**Management response to the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Decentralisation and Local Development Support Programme (DLDSP)**

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| **Recommendation 1:** Recognize that government demand for the program’s support could be subject to unexpected change in directions and that a demand driven approach could engender scope creep. In this vein, continue to seek the government’s endorsement of an overall decentralisation strategy in addition to a clear division of roles with other donors working in the same space. |
| **Management response:** UNDP Jordan accepts this recommendation, and has already identified the relevance of potential risks of “political situation changes” and “limited commitment and political will by the members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee or disagreements regarding their respective roles in the process” as part of a Risk Management Matrix approach, as shown in the DLDSP Quarterly Report for Q4/2018. A number of mitigating measures have consequently been taken, including that UNDP has maintained close and regular contacts with all relevant actors, especially the MOI, MOMA and MOPPA, as well as closer engagement with the IMC, the EUDEL and other national and international stakeholders in order to decide on any adjustments needed in case of political or institutional changes. |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Comments** | **Status** |
| 1.1. Continuously monitor the situation and maintain close contacts with the government and decide timely adjustments if required | June 2019  | Richard Chambers Team Leader UNDP | Steps will be demonstrated in DLDSP project reports. | Initiated and ongoing |
| **Recommendation 2:** 2. In terms of the program’s organization and structure, its overreliance on short-term consultants will need to be offsetted by the recruitment of long-term staff. Consider therefore expanding the program team to ensure interventions are adequately supported and their impact is sustained. |
| **Management response:** UNDP would generally agree with recommendation that recruiting more long-term staff would enable better support for the Programme’s interventions and contribute to sustainability of its impact; however, DLDSP and UNDP have budgetary restrictions that limit their ability to recruit longer-term staff. Mitigating solutions have been identified, such as the contracting of a longer-term Research and Reporting Specialist Consultant to support programme structure and organization through reporting, coordination and knowledge management. In addition, UNDP will contract additional technical experts in the fields of development of integrated territorial planning processes and capacity building and local engagement with long-term contracts in case the Programme is extended.  |
| 2.1 Contract Research and Reporting Officer  | February 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP | Initiated in February 2019; will impact on better quality reporting & coordination, etc. | Completed |
| 2.1 Contract long term technical experts in the fields of a) development of integrated territorial planning processes and b) capacity building and local engagement | May 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP | To be discussed following agreement on contract extension. | Ongoing |
| **Recommendation 3:** If the program is to continue activities under Result 1 and support the national dialogue, carry out a political economy analysis (PEA) to cultivate a clearer understanding of the prevailing political and economic processes in Jordan; specifically, the relationships, incentives and contestation of power between the different stakeholders. This would help situate the program’s interventions within a clearer understanding of contextual limitations and what is politically feasible within this context. It would also help the program set more realistic expectations of what outcomes can be secured, over what timescale and the risks involved. One direct outcome of this exercise would be to unpack the nature and limits of the existing political will for decentralisation reform. |
| **Management response:** UNDP accepts this recommendation.In January 2019, at the request of the two entities responsible for managing the 'National Dialogue on Decentralization' (MOPPA and ESC), DLDSP drafted a paper making recommendations on method and content of the dialogue that includes a political economy approach. The paper was well received by ESC which considered it a 'comprehensive guide to the Dialogue' and prompted their request to UNDP for further support with the organization of a National Conference and the drafting and unveiling of a GOJ policy paper on decentralization reforms. This is a direct and major contribution towards the achievement of DLDPSP’s Result 1, which however largely depends on the ability of the new government to develop a national vision and policy on decentralization, a task which has proved elusive for over a decade.As a way forward, UNDP is planning a workshop in April that intends to bring together a small group of key persons to have a focused discussion on policy options paper. More broadly, UNDP will engage on a broader Political Economy Analysis approach. |
| 3.1 Develop a note for supporting the National Dialogue on Decentralization including policy options for the decentralization way forward  | February 2019 | Leonardo G. RomeoMohamed El MensiDLDSP Experts on Decentralisation | PEA on decentralisation reform conducted; longer term PEA will be continued. | Initiated and on-going. |
| **Recommendation 4**: Ensure program support for the national dialogue secures leverage to affect policy and cultivates political buy-in with MOPPA and other government stakeholders. |
| **Management response:** UNDP agrees to work on this recommendation. The DLDSP is closely working with governmental stakeholders in identifying the lead actor of the National Dialogue on Decentralization. As noted in the Management Response to Recommendation 3 above, UNDP has an active role in supporting ESC in drafting policy paper on the National Dialogue and thus leveraging the future direction of the decentralisation process from both a political and technical perspective. |
| 4.1 Engagement in the national dialogue process demonstrated.  | December 2018 onwards. | Majida AL AssafRichard Chambers Leonardo G. RomeoMohamed El MensiDLDSP Experts on Decentralisation | The dialogue process was launched in December 2018 and continues at time of writing.  | Initiated and on-going. |
| **Recommendation 5:** Ensure technical assistance provided by UNDP is clearly “visible” as a program differentiator. |
| **Management response:** UNDP has taken several actions aimed at ensuring that the DLDSP achievements and its donor’s contributions are adequately disseminated. DLDSP’s Communication & Visibility Plan was drafted in June 2018 to reinforce the Programme’s mission and strategic vision throughout and beyond the project life. The Plan seeks to a) showcase the DLDSP as a successful mechanism for the GoJ in the implementation of its Decentralization policy and related national priorities; b) achieve a better understanding among the different stakeholders of the decentralization process and its implementation framework; c) Support full understanding of the role of citizens and civil society in the decentralization process among the governorate-based structures and municipalities; d) provide acknowledgement and recognition of donor support and agency engagement. The Communication and Visibility Plan takes into account EU’s Communication and Visibility Requirements for implementing partners. A Communication consultant and a Research and Reporting Specialist have been contracted to strengthen Programme’s outreach and visibility, in particular by drafting and circulating monthly reports to the stakeholders, organizing visibility events and increasing DLDSP’s presence in the social and traditional media. |
| 5.1 Circulate monthly reports to the stakeholders, organize visibility events (TOT graduation ceremony, signing of MoU between University of Jordan, the Hague Academy and MoI, launch of the Tanmiah tool) | February 2019 | Research and Reporting Specialist recruited.Communication consultant recruited. | Key visibility activities initiated in March 2019 onwards. | Initiated and on-going. |
| **Recommendation 6:** Continue to seek direct association with the Prime Ministry and ensure that all support is demand driven either by responding to government direct request for assistance or generating demand through awareness raising. In both cases, DLDSP should ensure a clear commitment from government to utilize, adopt and if applicable mainstream the generated products. Relatedly, consider developing dissemination and utilization plans for technical deliverables that GOJ would be asked to sign off on from the start. |
| **Management response:** UNDP accepts this recommendation. As also noted in the Management Responses to Recommendations 3 and 5, UNDP is maintaining close contact with the government and is actively cooperating in identifying government’s needs within the decentralization process.The DLDSP experts on Decentralisation will expand the policy note “Supporting the National Dialogue on Decentralisation” that was drafted in January 2019 and will come to Jordan in April to help ESC finalize the approach to the National Dialogue on Decentralisation.  |
| 6.1 Organize the visit of DLDSP experts on Decentralisation to Jordan and facilitate meetings with governmental stakeholders with a view of identifying the need for DLDSP to draft document on decentralization reform’s policy options and clear role in supporting the GoJ | January and April 2019 | Leonardo G. RomeoMohamed El MensiDLDSP Experts on Decentralisation |  | Initiated and on-going. |
| **Recommendation 7:** In working on legislative reform, widen the focus of the program beyond MOI and reach out to MOPPA, the ministry with the current mandate to support legislative reform. |
| **Management response:** UNDP takes note of this recommendation and confirms action has been taken in establishing closer relations with MOPPA through regular meetings and through the DLDSP liaison officer based in MOPPA.A key component of the DLDSP is focused on providing support to legislative reform and, as noted above in relation to Recommendation 3, DLDSP is supporting the National Dialogue on Decentralization, and based on the outcome, will be in position to better adjust to institutional rearrangements on legislative reform and the roles of different entities. |
| Depending on the selection of the policy options and which track to take, the DLDSP will expand engagement on the legislative reforms  | January and April 2019 | Majida AL AssafRichard Chambers Leonardo G. RomeoMohamed El MensiDLDSP Experts on Decentralisation |  | Initiated and on-going. |
| **Recommendation 8:** Because the evidence revealed that some interventions have not as yet generated impact, and the program in general has little leverage to reorient policy, a more realistic adaptation would see more focus on ensuring the depth, instead of breadth, of interventions. Accordingly, use the time remaining for the program to: a. Deepen engagement of governorate staff and ensure ownership of strategic planning and PEM processes;b. “Encourage contagion” of best practices and lessons learned from pilot governorate interventions to bring effective practices into other governorates;c. Continue the process of institutional building of the MOI LDD to help it implement the new laws; andd. Support the academic component through direct and close engagement with the University of Jordan. |
| **Management response:** UNDP is pleased to note that the Annual Working Plan for 2019 fully captures and is in line with the recommendations listed above. In particular, the Annual Work Plan envisages a range of actions: (a) Develop multi- partner action plans to support the development of the local government system (b1) Develop three Governorates Development Reports for the Aqaba, Irbid and Balqa (b2) Develop and deploy the socio- economic data at the governorate and municipal levels (Tanmiah tool) (c) Capture and document best practices in monthly and final reports and showcase success stories with donors and governmental stakeholders (d) Establish and sign MoUs between University of Jordan and the Hague Academy to design and start a university programme on Local Development |
| 8.a Develop multi- partner action plans to support the development of the local government system | March 2019 | Mazen AbdulMalik, Decentralization & Local Governance Specialist |  | Ongoing |
| 8.b1 Develop three Governorates Development Reports for the Aqaba, Irbid and Balqa  | April 2019 | Mazen AbdulMalik, Decentralization & Local Governance Specialist |  | Ongoing |
| 8.b2 Develop and deploy the socio- economic data at the governorate and municipal levels (Tanmiah tool)  | May 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP |  | Ongoing |
| 8.c Capture and document best practices in monthly and final reports and showcase success stories with donors and governmental stakeholders | June 2019 | Tomas Kvedaras, Research and Reporting Officer |  | Ongoing |
| 8.d Establish and sign MoUs between University of Jordan and the Hague Academy to design and start a university programme on Local Development. | March 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP |  | Ongoing |
| **Recommendation 9:** Considering decentralisation in Jordan is largely a political process and awareness of what it entails and how to operationalize is weak even among key stakeholders, cultivate demand for studies/reports akin to the scoping mission report the program produced earlier to clarify the decentralisation-development nexus in support of local development. Such analysis would elucidate the effects of decentralisation on government responsiveness and poverty-orientation, exploring how investments and resources may shift in favour of marginalized communities, and what political gains and losses may result from this process.  |
| **Management response:** UNDP agrees with the above recommendation.One of the central goals of DLDSP’s Communication & Visibility Plan is to achieve a better understanding among the different stakeholders of the decentralization process and its implementation framework and raise awareness across national institutions regarding the importance of opening the decision-making spaces to the participation of citizens.DLDSP is working with King Hussain Foundation on the CBOs Capacity Building project through which 14 selected CBOs will receive training based on the capacity development needs assessment and graduated CBOs will be eligible to participate in the grants programme aimed to support their initiatives. This is expected to enhance the role of CBOs in local development through their engagement and the participation in decision-making process on the local administration and improvement of service delivery leading to the enhancement of local economy.  |
| 9.1 Organize the visit of DLDSP experts on Decentralisation to Jordan and facilitate meetings with governmental stakeholders with a view of identifying the need for DLDSP to draft document on decentralization reform’s policy options  | March 2019 | Leonardo G. RomeoMohamed El MensiDLDSP Experts on Decentralisation |  |  |
| 9.2 Develop the CBOs/ NGOs comprehensive component including the tools and mechanism to monitor and follow up the impact of the decentralization on the local development, especially the LED and improving service delivery programmes (accessibility and quality) | December 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDPKHF |  | Ongoing  |
| **Recommendation 10:** To promote sustainability and deepen programmatic impact, catalyse opportunities to promote the work DLDSP is undertaking including the dissemination of narratives of successful activities to spread best practices and lessons learned beyond the program’s immediate circle of implementation. This can increase the program’s visibility and contribute to its donors’ coordination efforts. |
| **Management response:** As noted above in relation to Recommendation 3 and 5, DLDSP has contracted Research and Reporting Specialist to strengthen Programme’s outreach and visibility, which includes documenting and circulating DLDSP’s success stories. A stakeholder meeting is planned in April 2019 to provide update on DLDSP’s work. |
| 10.1 Draft a paper making recommendations on method and content of the National Dialogue on Decentralization  | February 2019 | Leonardo G. RomeoMohamed El MensiDLDSP Experts on Decentralisation |  | Completed |
| 10.2 Circulate monthly reports to the stakeholders. | On a monthly basis | Tomas Kvedaras, Research and Reporting Officer |  | Ongoing |
| 10.3 UNDP will organize a donor/ stakeholders meeting to provide an update on DLDSP’s work |  | DLDSP |  | Ongoing |
| **Recommendation 11:** Ensure that selected indicators the governorates develop are manageable and that updating them will not prove too cumbersome for resource stripped local level structures. Further, ensure participants have a clear and holistic understanding of the process and develop sufficient ownership of it. Also, ensure they understand the program’s results chain and its intended impact.  |
| **Management response:** UNDP takes note of this recommendation and is pleased to confirm specific measures are in place to ensure local officials receive necessary training on the process of gathering and verifying data for socio-economic indicators. In February 2019, the first version of socio-economic database for the three governorates (Aqaba, Balqaa and Irbid) has been established. New team of specialists in statistics have joined the DLDSP and initiated their work to improve and refine the newly established socio-economic databases within the three selected governorates. DLDSP’s specialists will work on validating and refining the socio-economic database in close coordination with all sectors in the three-targeted governorates and integrating them to TANMIAH planning tool. |
| 11.1 Provide technical Assistance and on-job training to develop institutional capacities on territorial planning | December 2019 | Mazen AbdulMalik, Decentralization & Local Governance Specialist |  | Ongoing |
| 11.2 Launch the TANMIAH planning tool at the local level (3 governorates and 8 municipalities) | May 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP |  | Ongoing |
| **Recommendation 12:** Ensure that communication and feedback channels in governorates (and partner ministries) is a key component of implementation. Perceptions of beneficiaries and stakeholders can be detrimental to programming and results. |
| **Management response:** UNDP fully agrees that adequate communication is critical in measuring the quality and impact of DLDSP’s interventions. Implementing partners and experts have regularly gathered beneficiaries’ feedback in 2018-2019 through questionnaires and surveys. DLDSP will continue to capture feedback where possible within programmes interventions. |
| 12.1 Liaise with experts to ensure that questionnaires are distributed to stakeholders and beneficiaries; include the results in monthly reports  |  | Tomas Kvedaras, Research and Reporting Officer |  | Ongoing |
| **Recommendation 13:** Ensure M&E framework design clearly articulates hierarchy of objectives and includes carefully selected SMART indicators. In this vein, strengthen indicators to better capture program’s efforts and measure progress, and plan appropriate MEL activities to monitor and evaluate results, and capture learning. In addition, consider adding to a main team member a more pronounced monitoring, evaluation and learning function. |
| **Management response:** As set out in the Programme Monitoring Framework of DLDSP Project Document, the M&E framework is designed and utilized to track the, process, assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation on a quarterly basis. The system of quarterly narrative progress reports has been complemented by Annual Report 2018, which reflects on broader progress towards objectives using a self-evaluation approach. As noted above, DLDSP contracted Research and Reporting Specialist to support the establishment of monthly reporting and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at all the implementation levels. |
| 13.1 Develop monthly reports  |  | Tomas Kvedaras, Research and Reporting Officer |  | Ongoing |
| 13.2 Contract Research and Reporting Officer  | 5 February 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP |  | Completed |
| **Recommendation 14:** Consider working more closely with the University of Jordan and ensure university interlocutors understand the program results chain and intended impact. |
| **Management response:** UNDP is pleased to note that University of Jordan and DLDSP’s proposed master and higher certificate degree programmes were accredited by the Jordanian Accreditation Bureau. DLDSP liaised with the Head of the Public Administration Section at the Faculty of Business of the University of Jordan to agree on the pool of professors who will cooperate with the European professors from the University of Florence, the University of Groningen, and The Hague Academy for Local Governance in developing the curriculum of both the master and higher diploma degree programmes on Local Administration and Local Development. Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between MoI, UoJ and The Hague Academy is planned for the first part of April, followed by further stages of training of academic staff, selection of scholarship recipients and start of programmes in September 2019.  |
| 14.1 Establish and sign MoUs between University of Jordan and the Hague Academy to design and start a university programme on Local Development. | March 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP |  | Ongoing |
| 14.2 Organize ToT sessions and curriculum development by Jordanian and international professors through Skype meetings and email communication and agree on the dates of TOT session at Jordan University.  | Curriculum development: March 2019ToT sessions: April/ June 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP |  | Ongoing |
| 14.3 Liaise with the management of the University of Jordan on the accreditation process of both Master and Diploma courses. | March 2019 | Asma Fashho, Programme Officer, UNDP |  | Completed  |