



**Terms of Reference for Evaluation of the  
One Plan 2012-2016**

## 1. Background

The One Plan 2012-2016 is the common programmatic framework for participating UN system agencies in Viet Nam. It is aligned with national planning cycles, in particular the 2011-2015 Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP). The One Plan 2012-2016 sets out a focused and coherent joint programme of work in support of national priorities and is based on the comparative advantages of participating UN entities. Importantly, the One Plan 2012-2016 represents a continuing shift towards high quality policy work to support the people and Government of Viet Nam. The One Plan 2012-2016 also gives greater emphasis to provision of high quality technical assistance, capacity development at the national and sub-national level and the UN's role in convening different stakeholders and expanding partnerships.

The One Plan 2012-2016 was developed jointly from the outset by UN entities working in partnership with Government and development partners. Key stakeholders from Government, donors and political, social, professional and mass organizations (PSPMOs) were engaged at each step of developing the focus areas, outcomes, outputs and indicators. The One Plan 2012-2016 is based on robust analysis which identified the key development challenges Viet Nam has been expected to face over the period of the One Plan 2012-2016. The One Plan 2012-2016 identifies the key interventions of the UN system in Viet Nam over its five-year cycle. Programming documents of individual participating UN system agencies have been developed based on the One Plan 2012-2016. The One Plan 2012-2016 is signed between the Government of Viet Nam and the UN, including 14 resident and two non-resident UN entities.

The One Plan 2012-2016 is accompanied by a Results Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with three focus areas, 12 outcomes, 43 outputs and 122 indicators. Eight inter-agency Joint Programming Groups (JPGs) are the vehicles through which One Plan results are delivered, and these groups are responsible for overall planning, monitoring and reporting on annual contribution to One Plan results. The Results-Based Management Working Group provides advisory and technical support on PMRE of the One Plan to UNCT and JPGs. The Results-Based Management Strategy (2013-2016) provides the Resident Coordinator, the UN Country Team (RC/UNCT), UN staff, and national and international partners with the overall approach to manage for One Plan and other Delivering as One pillar outcomes.

## 2. Evaluation context

In late 2014, an Equity-focused Systematic Review (including evaluability assessment) of the One Plan was conducted. The Systematic Review identified a number of advantages and challenges of the One Plan in terms of demonstrating its contribution to reduction of inequalities and disparities with a focus on the most vulnerable groups.

Advantages:

- An outcomes and outputs chain based on a reasonable theory of change;
- a selection of 47 outcome and output indicators to measure the contribution of UN to build a level playing field;
- 13 evaluations have provided or 12 have the potential to provide independent evidence of UN contributions in the three focus areas regarding the UN work in benefit of most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;
- Contribution stories from the UN annual reports that build the bridge between some equity-focused outputs and outcomes.

#### Challenges:

- The vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are only defined for some One Plan outcomes and outputs;
- For some outcomes, there is a gap between the concrete results at the output level and the higher level indicators at the outcome level, and therefore UN may struggle to justify a significant contribution to outcome changes;
- Information on indicators related to VHLSS may come from 2012 as VHLSS 2014 is likely not to be available at that time;
- the evaluative evidence on the contributions of UN to the One Plan outcomes and outputs is still scarce; there are only few additional evaluations planned to be conducted before mid-2015 and the independent cases studies at outcome level recommended by in the RBM strategy have not been carried out;
- the explanation of the effect of UN actions for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups is not always explicit in the available evaluations and contribution stories;
- Several evaluations are mostly based on secondary data without triangulation of information with different stakeholders, which reduces the robustness of the evidence collected.

Based on the above, for the One Plan Evaluation the Systematic Review thus recommended:

- using an approach that allows to show a comprehensive picture of UN work in Viet Nam and which does not necessarily require the level of data disaggregation that would be most suitable in using the equity approach;
- not conducting an outcome focused evaluation due to due to the risk of not having updated data from a key source such as VHLSS and the lack of clear indicators that bridge the gap between outputs and outcomes and that support the measurement of UN contribution to the different outcomes; and
- including impartial case studies, collecting opinions of several (external and internal) stakeholders to allow to bridge the gap between outcome and output level, while partially filling gaps in available evaluative evidence.

The One Plan Evaluation has been designed building on the Systematic Review's findings, conclusions and recommendations.

### 3. Guiding principles, objectives, purposes and scope

The **guiding principles** of the evaluation are that it:

- is credible, independent, impartial and transparent;
- builds on the One Plan Systematic Review conclusions and recommendations;
- is meaningful and utilization-focused;
- is feasible in terms of scope and timeframe;
- is efficient in use of human and financial resources available; and
- meets UNEG Standards, Norms and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation in the UN System;

The **objectives** of the evaluation are:

- to assess the contribution made by the UNCT in the framework of the One Plan to national development results through making judgments using evaluation criteria based on evidence (accountability).
- to identify the factors that have affected the UNCT's contribution, answering the question of why the performance is as it is and explaining the enabling factors and bottlenecks (learning).
- to reach conclusions concerning the UN's contribution across the scope being examined.
- to provide actionable recommendations for improving the UNCT's contribution, especially for

incorporation into the new One Plan. These recommendations should be logically linked to the conclusions and draw upon lessons learned identified through the evaluation.

The overall **purposes** of the OP Evaluation are:

- To support greater learning about what works, what doesn't and why in the context of the One Plan. The evaluation will provide important information for strengthening programming and results at the country level, specifically informing the planning and decision-making for the next One Plan cycle (2017-2021) and for improving United Nations coordination at the country level. The Government of Viet Nam, UNCT, donors, civil society and other key One Plan stakeholders can learn from the process of documenting good practices and lessons learned. These will also be shared with UN Regional Offices and HQ for potential benefit of other countries.
- To support greater accountability of the UNCT to One Plan stakeholders. By objectively verifying results achieved within the framework of the One Plan and assessing the effectiveness of the strategies and interventions used, the evaluation will enable the various stakeholders in the One Plan process, including national counterparts and donors, to hold the UNCT and other parties accountable for fulfilling their roles and commitments.

The **scope** covered by the evaluation includes examining the cross-cutting issues of the One Plan 2012-2016 and the global UNDAF programming principles (human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, culturally appropriate programming, HIV, results-based management, capacity development). The evaluation will examine overall strategies and outcome/output specific strategies included in the One Plan itself. The One Plan will be evaluated against the strategic intent laid out in the One Plan document and specifically its contribution to the national development results included in the One Plan results framework.

#### 4. Evaluation questions and methodology

**Overall approach:** The One Plan Evaluation is a programmatic evaluation of the One Plan programmatic framework and its specified strategic intent and objectives. It assesses UNCT's contribution to national development outcomes contained in the One Plan's results framework. The overall approach is participatory and orientated towards learning and identifying lessons on how to jointly enhance development results at the national level.

In line with UNEG standards, the contribution of UNCT to development outcomes will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

- **Relevance.** The extent to which the objectives of the One Plan are consistent with country needs, national priorities, the country's international and regional commitments, including on human rights (core human rights treaties, including ICCPR, ICESCR, ICERD, CEDAW, CPRD, CRC, etc.) and the recommendations of Human Rights mechanisms (including the treaty bodies, special procedures and UPR), sustainable development, environment, and the needs of women and men, girls and boys in the country.
- **Effectiveness.** The extent to which the UNCT contributed to, or is likely to contribute to, addressing target groups' vulnerabilities through the outcomes defined in the One Plan. The evaluation should also note how the unintended results, if any, have affected national development positively or negatively and to what extent have they been foreseen and managed.
- **Efficiency.** The extent to which outcomes are achieved with the appropriate amount of resources and maintenance of minimum transaction cost (e.g. funds, expertise, time and administrative costs).
- **Sustainability.** The extent to which the benefits from a development intervention have

continued, or are likely to continue, after it has been completed.

To assess the above, the One Plan evaluation will look at two factors, general enabling/explanatory factors that can help to explain One Plan performance overall, and target group case studies that can help demonstrate contribution to addressing vulnerabilities in contribution to One Plan outcomes.

**General enabling/explanatory factors:** These can be assumed to affect performance, and assessing them in line with the above evaluation criteria can allow broader lessons to be learned about why the UNCT performed as it did. Examples that may be examined include:

- Did **UN coordination** reduce transaction costs and increase the efficiency of One Plan implementation? To what extent did the One Plan create synergies among agencies and involve concerted efforts to optimise results and avoid duplication?
- To what extent did other **Delivering as One pillars** (One House, One Leader, One Voice, One Plan Fund and Operating as One) serve as enablers to effectively and efficiently achieving One Plan results?
- How were the five **cross-cutting issues**/programming principles employed (human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, culturally appropriate programming, HIV, results-based management, capacity building)? To what degree did they contribute to performance?
- How well did the UN use its **partnerships** (e.g. with civil society, private sector, local government, National Assembly, development partners) to improve its performance? To what extent was the “active, free, and meaningful” **participation** of all stakeholders (including non-resident agencies) ensured? What mechanisms were created throughout implementation to ensure participation?

**Target group case studies:** Building on the Systematic Review findings on challenges related to the current One Plan 2012-2016, in particular limited available evaluative data that can demonstrate contributions of UN’s outputs towards One Plan outcomes, and directly responding to the Review recommendation to develop “impartial case studies that collect the opinion of several (external and internal stakeholders) on selected interventions” to allow to bridge this gap, the evaluation will assess, against the above evaluation criteria, UN’s performance in addressing vulnerabilities of a limited number of target groups (approximately 4-6). Criteria for selection of target groups include:

- 1) a group that the UN jointly supports (more than one, but ideally not too many agencies);
- 2) a group that is supported through a number of UN interventions across a number of One Plan Outcomes (more than one, but ideally not too many);
- 3) a group for which the UN is a main actor in supporting and has provided a clear added value compared to other development actors; and

Examples of evaluation questions case studies will aim to answer include:

- How were these groups identified?
- How were their vulnerabilities defined?
- How was it expected that UN interventions/policy support would contribute to addressing these vulnerabilities?
- To what degree have UN interventions/policy support contributed – or are likely to contribute – to achievement of One Plan outcomes for these groups?

Within the scope of the case studies, the enabling/explanatory factors will also be examined in greater detail as they pertain to the case study in question. Evidence emanating from both the generic enabling/explanatory factors pertaining to the whole One Plan, as well as the more detailed target group case studies, will constitute the findings of the One Plan Evaluation, used to formulate

related conclusions and recommendations.

**Data analysis and collection methods:** Both for the overall assessment of enabling/explanatory factors, as well as for conduct of the target group case studies, the One Plan evaluation will draw on a variety of data collection methods. This firstly will include desk review and analysis of existing evidence (e.g. from agency evaluations, reviews and assessments). Some primary data will be collected to fill existing evaluative evidence gaps as identified by the Systematic Review. Examples of data analysis and collection methods include:

- Document review focusing on One Plan planning documents, progress reviews, annual reports and past evaluation reports (including those on projects and small-scale initiatives, and those issued by national counterparts), strategy papers, national plans and policies and related programme and project documents. These should include reports on the progress against national and international commitments.
- Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders including key government counterparts, donor community members, representatives of key civil society organisations, UNCT members, and implementing partners.
- Surveys and questionnaires including participants in development programmes, UNCT members, and / or surveys and questionnaires involving other stakeholders.
- Focus Group discussions involving groups and sub-groups of stakeholders, decision-makers.
- Other methods such as outcome mapping, observational visits, photo stories, etc.

Data collection methods must be linked to the evaluation criteria and evaluation questions that are included within the scope of the evaluation. The use of an evaluation matrix is recommended in linking these elements together. In addition, the precise data collection methods should be identified following:

- Analysis of availability of existing evaluative evidence and administrative data
- Logistical constraints (travel, costs, time, etc)
- Ethical considerations (especially when evaluating sensitive topics such as GBV or in sensitive settings such as post-conflict settings)

Data collection methods and process should consider gender sensitivity and data should be systematically disaggregated by sex and age and, to the extent possible, disaggregated by geographical region, ethnicity, disability, migratory status and other contextually-relevant markers of equity.

**Validation:** The One Plan evaluation will use a variety of validation methods to ensure that the data and information used and conclusions made carry the necessary depth, including by sharing findings, conclusions and recommendations with evaluation participants and the evaluation reference group. Information sources and findings will be triangulated to improve validity, quality and use of evaluation outputs.

## 5. Management and conduct of the evaluation

The One Plan Evaluation Team will work under the supervision of a dual-tiered evaluation management structure.

- The commissioner and decision-making organ for the One Plan Evaluation is the **One Plan Steering Committee** (OPSC) which is composed of representatives of UN and national counterparts. The key evaluation deliverables, namely the Final Evaluation Report and its Management Response, will be approved by the ESC.

- Direct supervision is provided by the One Plan **Evaluation Management Group (EMG)** which will function as the guardian of the independence of the evaluation. The EMG is composed by the Results-Based Management Specialist in the Resident Coordinator's Office, up to three members of the Results-Based Management Working Group and one representative from the Ministry of Planning and Investment. This group will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the evaluation and management of the evaluation budget. The key roles of the EMG are:
  - To lead the hiring of the team of external consultants, reviewing proposals and approving the selection of the evaluation team;
  - To supervise and guide the evaluation team in each step of the evaluation process;
  - To review, provide substantive comments and approve the inception report, including the work plan, analytical framework and methodology;
  - To review and provide substantive feedback to the draft and final evaluation reports for quality assurance purposes;
  - To ensure the quality and independence of the evaluation and to guarantee its alignment with UNEG Norms, Standards and Ethical Guidelines;
  - To identify and ensure the participation of relevant stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, if needed in consultation with OPSC;
  - To ensure relevant feedback to excerpts of findings and conclusions is solicited from the Evaluation Reference Group;
  - To ensure the evaluation findings and conclusions are relevant and recommendations are implementable; and
  - To contribute to the dissemination of the evaluation findings and follow-up on the management response.
  
- The **Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)**, composed of key technical-level stakeholders and evaluation experts, will provide advice to key consultant products and deliverables, including advance excerpts of findings and the full draft evaluation report. The ERG is constituted by the representatives of UN agencies in Viet Nam, the Results-Based Management Working Group, evaluation experts of national line counterparts, target group representatives and interviewees, regional UNDG and regional UNEG.

## Evaluation Team

The Evaluation Team will work in full independence from the evaluation commissioners. Given the importance of the One Plan Evaluation and the complexities involved in its design and conduct, it is critical that the evaluation team meet the standards to conduct the evaluation. The evaluation team will consist of a team leader and one or more team members with the following responsibilities:

- The **evaluation team leader** will lead the entire evaluation process, working closely with all team member(s). He/she will conduct the evaluation process in a timely manner and communicate with the Evaluation Management Group on a regular basis and highlight progress made/challenges encountered. The team leader will be responsible for producing the inception report and the draft and final evaluation reports.
- The **evaluation team member(s)** will contribute to the evaluation process substantively through data collection and analysis. He/she/they will share responsibilities for conducting desk review and interviews and conduct field visits to the project sites identified and collect data. He/she/they will provide substantive inputs to the inception report as well as to the draft and final reports.

## Evaluation Team Qualifications

As the One Plan Evaluation is an independent exercise, an external evaluation team will be engaged from a firm containing expertise and a good track record in conducting evaluations, preferably complex evaluations for UN and/or other multilateral organizations. Between all members of the evaluation team, the following should be demonstrated:

### *Essential:*

- a. International expertise and experience in evaluation
- b. Knowledge of Viet Nam and ability to bring local perspective to the evaluation
- c. Knowledge of, and experience in applying, qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and in a wide range of evaluation approaches
- d. A strong record in designing and leading evaluations
- e. Data collection and analysis skills
- f. Process management skills such as facilitation skills and ability to negotiate with a wide range of stakeholders
- g. Technical competence in undertaking complex evaluations which involve use of mixed methods
- h. Prior experience in working with multilateral agencies
- i. Strong experience and knowledge in the cross-cutting issues/programming principles (human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, culturally appropriate programming, results-based management and capacity development)
- j. Excellent English and Vietnamese language skills (written and spoken)

### *Desirable:*

- k. Balance in terms of gender
- l. Knowledge of UN role, UN reform process and UN programming at country level
- m. Experience in evaluation of UNDAFs
- n. Knowledge and experience applying participatory approaches to evaluation

While the above are not expected to apply to each evaluation team member individually, all of the above must be demonstrated between the evaluation team as a whole. In addition, all the members of the evaluation team should be independent from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising any aspect of the One Plan subject of the evaluation.

## Evaluation process

There are four main stages in the One Plan Evaluation process:

- **Preparation** (April-May): Includes reflection on the evaluation with stakeholders establishing the elements of the evaluation management structure and setting up an Evaluation Management Group. The ToR will be adopted and the evaluation team will be recruited
- **Conduct / implementation** (May-August): The evaluation team will prepare an inception report that will operationalize the design elements made in this ToR and will undertake data collection.
- **Reporting** (August): Preliminary findings and lessons learned will be presented to all the above referred stakeholders and, based on their feedback, a final report will be produced.
- **Follow-up and use** (September onward): Once the evaluation report is completed and validated by the Evaluation Steering Committee it will be made publicly available by posting in the UN Viet Nam and the UNDG websites. UNCT represented in the Evaluation Steering



Committee will endorse a management response to the evaluation recommendations within two months of the final report becoming available. This includes committing follow up actions to the recommendations as well as establishing responsibilities for the follow up.

**Location and tentative timeframe**

The Evaluation Team is expected to conduct at a minimum two missions to Viet Nam; one for data collection during the data collection phase for a maximum period of two weeks and a second mission for debriefing and presentation of preliminary findings to the various stakeholders once the draft report has been submitted for a maximum period of 3 days. For the case studies travel within Viet Nam might be necessary, to a maximum of three locations determined based on the definition of target groups.

The **evaluation timeline**, which will be adjusted once the Evaluation team has been recruited, can be viewed on the following page.

## Timeline for Evaluation of One Plan 2012-2016

April-December 2015

Activities	April				May				June					July				Aug				Sept onward
<i>Week starting on:</i>	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	
<b>Planning</b>																						
Finalize and begin implementation of Systematic Review Management Response																						
Establish management structure for the evaluation																						
Draft Evaluation TOR and Workplan																						
Organize relevant documentation																						
Recruit Evaluation Team																						
<b>Implementation</b>																						
Brief the Evaluation Team																						
Review inception report																						
Conduct desk review and analysis of existing data																						
Conduct initial informational interviews																						
Draft report																						
<b>Reporting</b>																						
Submission and presentation of 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of Evaluation Report by the evaluation team																						
Reference group comments on 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of Evaluation Report																						
Evaluation Team submits Final Report																						
<b>Use</b>																						
Prepare management response and implement evaluation recommendations as appropriate																						
Prepare/disseminate evaluation products, organize knowledge sharing events																						
Use results and lessons learned to inform development of One Plan 2017-2021																						

## **5. Deliverables**

1. Inception Report, including proposed methodology and work plan
2. Draft Evaluation Report
3. Power point presentation with key findings
4. Final Evaluation Report (including relevant annexes)

## **6. Structure of Evaluation Report**

The final report will be kept reasonably short (~50-75 pages maximum excluding annexes). More detailed information on the context, the One Plan or the comprehensive aspects of the methodology and analysis will be placed in the annexes. The report will be accompanied by an executive summary (max three to four pages of text). The report will be prepared in accordance with UNEG guidance (Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports).

The proposed structure will be considered during the inception phase and a more detailed outline of the Evaluation Report will be included in the inception report. The proposed structure is as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction (objectives, scope, methodology, limitations)
- Chapter 2: National development and institutional context
- Chapter 3: Evaluation findings
  - 3.1: General findings on enabling/explanatory factors
  - 3.2: Findings of target group case studies (one sub-section per target group)
- Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations
- Annexes

## **7. Payment terms**

30% of the total consultancy fee shall be paid upon receipt and acceptance of the inception report, with 70% paid upon receipt and acceptance of the Final Evaluation Report.