementation of relevant multilateral agreements and effectively address climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster-risk management (Outcome 1.3); and

- Key national and subnational agencies, in partnership with the private sector and communities, implement and monitor laws, policies and programmes for more efficient use of natural resources and environmental management, and to implement commitments under international conventions (Outcome 1.4).

Cluster III: Governance and Participation

- Elected bodies are better able to formulate laws, oversee the performance of state agencies and represent the aspirations of Viet Nam's people, especially women, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Outcome 3.1);
- All citizens, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, benefit from strengthened legal and judicial reform and increased access to justice, enhanced capacity of legal and judicial professionals, and strengthened national legal frameworks to support the implementation of international conventions ratified by Viet Nam (Outcome 3.2);
- Improved performance of public sector institutions at national and subnational levels, through enhanced coordination, accountability, transparency and anti-corruption efforts, will reduce disparities and ensure access to public services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Outcome 3.3); and
- Political, social, professional and mass organizations (PSPMOs) participate effectively in policy discussions and decision-making processes for the benefit of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Outcome 3.4).

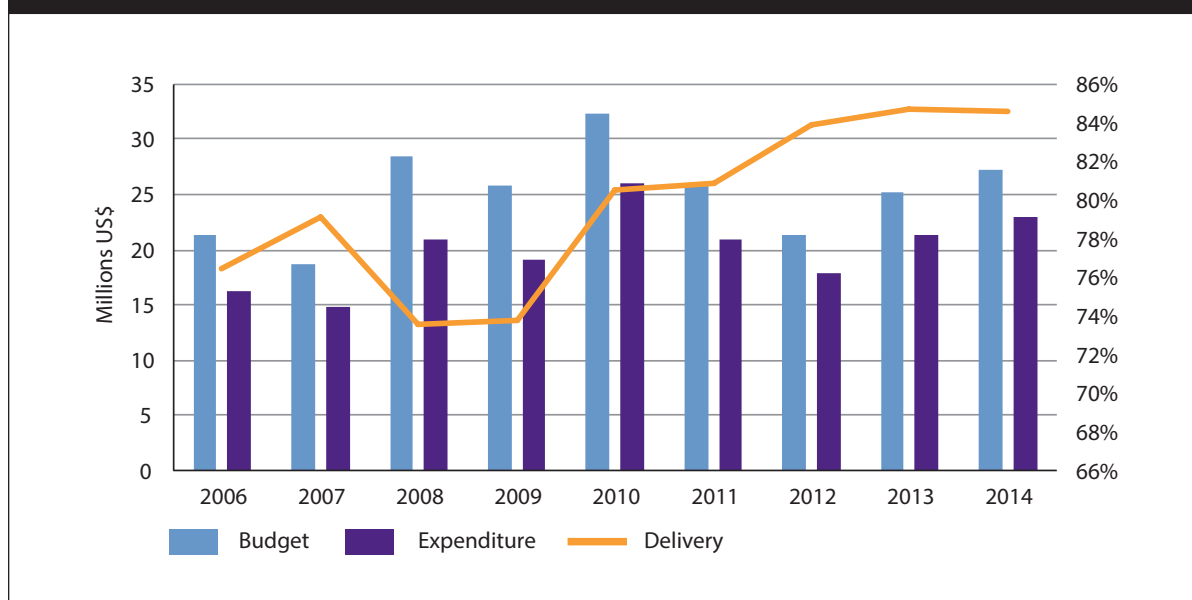
In addition to the three programmatic clusters, UNDP Viet Nam houses a group of policy advisors, known as a Policy Advisory Team (PAT), a UN/UNDP think-tank. Funded by the UN One Plan Fund and other donors (e.g. DFID, AECID, SDC, and USAID), the team is designed to provide independent, direct and flexible technical and policy advisory support to UNDP programmes, UN agencies and the government, often addressing sensitive issues. Currently, four policy advisor positions exist in the areas of governance (2), climate change (1), and inclusive growth (1). The team shares one DIM project: Policy Advisory Expertise and Dialogue in Viet Nam. This is expected to contribute to five One Plan/UNDP outcomes: 1.1 (economic development); 1.3 (climate change); 3.2 (rule of law and access to justice); 3.3 (public administration reform); and 3.4 (PSPMO participation).

3.2.2 COUNTRY OFFICE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The country programme budget was \$21.2 million in 2006 and \$27.1 million in 2014. Expenditure rose from \$16 million to \$23 million during the same period. Programme delivery fluctuated between 74 percent and 81 percent in the previous cycle. This has improved since the start of the current programme period, with a higher, steady average rate of 85 percent.

Throughout the two programme periods, funds from non-core sources were an important part of the programme resources. The non-core resources included funds from donors and the UN One Plan Fund. The One Plan Fund was launched in 2008 and administered by the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office on

Figure 5. UNDP Viet Nam programme budget and expenditure, 2006-2014



Source: UNDP Executive Snapshot.

Table 4. Summary of UNDP Viet Nam expenditures by funding source, 2006-2014 ('000 \$)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Core (regular)	5,723	5,903	5,686	6,594	7,812	9,076	9,093	9,552	10,477
Non-core resources	10,513	8,904	15,225	12,450	18,233	11,849	8,751	11,726	12,484
Total	16,236	14,807	20,911	19,044	26,045	20,925	17,844	21,278	22,961

Source: UNDP Executive Snapshot.

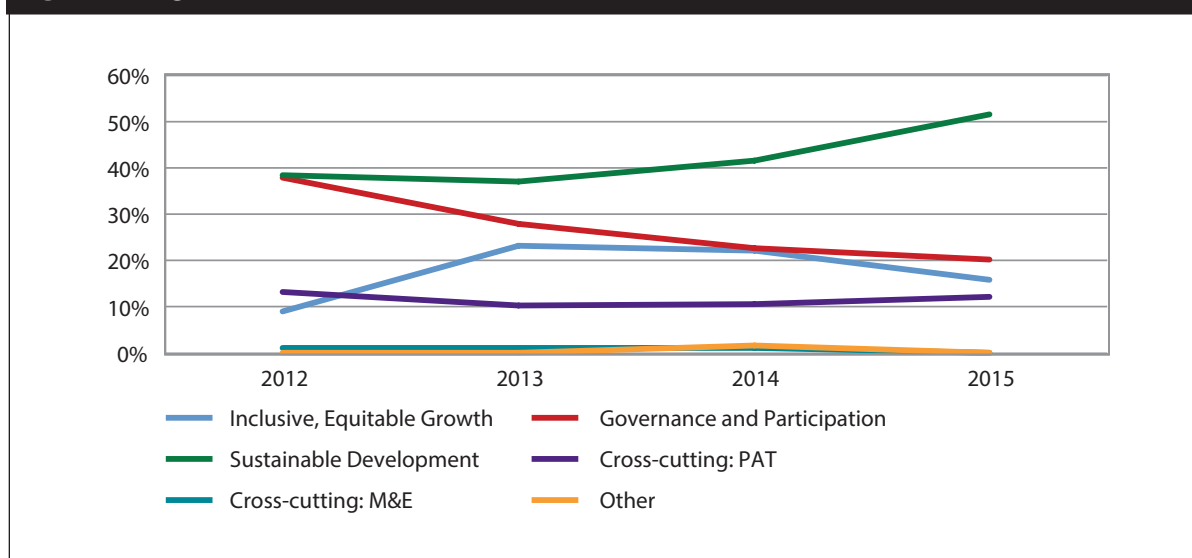
behalf of the UN system. The funds from the One Plan Fund are allocated on a competitive basis. In 2014, donors transferred \$7,454,349 to the Fund, bringing the contributions to the One Plan 2012–2016 to \$32,713,903.⁵²

While still at an early stage, the CO aims to strengthen its efforts towards securing government cost-sharing, reflecting Viet Nam's changed national context as a middle-income country.⁵³ Support from the RBAP Regional Centre in lessons learning from other middle-income countries in the region is critical. The CO is expected to recruit a resource mobilization specialist by the end of 2015.

Historically, the governance programme had the largest programmatic expenditures, particularly funded from the core resources; followed by poverty reduction, environment and sustainable development, and crisis prevention and recovery.⁵⁴

However, the programme landscape has changed in recent years, with increasing resource allocations from non-core resources into the Sustainable Development portfolio.⁵⁵ The Sustainable Development programme, which includes climate change, disaster risk reduction and natural resource management, has steadily broadened its resource base, from \$6.8 million in 2012 to \$14.6 million as of May 2015, surpassing the GPT to become the largest of the country's programmes. The GPT portfolio, which also started at around \$6.8 million in 2012, has declined years and currently stands at \$5.7 million. The IEG portfolio fluctuated in the same period, starting from \$1.6 in 2012 and peaked at \$5.1 in 2014. The resources for the PAT were provided by the One Plan Fund, DFID, AECID, SDC and other donors, as well as income from interests managing donor funds. About 1 percent was allotted to M&E activities.

Figure 6. Programme resource allocation, 2012-2015



Source: Operation Team, UNDP Viet Nam.⁵⁶

52 UN Viet Nam, 'Delivering as One: Annual Report 2014.'

53 UNDP Viet Nam, 'Annual Results Compact 2015.'

54 Based on UNDP Atlas data, particularly in the previous programme cycle.

55 For example, major donors for Sustainable Development related activities in the current programme cycle include the GEF, UN-REDD, One Plan Fund, Australia, USAID, and EU.

56 The total resource allocation for all programmes was \$17.8 million for 2012; \$21.2 million for 2013; \$22.9 million for 2014. The 2015 allocation was \$28.3 million, as of 8 May 2015.

3.2.3 COUNTRY OFFICE STAFF AND STRUCTURE

At the time of the evaluation, the CO had 74 staff, including 18 international (24 percent) and 56 national (76 percent) staff.⁵⁷ Some 71 percent of staff were women, including senior management, e.g. the Resident Representative, who also serves as the UN Resident Coordinator; and the Country Director. Female staff made up the dominant portion of the workforce in the programme clusters. The Deputy Country Director is in charge of both programmes and operations. Among national staff, 39 percent were national officers and 61 percent general service staff, while 70 percent of staff were engaged in programme delivery.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) opened its Viet Nam programme in 1990, engaging in a range of activities contributing to the achievement of the MDGs.⁵⁸ Both national and international volunteers are at work in various UN agencies and government offices. At UNDP, 37 UNV staff have been directly engaged in programme and project activities between 2006 and today. At the time of the ADR, three UNV staff were present, in the positions of Results Planning and Monitoring Officer at the CO; Human Rights and Gender Analyst in the GPT programme; and Specialist in Gender and Communication for a GPT project embedded in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).

3.2.4 PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MANAGEMENT AND M&E

Most UNDP projects in Viet Nam are implemented by national implementing partners through the national implementation modality

(NIM), except for those related to policy work or that require UNDP's direct engagement with national partners in delivery (direct implementation modality: DIM). The conceptualization, development, implementation and management of the NIM projects are guided by the Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guidelines (HPPMG), developed in 2010 by the government (Government Aid Coordinating Agencies, or GACA) and the UN (UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA), as a tool to "guide the management and implementation of UN-supported programme/projects."⁵⁹ The document sets out detailed operational instructions, including: (i) the submission by the Ministry of Planning and Investment to UN agencies of a "list of projects requiring UN assistance" based on which projects are formulated;⁶⁰ (ii) establishment of a Project Management Unit (PMU) in the implementing partner's office, comprising Project Director (senior level official) and Project Manager, responsible for day-to-day support to the project in accordance with the programme document, project document, and annual/quarterly work plans of a programme/project; (iii) development of a Detailed Project Outline (DPO), an official agreement outlining key elements of a project, indicative budget, implementation structure, management and coordination mechanisms; and (iv) monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities of the project, including the format of a quarterly project progress report. At the time of the ADR, a review of the implementation of the HPPMG was underway by a joint task force comprising the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and other members of the GACA, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF and the UN Resident Coordinator.

57 UNDP Viet Nam, as of August, 2015. The international staff included: D1 (1); D2 (1); P5 (2); and P4 (14).

58 UNV Viet Nam website, www.un.org.vn/unv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=62&Itemid=136.

59 'Viet Nam – United Nations Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guidelines (HPPMG),' May 2010.

60 Projects that are not included in the list 'must be considered and approved in accordance with Decree No. 131/2006/ND-CP.'

Chapter 4

CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

This chapter presents results of outcome analysis for each of the three thematic clusters. There are two aspects to the assessment for each cluster: UNDP's contribution to the outcomes (effectiveness), and the quality of its contribution (overall relevance, efficiency and sustainability).

4.1 INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE GROWTH (IEG)

Outcomes

The programme goal from the previous cycle – “National pro-poor policies and interventions that support more equitable and inclusive growth (Outcome 1)” – was extended to the following two outcomes for 2012–2016:

1. Key national institutions formulate and monitor people-centred, ‘green’ and evidence-based socio-economic development policies to ensure the quality of growth in Viet Nam as a middle-income country (Outcome 1.1).
2. A more effective national social protection system provides increased coverage, quality, and equitable access for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Outcome 2.1)

4.1.1 OVERVIEW

In the previous cycle, UNDP's IEG programme aimed to support the government on various fronts. These included improving the design and implementation of the national target programmes for poverty reduction and socio-economic development for the poorest communes; strengthening capacity for ethnic minority development policy formulation and implementation; building a needs-based and participatory framework for more effective monitoring of, and advocacy for, poverty reduction,

Viet Nam Development Goals and MDGs; and strengthening local government for pro-poor socio-economic planning and contributing to pro-poor policy options.⁶¹

The overall objective has become more ambitious in the current cycle, following the country's attainment of lower middle-income status. It has focussed not just on supporting national policies and programmes, but on strengthening the performance of national systems that are mandated to design and monitor the socio-economic development and social protection policies, macro-economic policy advice, and human development policies. Under Outcome 1.1, UNDP supports national data and monitoring systems; provides options as part of the development of national poverty policy and programmes; and facilitates the adoption of the multi-dimensional and human development approach. Under Outcome 2.1, UNDP supports provision of evidence to inform the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection legislations and policy, overall enhancement of the social protection system, and provision of options to expand social assistance, insurance and welfare.

UNDP's overall approach to the IEG programme is to be involved in the national cycle and process of policy development. UNDP works with various development partners (e.g. UN agencies, such as UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIDO, ILO, IOM, FAO, UN Women; and donors, including AusAid, CIDA, DANIDA, DFID, EU, FINIDA, GTZ, Irish Aid, JICA, NORAD, Sida, SDC), and provides national implementing partners with direct technical assistance, pol-

61 UNDP, CPD 2006–2011.

icy advice (by PAT and other international and national policy experts), international knowledge and experience, opportunities for policy dialogue at national and subnational (provincial, district) levels. The most significant financial support for the programme was from Irish Aid, which has helped UNDP to support local implementation of the NTP-SPR.⁶²

Under the One Plan, UNDP has participated in the JPG on Economic Growth and Decent Work, convened by ILO and FAO, and the JPG on Social Protection convened by UNICEF and ILO. UNDP has also led and participated in donor partnerships, including the Poverty Reduction and Ethnic Minority Poverty Group, the Viet Nam Development Partnership Forum, the joint policy response to the SEDP mid-term review (with the World Bank and ADB), and the World Bank-led policy note on the revision of the Law on Land.⁶³

A summary of the CCPD/One Plan outputs contributing to the outcomes, key project efforts and deliverables is presented in Annex 4.

4.1.2 ASSESSMENT OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOMES (EFFECTIVENESS)

The programme has contributed in several areas, including improved quality of national poverty programme-related documents and guidelines; strengthened capacity of government agencies to monitor and report on national development results; more availability of policy options and knowledge resources for debates; integration of international goals, such as MDGs, into the national monitoring system; and introduction of a new concept of multi-dimensional poverty into the national platform. The extent of programme contributions to the overall CCPD/One Plan outcomes

was challenged by the ambitious nature of the One Plan framework, inappropriate outcome/output indicators, and difficulty in tracking programme/project progress. Greater political commitment, attention to human and financial resources, and national capacity to produce consistent, quality national data would also enhance the overall effectiveness.

Between 2006 and 2011, UNDP's most significant contribution was an improved quality of documents related to the national poverty programme through the Support to the National Programmes for Poverty Reduction (NPPR) project, including: improved programme documents of the two national poverty programmes (P135/II and NTP-PR) and related circulars and implementation guidelines, a draft poverty reduction programme for 2011–2015, M&E framework and indicators for NTP-PR, forms and reporting formats for P135/II, annual poor household identification procedure and poverty line reporting system, a list of communes completing and benefiting P135/II, criteria for communes eligible to be investment owners in P135/II, and guidelines for financial management and disbursements under P135/II. The NTP-PR and P135/II and their guiding documents were developed in a transparent, participatory manner, involving international donors, ensuring gender mainstreaming and incorporating lessons from the previous evaluation process. These efforts resulted in participatory and efficient M&E systems at central and local levels, improved procedures to identify poor households annually as well as a poverty line reporting system, criteria for communes eligible to be investment owners, and more transparent budget allocation and participatory financial managements systems.⁶⁴ The project, funded by DFID and Finland, provided significant financial resources (\$6.46 million) and expertise to government agencies responsible for poverty reduction, MOLISA, and ethnic minori-

62 UNDP received \$5.3 million for the Poverty Reduction Policies and Programme (PRPP) project.

63 UN Vietnam, DAO Annual Results Report 2013.

64 End of Project Evaluation VIE 02/001, Peapros, March 2012.

ties, and the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). With the long-term, direct support provided by UNDP international technical advisors assigned to work within the government agencies, UNDP has gained the trust of national partners, and has supported the government's organization of regular, quality dialogue with development partners.

UNDP's support to MPI, GSO, MOLISA and CEMA contributed to strengthened system capacity in development data collection and analysis and the establishment of a needs-based, participatory framework for monitoring and advocating SEDP, Viet Nam Development Goals and MDGs. The national statistical indicators for those goals and the National Statistical Action Plan were revised and updated.⁶⁵ The data collection process was rationalized, and quality of data, reporting and communication were improved.⁶⁶ The MDG Reports (2005, 2008 and 2010) were used by the National Assembly and in regular government discussions.⁶⁷ The Urban Poverty Survey (UPS 2009) and its follow-up analyses⁶⁸ provided the first ever in-depth and comprehensive information on the reality of urban poverty, which contributed to the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction efforts with a multi-dimensional poverty approach. UNDP supported the government to formulate the SEDS 2011–2020. This is the most important policy document to give overall strategic directions and guides the country's socio-economic development process through, for example, nine research papers produced as input to the SEDS draft.⁶⁹

In the current period, 2012–2016, UNDP has continued to contribute to improved capacities in national statistical analysis, and the GSO and MPI reporting system through projects on Statistical Development Strategy and MDG monitoring and reporting. The Statistics Law (2003) has been revised, together with a draft decree and under-law documents for implementation of that Law. The (revised) Statistics Law was adopted by the National Assembly in November 2015 and was scheduled to come into effect from 1 July 2016. The reporting system for the national statistical indicators on gender development has been developed and improved. The master sample frame for household surveys has been developed for improved sample selection in large household surveys.⁷⁰ MDG monitoring has been institutionalized into a SEDP monitoring framework, and policies. MDG awareness raising efforts have paved the way for the introduction of a new set of international development goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, at the top policy level.

In terms of exploring options for development policies to promote inclusive and equitable development, the project, along with the Economic Committee of the National Assembly (ECNA), played a crucial role in promoting more open dialogue between the government and the National Assembly. Research programmes were developed bi-annually and were based on key macro-economic policy issues. Options and hypotheses were identified on a broad consensus basis. Evidence-based macro-economic policy analyses and studies were conducted to provide quality

65 MPI/GSO, Development Plan Of The Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy 2011-2020 And Vision To 2025 (VSDS 11-20), February 2010. www.Paris21.Org/Sites/Default/Files/Vietnam_Roadmap_E-Final.Pdf.

66 Annual progress reports 2005 – 2009.

67 For example, the Official Letter 6049/HTQT-VPCT dated 25 August 2010 by the Government Office on the approval, printing, and publication of Vietnam MDGs Report 2010 at http://vanban.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/hethongvanban?class_id=2&_page=37&mode=detail&document_id=96487. The MDGs related discussions can be also found in the discussion notes of their meetings, available on their websites.

68 UNDP Vietnam, Urban Poverty Assessment in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, 2010. www.un.org.vn/en/publications/doc_details/264-urban-poverty-assessment-in-ha-noi-and-ho-chi-minh-city.html.

69 SEDS Project Final Report 2011.

70 www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/poverty-reduction-project.html.

inputs to the policy-making process. The capacity of agencies involved in policy advice, examination, and oversight (e.g. the Party's Central Office of the government, the Economic Committee and the Financial Supervision Committee of the National Assembly), as well as research institutes, has also been improved.⁷¹ The national Macroeconomic Advisors Group has become active, and the Annual Macroeconomic Reports have been used by the government and National Assembly to support policy debates in the bi-annual economic forum (spring and autumn).

The Poverty Reduction Policies and Programme (PRPP) project has made a number of contributions, including: (i) a review of poverty reduction policies by MOLISA and CEMA that led to a high-level commitment to continue poverty policy reform under Resolution 80; (ii) creation of a foundation for programming the next phase of poverty reduction policies; (iii) introduction and development of a system for multi-dimensional poverty in Viet Nam; (iv) high-level policy dialogue on poverty in ethnic minorities and adoption of the MDG acceleration for ethnic minorities (MAFEM); and (v) development of the implementation instructions for the NTP-SPR.^{72, 73} Institutional complexity, challenges in inter-agency relationships, and the need for harmonization of the regulations of the programme's various components were reported to be among the challenges to be addressed.

UNDP's efforts also led to an increased awareness of urban multi-dimensional poverty among policymakers at local and central levels. Following the UPS 2009, the UPS 2012 became part of the Viet Nam Household Living Standards

Survey. Domestic and international experiences in the reduction of urban multi-dimensional poverty have been discussed at national level. With that initial success, Viet Nam has become a member of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network.⁷⁴ The government has recently decided to adopt multi-dimensional poverty as the instrument of poverty measurement in Viet Nam for 2016–2020.⁷⁵

At the time of the ADR, the Support the Improvement of the Social Assistance System (SAP) project was one year into its implementation due to a late start, and so UNDP's contribution to Outcome 2.1 was yet to be fully observed. Some efforts have been made and have made progress toward the two outputs: i) UNDP's reviews and studies that support awareness raising and mapping of social assistance policies and programmes have increased awareness of the fragmentation of the current national policies (Output 2.1.1); and ii) the Master Plan for Social Assistance Reform (MPSAR) was drafted with UNDP support (Output 2.1.2), but the plan is yet to be adopted by the Prime Minister. These efforts are expected to bring greater clarity among national partners on the importance of understanding vulnerability and poverty and investing in more inclusive growth.

In measuring performance against the CCPD/One Plan outcomes and outputs, there were a few challenges, including those related to the initial One Plan framework. Those challenges include (i) the outcome and outputs statements are too ambitious to be achieved within the time-bounds of a five-year period expected under the CCPD/One Plan; and (ii) inappropriate indicators for

71 ECNA Project Annual Progress Report 2014.

72 PRPP, Final Report on Midterm Evaluation, June 2015.

73 VDPF, Joint Remarks by the Poverty Reduction and Ethnic Minority Poverty Group at the Vietnam Development Partnership Forum "report back", 2014. www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2014/11/05/joint-remarks-by-the-poverty-reduction-and-ethnic-minority-poverty-group-at-the-vietnam-development-partnership-forum-report-back-.html.

74 Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, Vietnam – Including multidimensional measures in official government planning, MPPN portal, 2014. www.mppn.org/participants/vietnam/.

75 Decision 1614/QĐ-TTg, dated 15 September 2015.

measuring the extent of achievement.⁷⁶ Internally, the main challenge was difficulty in tracking the midpoint and year-end progress of UNDP's efforts against results initially planned at the project level. This was largely due to limited use of existing tools for planning and reporting results. The One Plan Database was being revamped at the time of the evaluation. It is expected to enhance the capture and tracking of results. The realization of the objectives would also require significant political commitment, availability of financial and human resources, and the national agencies' ability to produce consistent, high quality national data.

Role of UNDP upstream policy advisory services and guidance

Through the work of policy advisors (Country Economist in the previous cycle and Economic Policy Advisor on PAT in the current cycle), UNDP has brought into the national platform the international technical expertise and knowledge, policy options and best practices for pro-poor public finance policies, considering the impact of trade liberalization and financial reforms, for promoting equal access of women, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups to economic opportunities, social and legal services. The advisors have been requested to support the programme team as needed, e.g. in defining the topics for policy research and discussions, development and review of their terms of reference, and review of draft policy research outlines and products under the national implementation projects, such as the ECNA project. The research work conducted by PAT (e.g. on fossil fuels, social services, poverty reduction) has been presented at the policy dialogues/economic forums

organized under the SEDS and ECNA projects.

Key contributions by the policy advisors included: (i) UNDP's inputs and comments to Viet Nam MDG Reports; (ii) collaboration between UNDP and the World Bank and ADB in preparing and disseminating joint policy messages on the SEDP Mid-Term Review, including the messages promoting more inclusive growth and attention to the unfinished MDG agenda; (iii) the fossil fuel study supporting the programme's work on social protection by defining new sources of financing through savings from reducing subsidies on fossil fuels; and (iv) PAT's research on, for instance, social services/socialization and medium technologies, which complements research work under the national implementation projects.

The Economic Policy Advisor is expected to use his/her knowledge of international best practices to introduce new and innovative solutions to emerging issues faced by Viet Nam as a new middle-income country. In the current period, the joint work of the ECNA project and the Policy Advisor has produced active macroeconomy debates at the top-level forum. This forum remains active after the project's completion. However, the focus of the advisory services has been selective and limited. It has, for example, focused primarily on macroeconomic fundamentals, leaving out other critical issues, such as how to support the private sector and the public to increase overall 'competitiveness' in macroeconomic policy debates. It was also limited to, for example, the process of drafting the National Social Protection Strategy for 2011–2020,⁷⁷ and a research study done by the programme.⁷⁸

76 For example, some of the outcome indicators are set at too high a level (impact), e.g. the four outcome indicators for Outcome 1.1 (Proportion of people living below the national poverty line; child poverty rate; Gap between average monthly income per capita of the richest quintile and poorest quintile; and Vietnam's position in the Global Competitiveness Index); ii) some outcome indicators represented output level measures, e.g. Outcome 2.1 indicators (Number of beneficiaries receiving benefits from social assistance under Decree 67 and 13; share of workers covered by social insurance); and iii) weak linkages between the One Plan output indicators and output statements.

77 The strategy addressed a more comprehensive and inclusive social protection system, ensuring the active participation of the vulnerable groups in the labour market and efforts to reduce poverty reduction, and addressing the risks associated with unstable jobs and incomes, old age and natural disasters.

78 For example, 'Social Assistance in Viet Nam: a review and proposals for reform' (2015), which highlighted the weaknesses of the current system, using data and analyses undertaken by key research institutes of MOLISA, and proposed options for social assistance reform.

Achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment

Gender equality and women's empowerment have been emphasized in the national development policies supported by UNDP. The establishment of a reporting system for the national statistical indicators on gender development is a good example. The participation of women has been underscored in the guidance documents for implementation of many national policy documents.⁷⁹ In UNDP's support to NTP-PR, NTP-SPR, multi-dimensional poverty assessment, SEDS, SEDP, the national statistical system, etc., women (particularly those from the most vulnerable groups, such as ethnic minorities) are the main target beneficiaries. In many projects under the outcomes under review, however, gender aspects have not been clearly reflected in their design.⁸⁰

Eradication of poverty and reduction of inequalities/exclusion

Poverty reduction and equitable and inclusive growth are part of UNDP's core mandate. Various project evaluation reports noted that better formulation and implementation of government interventions, which have been strongly supported by the community of donors (including UNDP), have contributed to the success in reducing poverty in Viet Nam.

Since becoming a lower middle-income status, Viet Nam has faced a widening poverty gap and government's limitations in providing the most vulnerable groups with access to opportunities and development resources. UNDP's support in the present cycle is expected to support the government to design and implement new national interventions.

4.1.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF CONTRIBUTION

Relevance

The overall objectives of the UNDP IEG programme are highly relevant to national priorities and development goals. There is room for revisiting its approaches, however, to ensure participation of all relevant actors in further advancing poverty reduction and addressing inequality gaps.

The overall objectives of the programme outcomes are in alignment with national priorities and strategies as defined in documents such as SEDPs 2006–2010 and 2011–2015, SEDS 2001–2010 and 2011–2020, Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy, Social Protection Strategy 2011–2020, Resolution 15-NQ/TW on social protection policies, and Resolution 70 Action Plan for implementation of Resolution 15-NQ/TW.

Between 2006 and 2011, UNDP successfully engaged with the government agencies in charge of poverty reduction and pro-poor policy, such as MOLISA, CEMA, MPI, MARD, and GSO, as well as the community of development partners, and established a trusting relationship. The period reflected the 'high peak' of traditional development cooperation, with a large flow of ODA into Viet Nam. That strongly influenced the national development agenda, which focused on poverty reduction, and particularly targeted ethnic minorities in upland areas as the most vulnerable groups.⁸¹ UNDP's role as an in-house advisor to the government and its contribution within the national system⁸² were very important in supporting the government's strengthening of its capacity to develop/improve

79 For example, GSO list of publications: http://gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=490&idmid=5&ItemID=1817

80 For example, of the 18 projects under review, 16 were indicated as their outputs contributed in some way to gender equality, but not significantly (GEN1). One (ECNA macroeconomic project) was not expected to make a noticeable contribution (GEN0). Only one project (MDG reporting) is indicated as having gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2).

81 CPRGS, SEDS 2001–2010, SEDP 2006–2010, various NTPs for poverty reduction and/or policies targeting ethnic minorities including P135.

82 Support to NTP-PR and P135.

national policies and interventions, particularly when negotiating and cooperating with the donor community.

Since becoming a middle-income country in 2010, the national development agenda has shifted toward a greater global competitiveness, while also addressing inequality issues. UNDP has re-oriented its interventions during the present programme period to meet national needs and support the country to focus on the redistribution of income to benefit ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups,⁸³ and their inclusion in national money transfer and subsidy schemes.⁸⁴ However, the degree to which UNDP can achieve those goals may be limited, because its current programme strategy and approaches have not focused on critical areas, such as improved access by those vulnerable groups to development resources and opportunities. More emphasis should be given to ensuring that their voices are heard, and to their full participation in, and contribution to, the country's economic growth competitiveness.

Many national implementing partners reported their satisfaction with UNDP's support, which provided additional top-up funding and technical resources. However, UNDP has faced reduced support from donors in the current programme cycle, except for DFID ('UN Policy Influencing in Viet Nam' project) and Irish Aid (the PRPP project). One of the major reasons for that is that traditional development cooperation, especially in a grant form, has been phasing-out. Interviews with development partners also suggested that UNDP's scope and approaches in its interventions were not necessarily aligned to partner priorities and approaches, e.g. government agency-oriented selection of project implementing partners and limited participation of civil society and private sector in project delivery.

Efficiency

Use of the NIM and close communication between UNDP and national partners has been important in ensuring the efficiency of programmes and projects. However, some procedural requirements have hindered the timely and efficient delivery of projects. Cross-fertilization – synergy across different programmes, as well as collaboration between international advisors and programme staff – can be further strengthened.

Managerial efficiency: The use of NIM in project delivery has put national implementing partners in the driver's seat and promoted ownership in their management of project activities. Close, flexible and frequent communication between UNDP and national partners was favourably reported. Interviews with the partners, however, raised various challenges in the management and implementation of projects. For example, many projects under review suffered from a slow project appraisal and approval process as well as difficulty in mobilizing quality experts, due to insufficient funds. The recruitment of external consultants was often delayed by complicated procurement procedures by both UNDP and the government partners.⁸⁵

Some HPPMG requirements were reported as hindering the timely and efficient delivery of projects, for example, by forcing (i) the creation of multiple PMUs in parallel, thereby increasing the work load of the officers at implementing partner agencies; and (ii) frequent (quarterly) reviews of project activities and budgets involving UNDP programme officers and project officers at the implementing partners, which created a sense of micro-management and consequently slowed project implementation. Other reported challenges in project management included the limited and weak role of project steering commit-

83 Support to NTP-SPR.

84 Support to the national social protection system under SAP project.

85 In some cases, the best candidates were not selected due to the procurement delays (as well as due to low consultant fees).

tees, which were unable to make decisions when needed, along with the limited project management skills of implementing partners.

Programmatic efficiency: Challenges in programme efficiency were observed in three areas.

First, in some projects, there was a large gap between the estimated budget in the Detailed Project Outline (DPO) and the actual budget committed in the approved annual work plans. In one case, the actual budget for project implementation was only one-third of that originally estimated by the DPO.⁸⁶ The intended project objectives and corresponding activities have not corresponded to the resources available or mobilized, leading to the fact that the originally design objectives become too ambitious and unrealistic. Uncertainties in resource mobilization and the ambitious objectives seen in some of the UNDP projects may face challenges in fully reaching their intended goals.⁸⁷

Second, cross-cluster collaboration in addressing poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities and exclusion is critical. While some level of cross-cluster collaboration was reported, it was also described as mainly dependent on personal relationships and individual capacity to engage, and thus should be further strengthened. For example, stronger collaboration between the IEG and GPT programmes would be important, particularly in project planning and implementation, to ensure synergy in realizing public participation (civil society and private sector) and bringing in governance perspectives for inclusive and equitable growth. In a favourable example, the UNDP-supported Viet Nam Poverty Environment Programme (PEP) investigated how poor people disproportionately depend on environ-

mental assets that are a key source of income and food security. Poor people are particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards and pro-poor growth sectors depend on both a high quantity and quality of environmental assets and control of environmental hazards.⁸⁸ However, it was not clear if there had been any concrete follow-up of the joint poverty-environment work, or if any lessons were incorporated into subsequent programme/project efforts.

And third, collaboration between the IEG programme team and policy advisors on PAT and international technical advisors embedded in projects should be strengthened. Policy advisors have supported the programme/project work over the years by reviewing documents and material, when requested. The technical advisors working with national partner agencies have a direct engagement role with those institutions as in-house consultants, with knowledge and experience of field operations. In the two programme periods under review, collaboration between the groups was often influenced by personal relationships, which determined the extent and quality of their cooperation. A more strategic and clearer plan should be laid out in the programme to ensure that their expertise, knowledge and experience are efficiently and effectively mobilized, particularly during the critical phases of programme/project formulation (concept and design), implementation, and reporting, as well as for setting policy priorities and discussions.

Sustainability

UNDP has contributed to improved national policies and programmes. Sustainability remains a challenge due to uncertainties in institutional capacity, resources, etc.

86 For example, MDGs Monitoring Project. The planned budget was \$2million, whereas the actual budget was \$700,000. The MDG Monitoring Project 2013 Annual Progress Report, 2014.

87 For example, the 'MDGs monitoring and reporting,' 'Support to Implementation of Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy 2011-2020,' 'Support for enhancing capacity in advising, examining, and overseeing macroeconomic policies,' and 'Support to reduction of multi-dimensional poverty in urban settings' projects.

88 Steve Bass, David Annandale, Phan Van Binh, Tran Phuong Dong, Hoang Anh Nam, Le Thi Kieu Oanh, Mike Parsons, Nguyen Van Phuc, and Vu Van Trieu, Integrating environment and development in Viet Nam - Achievements, challenges and next steps, IIED, UNDP, 2010.

UNDP has supported the government's preparation of improved national poverty programmes and policies (e.g. SEDS/ SEDP, NTP-PR, P135, NTP-SPR), which has created a more solid foundation from which the country can move forward in its poverty reduction efforts and promotion of inclusiveness and equity in development. The programmatic goals under both outcomes, however, have also emphasized strengthening the national partners' ability to improve their policies, ensuring dialogues and opportunities. Sustainability of efforts and of achievements made to date has not yet been ensured, due to limited financial and human resources at the national institutions, as well as a limited scope on capacity development elements in programme/project design. An explicit exit plan for a time-bound programme/project was absent. Also, rigidity in government procedures for mobilizing external expertise, e.g. high quality advisors using the state budget and the slow pace of public administration reforms and governance, are also a challenge. Political will to reflect policy initiatives into the national system is crucial in ensuring programme/project sustainability.

4.2 GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION (GPT)

4.2.1 OVERVIEW

UNDP's governance work can be grouped into four main pillars: (i) parliamentary development; (ii) human rights, rule of law and access to justice; (iii) public administration reform, anti-corruption, and women's participation; and (iv) participation of civil society organizations. The GPT cluster does not have a distinct strategy document, but the structure of the outcomes and outputs as defined in the One Plan suggests a direction for each of the four outcomes.

The overall objective of Outcome 3.1 was to improve the ability of elected bodies to oversee the performance of state agencies and to represent the Vietnamese people. UNDP approached this outcome by focusing on (i) elected bodies' access to information; and (ii) their capacities to interact and consult with citizens.

The objective of Outcome 3.2 was to strengthen legal and judicial reform and increase access to justice in line with international standards. UNDP approached this outcome by adopting four related interventions: (i) policy, legal and regulatory frameworks; (ii) law enforcement; (iii) capacity building; and (iv) awareness raising.

Outcomes

The programme goal from the previous cycle – a system of governance based on the key principles of accountability, transparency, participation and equity, and consistent with the rule of law and democracy (Outcome 4) – has been extended to the following four outcomes in 2012–2016:

1. Elected bodies are better able to formulate laws, oversee the performance of state agencies and represent the aspirations of the Vietnamese people, especially women, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Outcome 3.1)
2. All citizens, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, benefit from strengthened legal and judicial reform and increased access to justice, enhanced capacity of legal and judicial professionals, and strengthened national legal frameworks to support the implementation of international conventions ratified by Viet Nam (Outcome 3.2)
3. Improved performance of public sector institutions at national and subnational levels, through enhanced coordination, accountability, transparency and anti-corruption efforts, will reduce disparities and ensure access to public services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Outcome 3.3)
4. Political, social, professional and mass organizations (PSPMOs) participate effectively in policy discussions and decision-making processes for the benefit of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Outcome 3.4)

For Outcome 3.3, the objective was to improve the performance of public sector institutions at national and subnational levels. UNDP's approach was to focus on: (i) the use of participatory, evidence-based, and cross-sector approaches; (ii) human resource management systems; (iii) capacities to implement and monitor implementation of anti-corruption law and key provisions of UNCAC; and (iv) citizen-generating systems to monitor the delivery of basic services.

For Outcome 3.4, the objective was to promote their participation in policy discussions. UNDP has approached it by focusing on (i) enabling political, social, professional and mass organizations (PSPMOs) to participate in policy discussion and decision-making processes; and (ii) strengthening CSOs' human resource and organizational capacities.

Other UN agencies have also contributed to the four outcomes. UNDP and these UN agencies have coordinated under One UN and the JPGs. For example, UN Women contributed to Outcomes 3.1, 3.2, and 3.4 through its support of the integration of, and reporting on, the CEDAW. It also participated in a joint programme on gender statistics launched in 2011 with the GSO. UNICEF has contributed to all governance outcomes to some degree. It engaged with the National Assembly Committee on Education, Youth, and Children on social policies and with the MOJ on access to justice, children's justice, and the juvenile court. It has also worked with CSOs on social accountability in the social services. UNODC has formed partnerships and contributed to capacity building of law enforcement agencies, customs, and banks on issues related to money laundering. To support the UNCAC self-review, UNODC trained the Government Inspectorate and participating government agencies (MOFA and MOJ) and will continue to support the government through its second round of the UNCAC review. Their contributions have been outlined in the One Plan 2012–2016.

There are two CCPD/One Plan outputs under Outcome 3.1, four each under Outcomes 3.2 and

3.3, and two under Outcome 3.4. A summary of the outputs contributing to the outcomes, key project efforts and deliverables is presented in Annex 4.

4.2.2 ASSESSMENT OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOMES

UNDP has contributed to all four outcomes. During the periods under review, participating elected bodies have better performed their oversight functions; legal and regulatory frameworks have been improved with the integration of human rights' principles; government agencies have used planning and management tools to reinforce accountability in the implementation of public administration agenda; and participating CSO partners (e.g. lawyers association and LGBT groups) have more actively engaged in policy-making processes and in the provision of services to vulnerable groups. The programme has supported women's participation in the public sector. The extent to which UNDP's contribution will bring about changes at the outcome level remains to be seen, as there are some dimensions of the outcomes that have not yet been addressed (e.g. capacity building).

For Outcome 3.1 on parliamentary support, there were positive changes in the capacity of participating National Assembly committees and people's councils in oversight, legal review and consultation. The Committee for Financial and Budgetary Affairs (CFBA), some 30 participating people's councils, and the Ethnic Council were reported as having gained knowledge and skills that have allowed them to better perform their oversight functions. Similarly, research findings facilitated by UNDP were used in the legal review process. A key achievement was the CFBA's contributions to tax laws and the revision of the law on the state budget in line with international practices and standards. The training materials were compiled into a manual to be used for newly elected deputies. Moreover, support to the Law Committee served as an input to the finalization of important laws, including the Law on the Organization of the National Assembly, the Law

on Local Government, the Law on Monitoring by the National Assembly and people's councils, and the Civil Code. Support to the Judicial Affairs Committee served as input for the Judicial Reform Strategy, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedural Law, and the Law on Detention, including research on the prevention and reduction in the use of the death penalty. The Institute for Legislative Studies (ILS) was better equipped to support the National Assembly in its work on review and oversight. It conducted research on practical and theoretical issues and, with UNDP, jointly organized forums for National Assembly committees to consult with various stakeholders during the legal review process.

However, challenges still remain for the outcome. The National Assembly committees, including committees on Law, Judicial Affairs, and CFBA, have continued to carry out their own research as they have not been able to fully rely on in-house research and data collection services offered by the ILS. In terms of institution building in oversight, although the National Assembly committees and participating people's councils received training, they still faced challenges in institutionalizing their oversight functions due to lack of clarity in the oversight mandate and processes. UNDP's support to enhancing interaction between participating National Assembly committees and citizen groups during the legal review process was primarily channelled through consultation forums organized by the ILS, rather than through the promotion of direct contacts between elected bodies or their deputies and citizens-*cum*-voters.

Under Outcome 3.2 on legal/judicial reform and access to justice, UNDP has primarily contributed to two areas: the development of national legal frameworks, and the strengthening of Viet Nam's capacities to conduct international human rights reporting.

First, UNDP's Access to Justice and Protection of Rights project with MOJ had two key achievements: the integration of human rights principles into the revised Constitution (2013)

and the concrete enumeration of human rights in some pieces of legislation. UNDP successfully advocated for due process, for lifting the detention of drug users and sex workers, and for enhancing tolerance of same sex relationships in the Law on Marriage and Family. UNDP has also advocated for other pertinent issues, e.g. surrogate pregnancy, gender reassignment, registration for civil status (including facilitation for vulnerable groups such as children and migrants, along with decentralized registration to district and commune levels for easier processing), the abolition of death penalty, and alternatives to criminal detention. The MOJ developed a tool to integrate gender into legal documents, focusing on the assessment and reporting of impacts on gender. That tool was later used in the draft laws on civil status, marriage, dissemination of legal education, and the law on the promulgation of legal documents. UNDP support was extended to human rights-related areas, such as the review of regulations related to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ICCPR reporting, the drafting of the criminal code and UPR implementation. Following an evidence-based consultation approach, the MOJ departments organized consultation sessions to discuss their draft legal documents. Since 2012, at least 50 policy-oriented research projects and 65 consultation meetings were carried out.

Second, UNDP contributed to strengthening key mechanisms for Viet Nam to implement international human rights reporting standards through its human rights projects at the MOFA. Preparation of the UPR 2009 and UPR 2014 was improved, as was the preparation of, and consultation on, a UPR action plan in 2015. The MPI and the MOJ, in addition to other government task forces, were familiarized with procedures to ratify and report on international conventions. The Human Rights project supported pilot teaching on human rights with the Academy for Foreign Relations and pilot training on the Convention against Torture.

UNDP contributions to other dimensions of the outcome, particularly strengthening law enforce-

ment and capacity building of legal and judicial professionals, were limited in scale. Activities to strengthen law enforcement and capacities of legal and judicial professionals were often one-off events. UNDP's contribution to training legal, law enforcement, and judicial personnel was limited to MOJ's development of training materials on data management for work planning within the justice sector, and its conduct of training for agencies implementing court orders.

Despite the outcome's focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, results were mixed. UNDP's contribution through the Access to Justice and Protection of Rights project to the vulnerable and disadvantaged was limited to the translation of documents on how to approach the poor. While notable achievements were observed in the integration of human rights principles and a rights-based approach to key legal documents, so far there have been limited implementation mechanisms for programmes to safeguard legal rights and access to justice. UNDP's support to the Viet Nam Lawyers' Association (VLA) and its legal consultancy centres, meanwhile, provided a preliminary and meaningful contribution to raising awareness and enhanced access to justice for vulnerable groups. The Strengthen Support to LGBT CSOs project, which focuses on developing networks for LGBT community leaders, their parents and other allies, has created more opportunities for consultative policymaking, raising awareness of sexual diversity, and empowering marginalized people.

While government performance in legal drafting has improved in terms of both methods and issues, there is still no explicit mechanism for the government/MOJ to track how improvements in the legal frameworks and human rights reporting supported by UNDP have empowered and changed the lives of end-beneficiaries, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. It should be

noted that since 2010, UNDP has supported the development of the Justice Index, implemented by the VLA, to serve as a neutral platform to gauge citizens' voice and opinions and measure the performance of justice sector personnel. This index is expected to be a complementary and reliable instrument for the government to monitor and assess the outcomes of reform amid changing legal frameworks.⁸⁹

Under Outcome 3.3 on public administration reform, UNDP has contributed to improved accountability in the PAR process at national and subnational levels. MOHA, including its PAR Department and provincial officials, is now better equipped to manage PAR and has adopted some level of an evidence-based approach in planning and formulating PAR policy and legal frameworks. On paper, the PAR–Master Programme 2011–2020 has clear objectives, outputs, and activities, with a logical framework. The MOHA departments supported by the project were able to commission feasibility studies and research as inputs to formulate implementation proposals and government decrees. The key resulting frameworks supported by the evidence-based inputs included:

- Decree 36 on the development of employment positions tied to the government's policy for civil service professionalization and reform;⁹⁰
- A salary system for civil servants with a resulting proposal presented at two Central Committee plena (the 5th Plenum in 2012 and the 7th in 2013);
- Decree 16 providing general guidelines on the organization of service delivery sectors (with pilots in higher education, public health, and library sciences) along the lines of financial autonomy mechanisms in social service delivery sectors;

89 The implementation of a provincial justice index component, originally included in the MOJ project, was postponed, and later transferred to the VLA project. This component is assessed in the section on Outcome 3.4.

90 By the end of 2015, MOHA achieved the goal of 50 percent of administrative agencies having a position-based staff structure with specific job description for each position.

- Decision 9 replacing Decision 93 on the organization of administrative service delivery through the One-Stop Shop and further promoting transparency in administrative procedures provided by inter-agency one-stop shops in such sectors as investment, judicial affairs, land, business, and construction; and
- Various frameworks on the system of local government, including the role of the head of the people's committees; redefinition of the role and functions of specialized agencies at provincial and district-level administrations; the comparative advantages of people's councils in urban quarters, wards and rural districts; strengthening the commune-level civil servant (Decree 121); the structuring of administrative boundaries at the subnational level; the restructuring of specialized government agencies at the provincial and district levels (Decrees 24 and 37); and the Law on Local Government (2013).

By 2016, the results of the human resource management pilot models in four provinces (Bac Giang, Ha Tinh, Can Tho, and Da Nang) will serve as inputs for the formulation of implementation frameworks for civil service reform. Involvement of Da Nang as a pilot unit has positively contributed to the PAR process. Da Nang has played a leading role both in terms of proactive implementation and testing new practices. Finally, MOHA has institutionalized two main tools of PAR monitoring work. The measurement of PAR implementation and results from the PAR Index and Customer Satisfaction Surveys (SIPAS) have raised awareness of relevant government agencies on the importance of PAR and its results, holding ministries and provinces accountable and preliminarily enforcing linkages between reform and performance.

However, there were still challenges in terms of the programme's overall effectiveness. UNDP's support to the PAR process focused on the civil service system and the civil servants (*cong chuc*) and had a limited effect on the reform of the

public service delivery system. Its support to the health and education sectors was limited to preliminary studies on the approaches to developing financial autonomy and did not directly address the reform of human resources in public service delivery. Practices developed in Da Nang, such as the use of information technology for personnel management, was viable inasmuch as Da Nang had already acquired an advanced information technology infrastructure. Similarly, the use of online citizen feedback by commune-level administrations in Da Nang may not work in rural Viet Nam, where citizen familiarity with online interaction remains limited. Another challenge involves the approach to monitoring for results. The PAR Index does not clearly establish linkages between PAR implementation and improved performance; assessing citizen satisfaction with administrative service delivery was only a small element of this objective. Finally, the partnership forums on PAR were limited in comparison to other consultation forums organized by the ILS and the MOJ under other outcomes. They were organized from 2009 to 2013, but were discontinued during the subsequent project period from 2013 to 2016.

In addition to the efforts under PAR, UNDP was expected to contribute to Outcome 3.3 through the implementation of an EU-funded anti-corruption project at the Government Inspectorate, the lead agency in this effort. The key achievement was the successful building of national institute capacities to implement the UNCAC self-review. The Government Inspectorate along with relevant government officials were familiarized with the self-review process in line with required international practices. The process of self-review was systematic, involving consultations with key stakeholders from state and non-state sectors. It yielded a legal framework to enforce coordination between government agencies in the implementation of UNCAC. Overall, UNDP support strengthened Viet Nam's capacity to review its own performance within international anti-corruption frameworks.

Results were modest, though, in terms of enhancing capacities of national institutions to implement

and monitor corruption and anti-corruption work. Available project resources were used for research projects on corruption in selected sectors and in the drafting of a pilot monitoring framework. Although these efforts have enabled the Government Inspectorate to establish baseline information on corruption in specific sectors and quantify corruption risks for the Inspectorate's inspection plan, these activities have not yet contributed to the development of a full-fledged monitoring system. Similarly, promotion of anti-corruption partnerships was limited to the organization of activities to raise awareness of Anti-Corruption Day and consultations with selected CSOs in the process of the UNCAC self-review.

On the women's participation front, the Center for Women in Politics and Public Administration (WIPPA) at the Ho Chi Minh Academy mainstreamed gender components into programmes within the Departments of Philosophy, Economics, and State and the Rule of Law, while the Women's Union has actively advocated the integration of gender into law-drafting (including a gender quota for women candidates in the Law on Elections) and policy reporting. The Women's Union's joint efforts with the Viet Nam Fatherland Front to field women as candidates during the upcoming elections will potentially increase the percentage of women in elected bodies. Support to women in the public sector – including female officials from the Central Committee for Minority Affairs – through research grants, training, and mentoring has enabled participating female professionals to become active in the workplace. UNDP also supported capacity building for women candidates for the 2016 elections.⁹¹

While Outcome 3.3 calls for an ultimate reduction of disparity and ensured access to public services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, project reporting has not tracked these results.

UNDP has taken a different approach to supporting PSMO/CSO participation under Out-

come 3.4 from its earlier engagement with Viet Nam's Union for Science and Technology Associations and the Viet Nam Fatherland Front. It has provided direct support to the VLA and LGBT communities to strengthen their participatory capacity in policy discussions.

The VLA was able to participate more effectively in policy processes and has better supported its branches in the provision of legal services to the poor and vulnerable. Additionally, inputs to the justice sector reform process also came from the VLA's preliminary implementation of the Justice Index. Finally, the VLA started a collaboration scheme with CSOs to expand its legal aid networks. UNDP support to the MOJ department responsible for drafting same-sex marriage and gender reassignment content through the Access to Justice and Protection of Rights and LGBT CSOs project increased the participation of LGBT people directly affected by these provisions in policy consultation and contributed to the amendment of the Law on Marriage and Family, the Civil Code, and the lifting of administrative fines on same-sex cohabitation. The LGBT project directly promoted networks of CSOs, enabling an organization, ISEE, to strengthen its LGBT research; arranging for another CSO (ICS) to work with a network of parents; and supporting ViLEAD to empower young leaders on LGBT issues. Challenges included: (i) the number of VLA-organized legal consultancy centres is limited, and the partnership of the VLA with CSOs has progressed slowly, affecting the scale of legal services provided at the local level; and (ii) there has not yet been a systematic approach to involving key government agencies-*cum*-duty bearers in sectors such as education, health care, and employment in addressing social issues related to stigma and discrimination.

Role of UNDP upstream policy advisory services and guidance

Since 2007, there have been two policy advisors for Rule of Law and Access to Justice and two for

91 See the project's website <http://sansangdethanhcong.com/> for detailed information.

PAR and Anti-Corruption. These advisors have contributed to the CPD Outcome 4 in the previous programme cycle, and to Outcomes 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 in the current cycle.

UNDP has produced knowledge products for policy work related to governance and participation, in addition to project-initiated knowledge products. A review of 124 publicly circulated knowledge products suggests that the knowledge products supportive of GPT policy work forms approximately two-thirds of the total knowledge products from the IEG, GPT, and Sustainable Development clusters. Around four-fifths of the GPT policy-related knowledge products focus on PAR and anti-corruption, while the remainder focuses on CSOs, rule of law/access to justice, and public finance. Knowledge products on Viet Nam's public administration focus on aspects of PAR within the framework of the PAR Master Programme (i.e. institutional reform, government organization, civil service, and public finance), citizen participation, and annual as well as analytical reports on PAPI. Products on anti-corruption focus on a wide range of issues, from prevention (including linkages between PAR and Anti-Corruption, access to information, the role of the media, and citizen perception) to whistle-blowing, enforcement, and criminalization. Around 45 percent of the GPT knowledge products were research, survey reports, or policy notes; 30 percent were advocacy documents; 16 percent were policy briefs; and 6.5 percent were good practice publications.

The Rule of Law and Access to Justice Policy advisors took initiatives to launch pilot undertakings that supported Outcome 3.2 and 3.4. The initiatives on clinical legal education (CLE) in Viet Nam's universities focused on supporting law faculties to establish clinical legal education programmes that facilitated access to justice for marginalized groups and introduced law students to pro bono work. The training pilot on adversarial skills was designed to improve skills in negotiation and the adversarial skills of participants from universities and the legal community. These initiatives have contributed to Outcome

3.2, especially the output focuses on enhancing the knowledge and skills of professionals in the justice sectors (Output 3.2.3). The PAR and anti-corruption policy team took the initiative to launch the Viet Nam Provincial Governance and PAPI as a tool to assess citizen experiences of governance. The PAPI focuses on the six dimensions: (i) local participation; (ii) transparency; (iii) vertical accountability; (iv) control of corruption; (v) public administrative procedure; and (vi) public service delivery. Its key goal is to provide an independent measure of citizens' experiences nationwide and a comparative perspective of change over time.

The Rule of Law and Access to Justice policy advisors provided input and mobilized project resources for legal drafting, making it possible to incorporate democratic and human rights elements into the frameworks. The advisors advocated integrating human rights into the 2013 constitution, including provisions on same sex relationships; international fair trial standards in the Criminal Procedure Code; due process; rights of sex workers and drug users; administrative detention; the Law on the Organization of People's Courts, with special regard to court procedures; universal periodic reviews; reduction of crimes eligible for death penalty; and the Convention against Torture. For Outcome 3.3 on PAR and anti-corruption, the policy team engaged in presenting new input for the policy process through the policy advisors themselves or through overseas speakers, and diversifying partnerships to cover stakeholders from the Vietnamese Communist Party, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front, the Ho Chi Minh Academy of Politics, the National Academy of Public Administration, the MOJ, and Da Nang City. The PAR and Anti-Corruption teams mentioned two specific undertakings that reflect attempts to 'think outside the box': (i) providing input to development and governance for the SEDP 2011–2020; and (ii) changing the direction of the UNDP-PAR project.

Overall, PAT's work has contributed to a more open country and national partners' greater famil-

ilarity with governance concepts and practices. Through consultation, the country has improved the quality of its policies and laws. The CLE and adversarial training pilot initiatives serve as fertile ground for identifying policy approaches, which could be replicated immediately by national partners or turned into NIM projects for further fine-tuning. PAPI results have had the effect of motivating national and subnational level government agencies to compete for better performance. Following the PAPI results, one-third of the provinces have developed provincial-level action plans.

Nonetheless, the question of how to use PAPI results to plan governance reforms remains a challenge for the government. A single figure measurement is not a sufficient reflection of reality, and should not be a sole basis for policy planning. So far, there has been limited clarity in how the capacity of provinces will be developed, for example, by utilizing governance tools, such as the PAPI and PAR Index.⁹² At the local government level, the PAPI system of indicators does not address specific locality or agency details of governance and public administration performance, because of their broad scope. A review of provincial action plans indicated varying practices by provinces in how they have responded to PAPI results. Some provinces developed an action plan that linked the improvement of PAPI results with the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Master Programme, while others linked the results with a grassroots

democracy framework. For planning and monitoring of specific provincial or local government performance (including PAR, service delivery, and anti-corruption), it would be important to focus on specifically tailored tools to track in a locality and/or agency to determine if (i) the plans address implementation gaps; (ii) scheduled plans are implemented on time and on budget; and (iii) implementation of specific projects or initiatives brings about improved performance and concrete results for citizens.⁹³

The sustainability of a policy-focused approach depends on the continued demand for policy advice from the government, the uptake capacity of relevant stakeholders, and the institutionalization of mechanisms to support follow-up of dialogue on different policy cycles.

Contributions to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Except for a few cases, the projects have not specifically focused on gender in their design, and their contributions have been indirect.⁹⁴ Since 2006, the GPT cluster has implemented activities with some bearing on gender equality, especially in the legislation process and the public sector. These activities included: recognizing gender budgeting in the Law on State Budget; integrating gender equality analysis and impact assessment into the promulgation of legal documents; and identifying gender equality gaps in selected sectors. The contributions of the two women's participation projects (rated '3', the highest on the

92 At the national level, this is crucial given that the 2014 results of the Ministry of Home Affairs' PAR Index (which measures the PAR implementation) and those of PAPI (which measures citizen experience) suggested that the best 10 provinces in PAR implementation did not necessarily do well on the six governance dimensions measured by PAPI.

93 See, for example, Theodore Poister, *Measuring Performance in Public and Nonprofit Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003); and Beryl A. Radin, *Challenging the Performance Movement: Accountability, Complexity and Democratic Values* (Washington D.C: Georgetown University, 2009). Additional references include: UNDP, *Methodology for Measuring the Index of Responsibility, Transparency and Accountability (RTA) at Local Level* (Skopje, 2008), for corruption measuring tools at the local/agency level; and on the approaches to track trends in government, Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, OECD, *Components of Integrity: Data and Benchmarks for Tracking Trends in Government* (Paris: OECD Conference Centre, 2009).

94 The UNDP Gender Marker ratings for the 16 projects under review showed that, on the scale of 0 to 3 from "outputs not expected" to "noticeable contribution to gender equality outputs" with gender equality as the main objective, a majority of the projects (10) were rated as 1 (outputs contributing in some way to gender equality but not significantly), and four projects rated as '2' (outputs having gender equality as a significant objective). A review of all project documents indicated that most of the projects did not have explicit gender equality outputs in the project designs, and they often implemented activities which were one-off events.

UNDP Gender Marker scale) are more extensive, including mainstreaming gender in training programmes and action research, mentoring, and joint action between the Women's Union and the Vietnam Fatherland Front to increase the number of female candidates for the 2016 elections.

Multiple factors explain the limited gender-mainstreaming efforts. First, there are agencies in Viet Nam assigned to take charge of gender equality issues, including the Committee for the Advancement of Women, the Women's Union, and the MOLISA. Given that gender mainstreaming is not explicitly stated in the project documents with systematic monitoring, implementing partners have less incentive to incorporate gender equality issues into their project activities, despite the existence of a national strategy on gender equality. Capacity building for implementing partners to mainstream gender in projects was often missing within the project framework. Second, due to its cross-cutting, multi-agency nature of work on gender equality, no single agency could successfully promote the nationwide gender equality alone. And third, national partners have limited capacity to identify equality gaps and to carry out action planning. These elements need to be addressed during the initial programme/project design and implementation.

Contributions to Reduction of Poverty, Inequality and Exclusion

Programme results are designed to have a spill-over effect on ameliorating poverty and advancing equality. The budgetary oversight projects have involved the Ethnic Minority Council and people's councils from poor provinces, and attention to these partners in design is expected to strengthen their capacity in fulfilling their responsibilities. The Access to Justice and Protection of Rights Project translated into Vietnamese a manual guiding the legal empowerment of the poor, while the VLA project supported local consultancy centres to provide legal services to poor and disadvantaged groups. The LGBT project addresses inclusiveness, while also emphasizing empowerment of LGBT communities. The interviews suggested that UNDP and imple-

menting partners working on governance and participation recognized that the reduction of poverty, inequality and exclusion is achieved with improved public governance.

4.2.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF CONTRIBUTION

Relevance

UNDP's programme contributions are relevant to the government's national plans and programmes, its international commitment, and UNDP's corporate priorities on democratic governance.

UNDP work on governance and participation has been aligned with national priorities, including the Legal System Development Strategy, the Judicial Reform Strategy, the Public Administration Reform Master Programs (2001–2010 and 2011–2020), and the National Strategy on Gender Equality (2011–2020). It has also been aligned with the government's increasing commitment to compliance with international conventions on anti-corruption and human rights, including the UNCAC ratified in 2009, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UPR, the Convention against Torture, the International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights, the Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities, CEDAW, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Paris Principles on national human rights institutions.

There is no official national priority on strengthening elected bodies. Nonetheless, UNDP work on budget oversight is aligned with the government's overall concern on public financial management reform. Its work on citizen participation and CSOs is also aligned with Viet Nam's legal frameworks (i.e. Law on the Promulgation of Legal Documents and Ordinance on Grassroots Democracy), which require participation of citizens and organizations in the law-making process.

The efforts made under the programme are aligned with UNDP's corporate priorities and strategies on promoting democratic governance

and human rights. UNDP has emphasized responsiveness to emerging development challenges and needs, which can be seen from its use of the issue-based advisory and multi-stakeholder approach. As noted under programme effectiveness, results from these efforts, e.g. enhanced civil participation and strengthening of elected bodies' performance, are yet to be fully seen, however, and will depend critically on the national capacity and commitment to move forward with them.

Efficiency

Challenges were reported in terms of the programme's managerial efficiency (e.g. delays in some project implementation and insufficient staffing, and limited clarity in the relationship between the NIM and DIM modalities) and programmatic efficiency (e.g. projects existing in isolation without clear linkages to achieve the outcomes).

Managerial efficiency: Delays in implementation were reported in many projects.⁹⁵ The national implementing partners noted several reasons for this, including a slow project approval process, project re-design, limited capacities of the PMU, difficulties in recruiting international consultants, and UNDP's lengthy procurement regulations. The planned and actual expenditure info indicated that most projects have been implemented within the estimated budgets, although some were under-spent. Frequent changes and shortage of UNDP staff over a project period and limited programme management support to coordinate inputs from various UNDP experts, such as policy advisors, technical advisors, and short-term experts, were identified as challenges in other projects.

The GPT programme has used both NIM and DIM modalities to deliver projects. A majority were national partner-initiated NIM projects, which has encouraged national ownership. At the same time, the modality that focuses on a sin-

gle implementing agency has often discouraged cross-sectoral or cross-organizational coordination. UNDP's ability to measure development changes has been limited. Support to LGBT communities and the work of policy advisors on PAT were both delivered through the DIM modality. The advantages of the DIM approach include the LGBT CSOs project's provision of an entry point for UNDP to work with small non-government agencies, and the innovative initiatives taken by policy advisors (e.g. the clinical legal education, adversarial training, and the PAPI) that introduced 'out-of-the-box' pilots for governance reform. They have allowed UNDP to diversify partners and work with multiple stakeholders simultaneously. However, the DIM approach has potential shortcomings in terms of UNDP's limited ability to ensure the government's full commitment to given efforts. For those projects reviewed, it was not clear how the efforts made under the DIM (e.g. through the work of policy advisors) were designed to support and strengthen the NIM framework.

Programmatic efficiency: UNDP should focus on allocating resources on a set of programmes, projects or activities expected to produce significant results. In this regard, having an explicit programme strategy of interventions for each of the GPT related outcomes, based on a theory of change, is important. Challenges with the GPT programme included lack of clarity on how different projects under an outcome are inter-related, or designed to mutually enforce one another to contribute to the indicated objectives. For example, the Access to Justice project, which includes a human rights component, should be clearly linked to the other standalone human rights projects to achieve the common outcome (Outcome 3.2). The PAR projects, GI-UNCAC project, and the Women's Participation project under Outcome 3.3 are all designed to support the government's public sector reform

95 For example, delays were reported under Outcome 3.1 in phase II of the budget oversight, and phase I of the ILS project; under Outcome 3.2, the Access to Justice project, and phase I of the Human Rights project; and under Outcome 3.3, the GI-UNCAC project, PAR project and the Women's Participation project.

efforts. Programme efficiency would improve if key elements among those projects are conceptually linked at the critical design stage and a clear, coherent strategy is developed and mapped against the outcome's objective.⁹⁶

The GPT programme's collaboration with other programme cluster areas were observed in, for example, its support ethnic minority women with legal aid (with the IEG programme) and legal drafting on environmental crimes (with the Sustainable Development programme). In addition to activity-specific collaboration, UNDP could further strengthen its cross-fertilization practices by focusing on 'issues' and defining various programmatic linkages between clusters: for example, poverty reduction and human rights, climate change financing, and the concretization of public administration reform measures to support sustainable development. A good theory of change model for the programmes can serve as a foundation for collaboration and tracking their contributions.

Project design issues also influence the extent of the projects' ability to generate intended results. The Access to Justice and Protection of Rights project with MOJ has lacked a multi-stakeholder mechanism to coordinate relevant agencies in the justice sector (including the Supreme People's Court, the Procuracy, the National Assembly Committees on Law and Judicial Affairs, and the Judicial Reform Strategy). This limits the scope of the project's contribution to its corresponding, multi-stakeholder oriented outcome (Outcome 3.2).⁹⁷ While all GPT-related outcomes focus on addressing the needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged, it was

not explicitly clear in many project designs how the projects intend to do so.

There were other efficiency-related issues. First, limited attention to critical focus areas in a project or effort was a concern for the GI-UNCAC project. The project has three components: UNCAC self-review, anti-corruption monitoring and CSO partnership. While substantive attention and resources have gone to the UNCAC self-review and research work for the Anti-Corruption Dialogue jointly organized by donors and the government, the other components on monitoring and anti-corruption partnerships with CSOs were not sufficiently focused. That limited the project's potential contribution to accountability (Outcome 3.3).⁹⁸ Second, mid-course changes in project activities and plans were raised as challenges in some projects, e.g. the Women's Participation project, where the development of a mentoring course with a university was budgeted, and yet this has not been materialized for the beneficiary, WIPPA. For the Women's Union, UNDP provided in-house support (through its senior Technical Advisor) to support the union's mentoring work. The current activity-based project delivery has also limited the partners' ability to develop long-term plans. Third, the existence of multiple projects to address an issue has created overlaps in efforts and limited the opportunity for efficient project delivery. For example, UNDP supports Viet Nam's law-drafting processes (Outcomes 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3). Since the drafting of laws is carried out by line ministries, support is provided to the individual ministries, as well as to the relevant committees at the National Assembly who review the drafts. Based on the current project

96 For example, currently, these projects exist in isolation, although the issues are highly related. For example, the PAR and anti-corruption efforts should be developed together, given their linkages, such as anti-corruption measures leading to improved accountability and eventually better public administration performance; similarly, the women's participation and PAR projects, exploring ways to integrate gender consideration into public administration reforms.

97 To contribute to the outcome, engagements among various stakeholders would be needed during project planning and monitoring, especially in the areas of strengthening of law enforcement and judicial institutions to better protect the rights enshrined in the 2013 constitution, and support to the various legal frameworks UNDP has helped to establish. Although the MOJ's Department of International Relations has been active in organizing legal and policy partnership forums, information exchanges of policy issues alone do not appear to be sufficient.

98 The project has three components: UNCAC self-review, anti-corruption monitoring and CSO partnership.

formulation practices in the country, multiple projects have been created separately to address the needs of individual national counterparts.⁹⁹

As for engagement with CSOs, UNDP has so far focused mainly on working with key political and social umbrella organizations, such as the Viet Nam Fatherland Front, the VLA and Viet Nam Union of Science and Technology Associations. The LGBT project has created an opportunity for UNDP to work with smaller CSOs and community-based networks. However, it is important for UNDP to have a clearer approach for its general strategic engagement with CSOs from the point of scaling-up its support to the government with development results and with broader popular participation, as well as improved coordination with donors and development partners currently active in engaging smaller, individual CSOs. In Viet Nam, support to CSOs may focus on their internal governance, CSO-government partnerships at the national and subnational levels, and development of financial mechanisms that allow the state budget to involve CSOs in, for example, service delivery, by ensuring cross-cutting approaches.

Sustainability

The programme has produced some tangible results, but challenges remain for longer-term sustainability, e.g. in national partner capacities and resources, and their capacity to implement new legal frameworks and pilot concepts.

The GPT programme from 2006 to 2016 has been designed to focus on the development of legal, regulatory, and policy frameworks based on democratic and human rights principles. To ensure longer-term sustainability, their imple-

mentation aspects need also to be addressed. To a large extent, the sustainability of PAR, legal and policy frameworks supported by the projects depends on the extent of change in the government's organizational structure mandated in the 2013 constitution. Change in the structure of the organization of the government may require the amendment of some human resource management initiatives, including (but not limited to) work positions and performance assessment supported by the UNDP until now.

There are also sustainability challenges in national partners' ability to use evidence-based policy-making practices, replication of good practices, and the institutionalization of public consultation processes supported by UNDP. For example, while the evidence-based approach to policy-making has been advocated, many existing projects lack support to develop capacity for research institutions. National partners' ability to adapt and implement innovative practices (e.g. PAPI, CLE) has also been limited. For example, the ability of provinces to develop action plans in response to PAPI results and the quality of their plans have varied. Whether the study programme on human rights supported by the projects will be replicated and scaled-up beyond the Academy of International Affairs depends on the government's commitment and resources. While opportunities for public consultations have increased, this should continue to be expanded. In the long run, the sustainability of public consultation depends on the institutionalization of consultation sessions.¹⁰⁰

The use of pilots for testing innovations and new concepts was evident, for example, in the areas of CLE and training on adversarial principles

99 For example, in the area of local government, UNDP's project support was given separately to MOHA's Department of Local Government and the National Assembly's Committee on Law; in the area of same-sex marriage (an element of the Family and Marriage Law), UNDP supported MOJ for drafting and ISEE to work with the National Assembly; and it supported MOJ on the work on death penalty and corruption crimes, while supporting the National Assembly's Judicial Committee and the GI.

100 For example, Viet Nam's Law on the Promulgation of Legal Documents has mandated public consultations on draft legal documents. The concretization of this framework, possibly in the form of government decrees or circulars, would further ensure the opportunity for public participation in the law drafting process. Particular attention may be paid to the role of government, non-government agencies, and elected bodies to organize these sessions and maintain transparency in handling collected inputs.

introduced by the PAT; human rights education; training on the Convention against Torture; legal aid services and empowerment for the poor; human resource management models; and mentoring for junior female professionals. Scaling-up project results has to take account of the government's financial commitment and resources to remain sustainable.

4.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Outcomes

The two goals from the previous programme cycle – “Viet Nam has adequate capacity to effectively reduce risks of, and respond to, climate-related disasters, particularly among the most vulnerable groups” (Outcome 2)’ and “Economic growth takes into account environmental protection and rational use of natural resources for poverty reduction” (Outcome 3)’ – have been extended to two outcomes in 2012–2016:

1. Key national and subnational agencies, in partnership with the private sector and communities, have established and monitor multi-sectoral strategies, mechanisms and resources to support the implementation of relevant multilateral agreements and effectively address climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster-risk management (Outcome 1.3).
2. Key national and subnational agencies, in partnership with the private sector and communities, implement and monitor laws, policies and programmes for more efficient use of natural resources and environmental management, and to implement commitments under international conventions (Outcome 1.4).

4.3.1 OVERVIEW

Outcome 1.3 aims to address Viet Nam's priorities on climate change and natural disasters by developing national and subnational strategies, climate planning and budgeting systems, legal and technical adaptation and mitigation processes and practices, and related institutional and human capacities. The strategies, mechanisms and resources that are to be established and monitored by 2016 seek a comprehensive response to climate change and disaster planning and to several multilateral agreements on climate change and disaster risk management, particu-

larly the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Hyogo Framework for Action on building resilience to disasters.

Other UN agencies are also engaged in this Outcome, such as FAO's involvement in climate-smart agriculture, the UNEP-FAO-UNDP partnership in the UNREDD programme, and UNIDO's engagement in energy efficiency.

Outcome 1.4 was designed to assist Viet Nam as it addresses sustainable development aspects of the SEDS 2011–2020 and develops a green and environmentally friendly economy. This included compliance with the Stockholm Convention on POPs, the Convention on Biodiversity and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The programme seeks to advance the Green Growth policy and cleaner production practices of industry, provide technical assistance on the sound management of hazardous chemicals and management of contaminated sites, and ensure that conservation of biodiversity is a central part of the economic development agenda.

Other UN agencies are also engaged in this outcome. These include FAO, which has been involved in the pesticides management activities; UNEP, which supports the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) updating process; and UNIDO in chemicals management in industry.

There are four CCPD/One Plan outputs each under Outcomes 1.3 and 1.4. A summary of the outputs contributing to the outcomes, key project efforts and deliverables is presented in Annex 4. The evaluation focused on the results produced by the selected projects (Annex 5).

4.3.2 ASSESSMENT OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE OUTCOMES

The Sustainable Development programme for Outcomes 1.3 and 1.4 has produced significant awareness, technical information, analyses and capacity development related to climate

change, green growth and low carbon opportunities, energy efficiency, disaster risk management, UN-REDD, contaminated sites and pesticides management, biodiversity conservation and protected areas management. It has resulted in legal, policy and technical frameworks to address these issues under international conventions and national directives, and demonstrated effective approaches and technologies on the ground.

The Outcome 1.3 programme has produced an impressive list of achievements on policy, strategy, laws, action plans and guidelines and advanced the awareness, institutional capacities and skills of government on climate change, Green Growth, DRM and UN-REDD. Most notably, the research, technical and legal inputs and consultations for the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and the National Green Growth Strategy and Action Plan have been major outputs assisted by the programme. Other key outputs included the formulation of National Target Program to respond to climate change (TP-RCC), climate change impact studies and climate scenarios developed with UK Met Office, the *Climate Public Expenditure and Investment Review* prepared with the World Bank, assessment of climate finance options, training of over 2,000 participants including Viet Nam representatives for COP negotiations, development of “intended nationally determined contributions” under UNFCCC, vulnerability and impact assessments in selected areas (Phu Quy Island, Binh Dinh and Can Tho), scientific research on integrated flood control and management for Mekong Delta Plan, *Viet Nam Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* and some 20 other publications.

On the mitigation side, the programme has assisted and promoted energy efficiency audits, technologies and investments in the public sector and industry. It has completed assessment of GHG emissions reduction and abatement costs in two sectors, developed Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) guidelines and started to formulate four NAMAs in steel

and chemical fertilizer sectors. It has developed energy efficiency service providers; provided loan guarantees for 54 small and medium enterprises and pilot demonstrations in 12 investment projects along with energy efficiency and conservation awareness training and programmes, and contributed to the National Fund for Development of Science and Technology to promote energy efficiency investments.

The two phases of project support for DRM have provided substantial development of the legal, policy and technical framework and guidelines, established the CBDRM approach with other development partners and provided extensive training to over 1,000 stakeholders in the provinces. The approach has been demonstrated at the local level and the project helped 54 communes in 20 provinces to prepare risk assessments and DRM plans. Assistance in drafting the Law on Disaster Management, the National Plan for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control, mainstreaming DRM into rural development programmes and establishing a ‘National Platform for DRM and Climate Change Adaptation’ has led to a major CBDRM programme at a national scale.

The UN-REDD programme has spent several years supporting the training of officials and personnel, and setting the stage for implementation. Actual implementation started in 2014 and the activity programmes have been designed with five co-implementing partners: Forest Inventory and Planning Institute, Forest Protection Department, National Institute of Agriculture and Planning, Viet Nam Forestry University, and Forest Sciences Academy. Preparation of Provincial REDD+ Action Plans (PRAPS) has been a key activity and progress is now being made on other components: the Measurement, Reporting, Verification (MRV) system, safeguards procedures, draft Gender Guidelines, beneficiaries’ pilot scheme, technical guidelines for site-level planning and pilot activities in six provinces.

UNDP and its partners have introduced innovative approaches, such as the use of co-

implementing organizations in delivering CBDRM and the creation of climate change/DRM forums, platforms and expert panels for dialogue and to share experiences.

Technical and institutional capacity in MONRE, MARD, MPI and the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) has increased, but the extent of that improvement is not known, because a comprehensive approach to institutional change and service delivery has generally not been adopted. New structures, such as the Viet Nam Panel on Climate Change, the Disaster Management Centre, the Department of Pollution Control, and the UN-REDD Office, have been created, but their ongoing capacity to maintain relevant services is uncertain. Capacity development benchmarks are largely undefined relative to expected outcomes. Enhanced capacity is mostly measured by the legal and technical documents, strategies and action plans and the number of training events and publications. Only two projects appear to have undertaken a capacity needs assessment¹⁰¹, and the comprehensive UNDP approach to capacity development¹⁰² is not readily apparent – except, perhaps, in the DRM project. Several reports note partnership and inter-ministry coordination challenges.¹⁰³ UN-REDD achievements to date have been limited by management constraints (see Efficiency section), although progress acceleration has been addressed in recent months.

The Outcome 1.4 programme has produced some important outputs that begin to address low carbon development strategies, soil pollution legacies, agricultural chemicals management, biodiversity conservation and protected areas finan-

cial sustainability. These included assistance in preparing the Law on Environmental Protection, preparation of a chapter on Environmental Crime in the new Criminal Code (relating particularly to expanding responsibilities and enforcement); a new Law on Natural Resources and Environment of Seas and Islands (notably relating to strengthening the role of integrated coastal zone management), studies on opportunities for low carbon economy and market opportunities for low carbon industrial production, roll-out of the Green Growth Strategy and action plan, new national standards for identifying contaminated sites and for the concept of risk to human health as a factor in determining appropriate remedial measures and land uses. Testing of various technologies for pollutant containment and treatment and/or excavation and disposal at 10 demonstration sites, along with training communities and government officials, were key accomplishments. The programme developed a national database and information system for about 1,500 contaminated sites. It helped to prepare NTP-PMEI and prepared site surveys and long-term provincial priorities to clean up and rehabilitate the sites. Government staff were trained in the inventory and assessment of pesticide-contaminated sites and safe handling of soils, while FAO assisted in promoting the safe application of pesticides and integrated pest management options.

Under Outcome 1.4, UNDP has also assisted updates to the National Biodiversity Strategy by 2020, vision to 2030 and Action Plan and the 5th National Biodiversity Report submitted under the Convention on Biological Diversity. It has prepared a Critical Issues Biodiversity Report

101 Peapros Consulting, Institutional Capacity Assessment of the Committees for Flood and Storm Control at National and Provincial Levels, SCDMII, Hanoi, March 2014.; EPRO Consulting, Capacity Needs Assessment and Capacity Building Plan Preparation for MOIT and relevant stakeholders in implementing climate change related tasks, Hanoi, April 2015.

102 UNDP, Supporting Capacity Development, The UNDP Approach, 2009; UNDP Practitioner's Guide: Capacity Development for Environmental Sustainability, March 2011.

103 MPI/UNDP, Building Sustainable Development and Climate Planning Project Assessment Report, 2014; MARD, 2014 Annual Project Progress Report, SCDM II project; The World Bank, Report No:ICR3183, Implementation Completion and Results Report (IDA-4114;IDA-4770) Natural Disaster Risk Management Report, 2014, p.24: "Despite MARD's mandated leadership role in DRM, it was sometimes difficult for MARD to influence MONRE and MOF in project implementation".

and guidance on implementing the NBSAP and biodiversity indicators. Biodiversity was incorporated into Decree 43 (dealing with Land Law) and related circulars on the formulation of land use plans, along with a report on the Assessment of Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Land Use Planning. Support was also provided to two provinces (Lang Son and Son La) on integrating biodiversity conservation into land use planning.

The technical framework for contaminated sites inventory and management has now been established within MONRE, although long-term effectiveness of the site monitoring, planning, remediation, inspection and maintenance of protective measures will, in reality, depend on available government and community resources. The biodiversity conservation/protected areas projects also assisted a new Biodiversity Law and advanced the information base on conservation values, risks and responses, piloted land use planning integration with biodiversity, and identified financing options for protected areas. The effectiveness of these results in the long term may depend on resolving coordination issues between MONRE and MARD on biodiversity conservation responsibilities and programmes.

The key factors that have contributed to results are the strong government commitments to international environmental agreements and to the use of internationally accepted environmental management practices; the close working relationship that UNDP has with senior levels of government. More than a decade of technical assistance and operational support to the

key agencies has provided continuity to improve skills and practices within the key agencies.

Monitoring information for tracking progress toward the outcomes is weak for several reasons. Expected programme end results are vague. The One Plan indicators are at an impact level and not useful for measuring programme results. Some project reports contain limited information mostly on completed activities. And the monitoring tables are very useful for assessing output progress, but not for cumulative progress toward the outcomes.

Role of UNDP upstream policy advisory services and guidance

UNDP's role has been central to national climate change/DRM discussions and donor coordination. Highlights of the policy-related outputs include research studies, policy notes, legal and strategy drafting, training/mentoring for international negotiators, informal advice and awareness-raising with senior officials and others.¹⁰⁴ The Sustainable Development programme provided extensive training on green growth and climate change to National Assembly members, central government and provincial policy makers (more than 900 government decision makers)¹⁰⁵. Outputs from UNDP projects, although generally unrecognized, have directly contributed to the multi-donor climate change SP-RCC Policy Matrix.¹⁰⁶

Four general observations are presented on the policy work to date. First, Sustainable Development projects and PAT have clearly assisted the development of, and advances in, climate change, Green Growth, DRM, POPs and biodiversity

104 These have been documented in UNDP Vietnam, Inputs for ADR, August 2015. E.g., UNDP provides technical support to the Standing Office or Secretariat of the National Committee on Climate Change (NCCC) and the Viet Nam Panel on Climate Change to advise NCCC. Since 2009, UNDP organized training and coaching for many climate change negotiators from Viet Nam and other ASEAN countries. They strengthened national research capacity on climate change and green growth and a monitoring framework on sustainable development has been formulated. Studies and discussions have included the *Vietnam Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation; Migration, Resettlement and Climate Change in Vietnam: Improving from Experience and other reports*.

105 UNDP Vietnam, Inputs for ADR, August 2015.

106 These include the hydro-meteorology law, energy efficiency investments, REDD implementation, biodiversity conservation strategy, NAMAs development and mainstreaming climate change/green growth into socio-economic development; see MONRE, SP-RCC Policy Matrix 2015; UNDP is not party to SP-RCC.

conservation strategies. But effective implementation of policy also requires substantive long-term institutional reform and modernization aimed at changing how environment/climate are addressed within current development and industrialization processes of government and the private sector, particularly given the evidence of weak compliance in the environment sector and reported gaps and dependencies on external advisors within the key agencies.¹⁰⁷ Other evaluations found the need for UNDP's policy analysis and dialogue work to move towards a more strategic longer term approach, assist UNDP programme components to mutually reinforce one another, and link policy advisory work more explicitly with capacity development for strengthening national and subnational institutional functions and capabilities to implement policy.¹⁰⁸

Second, the essential purpose of PAT is (i) to provide timely policy advice to the government; and (ii) to facilitate quality assurance in project implementation and policy leveraging. The work has largely focused on discrete policy advisory activity rather than direct quality assurance, or regular support for policy development within projects. The serendipitous approach carries a risk of one-time activities that are not fully synchronized with programme outcomes. PAT remains an effective and important approach to enhancing UNDP's impact but it needs to be more carefully aligned with outcome delivery.

Third, upstream policy advice could benefit from more collaborative efforts within UNDP/One UN and with other international partners engaged in the same areas. There are potential opportunities to enhance climate change policy-related support with UNEP (Third National Communication update underway),¹⁰⁹ FAO¹¹⁰ and UNIDO. Policy support to MONRE, MARD, and MPI by UNDP and other donors,¹¹¹ despite SP-RCC, has not sufficiently coordinated national policy actions, with individual ministries mostly working within the confines of their mandates.

And fourth, a more defined role could be established for JPG as a mechanism to identify policy leveraging opportunities and policy development issues within projects in consultation with PAT, project coordinators and STAs. Programme officers are not familiar with alternative means of addressing larger scale policy issues that could enhance systemic impacts of their project activities. Examples of project-related policy issues that may warrant further action include:

- Enhanced mechanisms for inter-ministry cooperation to address the overlapping responsibilities for conservation policy and planning, and for forest and land management;¹¹² the MPI-Green Growth/Sustainable Development search for a "clear mechanism for cooperation between tech-

107 The challenges for climate change assessment and action are described in MONRE, Viet Nam Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment, Report on Project Results and Proposal for Project Extension, *Strengthening national capacities to respond to climate change in Viet Nam, reducing vulnerabilities and controlling GHG emission*, Nov 20, 2014.

108 Frank Noij, *DFID UNDP Strategic Partnership Initiative End of Project Review Report*, Performance Assessment Resource Centre, June 2009.

109 Vietnam's *Second National Communication under UNFCCC* noted capacity-building needs for the following areas: Institutional and administrative, Technology development and transfer, Financial capacity and Education, training and public awareness. See also ISPONRE, *Viet Nam Assessment Report on Climate Change*, UNEP, 2009.

110 FAO, Climate Smart Agriculture project includes climate scenario impact assessment on agriculture sector; see, FAO, OED, *Mid Term Evaluation of Climate Smart Agriculture: Capturing the Synergies between Mitigation, Adaptation and Food Security in Malawi, Vietnam and Zambia* (GCP/INT/139/EC), Final Report, April 2014.

111 UNDP's climate change programme is one of 12 multilateral and bilateral climate change programmes in recent years; e.g. Danida, CCAM Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Programme 2009-2015; AusAid, Vietnam – Australia Climate Change Delivery Strategy 2010-15; DFID-World Bank, Vietnam Climate Partnership (VNCLIP).

112 The case for better MONRE-MARD coordination is made in the *Mid Term Review of Removing Barriers Hindering Protected Area Management Effectiveness in Viet Nam*, Feb. 2015, p.12: "the project management cannot resolve issues related to institutional agreements on its own."

nical officials from ministries, sectors and policy consultation activities”; and related coordination for DRM.¹¹³

- ‘Monitoring and after-care’ obligations and funding for contaminated sites protection. This includes sites that have been rehabilitated by the POPs-Pesticide project (10 sites) where post-project arrangements have a significant level of risk and the 1,500 pesticide-contaminated sites in Viet Nam where policy constraints affect responsible management.¹¹⁴

Contribution to the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment

UNDP facilitated the participation of women in decision-making mechanisms and advocated for the inclusion of women in partnerships and relevant policies, e.g. inclusion of a representative from Viet Nam Women’s Union in the National Central Committee for Floods and Storm Control in 2013. Gender equality principles have been included in the final draft DRM Law and the upgraded Disaster and Needs Assessment (DANA) tool (with UNICEF) includes gender-disaggregated disaster data. The UN-REDD programme has prepared Draft Guideline for Mainstreaming Gender and Social Safeguards in Provincial REDD+ Action Plan (PRAP) (2015). With direct technical support and advocacy by UNDP, the gender principle has been included within the approved Law on Environmental Protection 2014.¹¹⁵

The programme has been committed to gender equity and active input from gender advisors has been made. However, the consideration for gender equality needs to be clearly articulated and

reflected in the project designs up front, which are currently indicated as having limited contribution based on gender marker classification for the Sustainable Development projects.

Contribution to the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequalities/ exclusion

Disaster Risk Management efforts have had a direct bearing on poverty reduction and livelihoods’ development, with priority given to vulnerable communities. The climate change projects have promoted adaptation measures aimed at strengthening household livelihoods and incomes and reducing losses associated with floods, drought and storms. Health risk reduction benefits have been generated in the POPs-Pesticide and dioxin remediation projects. UNDP’s biodiversity conservation assistance highlighted the role of rural livelihoods and sustainable use practices that are compatible with conservation objectives and maintaining protected areas.

4.3.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF CONTRIBUTION

Relevance

UNDP’s sustainable development work has been both relevant and instrumental to Viet Nam’s responses to climate change and environmental risks. It has been fully integrated and aligned with government operations and policies and directly engaged the key agencies in updating the policy and technical frameworks.

Outcomes 1.3 and 1.4 (Sustainable Development) projects and activities have been highly relevant and timely in supporting Viet Nam to respond to government policy directives associated with climate change, Green Growth, DRM,

113 MPI and UNDP, *Building Sustainable Development and Climate Planning Project Assessment Report*, Dec. 2014 stated that “It is necessary to strengthen cooperation parties related to sustainable development and climate change... Until now, exchanges are usually dispersed and uncoordinated and this issue requires attention from UNDP”.

114 Central government funding is available for ‘treatment costs’ up to 50 percent for site excavation and rehabilitation; all other costs are borne by the provinces but there is little annual budget for the Departments of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) for ongoing sampling and monitoring of the sites. The central funds are sometimes not spent and cannot be used for monitoring/‘after care’ because of the regulations, and no mechanism is currently available for projects to carry over a small budget for monitoring and reporting after project closure.

115 UN Vietnam ROAR, 2014

POPs and biodiversity conservation challenges; and to updating the policy and technical frameworks related to international conventions. They are fully aligned with the government's national priorities and targeting processes, such as the Viet Nam Climate Change Strategy, National Strategy on Green Growth, NTPs for Climate Change Response and for Pollution Management and Environmental Improvement, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the National Action Plan for Sound Chemical Management.

The Sustainable Development programme is also in line with the UNDP country strategy to strengthen the policy and technical capacity to address climate and disaster management concerns. The activities support UNDP's corporate priorities particularly related to mainstreaming climate change, green growth and DRM into the development strategies. The One UN/DAO approach has had some significant coordination issues in the UN-REDD and POPs projects. The UN-REDD Phase II evaluation stated that "the programme would be more relevant if it did not mainly focus on deforestation/degradation... but also significantly included encouraging reforestation and afforestation, and enhancing quality of existing, degraded forests, and if it thereby focused on achieving continued net increases of forests/biomass."¹¹⁶

Efficiency

The project implementation processes experienced delays associated with work plan and procurement approvals, start-up difficulties in UN joint management of the UN-REDD project, cases of limited or poor quality project reporting, inactive or non-existent project steering committees, and constraints to cumulative monitoring of outcome progress. Delays in project commencement and in the time required to obtain approval of annual work plans often affected activity delivery. Programme officers are forced to spend too much time on administrative issues than on the qual-

ity of outputs and the results of their projects. Programmatic cross-cluster coherence aimed at well-defined outcomes remains elusive, and the track record on joint projects (e.g. the UN-REDD and POPs-Pesticide projects) for efficient One UN approach in Sustainable Development programme implementation is also weak.

Managerial efficiency: The project implementation processes have struggled with both UNDP and government approval procedures (work plan and procurement) and time delays, especially where multiple UN agencies are involved. Delays in project start-up and in the time required to obtain annual approval of AWP are a problem that has often affected activity delivery. The HPPMG has been implemented since 2010, but appears to need further refinement based on project experiences. Project inception misunderstandings, weak coordination, generally poor quality project reporting (with some exceptions), overly complicated government and UNDP administrative procedures, and difficulties recruiting and maintaining technical advisors were key issues. Several projects required re-design during the early stages of implementation and there were many examples of implementation delays. Yet there were also cases of adaptive management where re-adjusted designs led to significant results. For example, the POPs project design/management required re-structuring and revised indicators to give more clarity and precision, and the UN-REDD management strategy and implementation procedures were proactively amended to address some inefficiencies. The customized Programme Implementation Manual for UN-REDD may offer a model for similar multi-agency projects.

The GEF projects benefitted from the annual Project Implementation Review process and mid-term and final evaluations, which occurred in distinct contrast to the lack of such review rigour in the non-GEF line agency projects.

116 UN-REDD Programme, UN-REDD Vietnam Phase II Annual Report 2014, March 2015

Some projects do not appear to have executive committees or boards and others have not effectively used them to address implementation issues. Some efficiency issues are listed in the CO's self-assessment.¹¹⁷ The first-hand experiences of UNDP programme and project staff and advisors can serve to further refine the HPPMG manual, strengthen the relatively weak project design, M&E and reporting systems, and find more streamlined means of programme delivery.

The financial audits show a high degree of variation in the proportion of expenditures that go toward project management components: generally, in the 15 percent to 30 percent range.¹¹⁸

Programmatic efficiency: Programme scale planning and coordination (i.e. alignment of projects toward a common outcome) is not significant in the Outcome 1.3/1.4 portfolio, although there are linkages between climate change and green growth projects and between the POPs pesticide and dioxin projects. Double or triple phases of some of the climate change and DRM projects, and the national priority-setting processes through the National Target Program – Response to Climate Change and GEF allocation planning no doubt helped to provide some level of strategic coherence. Overall, however, it is difficult to promote programmatic efficiency without a well-defined and results-based set of outcomes toward which individual projects and initiatives jointly contribute. The project portfolios function as collections of projects under two outcome statements rather than as an integrated programme. Coordination at the cluster level deals largely with administrative issues that affect individual projects. Synergies between UNDP clusters hardly exist. The main One UN approach occurs through UN-REDD with UNEP and FAO, although there are some other limited project interactions between UNDP and UNIDO, UNEP, FAO and UNICEF.

Sustainability

The significant outputs from Outcome 1.3 and 1.4 activities, especially the policy, legal and planning outputs, the databases and methodologies for climate change scenarios and impact assessment, the CBDRM platform and approaches, protocols for contaminated sites remediation and management, and procedural models for integrating biodiversity conservation in land use planning, will all have an ongoing effect on professional standards and practices within the key agencies. Whether the key agencies now have sufficient institutional capacity to continue the progress based on this foundation and without major external support is another question. Technical advisors still play a central role, but little is known about the actual status of capacity (with some exceptions). The Sustainable Development programme lacks a clear vision of end results and for the withdrawal strategy for many projects.

The policy, legal and planning outputs, as well as the databases and methodologies for climate change scenarios, impact assessment and disaster risk management, provide an initial basis for sustainability. The protocols for contaminated sites remediation and management, and the procedural models for integrating biodiversity conservation in land use planning will also have an ongoing effect on professional standards and practices within the key agencies. Technical advisors – national and international – currently play a central role, and ministry budgets to carry the momentum forward are uncertain in the face of the withdrawal of many donors from Viet Nam. The Green Growth initiatives are expected to develop new sources of international financing through rapidly evolving market and non-market mechanisms. Many other options for cost recovery and new types of environmental and climate financing remain to be considered. Sustainability of UN-REDD is expected to require a two- or

117 For example, ROAR 2014 report indicated a low level of readiness of counterparts and partners; lack of effective and efficient partnership modalities.

118 KPMG, UNDP Country Office, Awards 0057013, 0084321, 0049713, 0049750, 0072132; various Audit Reports for the year ended 31 Dec., 2012, 2013 and 2014.

three-year extension of the original plan (2014 Programme Annual Review).

National ownership and institutionalization of the climate and disaster risk management and environmental management and related integration into national development and budgeting systems were keys to sustainability in the project designs. The emphasis has been on establishing acceptable standards and methods for monitoring and management, demonstrating their effectiveness and embedding best practices into the responsible institutions, including provincial Departments of Natural Resources and Environment (DONREs), who complained that they have limited budgets and capacity. USAID may continue to provide funding for monitoring dioxin project sites and future GEF/Green Climate Fund may provide some support for sustaining Sustainable Development programme results. Financial viability of some of the adap-

tation measures and energy efficiency technologies will assist replication and scale up. Improved crop varieties that are drought and flood tolerant for example have a high rate of farmer uptake without subsidies. The PESCE energy efficiency project provided loan guarantees to small and medium enterprises that showed commercial viability of certain energy efficiency technologies. Financing through concessional loans was suggested as a key element for future progress.

There does not appear to be an explicit strategy for phasing out UNDP support following attainment of a certain level of national capacity, or to specifically advocate for greater government budget support for the environment sector. The business case for investing in climate change adaption/mitigation, disaster risk reduction and pollution prevention by government and private sector should be a central focus in the final year of the programme cycle.

ASSESSMENT OF UNDP STRATEGIC POSITION

5.1 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS

UNDP has remained relevant and responsive to the context of Viet Nam's transition to a lower-middle income country during the two periods under review, with particular emphasis on using a policy-oriented approach to its work. Improved linkage of its policy services with the programmes and their implementation, as well as improved programme strategy, design, and management, could further strengthen UNDP's responsiveness.

UNDP's work in the previous and current programme cycles has focused on areas identified as major national development challenges and priorities in the three thematic programme areas. It has been relevant and responsive to Viet Nam's emerging policy development and governance modernization needs as Viet Nam transitioned to a lower-middle income country. UNDP established a policy advisory team in 2007 to provide direct policy advisory services and guidance through a combination of policy research and policy formulation support. This policy-oriented work has had a direct influence on the National Assembly, party resolutions and government decisions.

The work of policy advisors on PAT has been reported by many – both internal and external to UNDP – as vital to UNDP as well as to the UN's role in Viet Nam. Its ability to flexibly choose the scope and approaches of its work within a DIM project framework – including open-style research

and think-tank like work – has been the greatest advantage in the face of complex and fast-moving operational environment in the country. As seen in the assessment of the three thematic programmes, the role of policy advisors in each cluster has been crucial to opening and paving the way for a further engagement with national partners on often sensitive ideas and norms from international perspectives. In the area of governance, the PAT provided policy advocacy with non-project national partners, piloted new innovative initiatives, and integrated some of its ideas into project implementation. The evaluation also found some challenges in its current operational modality, which should be addressed in the next country programme, including (i) unpredictability in the overall sector-specific strategy stemming from its fluid annual work/ budget planning;¹¹⁹ (ii) activity coverage and scope often driven by individual disposition, communication skills and personality; and (iii) *ad hoc* and often random nature of collaboration (as-needed basis) with other UNDP programme units.

The policy advisors' work is designed to contribute to five of the eight One Plan/CCPD outcomes (Outcomes 1.1, 1.3, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4), but during the interviews, their policy advocacy and pilot activities were often described as unique initiatives, not directly related to the design or implementation of existing programmes/projects. While the PAT's policy advocacy work is expected to complement the work of programme teams, with the current *ad hoc* and often limited engagements with programme staff in the programme areas,¹²⁰ opportunities have been missed to exploit their

119 For example, in the current programme period, a request for extension of the DIM project 2011–2012 has been submitted every year to the Regional Bureau for approval, for the annual work plan 2013 (with the budget of \$1,793,392); for 2014 (\$2,851,116); and for 2015 (\$3,025,415).

120 For example, the requests for support from programme teams to PAT advisors were made when needed, typically in the forms of, e.g. reviews of draft reports and terms of reference for research, and interventions at workshops and other forums organized by projects.

expertise for improved quality of project designs and implementation approaches.

Policy implementation and the recognition of various players' role in 'policy' work

UNDP Viet Nam, through its three programmes, has contributed to the establishment of legal/policy frameworks in the areas where no framework previously existed. The assessment of quality of UNDP's contributions, particularly the sustainability aspects, indicated that while important milestones have been achieved with the work thus far, concerns remain on who will operationalize the new frameworks and how they will be implemented to meet the One Plan/CCPD outcomes and outputs within the time-frame (i.e. by the end of 2016).

There are various aspects in a policy cycle, including policy research and support to policy formulation and implementation. A Secretary-General's report on support to middle-income countries underscores the importance of support to policy implementation: "The shift towards advisory services is to some extent naturally underpinned by the development path of middle-income countries, as an increasing level of development often implies a relatively less pronounced need for financing but still a significant or possibly even greater need for assistance in strengthening the capacity to implement policies."¹²¹

In addition to PAT policy advisors, there are players in UNDP with the technical expertise and roles/mandates to directly contribute to various phases of 'policy' work, e.g. international senior technical advisors, programme managers and policy specialists in the programme units, and short-term international/national external experts recruited

for a project. These players can serve a complementary role alongside the PAT programmes. For example, international senior technical advisors assigned to a specific project, with their physical proximity to the national government partners, as well as with their international status for convening various partners, may be in a position to make a direct contribution to leading capacity development aspects in policy implementation in collaboration with others. Based on the interviews during the evaluation, one of the biggest challenges was that collaboration between these staff – such as PAT policy advisors and international senior technical advisors; PAT and programme teams; and international senior technical advisors and programme teams – varied considerably in the CO, often driven by personal dynamics, and in some cases, challenged by disagreements and/or uncertainties in programme/project strategies and approaches. The role expected of individual staff was also reported as unclear in some cases.¹²²

Measuring programme results

To strengthen UNDP's position as a development partner and remain responsive to national challenges, greater attention to measuring expected results is critical. The UN One Plan provides a framework for UNDP's work in Viet Nam in terms of programmatic outcomes and outputs expected during a programme period. In all three thematic programmes at UNDP, programme 'coherence' was constrained by a number of factors, including (i) broad and general outcome/output statements and indicators that do not fully or effectively measure expected results (challenges in defining and measuring results); (ii) unclear linkages between UNDP projects, One Plan outputs and outcomes;¹²³ (iii) projects often driven by

121 A/68/265, 'Development cooperation with middle-income countries: Report on the Secretary-General,' p. 17, UN General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session, 5 August 2013.

122 For example, some reported a lack of clarity in their responsibilities, especially for mobilizing resources for projects.

123 A UN evaluation, 'Equity-focused systematic review of the One Plan,' also discussed similar challenges in its evaluability assessment of the One Plan. In addition to the need for bringing more clarity to the outcome and output statements to give more operational 'direction' for actions, the ADR found that the role of Joint Programme Groups could be further strengthened, so as to lay out the UN's aspirations for sector-specific development issues. Some interviewees, however, raised the JPGs' limited funding and work planning/ decision-making abilities as a concern to serve as a platform for setting "UN strategies." Difficulties in tracing the funds for the purpose of accountability, once allocated to the One Plan Fund, were also voiced by some donors.

a variety of specific support needs of the national agencies, rather than based on a clear programme/project-level logic model or theory of change that articulates pathways for the outcomes/outputs; (iv) in some cases, unclear linkages among UNDP projects and among UN agency projects; and (v) very weak or almost no collaboration between national implementing partners, even in the same ministries or within the National Assembly, in designing and implementing UNDP-supported projects. The Sustainable Development programme has contributed to advancing the government's environment agenda, with the main issues (e.g. addressing climate change; disaster risks; forest emissions; green growth; polluted sites; and biodiversity conservation in development) led by commitments to international environmental agreements and national strategies. However, the overall programme efficiency was constrained by the large number and variety of projects over seven thematic areas. The IEG projects were often designed to meet the specific needs as expressed by the government.¹²⁴ In the GPT programme, there were challenges in measuring programme results within the CCPD/OP framework, as not all indicators reflected the programme's focus.¹²⁵

At a project level, there were a number of challenges related to project design, management and reporting among the projects under review. UNDP's project operations are guided by the HPPMG, which, at the time of the ADR, was reported as expecting a comprehensive review. The key issues appeared to be associated with

capacity limitations in the preparation of project concepts and designs (as per DPOs), as well as the pre-determined operational environment within which UNDP is expected to work with national institutions. Many of these issues have been recognized by UNDP:

- Existence of multiple projects with similar objectives, except for implementing partners;
- Activity-based approaches in initial project design, with generally limited considerations for results-based management (e.g. limited emphasis on describing measurable and sustainable results).
- Insufficient stakeholder analysis on a given problem/issue, which limited the selection of project counterparts (actors and beneficiaries);
- Significant gaps in initially-estimated and actual project budgets, and time-frames needed to effectively launch a project;
- Limited opportunities to make significant changes to the scope, direction, and approaches in project design, once the Detailed Project Outlines have arrived as government-approved documents;
- Difficulty in formulating UNDP's support in relation to similar efforts by other development partners;
- Constraints in the ability of UNDP staff to effectively address day-to-day challenges in project delivery of government-managed projects;¹²⁶

124 For example, urban poverty tracking and multi-dimensional poverty assessment undertaken in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City; and support to NTP-PR/P135 and support to Resolution 80/NTP-SPR (PRPP) with MOLISA and CEMA.

125 For example, there were gaps between the use of PAPI indicators to measure results and the limited scope and scale of the governance programme. For example, Outcome 3.3 lists two indicators from PAPI: Indicator 1: Percentage of citizens who say the quality of public social services and public administration services has improved and Indicator 3: Percentage of citizens using public services who experienced an act of corruption in the last 12 months. While the two indicators focus on public social services and administrative services, UNDP PAR projects only focused on selected components of administrative services. Responsiveness of the governance programme to CCPD/OP outputs and outcomes was further compromised by weak coordination among projects within the programme.

126 Except for some donor-funded projects. One of the key challenges raised by the Project Management Units included insufficient funding availability when completing envisaged activities, requiring immediate decisions on options for action. UNDP programme staff were reported as being in a close contact with the Project Management Units throughout the project cycles; however, they were currently not part of a 'project management unit.'

- High dependency on short-term planning tools (e.g. Annual Work Plans) as a guide to project implementation in the absence of clear project documents. This allowed frequent mid-course changes in the scope and objectives initially envisaged based on long-term perspectives;
- Reported challenges in the HPPMG procedures for administration of contracts with project Co-implementing Partners; and
- Limited mid-term and terminal evaluations for some of the large-scale projects in the current UNDP programmes (e.g. IEG and Sustainable Development) and limited use of external evaluations (e.g. GPT).

The CO's monitoring and evaluation team has conducted annual M&E training, inviting PMU personnel from national implementation projects and UNDP programme teams.¹²⁷ However, the overall implementation of evaluation practices was relatively limited and weak.¹²⁸ The evaluation plan for the current programme cycle showed a highly skewed picture of planning.¹²⁹ Available monitoring tools were under-utilized.¹³⁰ Project completion reports were sometimes viewed as equivalent to final evaluations.

UNDP's efforts to monitor the progress of project delivery rely on, for example, quarterly project progress reports, audits of select national implementation projects,¹³¹ and annual spot-checks by the aid coordination group for select projects. The annual DaO reports have also provided an opportunity for reviewing the progress at the outcome-level. However, some of these tools are primarily financial and administrative in their purposes (e.g. progress reports and audit) or not appropriate for the timely detection of challenges for mid-course corrections and lesson learning from specific project activities. It is crucial that national implementing partners have an appropriate results-based management concept and M&E framework.

UNDP guidelines on evaluation suggest the following, which should be considered:¹³²

- UNDP should plan evaluations in a way that they, collectively, provide sufficient coverage of programmatic activities, address all outcome areas in the programme document, and produce evaluative evidence to inform decision-making and support accountability and learning;
- Individual project evaluations are recommended, if a project is in a pilot phase or

127 For example, 30 national implementing partners and seven programme officers participated in the training in 2014. At the time of the ADR, the M&E team comprised two staff – one responsible for programme – and corporate-level reporting (e.g. compilation of ROARs), and the other responsible for project-level activities, including reviews of project documents and Annual Work Plans on M&E references.

128 Between 2006 and present, there were a total of 50 evaluations – including those carried out by UNV (3), donors (3), UNDP headquarters (1) and the CPAP review (1) – conducted and registered in the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre, with the number of annual evaluations ranging from zero (2014) to nine (2009 and 2013); predominantly covering project-evaluations (no outcome evaluations); and a varying degree of programme representation, e.g. Sustainable Development (20), Governance (15) and Inclusive and Equitable Growth (8). The interviews suggested challenges in encouraging national implementing partners to include an evaluation, as well as reluctance among staff.

129 For example, the evaluation plan for the CCPD 2012-2016 submitted to the Executive Board contained a limited number of predominantly GEF-funded project evaluations from Sustainable Development.

130 For example, it was noted in the review of the protected areas project that the GEF and UNDP monitoring tools should have been used to help focus attention on the achievement of outcome level results related to PA financing, capacity strengthening, and conservation of globally significant biodiversity. See Brad Auer and Ha Thanh, Mid Term Review of Removing Barriers Hindering Protected Area Management Effectiveness in Viet Nam, Feb 2015.

131 For example, a total of 12 projects were subject to the audit in 2013-2014.

132 UNDP, the updated guidance on 'Evaluation in the Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009),' Addendum, June 2011.

expected to move onto a next phase in implementation, and project efforts continue for more than five years;

- An evaluation plan should be comprehensive and strategic, including an appropriate mix of outcome-level evaluations of programmes or their components, projects and themes; and
- All evaluations require a management repose, prepared in close consultation with national government and partners.

5.2 UNDP'S COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS AND USE OF PARTNERSHIPS

UNDP's strengths include its close and established relationship with the government, its convening power, neutrality and source of international expertise. These have allowed UNDP to gain entry points for crucial development interventions. UNDP should capitalize on those strengths to further advance its programme and operational activities. The framework for partnerships has been forged with the government, UN and donors through the tripartite governance structure of the UN One Plan. There remains much scope to strengthen partnerships for programmatic results through more joint planning and delivery between UN agencies and other development partners.

Comparative strengths

The interviews that took place during the evaluation identified several of UNDP's comparative strengths. These include a high level of government trust that allows UNDP to lead dialogue on policy matters, UNDP's significant presence

in the country, convening power that assists networking and coordination of development assistance, and access to international expertise and to funding sources. The close relationship that UNDP has with the government on climate change and related environmental issues, for example, led to a climate change advisor from PAT being invited to attend UNFCCC COP meetings as an official member of the Viet Nam delegation. In the governance area, UNDP was recognized as a neutral partner and a source of expertise on international standards. UNDP has capitalized on those strengths by jointly convening consultation sessions and supporting the country in developing policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks in line with international best practices as well as with UN requirements. UNDP was regarded as an authoritative source of assistance in the areas related to international conventions and UN international requirements. In the inclusive and equitable growth area, with the explicit objectives of working with government partners to support national objectives, UNDP's unique role as a coordinator for the national policy reform related to poverty reduction and ethnic minority issues has been highly appreciated by the government and development partners. UNDP has contributed to the full integration of international goals such as MDGs into the national plans and policies.¹³³ There is much expectation from development partners and national implementing partners for UNDP to continue to lead where it has expertise and experience, including support to issues of ethnic minorities, multi-dimensional poverty, transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, international climate negotiations and compliance to other various international conventions, as well as the harmonization of international and national legal frameworks.

133 The government report says, "Viet Nam has successfully nationalized the targets and indicators of MDGs into the Vietnamese development goals. ... By mainstreaming MDGs into programmes, plans and policies at various levels of government and sectors, Viet Nam successfully managed to introduce international commitments such as the MDGs to the country-level practice, while designing specific action plans and allocating adequate funding to achieve such goals. In this process, the MDGs no longer constituted a stand-alone international framework, but instead, became a component of the national plans and policies." 'Country Report: 15 Years Achieving the Viet Nam MDGs,' September 2015.

Partnerships

The tripartite partnership structure that unites the government, the UN, and donors has served as a forum for information sharing and dialogue. The JPGs and other development partners' forums provided an opportunity to improve and harmonize the work of various UN agencies.

In the GPT programme area, UNDP has been successful in developing and forging partnership forums that involve government agencies, donors, and CSOs. For example, one structure consists of forums organized by the Institute of Legislative Studies to open up discussion of draft legal documents to be reviewed by the National Assembly. Additionally, UNDP partnered with the Department of International Cooperation at the MOJ to organize a Legal Partnership Forum and Legal Policy Forum involving other government agencies in the justice sector as well as academics, donors, and CSOs. UNDP also supported the organization of a PAR partnership forum organized by MOHA from 2009 to 2013.

Within the One Plan framework, UN agencies have contributed to the relevant outputs and outcomes. For example, on parliamentary support (Outcome 3.1), ILO, UN Women, UNESCO, UNFPA, and UNICEF contributed to Output 3.1.1 on access to high quality research, while UNICEF and UN Women also contributed to Output 3.1.2 on improved capacity for interacting and consulting with citizens. Overall, for the GPT outcomes, the UNDP received the major portion of the budget. The JPG structure is a venue for UNDP to work with other UNDP agencies. PAT's work on rule of law was reported as having relied on this network to gather UN contributions to issues related to sex workers, drug addicts and juveniles.

In the Sustainable Development programme area, UNDP has positioned itself as a key player in the climate change/disaster risk management arena, directly with government programmes and

as a convener of donors and stakeholders including policy dialogues with Viet Nam institutions. In the environment sector, UNDP's strategic positioning tends to be conditioned by (i) commitments made by government to international conventions; (ii) country GEF priorities and the related availability of funds from GEF-managed trust funds; and (iii) other priorities where the government and UNDP have agreed on an issue requiring support and TRAC or bilateral funds are available (e.g. in the DRM project). Joint projects, such as the Climate Public Expenditure and Investment Review with the World Bank, have helped to establish UNDP's profile on climate change.

The most prominent UN partnership has been UN-REDD, but there have been other direct project implementation associations between UNDP and FAO, UNEP, UNICEF and UNIDO. UNDP, along with UNICEF, WHO and FAO, has been instrumental in developing the Disaster Management Working Group to facilitate coordination. Separate climate change projects and components have been implemented with individual ministries, reinforcing institutional barriers and reducing UN DaO potential. Similar GHG mitigation activities (e.g. NAMA formulation) under UNDP and UNIDO appear to have operated quite separately – although in hindsight there could have been significant knowledge development linkages with UNDP. Integrated programming is more notional than functional in the Sustainable Development programme. The major tripartite interactions occurred through UN-REDD and the CBDRM programme, each with multiple partners and donors.

Coordination of UN partners in operationalizing the UN-REDD programme has been difficult. UNDP-FAO collaborated on the POPs-pesticide project, but the process was also not easy, with confusion over project concept, responsibilities and financial reporting. Other linkages were established in the recent development of the chemicals management project with UNIDO, and the collaboration with

UNEP on a joint review of the draft National Biodiversity Strategy.¹³⁴

In the IEG programme, the JPG on Social Protection¹³⁵ has successfully connected agencies for joint discussions and to forge efforts to address issues prioritized by national policies. The JPG on Economic Growth and Decent Work, led by ILO and FAO, also harnessed support from its partner agencies.¹³⁶ UNDP has been an active member and has led many dialogues in these JPGs. UNDP has also led and participated in the Poverty Reduction and Ethnic Minority Poverty Group, Informal Development Partners Group on Social Protection, the Viet Nam Development Partnership Forum, the joint policy response on the SEDP mid-term review (with the World Bank and ADB), the UNDP-led joint development partners policy note on the revision of the Law on Land.¹³⁷ UN agencies have jointly contributed to the One Plan outcomes based on their specific mandates and interests. At the same time, financial constraints have been reported as a challenge, forcing the agencies to compete for funds through the One Plan Fund, and not always having committed co-financing once projects commence.

Based on the interviews, UNDP's work on the outcomes related to inclusive and equitable growth has also been less visible among development partners and it was difficult for them to establish direct interface with UNDP. The work of international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and ADB, has a direct bearing on setting the policy discussions on inclusiveness and sustainable growth. However, UNDP's partnership with them on programme/project delivery has been limited. The role of civil society and the private sector has also been minimal in UNDP interventions. A meaningful partner-

ship is established when all relevant stakeholders have been identified (including government, UN agencies, bilateral donors, development banks, private sector, and CSOs) and engaged for common objectives. UNDP should develop an effective stakeholder engagement strategy to improve coordination and maximize development results.

More direct partnerships are needed with development partners at the policy level (such as in the SP-RCC) to support national partners develop innovative and effective solutions to the national development agenda.

5.3 PROMOTING UN VALUES FROM A HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

UNDP's direct engagement with national partners in support of national strategies and programmes were important in ensuring the country's ownership of the development process and results. UNDP's support, both through policy work and programmes/projects, has contributed to the promotion of core values in human development. However, it needs to strengthen its ability to monitor progress and facilitate the expected changes made through its efforts.

National ownership and capacity

In the Sustainable Development programme, UNDP projects provided support directly related to the national strategies and target programmes. National ownership and capacity were therefore central to the programme. Promising elements have been noted, for example in the disaster management areas; in the creation of a new Department of Natural Disaster Prevention and Control; and the introduction of improved

134 The One Plan 2012-2016 Joint Programming Matrix (2012) listed the agencies directly or indirectly involved in implementation of each Output but not how they should work together.

135 The JPG on Social Protection was convened by UNICEF, co-convened by ILO and brought together support from FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNODC and UN Women.

136 IFAD, IOM, ITC, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO and UN Women.

137 UN Vietnam, DAO Annual Results Report 2013.

damage and needs assessment guidelines, software and templates. Participation in orientations, training and technical studies by the key agencies, as well as development of training material, TOT and technical guidelines, are likely to be beneficial to future skills development and improved management practices. However, the M&E data do not currently provide sufficient information to determine the level of enhancement and the gaps that may remain relative to expected results. Under the IEG programme, UNDP has facilitated the **formulation** and **monitoring** of the key national strategies and policies, but has been limited in contributing to their **implementation**. Various inputs¹³⁸ have been made and embedded in the national system and/or widely discussed at national and provincial events, but little is known about the quality of performance of those agencies involved following the closure of projects due to insufficient capacity assessment. Resource requirements and availability of capacity at the provincial level are of particular concern, where national strategies and policies are expected to be applied. The GPT programme has benefited from the national implementation modality in terms of project ownership. The projects have approached capacity building through, e.g. on-site training, codification of training materials, and study tours to develop work tools that enabled national partners to carry out planning and monitoring. However, most project support has only targeted particular ministries and agencies, resulting in uneven capacity to address cross-agency and cross-sectoral issues. Concerns remain over national partners' implementation capacities to continue with positive results from the projects and initiatives.¹³⁹ Overall, there have been limited efforts to track the impact of UNDP capacity building work.

Knowledge products and knowledge management

The CO has produced or significantly contributed to numerous publications over the years, such as research and surveys, policy briefs, good practices and advocacy material. Many have been prepared for the purpose of facilitating broader discussions and engagements based on research results, as well as for awareness raising (Figure 7).

Among the list of such publications or knowledge products made available to the ADR, a large majority were related to public participation in governance and social affairs.¹⁴⁰ They covered dimensions of the four governance-related outcomes, such as public financial management, access to justice, human rights, women's participation and LGBT, and particularly PAR and anti-corruption. While PAT policy advisors contributed widely, the GPT projects also supported their development to facilitate project implementation, e.g. situation analyses and recommended solutions, which were used as inputs to drafting legal and regulations.

In the Sustainable Development area, activities to improve the information base on climate change, disaster risk, polluted sites and biodiversity, and to disseminate knowledge to decision-makers, government staff and the public were also significant. Extensive publications and websites on climate change assisted in disseminating the key findings of research. In project design, however, some of the expectations appeared overly ambitious, e.g. "decision-makers and public equipped with knowledge and tools to change behaviour on sustainable development and climate change/energy."¹⁴¹ In the IEG, lessons and policy notes were highly appreciated

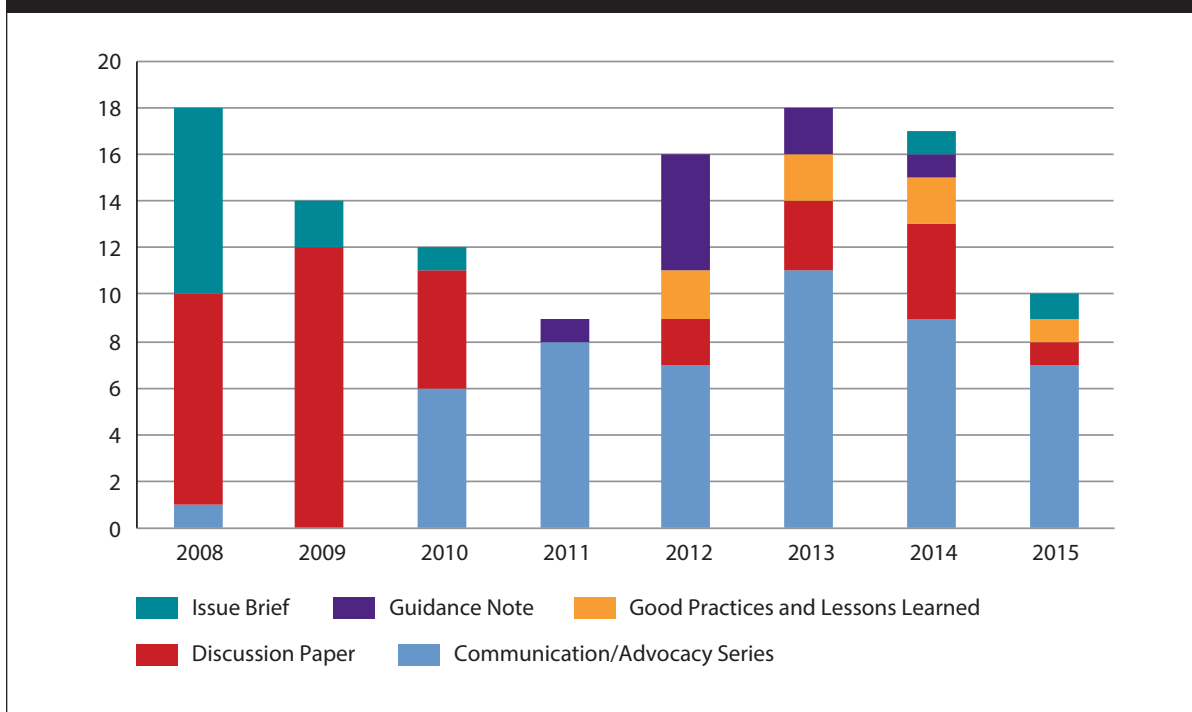
138 For example, SEDS 2011–2020, SEPD 2011 - 2005, programme documents and implementation guidance of NTP-PR, P135/II, NTP-SPR, Statistical Law, VSIDS, MDGRs, NHDRs, multi-dimensional poverty concept and SDGs etc.

139 For example, their technical capacity to effectively and efficiently utilize complex information made available from the newly introduced, useful governance tools, such as the PAR Index and Justice Index, as well as the availability of financial resources to continue using the PAPI after the end of the major donor's (SDC) support in 2017.

140 Based on a list of 122 publications with UNDP's significant inputs received from the country office, 68 percent, or 75 items, were related to topics under governance and participation.

141 SDCP/MTP project, Output 2.

Figure 7. Knowledge products prepared with UNDP's significant input by year¹⁴²



by many partners interviewed and were used in discussions.¹⁴³

The knowledge products developed by UNDP, sometimes in collaboration with other UN agencies, are expected to play an important role in promoting evidence-based policymaking, particularly in the context of Viet Nam where baseline information and data in many development priority areas have not existed or options for solutions may have been limited. Given that significant effort has gone into preparing those materials, UNDP needs a better understanding of its knowledge development results from those efforts, notably in regard to i) whether the products have con-

clusively contributed to desired expectations (e.g. formulation of a national policy); and ii) how the products have advanced progress toward the One Plan outcomes and outputs, with clear linkages between various types of products.

South-South Cooperation

UNDP has facilitated Viet Nam's lesson learning and sharing with other countries. It has, for example, shared its successful experience with the MDGs at the 2010 MDG Summit, in which the country's success was attributed to policy changes that mainstreamed the MDGs into national initiatives. It has also contributed through the Viet Nam delegation's visit to three countries to learn

142 Based on a list of 114 key documents provided by the country office, excluding non-relevant items (e.g. evaluations). The list was categorized by the ADR into the following classification by using the UNDP knowledge product typology (2009): i) 'issue brief,' including PAT policy briefs; ii) 'guidance note,' including technical guidance; iii) 'good practices and lessons,' iv) 'discussion paper,' including survey and research results; and v) 'communication and advocacy series,' for material produced for awareness raising purposes.

143 For example, a number of studies contributing to the SEDS 2011 - 2020, SEDP 2011 - 2015, programme documents and guidelines for the NTP-PR, P135/II, NTP-SPR, draft revision of the Statistical Law 2003, and draft Social Protection Strategy 2011 - 2020; Series of MDG Reports The MDG Reports (2005, 2008, 2010, 2013 and 2015); Urban Poverty Surveys (UPS 2009 and UPS 2012) and follow-up analyses that provide in-depth information on the reality of urban multi-dimensional poverty; the Economic Forum on macro-economic issues; the review of social assistance in Viet Nam and proposed options for social assistance reform, and the National Human Development Report.

about their challenges as middle-income countries, changing roles of ODA, and the UN's role in the countries (Egypt, Turkey and Malaysia in 2009).

Several South-South cooperation efforts were reported in the UNDP's annual programme self-assessments, e.g. study tours and conference participation. In the areas of poverty reduction, examples include (i) international practices and experience in designing and managing national programmes on poverty reduction, cash transfers, ethnic minorities brought in from several countries (2008); (ii) exchanges of experiences with China on poverty reduction (2009 and 2010¹⁴⁴); and (iii) learning about innovative approaches for poverty reduction and ethnic minorities (e.g. block grants from India in 2010). Viet Nam's best practices and lessons learned in implementing the MDGs, SED monitoring, improving the national statistical system, and multi-dimensional poverty have been shared with other countries, such as Cambodia, Nepal, and Lao PDR. Viet Nam became a member of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network.¹⁴⁵ Indonesian experience of developing a national social protection system was also brought into Viet Nam.¹⁴⁶

In the GPT programme, several previous projects included study tours that helped expose national counterparts with international practices. For

example, the study tours facilitated through the human rights projects allowed government agencies to obtain first-hand experience on how to conduct treaty body reporting. Currently, national partners' opportunities to learn lessons from other countries has primarily been through contacts with international experts, rather than study tours. For example, support to Viet Nam with the UNCAC self-review involved international practitioners. The Government Inspectorate, in turn, supported its counterparts in Lao PDR and Cambodia on their UNCAC self-reviews. Interview results, however, suggested that contribution to the achievement of outcomes of such South-South cooperation varied.¹⁴⁷ In the Sustainable Development programme, some international exchanges occurred on disaster risk management and energy issues,¹⁴⁸ but extensive South-South exchange was not evident in the projects.

Contribution to human rights and gender equality

UNDP's contribution to the promotion of human rights was widely recognized by development partners. There was a high expectation for UNDP to continue to lead and support the country in this area, particularly in a context in which many donors are leaving the country since the country's achievement of the middle-income status.¹⁴⁹ Programmatically, UNDP has addressed this from various perspectives, includ-

144 Global new development partnerships at the China-Africa poverty reduction and development conference of November 2010.

145 Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative, Vietnam – Including multidimensional measures in official government planning, MPPN portal, 2014. www.mppn.org/participants/vietnam/.

146 MDG Monitoring Project 2013 Annual Progress Report. Interviews with IPs and DPs.

147 For example, despite exchanges between Viet Nam and South Korea on the development of independent research organizations to support parliamentary work, the research role of Viet Nam's Institute for Legislative Studies remains moderate. Another example was that, with the support of the Regional Centre, non-governmental lawyers under the VLA studied China's successful innovations in law clinics and access to legal services for migrant workers in 2010. But the actual project implementation of the concept through the Access to Justice and Protection of Rights and the VLA projects remained limited.

148 For example, the Bangladesh Parliament participated in a policy dialogue with members of the Viet Nam National Assembly involved in the appraisal of the Disaster Risk Management Law (2012); and a Viet Nam delegation visited Bangkok to exchange views and lessons on floods management; a delegation from Mozambique visited Viet Nam to discuss institutional arrangements and models of disaster risk management, planning and actions at national/local levels; and a delegation from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea visited to exchange lessons on sustainable energy development (2011). UNDP, ROARs.

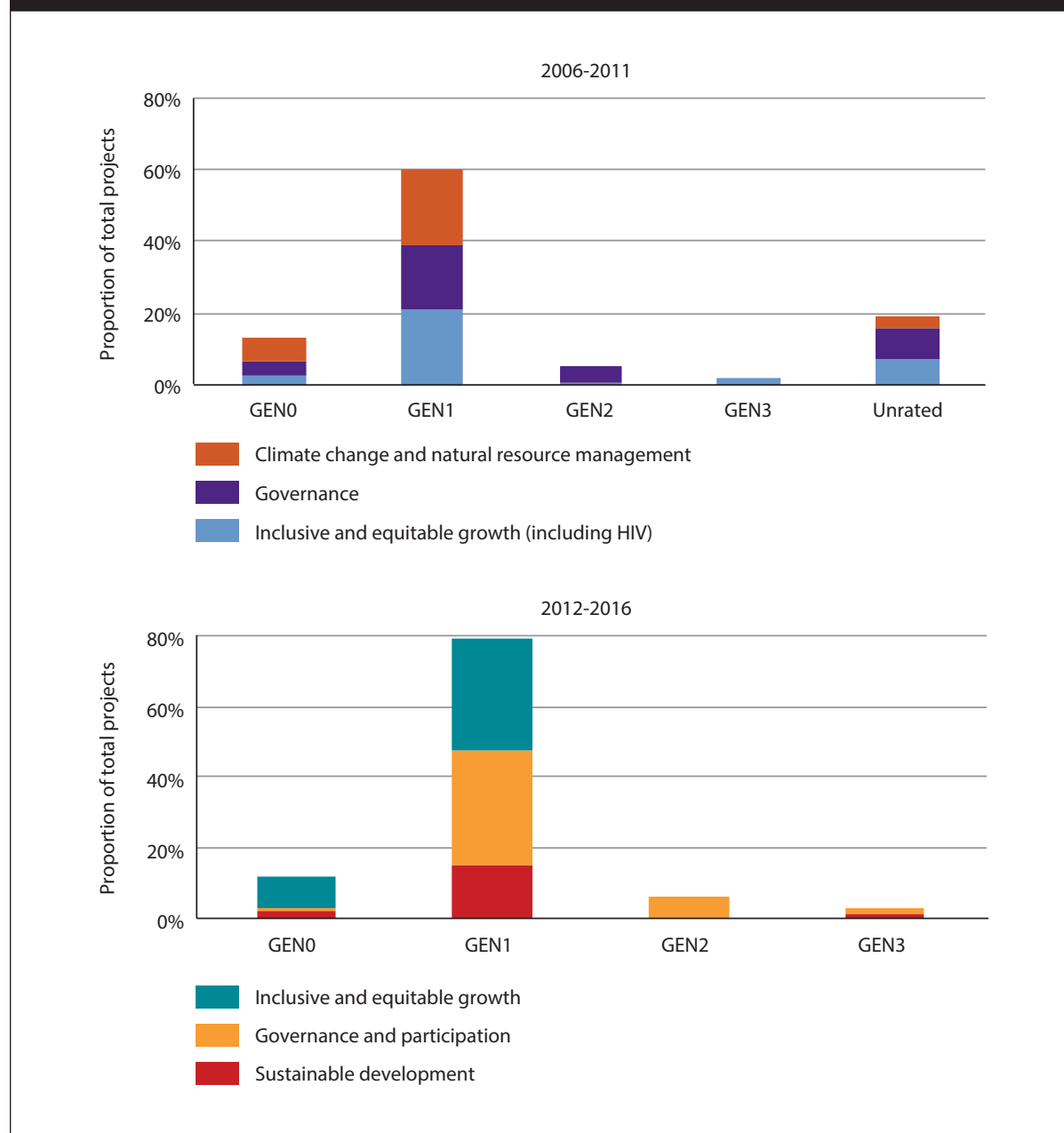
149 Currently, UNDP chairs the Human Rights Technical Working Group and quarterly Informal Development Partner Working Group on Human Rights.

ing, for instance, the integration of human rights' principles into the revised constitution; support to the UPR reporting and ratification of international treaties; promotion of the rights of ethnic minorities, the poor and LGBT communities; and support to vulnerable communities with

environmental health risks associate with POPs. The policy advisors' work was indispensable to those efforts during the periods under review.

UNDP facilitated the participation of women in decision-making mechanisms and advo-

Figure 8. Distribution of projects by Gender Marker and thematic cluster



cated inclusion of women's roles in partnerships and relevant policies. Other examples include GPT-related projects¹⁵⁰ and UN-REDD and disaster risk management projects.¹⁵¹

Challenges remain for UNDP. While numerous activities may have been conducted, such as training and workshops, monitoring of the changes expected and realization of goals defined in the projects also need to be taken into consideration. For example, mainstreaming gender into laws and draft resolutions has been a significant contribution, but efforts need to be continued to ensure their implementation. In a

review of gender integration in programmes/projects, most UNDP projects were rated as not significantly contributing to gender equality in their project design.¹⁵² The gender-focused projects were primarily under the GPT and IEG related outcomes.

While a large majority of office staff are women, the overall gender-related efforts at the CO appeared limited.¹⁵³ In accordance with UNDP's commitment to gender equality (e.g. UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014–2017), a more rigorous strategy would be needed to institutionalize its efforts at the office level.

150 For example, support to the MOJ to institutionalize the integration of gender principles in all laws (Law on the Promulgation of Legal Documents, 2008); efforts to increase women's public sector participation and their representation in Viet Nam's political area; representation of the Women's Union in the National Central Committee for Floods and Storm Control in 2013.

151 For example, inclusion of gender principles and targets in the State Budget Law, gender equality principles in the final draft DRM law and the Law on Environmental Protection; preparation of the upgraded Disaster and Needs Assessment tool that include gender-disaggregated data (in collaboration with UNICEF), as well as the draft Guideline for Mainstreaming Gender and Social Safeguards in the Provincial REDD+ Action Plan (2015).

152 Based on the UNDP Gender Marker ratings of all projects in the Atlas, 90 percent of the projects in the period 2012–2016 were rated either GEN0 ("outputs are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality") or GEN1 ("outputs contributing in some way to gender, but not significantly"), and only 10 percent were rated as GEN2 ('outputs as significant objective') or GEN3 ("gender equality as main objective"). About 10 percent of the budget expenditures were on projects with significant gender-based projects (GEN2 and GEN3). Based on Atlas data with the expenditure reflecting the total project life cycle (2012 to the present).

153 For example, the role of gender focal point has been shifted among staff, and it is not led by senior management.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations drawn from the evaluation.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. UNDP's work during the periods under review was relevant and timely as Viet Nam transitioned into a new middle-income country. The objectives of its programmes and projects were fully aligned with national priorities and policies, and UNDP has successfully engaged key national agencies.

Between 2006 and 2011, UNDP's country programme aimed to extend and deepen the *Doi Moi* reform process and support national socio-economic development targets. After Viet Nam attained middle-income status in 2010, UNDP's programmatic goals – stemming from the UN's One Plan – shifted to supporting the country's transformation, which faced various development challenges (e.g. widening inequalities, persistent poverty, and climate change). UNDP programmes were in alignment with challenges identified in Viet Nam's Socio-Economic Development Strategy, the corresponding five-year plans, and relevant sector-specific policies and priorities. Through its programmes/projects in the two review periods, UNDP has effectively engaged key relevant government agencies, and achieved a high level of government trust, which has allowed UNDP to lead international dialogue on various policy matters.

Conclusion 2. UNDP was responsive to the country's emerging needs through its strong application of an upstream policy-oriented approach to its work.

The use of best practices, high quality policy advisory services, and innovation in interventions

are critical in supporting middle-income countries. The introduction of the Policy Advisory Team in 2007 as a distinct unit for providing quality upstream policy work has enabled the CO to demonstrate its commitment to providing the country with quality upstream policy work as the foundation for its work. It also helped in engaging widely with national and development partners to address critical challenges in governance, inclusiveness and equity, and sustainable development. The policy work was vital to UNDP as well as to the UN's role in the country. For example, policy advocacy has been able to reach the highest level of government on climate change and green growth issues; heightened awareness of human rights and ethnic minorities has been developed; and members of the National Assembly are more familiar with international norms. Its ability to provide opportunities for open dialogues on sometimes politically-sensitive reform issues was recognized as highly valuable to the country and is one of the UNDP's strong comparative strengths.

Conclusion 3. In each thematic programme, UNDP has contributed to the establishment of relevant legal, policy, and technical frameworks; awareness raising; and capacity development of national partners. However, the overall programme implementation approach was relatively weak, lacking a strategy to achieve the CCPD/One Plan outcomes and outputs. Challenges included inherent limitations in the measurability of performance against goals; sustainability; and insufficient collaboration with development partners working in the same sectors.

The three thematic programmes have made significant contributions in their respective areas. In the IEG programme, UNDP has supported the

government in strengthening its national statistical system (analysis and reporting) and its capacity to monitor the implementation of the MDGs and Viet Nam Development Goals. It has provided options for development through studies on macro-economic policy, and paved a way for high-level policy dialogue on poverty in ethnic minorities and adoption of the MDG acceleration framework for ethnic minorities. In the GPT programme, UNDP has supported elected bodies to better perform their oversight duties; contributed to improved legal and regulatory framework to integrate human rights principles; and promoted the use of planning and management tools to reinforce accountability in public administration and justice reforms. The evidence-based and public consultation approach has promoted wider public participation in the state management process. The Sustainable Development programme has produced significant awareness, technical information, analysis and capacity development related to climate change, green growth and low carbon opportunities, energy efficiency, disaster risk management, UN-REDD, contaminated sites and pesticides management, biodiversity conservation and protected areas management. It has resulted in the establishment of relevant legal, policy and technical frameworks that address international conventions and national directives, and effective technologies on the ground. It has also facilitated DRM coordination mechanisms, assisted government and partners in large-scale CBDRM, promoted energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies and directly supported engagement in international climate change and DRM negotiations.

However, the overall measurability of UNDP's work was limited, as the current results framework contained in the CCPD/One Plan lacks adequate clarity and measurability in the outcome/outputs statements. Many of the current outcome indicators were not considered useful for measuring UNDP's programme performance.

The current programmes at UNDP were relatively weak in terms of their programme coherence, and lacked a clear implementation strategy (or road-

map) that defines how to reach the CCPD/One Plan outputs and outcomes. Project portfolios often functioned as separate collections of projects under the outcomes rather than as an integrated programme with well-defined end results. There were insufficient considerations for the work done by other UN partners in some cases.

In general, there were uncertainties about the degree to which national institutions have developed sufficient capacity to manage and maintain progress made so far with limited resources. The rigorous capacity assessment of partner institutions was often absent.

UNDP's partnerships with other development partners on its programme/project efforts was limited in some cases, including those with a direct bearing on setting the policy discussions for the country. For example, UNDP's role in the sector-specific working groups of development partners has been prominent in some sectors (sustainable development) – such as the multi-donor supported Policy Matrix of the Support Programme for Climate Change Response – and less so in others (inclusive and equitable development).

Conclusion 4. The national implementation modality was particularly valued for its promotion of national ownership of development processes and results. But significant challenges exist in project design, management, administration and reporting.

The use of NIM was highly regarded by national partners for directly benefiting their institutions and promoting their ownership of projects. Despite the joint government-UN efforts to harmonize and efficiently manage projects through the development of the HPPMG guidelines, several critical weaknesses were observed in the projects under review. They encompassed various aspects of project design, management, administration and reporting of results. For example, they included (i) weak activity-based design with limited results-based management approaches; (ii) limited inter-ministry coordination due to

overlapping mandates among ministries; (iii) omission or limited inclusion of critical stakeholders in design (e.g. civil society and private sector); (iv) lack of an efficient project management mechanism to quickly and efficiently address day-to-day challenges in project delivery (e.g. work plan approval timelines, procurement delays, midcourse adjustment in project activities, and progress and financial reporting variations); (v) funding gaps in some projects, resulting in downsized project objectives; and (vi) weak M&E practices that limit project accountability and learning (e.g. activity- and financial-based reporting, and limited measurement of intended results). The project experiences in some areas suggest that the NIM modality is still not easily compatible with the DIM modality where projects are jointly delivered, for instance, in projects implemented with other UN agencies (e.g. FAO and UNEP). Further, the HPPMG guidelines do not provide sufficient direction on the process for engaging co-implementing partners. These operational issues affected project efficiency and effectiveness.

Conclusion 5. With its flexible/exploratory stature, the current framework of the Policy Advisory Team lacks clarity in its long-term strategy and approaches. The team's linkages with existing programme operations have been selective, and limited in strategies for policy implementation. Numerous knowledge products were produced through their work, but the extent of their reach and utility is yet to be fully determined.

PAT's work – its programmes and resource plans – has been shaped annually, rather than based on clearly defined medium/long-term goals in its respective sectors. The areas of focus, approaches used, and levels of engagements with partners in addressing development issues have varied significantly among individual policy advisors in the two programme periods. While both policy advisors and programme officers work towards the goals set in the UNDP's country programme and the UN One Plan, the actual interaction between them and reflection of advisors' technical knowl-

edge in programme/projects has been limited and often driven by personal relationships. An opportunity has been missed to apply their analytical and technical rigour under a full programme theory for each of the outcomes, as well as in project designs. Reflecting concerns over national partners' capacity to adopt and implement innovations and practices, more attention is needed on how to facilitate policy implementation by national partners, in addition to supporting policy formulation with evidence-based research work. Also, numerous knowledge products have been prepared through the team's research and analytical work (as well as within the projects), but the extent of their reach to target audiences and their utility has yet to be fully assessed.

Conclusion 6. The integration of gender principles in programme/project design was generally limited, except for some dedicated projects.

UNDP is part of the Joint Programme Group on Gender, convened by UN Women and UNFPA. At the programme level, UNDP contributed to gender equality and women's empowerment through, for example, the integration of gender principles into the national laws and facilitation of women's participation in national decision-making forums. However, overall gender mainstreaming in UNDP project designs was limited in the two periods under review. The role of the gender focal point in the CO has been assigned among staff, but without a clear direction or strategy.

Conclusion 7. Challenges in inter-agency coordination and collaboration affected the quality and timeliness of some programmes/projects.

UN agencies have different structures, perspectives and practices that are often overlooked in the coordination task. The early track record of UN collaboration for the UN-REDD programme (UNDP/UNEP/FAO) and the POPs-Pesticide project (UNDP/FAO), for example, has demonstrated the need to ensure careful design of the joint implementation strategy and the management structure, roles and responsibilities.

UN-REDD has required significant adaptive management, designation of a lead facilitating agency and creation of a detailed project implementation manual in order to accommodate the different agencies. In other cases, coordination mechanisms are informal and awkward (e.g. UNDP and UNIDO projects on GHG mitigation in the steel sector lack a joint strategy). Management structures and operational processes affected the quality and timeliness of the results.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. UNDP should continue to focus on upstream policy work as its core country programme strategy, but revisit its overall policy praxis/approach to develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure that all efforts link to the CCPD/One Plan outcomes and outputs.

Given the significant value to the country in the early stages of middle-income country status, UNDP's policy-oriented work should continue to be at the core of its interventions. A comprehensive strategy for its policy work should be developed to ensure that various existing efforts represent a coherent approach that ultimately contributes to the One Plan/CCPD outcomes and outputs. This should encompass the following:

- i. Strengthen the linkages between the policy advisors on PAT and the programmes/projects by: (i) ensuring the use of PAT's expertise in quality assuring programme/project design, implementation and reporting of results; and (ii) institutionalizing the working relationship between policy advisors and programme teams;
- ii. Ensure that UNDP's efforts contribute to both policy formulation and policy implementation (institutional capacity development) grounded in a results-based framework. This should ensure the participation and the reflection in the policy-work mapping of the roles played by all staff with advisory capacity/mandates to programmes and projects – including PAT policy advisors; international senior technical advisors

embedded in projects with a direct engagement role with national partners; and policy specialists embedded in the programme teams; and

- iii. Increase UNDP's presence and role at the UN level, through sectoral work by JPGs, in defining UN-level policy visions and approaches.

Recommendation 2. In close consultation with the government and UN agencies, UNDP should further strengthen its programme approach.

Taking advantage of ongoing and forthcoming efforts to improve the programme/project management system in the country, such as a review of the HPPM guidelines by the government and UN agencies, UNDP should further shift away from a project-focused to a more programme-focused approach. This should include:

- i. Substantively contribute to the formulation of One Plan outcomes and outputs in the next cycle to bring clarity to their statements, objectives, and means of verification;
- ii. Develop a clear, logical pathway for UNDP Viet Nam to reach the goals defined in the CCPD/One Plan, by constructing a thematic cluster-specific strategy that is based on a longer-term perspective in achieving results and a programme theory of change. The manner in which UNDP is expected to deliver outcome/output results across the sectors and in collaboration with other UN agencies (through a joint programming matrix) should be clearly articulated;
- iii. In close and early dialogue with the government, develop a set of necessary and sufficient projects that contribute to each of the CCPD/One Plan outcomes/outputs. A collection of those individual projects should constitute a collective strategy for achieving their intended objectives; and
- iv. At the project level, and in consultation with national partners, develop the initial project documents (e.g. DPOs) so that they serve as

the foundation for project delivery. While the AWP and quarterly reviews are important tools to guide short-term interventions and assess project progress, the overall objectives and approaches defined in the initial project documents should remain as accountability documents between UNDP and the national partners throughout a project's duration. UNDP should fully contribute to shaping the design and approaches of each project.

Recommendation 3. UNDP, in close consultation with national partners and the Regional Bureau, should strengthen its M&E practices in its projects and policy efforts.

In close consultation with national partners, and with guidance from the Regional Bureau, the CO should ensure that appropriate M&E activities are carried out in line with existing UNDP guidelines on evaluation, such as those contained in the Programme and Operations Policy and Procedures and the Addendum to the Evaluation Handbook. UNDP should:

- i. Ensure regular and full evaluations for large-scale projects (e.g. those in the Sustainable Development and IEG programmes with a multi-million dollar budget) and for projects that support national programmes for a longer duration (including GEF-SGP);
- ii. Before the evaluation plan is submitted to the Executive Board together with the country programme, ensure that the plan covers all programme areas, and at least one outcome evaluation in collaboration with other UN agencies; and
- iii. Conduct assessments of research studies, policy briefs, and other knowledge products produced by UNDP to ensure that they have reached, and are used by, the target audience; and have produced results as planned.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should build more effective partnerships with development partners within the UN system and with international financial institutions when taking an

issue-based approach to its interventions, to enhance programme complementarity and a leadership role for UNDP.

For the areas recognized as UNDP's strengths, including aspects of governance, support to ethnic minorities and climate change, there are many other players at the UN level and in international financial institutions, e.g. World Bank and ADB, who are addressing common development challenges. Policy reform and development services from UNDP can complement investment and budgetary support programmes of the major donors and lending institutions. This is the niche in which UNDP's comparative advantages lie. As it pushes forward with the issue-based approach, UNDP should actively participate in the JPGs and other development partners' forums that discuss the roles, directions and approaches of development partners in addressing those issues (e.g. discussion on 'policy matrix') in order to bring coherence and coordination to the work of all partners. In addition to the respective programme teams, policy advisors should also engage in such forums and lead the discussions.

For joint programmes/projects with other UN agencies, management arrangements and administrative procedures between UN agencies and with government agencies need to be addressed carefully and in detail before they start. Customized arrangements need to be specified to harmonize and streamline the decision-making processes and procedures. They will become more significant under the forthcoming SDGs.

Recommendation 5. UNDP, in close consultation with the government and the UN agencies, should facilitate innovations in inter-ministerial coordination to address specific problems associated with overlapping mandates and programmes. It should engage non-government organizations to enhance delivery of government services.

Coordination barriers within government were a common theme in project implementation and lessons learned. For example, the structural issue

of MONRE responsibility for biodiversity conservation and protected area policies and MARD responsibilities for land and forest management was highlighted, as well as the search for more effective inter-ministerial coordination of climate change and green growth, the cross-agency collaboration on DRM, and mainstreaming ethnic groups and minority rights into economic development programmes.

In other countries, UNDP has played a lead role in such sensitive organizational issues where projects have provided opportunities to test new working relationships between government agencies at national and subnational levels, and innovative programme delivery partnerships with civil society and private sector service providers. Operational MoUs, inter-agency work groups and joint implementation teams have been applied to overcome coordination issues. The use of co-implementing partners in the DRM project (Red Cross, Women's Union and Oxfam) and UN-REDD programme also offer promising models that could be considered for other government programmes and services. More integrated programme delivery strategies involving governance, poverty reduction and sustainable development objectives should be part of the next phase of One UN Planning.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should develop and implement a clear office-wide gender plan/strategy with accountability mechanisms in place for implementation and achievement of set objectives.

The UNDP CO should explore ways to institutionalize its gender efforts, for example, by participating in a corporate certification mechanism, the Gender Equality Seal exercise. The exercise assesses seven elements critical for a CO to deliver on gender equality and women's empowerment,

i.e. management systems for gender mainstreaming; capacities; enabling environment; knowledge management; programme/projects; partnerships; and results/impact. A clear gender strategy should be developed, including the assignment of a gender focal team headed by senior-level management, to ensure that the office's efforts contribute to both development results and to a stronger CO accountability system.

Recommendation 7. UNDP should assess existing knowledge development options, including South-South cooperation practices and research/analytical work produced by the PAT and the projects, and develop an effective knowledge management strategy for the country office.

Fostering knowledge flows and innovations, as well as learning from other countries' experiences, are important to Viet Nam in the middle-income country context. The CO should capitalize on the many knowledge products it produces as part of its research and analytical work. It should also seize opportunities to share Viet Nam's lessons with other countries. Knowledge products and exchanges should go hand-in-hand with programme and operational efforts that ultimately contribute to the country programme/One Plan goals. As knowledge products and associated work has often existed in isolation, an effective knowledge management strategy should be developed at the CO level. Such a strategy should define a specific role for information and outreach as a change agent within existing programme/project designs.

In conjunction with a knowledge management strategy, a more systematic and strategic approach to South-South cooperation on priority themes linked to One Plan outcomes should be explored, with support from the Bangkok Regional Centre.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts country evaluations called “Assessments of Development Results (ADRs)” to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP’s strategy in facilitating and leveraging national effort for achieving development results. The purpose of an ADR is to:

- Support the development of the next UNDP Country Programme Document.
- Strengthen accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders.
- Strengthen accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board.

ADRs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.¹⁵⁴ The IEO is independent of UNDP management and is headed by a Director who reports to the UNDP Executive Board. The responsibility of the IEO is two-fold: (a) provide the Executive Board with valid and credible information from evaluations for corporate accountability, decision-making and improvement; and (b) enhance the independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation function, and its coherence, harmonization and

alignment in support of United Nations reform and national ownership.

An ADR will be conducted in Viet Nam in 2015, as its country programme will end in 2016. Results of the ADR will feed into the development of the new country programme.

The ADR will be conducted in close collaboration with the Government of Viet Nam, UNDP Viet Nam CO, and UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP).

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Following the reunification in 1975 and with the dramatic growth achieved through intensive political and economic reforms launched in 1986 (*Doi Moi*), Viet Nam has transformed itself from one of the world’s poorest nations to one of the most dynamic emerging countries in the region. Having reached lower middle-income country status in 2010, Viet Nam is considered as a development success story.^{155, 156}

Viet Nam has an estimated population of 91.68 million, of which 32 percent live in urban areas.¹⁵⁷ It is a diverse country with 54 ethnic groups. The Kinh majority group accounts for about 87 percent of the total population and mainly live in the Red River delta, the central coastal delta, the Mekong delta and major cities.

154 UNDP Evaluation Policy: www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf. The ADR will also be conducted in adherence to the Norms and the Standards and the ethical Code of Conduct established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (www.uneval.org).

155 “About Viet Nam,” UNDP country office website, www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/countryinfo/; <http://www.un.org.vn/en/about-viet-nam/overview.html>.

156 “Viet Nam at a glance,” UN Viet Nam website, www.un.org.vn/en/about-viet-nam/overview.html.

157 UNDP, ‘Human Development Report 2014,’ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/VNM>.

The other 53 ethnic minority groups are scattered over mountain areas (covering two-thirds of the country's territory) from the north to the south.¹⁵⁸ Only one-third of the country consists of arable land.

The country, with 330,957 square kilometres of area, is bordered by Cambodia and Laos to the west and China to the north. Viet Nam has 64 cities and provinces. Ha Noi in the north is the capital city with the population of approximately 6.45 million people and Ho Chi Minh City in the south is the largest urban area, with a population estimated at 7.16 million.¹⁵⁹

The country has made significant progress in reducing poverty over the last few decades. The poverty headcount fell from 58 percent in the early 1990s to 14.5 percent by 2008 with the estimate of well below 10 percent by 2010.¹⁶⁰ The GDP growth was on average 6.4 percent between 2002 and 2013.¹⁶¹ Despite this general growth, challenges remain in macroeconomic instability, external shocks and inequality.

Viet Nam has been successful in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly for Goals 1 (extreme hunger and poverty), 2 (primary education), 3 (gender equality and empowerment of women), 4 (child mortality) and 5 (maternal health). However, the country is lagging behind in achieving Goals 6 (HIV

and AIDS) and 7 (environmental sustainability). The progress has also been uneven with significant regional disparities, particularly among ethnic minorities.¹⁶² With the Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.638 (2013), Viet Nam ranked 121st of 187 countries and territories, the medium human development category.¹⁶³

Women are increasingly represented in public offices and the labour market. About 24 percent of seats in the National Assembly are held by women and the labour force participation rate among women of ages 15 and older is about 73 percent. However, women continue to face challenges such as inequality, discrimination, and lacking of economic opportunities.¹⁶⁴ Men earn nearly 50 percent more than women in the informal sector. Migration, including internal, cross-border and overseas labour migration, continues to increase, making women vulnerable to labour exploitation, abuse and trafficking.¹⁶⁵ The Gender Inequality Index in the Human Development Report is 0.322 (ranking at 58).

Much remains to be done in other areas, as well. For example, the country is challenged by limited institutional capacity for better governance, fighting corruption, legal framework for greater people's participation and civil society development, accountability and transparency, enhancing the role of the media and creating an enabling environment for business.¹⁶⁶

158 Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 'Ethnic groups in Vietnam', www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/English/TheSocialistRepublicOfVietnam/AboutVietnam/AboutVietnamDetail?categoryId=10000103&articleId=10002652 (accessed Feb 2015).

159 General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 'The 2009 Population and Housing Census', July 2010, www.gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=599&ItemID=9788.

160 World Bank, 2012 Vietnam Poverty Assessment "Well Begun, Not Yet Done: Vietnam's Remarkable Progress on Poverty Reduction and the Emerging Challenges," Hanoi, 2012.

161 World Bank, World Development Indicators, Real change in GDP, 2002-2013.

162 UN Viet Nam, 'Our Voices, Our Future: Consolidated Report on Viet Nam's Post-2015 Consultation Process,' p.6 (Viet Nam's progress in achieving the MDGs).

163 UNDP, Human Development Report 2014. The average annual HDI growth was 0.28 percent between 1980 and 1990; 1.70 between 1990 and 2000; and 0.96 between 2000 and 2013.

164 UN Women in Asia and the Pacific, 'Gender in Viet Nam', <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/vietnam/gender-in-viet-nam> (accessed Apr 2015).

165 UN in Viet Nam, 'Cross-cutting Themes: Gender', www.un.org.vn/en/component/content/article.html?Itemid=&id=1081:cross-cutting-themes-gender (accessed Apr 2015).

166 UN Viet Nam website.

Tropical climate provides favourable conditions for Viet Nam's agricultural development. The country, however, is prone to natural disasters – including typhoons, storms, floods, droughts, mudslides, and forest fires – and particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. A growing population, rapid economic development and urbanization are putting great pressures on natural resources and the environment.¹⁶⁷ The most vulnerable groups are the urban poor, especially those unregistered migrants who have no direct water supply and sewerage connections, causing health and environmental risks.¹⁶⁸

3. UNDP PROGRAMME STRATEGY IN VIET NAM

Viet Nam is one of the eight United Nations Delivering as One (DaO) pilot countries since 2006. The DaO initiative in Viet Nam is based on the 'five plus one pillars' of UN reform: One Plan, One Budget, One Leader, One set of Management Practices, and Green One UN House, together with the sixth pillar, One Voice.¹⁶⁹ The One Plan 2012–2016 represents a five-year programmatic framework of the UN system in Viet Nam, which brings together 16 UN agencies, the Government of Viet Nam and donor community (a 'tripartite' governance structure). It is designed to support national development priorities as

defined in the country's Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2011–2015, and comprises three focus areas: 1) Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Growth; 2) Access to Quality Essential Services and Social Protection; and 3) Governance and Participation.¹⁷⁰ Eight inter-agency Joint Programming Groups (JPGs) are the main vehicles responsible for overall planning, monitoring and reporting of results.

UNDP in Viet Nam works closely with other UN agencies at the country level (Table A1):

- During the 2006–2010 period (later extended to 2011), UNDP's country programme was guided by its Country Programme Document (CPD) and the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP), which were built on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).¹⁷¹ UNDP was expected to work on two of the three UNDAF outcomes related to growth and governance.
- In the current period 2012–2016, UNDP's work is defined in the Common Country Programme Document (CCPD), which stems from the One Plan 2012–2016.¹⁷² The programme focuses on eight of the 12 One Plan outcome areas, grouped in the three focus areas.

¹⁶⁷ UNDP country office website.

¹⁶⁸ World Bank, 'Better Infrastructure for 7.5 Million Urban Residents in Vietnam', December 2014, www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/12/19/better-infrastructure-for-75-million-urban-residents-in-vietnam.

¹⁶⁹ 'One Plan 2012–2016, between the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the United Nations in Viet Nam,' 27 March 2012.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. The One Plan represents a 'continuing shift towards high quality policy work' to support the country; and focuses on 'provision of quality technical assistance' and 'capacity development' at the national and subnational levels. It has a total of 12 outcomes, 43 outputs and 122 indicators.

¹⁷¹ DP/DCP/VNM/1, 'Draft country programme document for the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (2006–2010),' 12 April 2005; 'Country Programme Action Plan 2006–2010,' 9 May 2006; and United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 2006–2010, June 2005.

¹⁷² DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF/DCCP/2011/VNM/1, 'Draft common country programme document for Viet Nam, 2012–2016,' signed by UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS and UNICEF, 22 July 2011.

Table A1. UN framework and UNDP programmes, 2006 to the presentOne

UNDAF and UNDP CPAP 2006-2010/11		One Plan and UNDP CCPD 2012-2016	
UNDAF Outcome 1. Economic growth is more equitable, inclusive and sustainable.	Indicative resources (US\$) in CPAP	One Plan Focus Area 1. Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Growth	Indicative resources (US\$) in CCPD
Achieving the MDGs and reducing human poverty: Outcome 1. National pro-poor policies and interventions that support more equitable and inclusive growth. Crisis prevention and recovery; and Energy and environment for sustainable development: Outcome 2. Viet Nam has adequate capacity to effectively reduce risks of, and respond to, climate-related disasters, particularly among the most vulnerable groups. Outcome 3. Economic growth takes into account environmental protection and rational use of natural resources for poverty reduction.	 Regular: \$9 million Other: \$8 million Regular: \$2 million Other: \$6 million Regular: \$4.5 million Other: \$17 million	 Outcome 1.1 Key national institutions formulate and monitor people-centred, 'green' and evidence-based socio-economic development policies to ensure the quality of growth in Viet Nam as a middle-income country. Outcome 1.3 Key national and subnational agencies, in partnership with the private sector and communities, have established and monitor multi-sectoral strategies, mechanisms and resources to support the implementation of relevant multilateral agreements and effectively address climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster-risk management. Outcome 1.4 Key national and subnational agencies, in partnership with the private sector and communities, implement and monitor laws, policies and programmes for more efficient use of natural resources and environmental management, and to implement commitments under international conventions.	 Regular: \$16 million Other: \$63.85 million
		One Plan Focus Area 2. Access to Quality Essential Services and Social Protection	
		Outcome 2.1 A more effective national social protection system provides increased coverage, quality, and equitable access for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.	Regular: \$2 million Other: \$3 million
UNDAF Outcome 3. Governance effectively supports rights-based development to realize the values and goals of the MDGs		One Plan Focus Area 3. Governance and Participation	
Fostering democratic governance: Outcome 4. A system of governance based on the key principles of accountability, transparency, participation and equity, and consistent with the rule of law and democracy. Responding to HIV and AIDS: Outcome 5. National and subnational policies and laws are in place to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS and minimize impacts on people living with HIV and AIDS	 Regular: \$11.5 million Other: \$15 million Regular: \$3 million Other: \$2 million	 Outcome 3.1 Elected bodies are better able to formulate laws, oversee the performance of state agencies and represent the aspirations of the Vietnamese people, especially women, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Outcome 3.2 All citizens, particularly the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, benefit from strengthened legal and judicial reform and increased access to justice, enhanced capacity of legal and judicial professionals, and strengthened national legal frameworks to support the implementation of international conventions ratified by Viet Nam. Outcome 3.3 Improved performance of public-sector institutions at national and subnational levels, through enhanced coordination, accountability, transparency and anti-corruption efforts, will reduce disparities and ensure access to public services for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Outcome 3.4 Political, social, professional and mass organizations participate effectively in policy discussions and decision-making processes for the benefit of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.	 Regular: \$26.165 million Other: \$29.345 million

Source: UNDAF, CPAP, CCPD and One Plan.

4. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will examine the ongoing country programme (2012–2016) as well as the previous programme (2006–2010/2011). Given that the ADR is expected to provide a set of forward-looking recommendations as the CO prepares its next country programme starting in 2017, a close attention will be given to the current programmatic structure and strategy as a basis, which comprises three thematic clusters at the UNDP CO: i) Inclusive and Equitable Growth; ii) Sustainable Development; and iii) Governance and Participation. To assess the results obtained thus far, the evaluation will go back to the previous programme cycle (2006–2010/2011), assessing relevant corresponding projects. The evaluation will exclude the assessment of the HIV and AIDS programme, which was discontinued in the previous cycle and is no longer a priority area for UNDP Viet Nam.

The ADR covers the entirety of UNDP's activities in the country and therefore includes interventions funded by all sources of finance, core

UNDP resources, donor funds, government funds, etc. Special efforts will be made to capture the role and contribution of the associated funds and programme, i.e. UNV and UNCDF, as appropriate, through undertaking joint work with UNDP. This information will be used for synthesis in order to provide corporate level evaluative evidence of performance of the associated fund and programme.

5. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology comprises two components: (i) assessment of UNDP's contribution by thematic/programme area, and (ii) assessment of the quality of this contribution. The ADR will present its findings and assessment according to the set criteria provided below,¹⁷³ based on an analysis by country programme outcome area. It will generate findings, conclusions and recommendations for future action.

- **UNDP's contribution by programme areas.**
The ADR will assess the effectiveness of UNDP in contributing to development

Table A2. UNDP Programme Outcomes by Country Office Cluster

Cluster 1: Inclusive and Equitable Growth

Outcome 1.1 Evidence-based development policies in a LMIC Viet Nam

Outcome 2.1 Social protection

(*2006-2010/2011 Outcome 1: Pro-poor policies)

Cluster 2: Sustainable Development

Outcome 1.3 Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

(*2006-2010/2011 Outcome 2: Reduction of risks/response to climate-related disasters)

Outcome 1.4 Natural Resources and Environmental Management

(*2006-2010/2011 Outcome 3: Environment protection and use of natural resources)

Cluster 3: Governance and Participation

Outcome 3.1 More responsive elected bodies / Legislative Process

Outcome 3.2 Legal/ Judicial Reform and Access to Justice

Outcome 3.3 Public Administrative Reform

Outcome 3.4 More effective and sustained participation by civil society

(*2006-2010/2011 Outcome 4: Governance)

¹⁷³ Further elaboration of the criteria can be found in ADR Manual 2011.

results of Viet Nam through its programme activities. Specific attention will be paid to assess the contribution related to UNDP's overall vision of supporting the country achieve poverty eradication and reduce inequalities and exclusion, and its contribution to furthering gender equality and women's empowerment.¹⁷⁴

■ **The quality of UNDP's contribution.** The ADR will assess the quality of UNDP's contribution based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of UNDP's projects and outcomes to the country's needs and national priorities;
- Efficiency of UNDP's interventions in terms of use of human and financial resources; and
- Sustainability of the results to which UNDP contributed.

The ADR will assess how specific factors explain UNDP's performance, namely the engagement principles and alignment parameters of the 2014–2017 UNDP Strategic Plan.¹⁷⁵ For example, in addition to assessing UNDP's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment, the evaluation will assess gender mainstreaming as a factor of UNDP's performance for each country programme outcome.¹⁷⁶ Second, UNDP strategic positioning will be analysed from the perspective

of the organization's mandate and the agreed and emergent development needs and priorities in the country. This will entail systematic analysis of UNDP's position within the national development and policy space, as well as strategies used by UNDP to maximize its contribution. Finally, the ADR will assess how managerial practices impacted achievement of programmatic goals.¹⁷⁷

In assessing the above, the evaluation will also examine a number of country-specific factors that may have had an impact on UNDP's performance, for example:

- The strong DaO environment with the One Plan as the foundation for the UN work in the country.
- A tripartite governance framework, where the UN, Government, and donors collaborate closely.
- Viet Nam achieving the middle-income country status in 2010.

Assessment at the outcome level: An outcome paper will be developed for each outcome noted in Table 2 above, which examines the programme's progress towards the respective outcome and UNDP's contribution to that change over the period. A Theory of Change (ToC)¹⁷⁸ approach will be used and developed by the evaluation team in consultation with UNDP and

174 Using the UN System-Wide Action Plan (UN SWAP) to improve gender equality and the empowerment of women across the UN system. www.unwomen.org/-/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/How%20We%20Work/UNSystemCoordination/UN-SWAP-Framework-Dec-2012.pdf.

175 The Strategic Plan 2014-2017 engagement principles include: national ownership and capacity; human rights-based approach; sustainable human development; gender equality and women's empowerment; voice and participation; South-South and triangular cooperation; active role as global citizens; and universality.

176 Using, *inter alia*, the Gender Marker data and the Gender Seal parameters based on UNDP/UNEG methods.

177 This information is extracted from analysis of the goals inputted in the Enhanced RBM platform, the financial results in the Executive Snapshot, the results in the UNDP Global Staff Survey, and interviews with management and operations staff at the country office.

178 Theory of Change is an outcome-based approach which applies critical thinking to the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives and programmes intended to support change in their contexts. At a critical minimum, theory of change is considered to encompass discussion of the following elements: (1) context for the initiative, including social, political and environmental conditions; long-term change that the initiative seeks to support and for whose ultimate benefit; process/sequence of change anticipated to lead to the desired long-term outcome; and (2) assumptions about how these changes might happen, as a check on whether the activities and outputs are appropriate for influencing change in the desired direction in this context; diagram and narrative summary that captures the outcome of the discussion. Source: Vogel, Isabel, "Review of the use of 'Theory of Change' in International Development" (April 2012), DFID.

national stakeholders, where appropriate. Discussions of the ToC will focus on mapping the assumptions made about a programme's desired change and causal linkages expected and these will form a basis for the data collection approach that will verify the theories behind the changes found. The outcome papers will use the ToC approach to assess UNDP's contribution to the outcome using the evaluation criteria, and identify factors that have influenced this contribution. Each outcome paper will be prepared according to a standard template provided by the IEO which will facilitate synthesis and the identification of conclusions and recommendations in the ADR report for UNDP to consider together with main partners for future programming.

6. DATA COLLECTION

Assessment of data collection constraints and existing data. An evaluability assessment was carried out prior to and during the preparatory mission, in order to understand potential data collection constraints and opportunities. This process informs development of evaluation plans. Some of the key issues identified are as follows:

- Past evaluations: All evaluations conducted by the CO thus far have been uploaded in the Evaluation Resource Centre. It was noted at the time of the preparatory mission that the available reports were predominantly project-level with no outcome evaluation reports. The information about the progress and achievements regarding outcomes may be available from each of the JPGs through, for example, examination of the One Plan Database maintained by the Resident Coordinator's Office. The Office also maintains the Monitoring Table, a platform that contains outcome data, provided by each agency.
- Programme/project information: With the support of the CO, the project documents, progress reports and any other relevant programmatic information and data have been uploaded in the ADR platform (SharePoint). This will continue throughout the evaluation phase. In all thematic clusters, there are at

least a few programme staff members who have the knowledge of previous programme cycles. In some cases, e.g. Inclusive and Equitable Growth, project units at the Government may no longer exist.

- Access to project sites: Transportation to field sites is available either by land or air. For projects in remote mountainous areas (e.g. support to ethnic minorities), traveling will be only by vehicles.

Data collection methods. A multiple method approach will be used as follows:

- Desk reviews: The IEO and the CO have identified an initial list of background and programme-related documents which is posted on the ADR SharePoint website. The evaluation team will review those documents, which include: country programming documents; project/programme documents; UN-level strategies and frameworks, e.g. the One Plan and JPG reports; UNDP corporate material, e.g. strategic plan, multi-year funding frameworks, Global Staff Surveys, results-oriented annual reports (ROARs), and annual work plans (AWPs); past evaluation reports; and any relevant reports available from the Government and others about the country.
- Interviews with stakeholders: Face-to-face and/or telephone interviews will be conducted with relevant stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society organizations, private sector, UN agencies and donors and other partners, and beneficiaries. Focus groups will be used to consult some groups of beneficiaries as appropriate.
- Field visits: The team will undertake field visits to select project sites to observe the projects and activities first-hand.

A list of projects for in-depth reviews will be developed based on a purposive sampling. The criteria for selection include: programme coverage (a balanced coverage of key issues under each outcome); maturity; budgetary and geographical considerations.

Validation. The evaluation will use triangulation of information collected from different sources and/or by different methods to ensure that the data is valid.

Stakeholder involvement: At the start of the evaluation, a stakeholder analysis will be conducted to identify all relevant UNDP partners, as well as those who may not work with UNDP but play a key role in the outcomes to which UNDP contributes. Each outcome paper will develop a stakeholder analysis within the scope of the outcome.

7. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP: The UNDP IEO will conduct the ADR in consultation with the UNDP Viet Nam CO, the RBAP and the Government of Viet Nam. The IEO evaluation manager will lead the evaluation and coordinate the evaluation team. The IEO will meet all costs directly related to the conduct of the ADR.

UNDP CO in Viet Nam: The CO will support the evaluation by: i) liaising with key national partners and other stakeholders; ii) making available to the team all necessary information regarding UNDP's programmes, projects and activities in the country; iii) providing logistical and administrative support required by the evaluation team during data collection (e.g. arranging meetings with project staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries; and assistance for the project site visits); iv) reviewing the draft ADR report and providing factual verifications on a timely basis; and v) facilitating the organization of a stakeholder workshop at the end of the evaluation.

National Reference Group: A participatory approach is important in the ADR process. A national reference group will be established to ensure national ownership of evaluation results and process, representing key stakeholder groups (e.g. government, civil society organizations, UN agencies, donors and other development partners, and the UNDP CO). The group will be respon-

sible for reviewing the terms of reference and the draft ADR report.

Vietnamese Government ministries and agencies, who work with UNDP as beneficiaries or coordinators, will facilitate the conduct of ADR by: i) providing necessary access to information sources within the government; ii) safeguarding the independence of the evaluation; iii) jointly organizing the final stakeholder meeting with the IEO when it is time to present findings and results of the evaluation; and iv) ensuring appropriate use and dissemination of the ADR report.

UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific: The RBAP will support the evaluation through information sharing, facilitation of the evaluation process, and participation in the stakeholder workshop. The Bureau will be responsible for monitoring follow-up actions, following the completion of the report.

Evaluation Team: The IEO will constitute an evaluation team to undertake the ADR. The team includes the following members:

- **Evaluation Manager (EM):** IEO staff member with overall responsibility for conducting the ADR and managing the evaluation team. Specific activities will include: i) preparatory activities (e.g. preparatory mission, development of the terms of reference, team selection and recruitment, and formulation of appropriate tools and templates for analyses); ii) team oversight and provision of methodological guidance; iii) reviews of draft outcome analyses; iv) synthesis process; v) drafting and finalization of the final report, including audit trails; vi) organization of a stakeholder workshop with support of the CO.
- **Research Assistant (RA):** A research assistant based in the IEO will provide background research and documentation, as well as any support required by the EM.
- **Consultants:** A group of three external team specialists will be recruited in the three focus areas: Inclusive and Equitable Growth;

Sustainable Development; and Governance and Participation. The consultants will have demonstrated technical knowledge, experience in conducting evaluations, and familiarity with the country context (Viet Nam). As a member of the evaluation team, each consultant will be responsible for fully participating in the preparatory desk reviews of material and field work in Viet Nam, and preparing quality, written analytical papers for the assigned outcomes in accordance with the format and instructions given by the EM. Clarification and supplemental analyses should be provided, upon request by the EM. These inputs will be used for the synthesis and preparation of a draft ADR report. In forming the evaluation team, national expertise, with a gender balance, will be sought to the extent possible. The

roles of the different members of the team is summarised in Table A3.

8. EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation will be conducted according to the approved IEO process as outlined in the *ADR Method Manual*. The following represents a summary of key elements of the process. Four major phases provide a framework conducting the evaluation.

Phase 1. Preparation: The Evaluation Manager at the IEO prepares the terms of reference and evaluation design, following her preparatory mission to UNDP Viet Nam CO. The preparatory mission and discussions with UNDP programme staff, include the following objectives:

Table A3. Evaluation team responsibilities

Item	Responsibilities	Members
Preparatory activities	Uploading of reference material and documents; Drafting of background paper	RA
	Preparatory mission	EM
	Terms of reference	EM
	Evaluation instruments and templates	EM
Recruitment	Job announcement; Short-/long-list of candidates; Interviews	EM with support of IEO
Data collection and analysis	Chapter 1. Introduction	EM; RA
	Chapter 2. National context	EM; RA
	Chapter 3. UNDP programme	EM; RA
	Chapter 4. Assessment by thematic cluster	EM
	Inclusive and Equitable Growth	Team specialist
	Sustainable Development	Team specialist
	Governance and Participation	EM and Team specialist
	Chapter 5. Strategic positioning issues	EM with input from Team specialists
	Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations	EM and Team
Synthesis, drafting of report	Initial write-up	EM
	Discussions	EM and Team specialists
Finalization of report	Consolidation of all chapters	EM
	Preparation of audit trails; Revision and finalization of report	EM
Stakeholder workshop	Presentation of results in Hanoi and discussions	EM with IEO Director

- Ensure that key CO staff are familiar with the objectives of the ADR and the ADR process
- Gain a stronger understanding of the country programme, its origins, the CO strategies, etc.
- Assess the programme evaluability prior to developing the terms of reference.
- Identify potential consultants that could help with data collection.
- Identify areas where support can be provided for data collection endeavours, e.g. data maintained at the Resident Coordinator's Office and JPGs.

Additional evaluation team members, comprising international and/or national development professionals, will be recruited once the terms of reference are complete.

Phase 2. Data collection and analysis: The phase will commence in August 2015. An evaluation matrix with detailed questions and means of data collection and verification will be developed to guide data collection. The following process will be undertaken:

- Pre-mission activities (July): Evaluation team members conduct desk reviews of reference material, and prepare a summary of the context and other evaluative evidence, and identify the outcome theory of change, outcome-specific evaluation questions, gaps and issues that will require validation during the field-based phase of data collection. The IEO with support of the CO develops a field work plan with interview appointments and site visits.
- Data collection mission (August): The evaluation team will undertake a mission to Viet Nam to engage in data collection activities. The estimated duration of the mission is about 3-4 weeks. Data will be collected according to the approach outlined in Section 6 with responsibilities outlined in Section 7.
- Follow-up analyses and finalization of outcome papers: The team conducts any post-mission follow-up data collection activities required and completes individual analyses.

Phase 3. Synthesis, report writing and review: Based on the outcome reports, the EM will undertake a synthesis process.

The first draft of the ADR report will be prepared and subjected to the quality control process of the IEO. Once cleared by the IEO, the first draft will be further circulated with the CO and the RBAP for factual corrections. The second draft, which takes into account factual corrections, will be shared with national stakeholders for review.

The final draft report will be shared at stakeholder workshop where the results of the ADR will be presented to key national stakeholders. The UNDP Viet Nam CO will discuss its management response to the recommendations from the ADR. The workshop also discusses the ways forward with a view to creating greater ownership by national stakeholders in taking forward the lessons and recommendations from the report, and to strengthening accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders. The final evaluation report will be prepared by taking into account the discussion at the workshops. It will contain the official management response to the ADR, developed by the CO under the oversight of RBAP.

Phase 4. Production, dissemination and follow-up: The ADR report and brief will be widely distributed in both hard and electronic versions. The evaluation report will be made available to UNDP Executive Board by the time of approving a new Country Programme Document. It will be distributed by the IEO within UNDP as well as to the evaluation units of other international organizations, evaluation societies/networks and research institutions in the region. The Viet Nam CO and the Government of Viet Nam will disseminate to stakeholders in the country. The report, including the management

response, will be published on the UNDP website¹⁷⁹ as well as in the Evaluation Resource Centre. The RBAP will be responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of follow-up actions in the Evaluation Resource Centre.¹⁸⁰

9. TIMEFRAME FOR THE ADR PROCESS

The timeframe and responsibilities for the evaluation process are tentatively as follows:

Table A4. Timeframe for the ADR process		
Activity	Responsible party	Proposed timeframe
Phase 1: Preparation		
Preparatory mission	IEO with support of CO	1-9 May 2015
Finalization of Terms of Reference	IEO	Mid-June
Selection and recruitment of external evaluation team members	IEO with support of CO	June–early July
Phase 2: Data collection and analysis		
Preliminary analysis of available data and context analysis	Evaluation team	July
Data collection	Evaluation team	Aug (3-4 weeks)
Analysis and finalization of outcome reports	Evaluation team	By mid Sep
Phase 3: Synthesis and report writing		
Synthesis	IEO/Evaluation team	By mid Oct
Zero draft ADR for clearance by IEO	IEO	By end of Oct
First draft ADR for CO/RB review	IEO	End of Nov
Revision and second draft for national stakeholder review	IEO	By Mid Dec
Draft management response	CO	Dec 2015 – Jan 2016
Stakeholder workshop	IEO/CO	Dec 2015 – Jan 2016
Phase 4: Production and Follow-up		
Editing and formatting	IEO	Jan–Feb 2016
Final report production and Evaluation Brief	IEO	March
Report made available to the Executive Board	IEO	June
Dissemination of the final report	IEO/CO	June

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Annex 2

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Annex 3

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Annex 4

COUNTRY PROGRAMME/ONE PLAN OUTPUTS AND A SUMMARY OF KEY PROJECT EFFORTS AND DELIVERABLES, BY OUTCOME

Outcomes	Outputs
Inclusive and Equitable Growth (IEG)	
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output 1.1.1: Strengthened capacities of data producers, providers and users for evidence-based socio-economic development planning and decision-making; Output 1.1.2: Strategic options for development policies defined and considered by policy-makers to promote inclusive, people-centred and equitable development; and Output 1.1.3: A multi-dimensional and human development approach is adopted in the poverty reduction components of SEDPs at national and subnational level to effectively address chronic and emerging forms of poverty.
<p>Key project efforts and deliverables:</p> <p>UNDP's support to national data and monitoring systems (Output 1.1.1) was addressed by projects such as 'Support to Implementation of Viet Nam Statistical Development Strategy 2011-2020, Vision to 2030,' 'Support to Socio-Economic Development Monitoring,' 'Support to the preparation of National MDG Reports,' 'MDGs monitoring and reporting - An institutionalized framework for monitoring, advocating and advising, and South-South cooperation,' and 'Support to in-depth assessment of urban poverty in Hanoi and HCMC.' For the development national policy and programmes (Output 1.1.2), projects included 'Support to the formulation of SED Strategy 2011-2020,' 'Support for enhancing capacity in advising, examining, and overseeing macroeconomic policies' with the Economic Committee of the National Assembly (ECNA), 'Support to the National Programmes for Poverty Reduction (NPPR),' and 'Support to the implementation of Resolution 80 (2011-2020) and NTP-SPR (or Poverty Reduction Policies and Programme (PRPP) project)'. The multi-dimensional and human development approach, including the SDGs (Output 1.1.3) was addressed by such projects as the urban poverty and MDGs projects from the previous cycle, and 'Support to reduction of multi-dimensional poverty in urban settings (Tracking Urban Poverty 2)'. The PRPP project is also designed to contribute to Output 1.1.3.¹⁸¹</p> <p>The actual deliverables from the projects included: i) studies and policy briefs as inputs for the SEDS and SEDP; ii) national MDG reports (2008, 2010, 2013 and 2015); iii) draft national statistical development strategy for 2011-2020; iv) studies and policy dialogue forum to support advising, examining, and overseeing macroeconomic policies; v) technical support to the implementation of Resolution 80 (2011-2020) and NTP-SPR at the national level as well as local levels in eight selected poor provinces of Viet Nam (Ha Giang, Dien Bien, Cao Bang, Bac Can, Thanh Hoa, Quang Ngai, Kon Tum and Tra Vinh) and vi) surveys, studies, workshops and training to introduce a multi-dimensional poverty reduction approach.</p>	
2.13 ¹⁸²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Output 2.1.1: High quality evidence is available for use by decision-makers to inform the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection related legislation and policy; Output 2.1.2: Policy advice and technical support provided and considered by the Government to enhance the effectiveness of the social protection system, with a particular focus on coherence between different pillars and with other relevant policy frameworks; Output 2.1.3: Alternative legal, policy, targeting and financing options are available and considered by the Government for the expansion of integrated and adequate social assistance, social insurance and social welfare and protection services; and Output 2.1.4: Institutional and human resource capacity strengthened to design and deliver social assistance, social insurance, and social welfare and protection services.

(continued)

181 In this programme, some projects are expected to contribute to multiple CCPD/One Plan outputs, e.g. 'MDGs monitoring and reporting' project and the 'Support to in-depth assessment of urban poverty in Hanoi and HCMC' project contribute to Output 1.1.1 and 1.1.3, while the PRPP project contributes to Output 1.1.2 and 1.1.3.

182 UNDP contributes to only three of the four outputs, 2.1.1-2.1.3.

Outcomes	Outputs
Inclusive and Equitable Growth (IEG) (continued)	
<p>Key project efforts and deliverables:</p> <p>UNDP contributes to Outcome 2.1 (and its three Outputs) by a project, 'Support the improvement of the social assistance system (SAP project)'. The project supports the overall objectives of the Resolution 15 (improvement of the social assistance system) which aims to: i) increase the number of people benefiting from regular social assistance - to about 2.5 million by 2020 including the elderly; ii) increase the social transfer level/improve the wellbeing and reduce the vulnerability of the beneficiaries to the economic conditions of the country; and iii) develop and improve the operational mechanisms of the social assistance system to ensure that the social transfer is timely, demand-based and for the right beneficiaries.</p> <p>The \$2 million project is expected to be implemented in two phases: Phase I (Q4/2013 – 2014) to identify the areas of reforms and building of a roadmap for the social assistance reform; and Phase II (2015 – 2016) to support the implementation of the reform. By providing direct technical assistance to the national agency in charge of social protection, MOLISA, it is expected to create opportunities for policy debates with the National Assembly/Committee for Social Affairs and the Communist Party's Theoretical Council, bring in the evidence-based research and international experience, and support the formulation and implementation of a reform in national social assistance system policy. The deliverables include in-depth field studies, feasibility studies, and a draft Master Plan for Social Assistance Reform (MPSAR).</p>	
Sustainable Development (SD)	
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 1.3.1: Planning and investment processes are climate proofed and specific programmes have been formulated and operationalized for long term adaptation to reduce climate change vulnerabilities. • Output 1.3.2: Resilience of at-risk and vulnerable groups to natural hazards is enhanced, and nationally relevant aspects of international agreements on disaster risk management are implemented. • Output 1.3.3: A national system for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD), and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) for a number of strategically chosen sectors and localities are formulated and operationalized with clear potential benefits. • Output 1.3.4: National long term climate change strategy and Green Economy/low carbon strategy operationalized which are based on the national development vision (SEDS) while building on the National Target Programme results.
<p>Key project efforts and deliverables:</p> <p>The key expected results include: (i) Community resilience to natural hazards strengthened in priority areas, (ii) Climate Change Strategy and Green Economy Strategies operationalized, (iii) Climate change/ disaster risk management (DRM) mainstreamed into national/subnational planning and budgeting, and (iv) GHG mitigation programmes established and scaled up in forestry, energy and other sectors. Climate Change is principally the mandate of MONRE who are responsible for national climate policy, sectoral strategies and climate scenarios, but related Green Growth/Low Carbon Development issues are primarily led by MPI. Reduction of GHG emissions from industries is a focus of Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT) while energy efficiency and management are also addressed by Ministry of Science and Technology (MOIST). Disaster management responsibilities are also complex, with MARD's Disaster Management Centre and Water Resources Directorate and an inter-ministerial body - the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC) having the lead roles. The REDD – Viet Nam Programme is managed by Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) under MARD as 'programme owner' along with the Viet Nam REDD+ Office, Provincial People's Committees (PPCs) in pilot provinces, respective DARDs at the provincial level, and five forestry institutes and organizations involved in implementation and technical and managerial support by UNDP, UNEP and FAO.</p> <p>Outcome 1.3 has been pursued through a series of projects: 'Capacity Building for Climate Change' with MONRE and MARD; 'Building Sustainable Development and Climate Planning' with MPI; 'Promoting Energy Conservation in Small and Medium Size Enterprises (PESME)' with MOST; 'Strengthening Capacity in Climate Change in Industry' with MOIT, 'Disaster Risk Management Phase I and II' project with Disaster Management Centre of MARD, CCFSC and civil society organizations, and the 'UN-REDD Phase I and II' programme with VNFOREST and others. In addition, PAT has provided complementary assistance for a variety of climate change support activities.</p>	

(continued)

Outcomes	Outputs
Sustainable Development (SD) (continued)	
1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 1.4.1: Policies, regulations and fiscal tools for green economic development, natural resources management and cleaner production are formulated and applied. • Output 1.4.2: A set of coherent policies and plans are prepared or updated to strengthen (1) management of protected areas and biodiversity conservation, and (2) environment management at national and community levels. • Output 1.4.3: Policies, plans and technical skills are strengthened for the sound management of hazardous chemicals and POPs in accordance with international conventions. • Output 1.4.4: Regulations and fiscal tools formulated and operationalized to enhance rights of the land holders, improve land use and water resources management, and enhance access to decent and social housing by the poor and vulnerable groups.
Key project efforts and deliverables: <p>The key expected results include progress in implementing a Green Growth Strategy, programmes to address certain POPs (pesticide and dioxin) contaminated sites, and updated strategies and capacity strengthening for biodiversity conservation and protected areas management. The Green Growth Policy issues are led by MPI, while contaminated sites are predominantly the responsibility of MONRE and their DONRE counterparts at the provincial level. National Steering Committee 33 is an inter-ministerial body led by MONRE with duties to address war-related dioxin (Agent Orange) pollution. Biodiversity conservation and protected areas are the mandate of MONRE but many of the forest management and land use/livelihood aspects fall under MONRE responsibilities. Outcome 1.4 is being pursued through six projects: 'Building Sustainable Development and Climate Planning' with MPI (overlaps with Outcome 1.3 climate change/green growth activities), 'Capacity Building and Completion of the Overall National Plan for Remediation of Dioxin Contaminated Hotspots (POPs-Dioxin Phase I)', 'Eliminate Pesticide Stockpiles (POPs-Pesticide)', 'Environmental Remediation of Dioxin Contaminated Hotspots in Viet Nam', with MONRE, Committee 33, Ministry of Defence and others; and 'National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan', and 'Removing Barriers Hindering Protected Area Management Effectiveness in Viet Nam' projects which were implemented by the Biodiversity Conservation Agency of MONRE in collaboration with DONREs and MARD. In addition, 79 GEF Small Grants projects were implemented from 1999-2015 (\$2.88 M), half of which were in the biodiversity focal area.</p>	
Governance and Participation (GPT)	
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.1.1: Elected bodies benefit from enhanced knowledge generation and knowledge management to access high quality research and data to guide their legislative duties. • Output 3.1.2: Elected officials and bodies have improved capacities to interact and consult with citizens, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
Key project efforts and deliverables: <p>The five projects under review encompass three on budget oversight and two on supporting the Institute of Legislative Studies (ILS), a research agency attached to the National Assembly. The three budget oversight projects supported the National Assembly's Committee for Financial and Budgetary Affairs (CFBA) and the Ethnic Minority Council, as well as selecting the people's councils from 2004 to 2014. Support for the CFBA was reinforced by the support for capacity building of the ILS and two additional Committees on Law and Judicial Affairs. The outputs/deliverables from these projects included: i) capacity building in the CFBA, Ethnic Minority Council, and participating people's councils through training; ii) compilation of training materials; iii) increased research and information technology capacity for the ILS; and iv) capacity building for the ILS as a vehicle for public consultation.</p>	

(continued)

Outcomes	Outputs
Governance and Participation (GPT) (continued)	
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.2.1: Policy, legal and regulatory framework strengthened to better reflect the rights of the most vulnerable groups and increase their access to justice • Output 3.2.2: Law enforcement and judicial institutions strengthened to better protect rights, and provide increased access to justice to all people, particularly the most vulnerable groups • Output 3.2.3: Legal, law enforcement and judicial personnel have enhanced knowledge and skills to carry out their obligations under Viet Nam's Constitution and laws as well as ratified international conventions • Output 3.2.4: Awareness-raising programmes and legal support services developed and effectively implemented to enable all people, particularly vulnerable groups, to be aware of, and claim their rights
<p>Key project efforts and deliverables:</p> <p>The six projects under review for this outcome comprise one access-to-justice project (2009-2015), two on human rights (2008-2016), and three collaborations with civil society organizations (2007-2016). The access-to-justice project at the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) was a continuation of UNDP's long-standing support to MOJ since 1995. The human rights projects are organized into two phases: first, on capacity building for human rights mechanisms, especially treaty body reporting (2008-2013), and second, on Universal Periodic Review reporting and action planning (2013-2016), as well as on support for the implementation of additional treaties. The three projects with CSOs also contribute to Outcome 3.4.</p> <p>The outputs/deliverables from the projects are fourfold. First is the development of legal and policy frameworks with particular focus on certain aspects of rights protection, followed by reporting of international treaties as well as action planning for UPR recommendations; implementation of the strategy for judicial reform with emphasis on the court system; and increased CSO capacities to provide legal education and raise the awareness of citizens, especially vulnerable groups.</p>	
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.3.1: Government agencies at the national and subnational level are able to apply participatory, evidence-based and cross-sector approaches in planning, implementation of, and monitoring of public service delivery for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. • Output 3.3.2: The public administration systems at national level and in selected provinces, have enhanced human resource management systems, a customer-oriented approach, and strengthened mechanisms for accountability and transparency. • Output 3.3.3: Selected national institutions have enhanced capacities to implement and monitor implementation of national legislation on anti-corruption and key provisions of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). • Output 3.3.4: Systems to monitor the performance of government institutions and the delivery of basic public services are evidence-based and include mechanisms for citizen feedback.
<p>Key project efforts and deliverables:</p> <p>The five projects under review encompass two phases of a public administration reform (PAR) project at the national and subnational levels: an anti-corruption project, and two projects on women's participation. The Accelerating and Improving PAR project (2009-2013) provided support to the central-level ministries to plan PAR implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and partnership. The Strengthening the Impact of PAR project (2013-2016) supports the four provinces of Bac Giang, Ha Tinh, Da Nang, and Can Tho in piloting human resource management with a plan to apply the model nation-wide. The Government Inspectorate (GI)-UNCAC project (2009-2013) supported the conduct of UNCAC self-review, development of a system to monitor corruption and the work to combat it, and the enhancement of anti-corruption partnerships. Meanwhile, Phase 1 of the women's participation projects, the Cambridge-Viet Nam Women's Leadership Program (2008-2013), focused on education, research, and networking, as well as on recruiting female professionals to study at Cambridge. Phase 2 of the projects, the Empowerment of Women in the Period of International Integration Project (2013-2016), addressed the integration of women's participation in the public sector.</p>	

(continued)

Outcomes	Outputs
<p>Key project efforts and deliverables: (continued)</p> <p>The outputs/deliverables from these projects included: i) improved PAR planning capacity within the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) and detailed proposals for various PAR measures; ii) monitoring tools to track PAR implementation (i.e., PAR Index) and customers' satisfaction (i.e. SIPAS); iii) an administrative "one-stop-shop" model developed through information technology; iv) human resources management pilots for creating employment and applying information technology to personnel management, individual training, and performance appraisal in the civil service; v) a tool for tracking corruption and anti-corruption work; vi) Vietnamese completion of the UNCAC self-review; vii) women's public sector participation through mainstreaming gender in training programs and action research; and viii) mentoring and joint action between the Women's Union and the Viet Nam Fatherland Front to increase the number of female candidates for the 2016 elections.</p>	
3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Output 3.4.1: Enabling legal, policy and institutional framework and dialogue mechanism available for PSPMOs to participate in policy discussion and decision-making processes. • Output 3.4.2: PSPMOs' human resources and organization capacities strengthened to provide significant contributions in the development of policies in the best interests of the most vulnerable groups.
<p>Key project efforts and deliverables:</p> <p>The three projects under review include two with the Viet Nam Lawyers' Association (VLA) and one on LGBT CSOs. The VLA projects were organized in two phases: Phase 1 (2007-2011) focused on organizational development of the VLA, while Phase 2 (2012-2016) focused on improved performance of the VLA in providing legal commentaries and legal aid services. Contrary to other UNDP interventions that partner with umbrella organizations, the LGBT CSO project focused on LGBT communities and networks. Project outputs/deliverables include: capacity building for commenting on existing legal documents; legal services to the poor and disadvantaged; partnerships with CSOs working on legal assistance and legal aid; the justice index; improved awareness of LGBT rights; and strengthened networks within LGBT communities.</p>	

Annex 5

PROJECTS FOR IN-DEPTH REVIEWS BY PROGRAMME

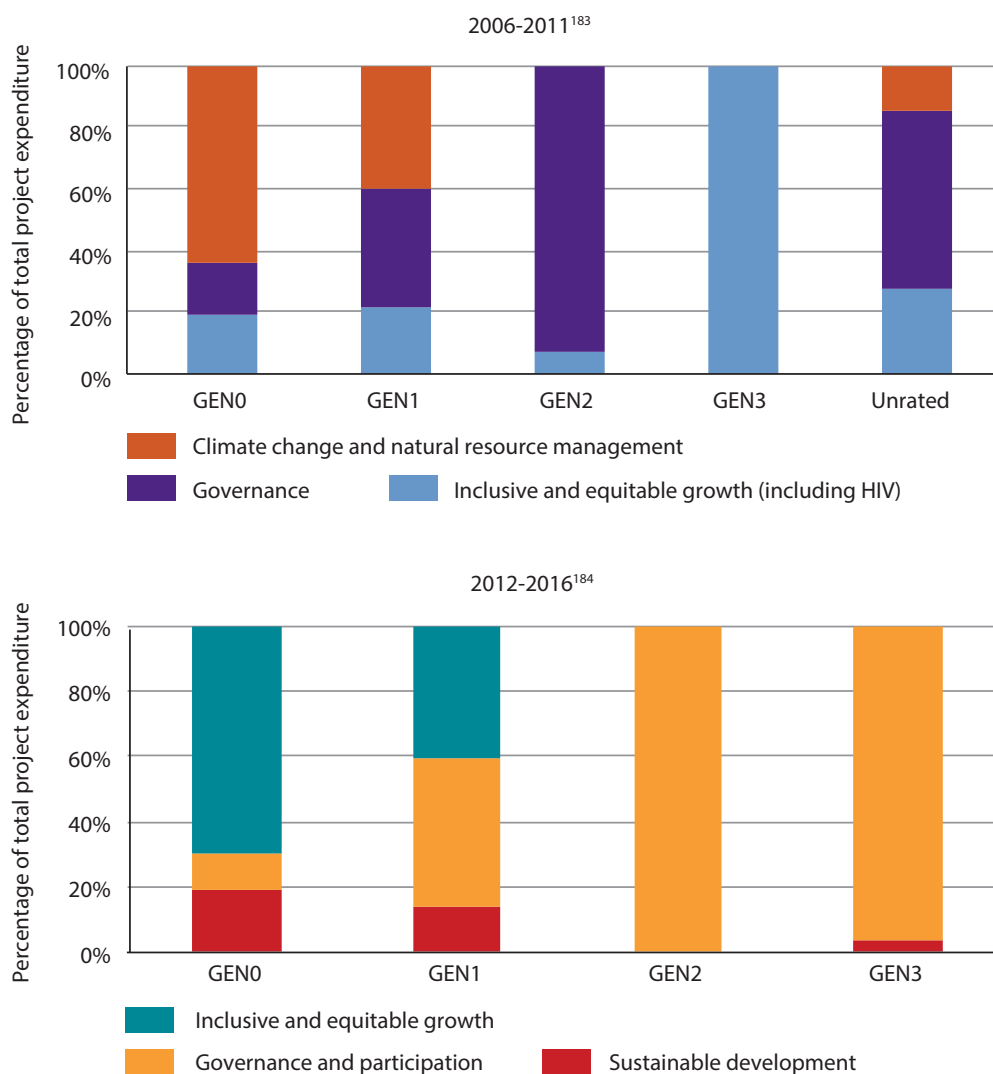
Award ID	Award Title	NIM/ DIM	Start Date	End Date	Expendi- ture (\$)
Inclusive and equitable growth					
Outcome 1.1					
00051418	Tracking Urban Poverty	NIM	26/11/2012	31/12/2012	276,082
00068983	Support to multi-dimensional poverty reduction in urban	NIM	01/11/2013	31/12/2015	869,770
00068889	Support to the implementation of the Resolution 80	NIM	01/08/2012	31/12/2016	5,165,011
00015593	Support to the National Programs for Poverty Reduction	NIM	01/01/2008	30/06/2012	1,414,531
00068992	Vietnam Statistical Development Strategy 2011-2020	NIM	01/03/2012	31/12/2014	1,095,657
00040722	Support to Socio-Economic Development Monitoring	NIM	01/01/2012	31/12/2015	2,743,780
00070428	Monitoring and report Millennium Development Goals	NIM	14/11/2012	31/12/2016	387,687
00049131	Support to the preparation of MDGR 2008-2010	NIM	12/06/2004	31/01/2013	635,327
00059714	Macroeconomic policy project	NIM	12/04/2010	31/12/2014	2,252,177
00050577	Support to the formulation of SED Strategy 2011-2020	NIM	11/01/2012	31/03/2013	946,427
Outcome 2.1					
00077891	Support the improvement of the social assistance system	NIM	01/12/2013	31/12/2016	418,160
Sustainable development					
Outcome 1.3					
00049713	Capacity Building for Climate Change	NIM	01/01/2009	31/12/2013	3,884,439
00057013	Building Sustainable Development and Climate Planning	NIM	10/03/2009	31/12/2015	3,549,998
00065128	Strengthening Capacity in Climate Change in Industry	NIM	01/03/2012	31/12/2016	601,632
00072132	UN REDD Phase 2	NIM	25/01/2013	31/12/2016	1,898,619
00057821	UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme	NIM	03/07/2009	30/06/2014	2,717,785
00040025	Energy Efficiency and Conservation	NIM	11/05/2005	31/12/2012	5,386,162
00068891	Disaster Risk Management (Phase II)	NIM	16/11/2013	31/12/2014	1,613,502
00051111	Disaster Risk Management	NIM	01/10/2008	31/12/2012	2,713,137

(continued)

Award ID	Award Title	NIM/ DIM	Start Date	End Date	Expendi- ture (\$)
Sustainable development (continued)					
Outcome 1.4					
00047880	POPs – Dioxin Phase I	NIM	23/11/2004	31/12/2010	494,971
00057013	Building Sustainable Development and Climate Planning	NIM	02/07/2012	31/12/2014	565,349
00049750	Eliminate Pesticide Stockpile	NIM	01/01/2008	31/12/2015	3,359,648
00057593	Dioxin Hotspots – Phase 2	NIM	09/10/2009	30/06/2015	6,701,836
00059640	Protected Area Management Effectiveness	NIM	01/01/2010	31/12/2015	2,713,261
00063449	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan	NIM	01/01/2012	31/12/2016	728,908
Governance and participation					
Outcome 3.1					
00072412	Legislative Information and Institutional Strengthening	NIM	17/04/2013	31/12/2015	795,359
00060305	NA - ILS Research and Communications	NIM	21/07/2010	30/06/2013	1,272,321
00072676	Capacity of Budget Oversight of Peoples' Elected Bodies	NIM	01/03/2013	31/12/2015	1,247,364
00050739	Strengthening Budget Oversight for Elected Bodies in Viet Nam	NIM	27/11/2012	31/01/2013	2,735,892
00015602	Budget Oversight	NIM	06/08/2004	30/9/2008	1,891,341
Outcome 3.2					
00058492	Strengthening Access to Justice and Protection of Rights	NIM	01/11/2009	30/09/2015	3,986,930
00046998	Human Rights' Treaties in Viet Nam	NIM	11/04/2007	31/03/2014	1,558,791
00073304	Increasing Vietnam's human rights capacities	NIM	01/05/2013	31/12/2016	427,420
Outcome 3.3					
00051162	Anti-Corruption Treaties in Viet Nam	NIM	01/06/2012	30/06/2013	1,914,043
00069828	Strengthening the impact of Public Administration Reform	NIM	01/11/2012	31/12/2016	629,693
00056616	Accelerating and Improving Public Administration Reform	NIM	01/04/2009	30/06/2014	5,207,996
00074548	Empowerment of Women in the Period of International Integration	NIM	01/07/2013	31/12/2016	1,108,089
00050525	Cambridge - Viet Nam Women's Leadership Programme	NIM	22/07/2008	30/06/2013	4,212,708
Outcome 3.4					
00068222	Legal Empowerment through Support Viet Nam Lawyers Association	NIM	01/08/2012	30/06/2016	1,200,718
00042690	Strengthening Capacity for Viet Nam Lawyers Association	NIM	12/01/2006	31/12/2011	1,592,461
00076346	Support to Strengthen Sexual Minorities in Viet Nam	DIM	01/10/2013	30/09/2015	236,883

*Note: PAT's DIM project, 'Policy Advisory Expertise and Dialogue in Viet Nam' (00056485), was a cross-cutting project contributing to Outcomes 1.1, 1.3, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4.

TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure A1. Percentage of programme expenditure by Gender Marker and thematic cluster, 2006-2011

183 Expenditure based on total project life cycle from Atlas data, totalling US\$ 143.5 million for included projects.

184 Expenditure based on total project life cycle from Atlas data, totalling US\$ 123.3 million for included projects.

Figure A2. Proportion of UNDP projects by Gender Marker rating and CCPD/One Plan outcome

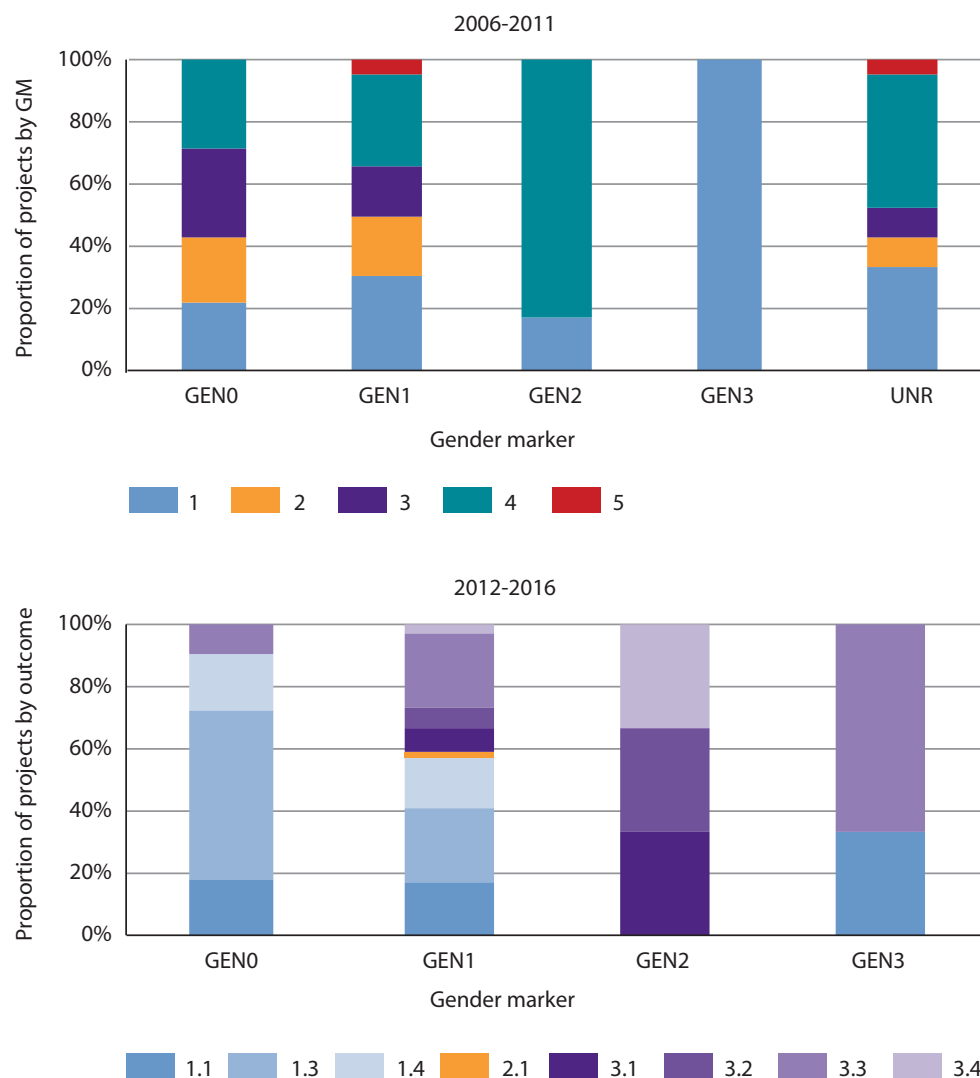


Table A5. 2012, 2013 and 2014 One Plan Fund Allocations by One Plan 2012-2016 Outcomes (\$) ¹⁸⁵

Outcomes	2012	2013	2014	Total Allocation
Outcome 1.1 - Evidence-based Development Policies in a MIC Viet Nam	355,175	1,983,462	965,941	3,304,578
Outcome 1.2 - Opportunities for Decent Work	123,930	704,710	52,800	881,440
Outcome 1.3 - Climate Change/ Disaster Risk Mgmt.	756,360	1,870,000	140,000	2,766,360
Outcome 1.4 - Natural Resources/ Env. Management	62,500	40,500	0.00	103,000
Total Focus Area 1	1,297,965	4,598,672	1,158,741	7,055,378
Outcome 2.1 - Social Protection	691,514	1,269,077	641,218	2,601,809
Outcome 2.2 - Health	928,650	2,123,170	1,952,849	5,004,669
Outcome 2.3 - Education and Training	90,660	670,792	426,182	1,187,634
Outcome 2.4 - Gender Equality and HIV	901,437	2,303,366	712,446	3,917,249
Total Focus Area 2	2,612,261	6,366,405	3,732,695	12,711,361
Outcome 3.1 - Elected Bodies/ the Legislative Process	0.00	1,209,898	441,152	1,651,050
Outcome 3.2 - Legal/Judicial Reform & Access to Justice	590,160	805,635	134,000	1,529,795
Outcome 3.3 - Public Administrative Reform	446,836	3,226,131	716,036	4,389,003
Outcome 3.4 - Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organizations (PSPMOs)	286,000	0.00	0.00	286,000
Total Focus Area 3	1,322,996	5,241,664	1,291,188	7,855,848
TOTAL	5,233,222	16,206,741	6,182,624	27,622,587

Table A6. 2012, 2013 and 2014 One Plan Fund Allocations to Participating UN Agencies (\$)

UN Agency	2012	2013	2014	Total Allocation
FAO	358,616	520,067	463,000	1,341,683
ILO	679,937	1,099,163	178,182	1,957,282
IOM	47,430	217,575	73,586	338,591
UNAIDS	251,218	394,605	119,300	765,123
UNDP	1,810,694	5,238,823	1,468,224	8,517,741
UNEP	20,000	64,500	-	84,500
UNESCO	163,357	405,722	141,221	710,300
UNFPA	114,000	1,399,680	816,340	2,330,020
UN-Habitat	237,795	331,690	87,134	656,619
UNICEF	1,123,616	3,216,620	1,212,937	5,553,173
UNIDO	227,500	617,230	196,800	1,041,530
UNODC	344,665	850,183	228,372	1,423,220
UNV	59,500	100,452	20,000	179,952
UN Women	345,000	520,914	167,366	1,033,280
WHO	760,212	1,229,517	1,010,162	2,999,891
TOTAL	6,543,540	16,206,741	6,182,624	28,932,905

185 UN Viet Nam, 'Delivering as One Annual Report,' 2014.

Table A7. One UN Fund expenditures by thematic area and UN partner, 2008-2015*

Period	Thematic area	FAO	ILO	IOM	UNAIDS	UNDP	UNV	UNEP	UNESCO
One UN Fund I (2008-2011)	Disaster Management	\$673,765				\$4,031,068			
	Environment	\$869,733				\$1,650,000			\$1,243,242
	Governance		\$2,233,452			\$6,379,735			\$51,500
	Social Economic Policy	\$779,482	\$2,132,465		\$1,729,146	\$12,811,584			
	Social Services	\$700,438			\$369,150		\$588,409		\$1,349,851
One UN Fund II (2012-2015)	OP 2012 Governance & Participation		\$461,219	\$39,599		\$3,617,824			
	OP 2012 Inclusive Growth	\$440,281	\$383,674	\$77,662		\$3,160,690	\$53,012	\$116,070	\$154,891
	OP 2012 Services & Social Protection	\$212,200	\$471,738	\$50,989	\$181,208	\$174,006	\$10,215		\$241,901

Period	Thematic area	UNFPA	UNHABITAT	UNICEF	UNIDO	UNODC	UNWOMEN	WHO
One UN Fund I (2008-2011)	Disaster Management		\$437,644	\$85,598			\$399,949	\$996,830
	Environment		\$457,865		\$688,445			
	Governance			\$1,197,996		\$1,425,038	\$745,092	
	Social Economic Policy	\$4,422,288	\$299,626	\$3,028,484	\$2,648,713	\$300,000		\$1,291,000
	Social Services	\$4,790,998		\$26,473,363		\$1,089,482		\$5,622,424
One UN Fund II (2012-2015)	OP 2012 Governance & Participation	\$202,179	\$149,137	\$856,697		\$416,976	\$127,194	
	OP 2012 Inclusive Growth	\$129,898	\$425,887		\$561,213		\$14,670	\$42,500
	OP 2012 Services & Social Protection	\$1,084,432		\$2,269,457		\$434,615	\$668,306	\$1,819,188

*Data extracted 24 Sept 2015 from MPTF

Table A8. One UN Fund expenditure by outcome and UN partner, 2012-2015*

	FAO	ILO	IOM	UNAIDS	UNDP	UNDP(UNV)	UNEP	UNESCO
Outcome 1.1 - Evidence-based Development Policies in a MIC Viet Nam	\$194,695	\$313,555	\$30,232		\$865,572	\$41,832		\$124,617
Outcome 1.2 - Opportunities for Decent Work	\$127,097	\$70,119	\$47,430					\$30,274
Outcome 1.3 - Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management	\$118,489				\$2,295,118			
Outcome 1.4 - Natural Resources and Environmental Management						\$11,181	\$116,070	
Outcome 2.1 - Social Protection		\$396,907	\$50,989		\$174,006			
Outcome 2.2 - Health	\$212,200			\$110,222				
Outcome 2.3 - Education and Training								\$212,832
Outcome 2.4 - Gender Equality and HIV		\$74,831		\$70,986		\$10,215		\$29,069
Outcome 3.1 - Elected Bodies and the Legislative Process		\$128,370			\$467,092			
Outcome 3.2 - Legal and Judicial Reform and Access to Justice		\$78,090	\$39,599		\$467,500			
Outcome 3.3 - Public Administrative Reform					\$2,683,232			
Outcome 3.4 - Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organizations (PSPMOs)		\$254,759						

	UNFPA	UNHABITAT	UNICEF	UNIDO	UNODC	UNWOMEN	WHO
Outcome 1.1 - Evidence-based Development Policies in a MIC Viet Nam	\$129,898	\$185,399		\$296,830		\$14,670	
Outcome 1.2 - Opportunities for Decent Work				\$264,383			
Outcome 1.3 - Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management		\$240,488					\$42,500
Outcome 1.4 - Natural Resources and Environmental Management							
Outcome 2.1 - Social Protection	\$1,552		\$1,144,348				
Outcome 2.2 - Health	\$249,185		\$761,394		\$113,669		\$1,450,603
Outcome 2.3 - Education and Training			\$363,715				
Outcome 2.4 - Gender Equality and HIV	\$833,694				\$320,946	\$668,306	\$368,585
Outcome 3.1 - Elected Bodies and the Legislative Process	\$202,179		\$213,035			\$127,194	
Outcome 3.2 - Legal and Judicial Reform and Access to Justice			\$369,206		\$304,925		
Outcome 3.3 - Public Administrative Reform		\$149,137	\$274,457		\$112,051		
Outcome 3.4 - Political, Social, Professional and Mass Organizations (PSPMOs)							

*Data extracted 24 Sept 2015 from MPTF

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Evaluation recommendation 1. UNDP should continue to focus on upstream policy work as its core country programme strategy, but revisit its overall policy praxis/approach to develop a comprehensive strategy that will ensure that all efforts link to the CCPD/One Plan outcomes and outputs.

Management response: The recommendation is accepted. Policy work will continually be central to UN/UNDP development results in 2017-2021. Upstream policy work and integrated programming to ensure that policy work contributes to the One UN Strategic Plan Outcomes will be the focus of the next country programme. We will also maintain the existence of the Policy Advisory Team (PAT) as a UNDP global best practice, and strengthen the linkages between the PAT and the programme/projects by ensuring the use of PAT expertise in quality assuring programme/project design, implementation and reporting of results. An emerging priority for our work in 2017-2021 is to address policy implementation gaps, in addition to policy development.

To increase UNDP's role and contribution at the UN level, we will implement agreed actions in 2016 to promote issue-based, multi-disciplinary programming through sectoral work by Joint Programming Groups (JPGs) and contribute actively to defining UN-level policy visions and approaches in the formulation of the One UN Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Deepen links between programme and policy work, strengthen quality assurance of programmatic results by Policy Advisory Team.	2016 onwards	PAT and programme units		Ongoing
1.2 Focus on policy implementation gaps in addition to policy development is an emerging priority for UN/UNDP work in 2017-2021.	2017-2021	Programme units and PAT		Initiated
1.3 Implement agreed actions in 2016 to promote issue-based, multi-disciplinary programming within UNDP and as part of UN-wide results.	2016 onwards	Programme units and PAT		Ongoing

Evaluation recommendation 2. In close consultation with the government and UN agencies, UNDP should further strengthen its programme approach.

Management response: The recommendation is accepted and being taken on board. We are reviewing our programme approach and planning a shift away from project-focused to a more programme-focused approach in the formulation of 2017-2021 One UN Strategic Plan and Country Programme Document (CPD). This is facilitated by the current review of the Harmonized Programme and Project Management Guideline (PPMG) together with UNICEF, UNFPA and Government Aid Coordinating Agencies (GACAs) and the revision of the ODA regulations, under which the non-project assistance is very likely to be accepted. The PAT, programme units and the M&E Team are actively contributing to all pillars of the 2017-2021 One UN Strategic Plan, with a focus on ensuring clarity of statements, objectives and means of verification.

With the support from the regional bureau, UNDP Viet Nam is developing a clear, logical pathway (Theory of Change: TOC) for each thematic area under its next Country Programme. This will articulate how UNDP is going to deliver outcome results across the sectors in collaboration with other UN agencies. Based on the longer-term perspective in achieving results and the programme theory of change, we will develop an improved design of UNDP projects/assurances that support the achievement of the planned results.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Shift away from project-focused approach in the next programme cycle, enabled by national ODA regulations	2016-2017	Programme units, Programme Support Unit, M&E Team		Initiated

(continued)

2.2 Support all key pillars of the One UN Strategic Plan formulation, with a focus on ensuring clarity of objectives and means of verification	2016	PAT, programme units, M&E Team		Initiated
2.3 Building on One UN Strategic Plan, develop logical pathways (theories of change) focusing on UNDP outputs in support of UN outcomes	2016	PAT, programme units, M&E Team		Initiated
2.4 Further focus UNDP assistance and improve programme design to support agreed results	2016 onwards	PAT, programme units, M&E Team		Ongoing
2.5 Promote flexibility of programming with due reference to ODA management regulations and HPPMG revision	2016 onwards	PAT, programme units, Programme Support Unit, M&E Team		Ongoing

Evaluation recommendation 3. UNDP, in close consultation with national partners and the Regional Bureau, should strengthen its M&E practices in its projects and policy efforts.

Management response: The recommendation is accepted. Under the DaO context, the monitoring and evaluation of the UNDP Country Programme will be an integral part of the One UN Strategic Plan (2017-2021), and aligned to its overarching Results Monitoring Framework. As results-based management (RBM) will continue to be an essential component of DaO, results planning, monitoring, reporting, review and evaluation of the One UN Strategic Plan will continue to be strengthened to ensure evidence-based decision-making and enhanced accountability. Particular attention will be given to measuring the results of UNDP's support to upstream policymaking. UNDP will contribute to the development and monitoring of relevant inter-agency Joint Programming Groups' annual work plans, using UNDP's expertise and agency-specific monitoring tools, while building synergies with the UN agencies in Viet Nam. To ensure harmonized approaches to results-based management, UNDP will make use of undg-endorsed tools and guidance in line with Standard Operating Procedures. Joint monitoring and evaluation as well as RBM capacity development will be supported in coordination with the Government and other UN agencies.

The monitoring and evaluation of the UNDP Country Programme will also be based on indicators, baselines, and targets defined in the corporate UNDP Strategic Plan (IRRF). Indicators will be disaggregated by sex and other variables, where applicable. National data and monitoring and evaluation systems will be used to the fullest extent possible.

UNDP will strengthen its M&E practices in project and policy efforts to generate information and produce data for evidence and analysis through specific actions mentioned below.

Through the use of ToC at the programme level, monitoring and evaluation will play a key role in validating the assumptions that are vital to the ToCs, thereby providing inputs for necessary adjustments of programme design during the implementation.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Further strengthen implementation of M&E policies and procedures, with an emphasis on periodic reviews and mid-term and/or final evaluations and joint UN actions	2016 onwards	M&E Team and programme units		Ongoing
3.2 CPD 2017-2021 to include an evaluation plan covering all programme areas; at least one outcome evaluation to be pursued with other UN organizations	2016	M&E Team and programme units		Initiated
3.3 Annually-updated evaluation plan to include full evaluations of large-scale projects, if not covered by an outcome evaluation, as per the UNDP Evaluation Policy	2016 onwards	M&E Team and programme units		Ongoing
3.4 Strengthen assessment and measurement of results (research studies, policy briefs and other knowledge products) during planning and implementation, with appropriate resource allocations.	2016 onwards	M&E Team, programme units and PAT		Ongoing

(continued)

Evaluation recommendation 4. UNDP should build more effective partnerships with development partners within the UN system and with international financial institutions when taking an issue-based approach to its interventions, to enhance programme complementarity and a leadership role for UNDP

Management response: This recommendation is accepted and being addressed. UNDP is strengthening partnership at all levels to address the common development challenges. We are also actively participating in the JPGs and currently the convener of two JPGs (Governance and Rule of Law, and Climate Change and Environment) as well as facilitating development partners' policy coordination in select areas (e.g. in ethnic minority development, legal reform, human rights, and climate change). In addition, UNDP will prioritize the mobilization of domestic resources for development cooperation in line with Viet Nam's status as a Middle Income Country.

We are also drawing important lessons on management of joint programmes/projects with other UN and government agencies and will apply these lessons in the next programme cycle.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Strengthen effective partnerships at all levels to build on complementarities, and develop new innovative partnerships (institutions, groups and sectors)	2016 onwards	Programme units and PAT		Ongoing
4.2 Offer policy reform and development services to facilitate investment and budget support programmes of partners, including lending institutions	2016 onwards	Programme units and PAT		Ongoing
4.3 Develop and implement an action plan for the mobilization of domestic resources to support development cooperation, including increased government cost-sharing.	2016 onwards	CO wide, under leadership of Country Director		Ongoing
4.4 Continue to serve as convener of UN joint mechanisms, and facilitate development partners' policy coordination in select areas.	2016 onwards	Programme units and PAT		Ongoing
4.5 Apply lessons on management of UN joint programmes from the current cycle of support.	2016 onwards	Programme units and PAT		Ongoing

Evaluation recommendation 5. UNDP, in close consultation with the government and the UN agencies, should facilitate innovations in inter-ministerial coordination to address specific problems associated with overlapping mandates and programmes. It should engage non-government organizations for enhanced delivery of government services.

Management response: This recommendation is accepted. Inter-ministerial coordination is a system-wide bottleneck that transcends UN/UNDP programmes. The UNDP response has been to bridge institutional gaps and promote whole-of-the-government action, but this has not always been possible due to institutional mandates. In the coming time, we will focus our efforts on bringing different actors together to address institutional fragmentation and overlaps and promoting the role of civil society as an important partner in development.

The next Country Programme will place a high priority on promoting a whole-of-government approach to tackling the increasingly complex development challenges that Viet Nam faces, along with supporting a framework for measuring and reporting on national SDG performance.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Continue to support participatory policy forums bringing state and non-state actors together to identify integrated solutions to issues and address institutional fragmentation and overlaps.	2016 onwards	Programme units and PAT		Ongoing
5.2 Build on successful NGO service delivery models, and promote role of civil society as a partner in development, including through an enabling CSO framework.	2016 onwards	Programme units and PAT		Ongoing
5.3 Next CPD to include focus on whole-of-government approaches and support to SDG implementation framework.	2016 onwards	Programme units and PAT		Ongoing

(continued)

Evaluation recommendation 6. UNDP should develop and implement a clear office-wide gender plan/strategy with accountability mechanisms in place for implementation and achievement of set objectives.

Management response: This recommendation is accepted and being taken on board. The Viet Nam Country Office has identified gender as a priority for alignment with corporate UNDP Strategic Plan, and will develop Gender Strategy and Action Plan for the new Country Programme Document. We are also undergoing a rigorous Gender Seal certification programme to strengthen gender equality programming, and promote gender mainstreaming across development and organizational goals. A Gender Seal Action Plan has been drafted, encompassing 37 mandatory benchmarks, and implementation is expected to continue through October 2016. A Country Office Gender Focal Team, with representation across all programme and operational units and headed by the Country Director has been appointed.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
6.1 Develop Gender Strategy and Action Plan for the new Country Programme Document.	2016	Gender Focal Team		Ongoing
6.2 Undergo a Gender Seal certification programme, including develop and implement a Gender Seal Action Plan encompassing 37 mandatory benchmarks.	Oct 2015-Oct 2016	Whole Country Office		Ongoing
6.3 Appoint a Country Office Gender Focal Team, with representation across all programme and operational units and headed by Country Director	August 2015	Senior Management		Done

Evaluation recommendation 7. UNDP should assess existing knowledge development options, including South-South cooperation practices and research/analytical work produced by the PAT and the projects, and develop an effective knowledge management strategy for the country office.

Management response: This recommendation is accepted and being addressed. Knowledge management and innovation are key aspects of re-thinking UN comparative advantage in the middle-income-country context of Viet Nam. A UN-wide examination of appropriate modalities is underway. The Country Office has planned to capitalize on numerous knowledge products and exchange with different stakeholders through improved online access and reach using IT solutions, applications and social media. A knowledge management strategy will be developed, possibly in partnerships with other UN agencies for the implementation of the 2017-2021 One UN Strategic Plan. The next Country Programme will include a more strategic approach to South-South cooperation and exchange on knowledge products and innovations on priority themes linked to One Strategic Plan and CPD outcomes, with support from the Bangkok Regional Hub and headquarters.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
7.1 Improve online access and reach using IT solutions, applications and social media, and engage stakeholders on the role of data for sustainable development.	2016 onwards	Programme units, PAT, and Communications Team		Ongoing
7.2 Develop a knowledge management strategy to guide knowledge generation and dissemination, possibly in partnerships with other UN organizations.	2016 onwards	Communications Team, Programme units and PAT		Ongoing
7.3 Access corporate and regional support to promote south-south cooperation and exchange on knowledge products and innovations.	2016 onwards	Programme units, PAT, and Communications Team		Ongoing

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database (ERC).



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