Mid-Term Evaluation of the project Strengthening Representative Bodies in Mongolia

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| **Commissioning Unit:** | Mongolia |
| **Evaluation Plan:** | 2017-2021 |
| **Evaluation Type:** | Decentralized evaluation  |
| **Planned End Date:** | 12/2018 |
| **Unit Responsible for providing Management Response:** | UNDP Mongolia CO  |

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| **Recommendations (8.1): Citizen engagement** |
| 1. Public awareness raising is included in the multi year work plans in both output 1 and 4. In the latter it refers to raising awareness about legislative process and new laws. It is recommended that this is addressed with greater vigour with the Parliament Secretariat.
 |
| **Management Response:** This recommendation is fully accepted. Legal awareness raising by the Parliament Secretariat is included in the 2019 Annual Work Plan (AWP 4.4, 4.9). The 2019 annual work plan also includes activities related to public awareness under Output 1 (AWP 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8). Attention will continue to be paid to legal awareness raising in 2020 as well. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Time frame** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Legal awareness raising by the Parliament Secretariat (AWP 4.4, 4.9).Awareness-raising concerning LATUG revision, etc. (AWP 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8). Awareness-raising activities to be included in 2020 AWP. | 2019/122019/122020/12 | SRBM and PS | Initiated |  |
| 1. To better address citizen engagement, the project should aim for synergies with SDC governance projects which focus specifically on citizen engagement.
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| **Management Response:** Recommendation partially accepted.It was decided at the planning stage of the project to leave out citizen engagement from the core focus of SRBM. In line with the recommendation, SRBM will aim for stronger synergies with other projects from SDC governance portfolio which focus on citizen engagement (e.g., civic engagement project with MoJIA, etc.)Citizen engagement related activities are already planned by SRBM: media campaign for citizen awareness-raising on CRHs (AWP 2.3) and small grants (AWP 2.2) with a focus on citizen engagement. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Synergies with other projects from SDC governance portfolio which focus on citizen engagement.Citizen engagement related activities already planned by SRBM: * media campaign for citizen awareness-raising on CRHs (AWP 2.3) and
* small grants (AWP 2.2) with a focus on citizen engagement.
 | 2020/122019/122020/7 | SRBMSRBMSRBM | InitiatedInitiated |  |
| 1. Aimags, soums, districts, etc. need to explore what they can do to increase citizen awareness and participation. Dialogue events to brainstorm on what needs to be done and what needs to be communicated can be a starting point for a few pilots or even for consideration for small grant projects. NGOs should be involved in these exercises.
 |
| **Management Response:** Recommendation fully accepted. Good effort on this have been completed from the project’s end. Representatives’ engagement with citizens is included as a key topic of all main trainings held so far (induction, leadership, WLT). It is also one of the two key focus areas of the small grants. Down the line, increased focus can be laid on the promotion and dissemination of good practices developed by CRHs to engage with citizens.Furthermore, CRHs’ good practices of citizen engagement will be collected and presented at different meetings among CRH chairs, secretaries, etc. including at the regional experience-sharing forums (AWP 2.7). They will be further disseminated to a wider audience through sharing slides, videos, etc. via social media and other channels.Stronger engagement of the corresponding CRH secretary working group to be aimed at in 2019 and 2020. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Promotion and dissemination of good practices developed by CRHs to engage with citizens, e.g. through WLT follow-up activities planned in 2019 (AWP 3.1).CRHs’ good practices of citizen engagement to be collected and presented at different meetings and further disseminated.Foster engagement of the corresponding CRH secretary working group (support to and monitoring of annual work plan). | 2019/122019-20/122019-20/12 | SRBMSRBMSRBM | InitiatedInitiatedInitiated |  |

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| **Recommendations (8.2): Strengthening training for hurals** |
| 1. Hurals need higher level skill input in budget review, the planning function, legislative oversight. etc. These can be addressed through thematic training programmes. NAoG is aware of this need. These need to be incorporated into future training revision. Cost sharing possibilities need to be worked on. It will enhance the effectiveness of hurals.
 |
| **Management Response:** This recommendation is partially accepted. The project needs to take into account that the budget available for training purpose in the two remaining years of the project is limited. Refresher training and thematic training contents finalized by NAoG and ready for roll-out (AWP 3.2). They include the topics of local budget and oversight. Due to limited budget, the thematic training modules will have to be delivered on a cost-sharing basis. Thematic modules will be incorporated into the official training program of NAoG. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Time frame** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Roll-out of refresher training and thematic training contents on a cost-sharing basis (AWP 3.2).  | 2019-20/12 | SRBM | Initiated | All aimags and district CRHs are aware of the possibility to organize these trainings. |
| 2. Hural secretaries and presidium members who are at the core of hural functioning need to be focussed on more in the remaining years. Greater focus is required on their administrative work to develop greater effectiveness/ efficiencies in the discharge of responsibilities to hurals and citizens. |
| **Management Response:** Recommendation partially accepted. See above remark concerning limited budget resources for additional training in remaining two years of the project.Several actions are planned in the 2019 AWP for secretaries to strengthen administrative capacities, including the development of a reference book for soum CRH secretaries (AWP 2.10), support / training for standard meeting procedure and LGAP guidelines (AWP 2.1), as well as regional experience-sharing forums (AWP 2.7). |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Development of a reference book for soum CRH secretaries (AWP 2.10).Support / training for standard meeting procedure and LGAP guidelines (AWP 2.1) Support to regional experience-sharing forums (AWP 2.7). | 2019-20/12 | SRBM | Initiated |  |
| 3. The proposed continuation of induction and refresher training by NAoG would only encompass soum and aimag level, but not the bagh level. Given the importance of this lowest tier of governance to ensure that citizens’ needs are reflected adequately in soum and aimag level planning, it is recommended that the aimag level takes on the responsibility to train the Chairs of bagh General Meetings.  |
| **Management Response:** Fully accepted. Discussions with aimag CRHs for allocation of funding and management responsibilities concerning the bagh chair training after the next elections will be initiated within 2019 by the project and continued in 2020. Discussions will also address responsibility allocation for training delivery, contents upgrades, etc. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Discussion with aimag CRHs to be held in 2019, and potentially embedded in the general discussion / preparation of the training plan (see below). | 2019-20/12 | SRBM | Initiated | All aimags CRHs are aware of this need (dissemination of information in March 2019). |
| 1. As the economy is improving and as some regions / aimags are better placed financially, it is an opportune moment to discuss and develop criteria for cost sharing of training costs and to implement in practice. The Project has facilitated the establishment of working groups of aimag and districts hural secretaries, as task forces to support different project related responsibilities. The appropriate working group can be tasked to discuss and work out steps to implement it.
 |
| **Management Response:** Fully accepted.Aimag / district CRHs should develop and approve their own comprehensive training plans with all trainings and funding source (e.g., NAoG for induction, aimags for leadership training and thematic trainings, etc. including cost-sharing by representatives). The project will prepare a model plan with suggestions, which can then be adapted by each CRH.The project will seek to keep involving the related secretary working group, with a clear work plan. Discussions about cost-sharing of thematic training modules and take-over of bagh training by aimags (see above) are first steps toward this direction.  |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Support to aimag / district CRHs to develop and approve their training plans, based on model plan.Support to related secretary working group in preparing their annual work plan, and follow-up on it. | 2019-20/122019/12 | SRBMSRBM | InitiatedInitiate | Secretary working group aware of the need to support model plan in 2019. |
| 1. It would not be appropriate at this point to do a country wide roll out of the Performance management framework for hurals as evidently proposed by the Consultants. The methodology and the content can be first piloted in a sample of aimags and soums, as already indicated in the project document and focus on indices that disclose member performance on fundamentals of their participation. The Consultants should have “consultations with the Central government, hurals, subject matter experts, and citizens and check against the existing reporting requirements”.
 |
| **Management Response:** Fully accepted.The project acknowledges the need for a gradual approach for take-up of the Performance management framework. First consultations with the Central government, hurals, subject matter experts, and citizens and a check against the existing reporting requirements were completed by the consultants. The next steps will focus on discussing the framework with the Cabinet Secretariat and pilot it with a few CRHs. Further steps toward take-up of the framework will be taken (AWP 2.6).  |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| First consultations with the Central government, hurals, subject matter experts, and citizens and a check against the existing reporting requirements. Further consultations to be conducted with Cabinet Secretariat, etc. while piloting the framework.Pilot the framework with a few CRHs and revise / fine-tune it with involvement of the secretary working group. Next steps toward adoption to be taken then (AWP 2.6). | 2019/012019/122019-20/12 | SRBMSRBMSRBM | DoneInitiatedInitiated | Consultancy is completed. |

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| **Recommendations (8.3): Small grants scheme** |
| 1. Small grants have significantly contributed to Hural capacity development and greater citizen engagement. Given the difficulties that some hurals have faced in the present round of small grant projects, it is recommended that hurals be twinned with appropriate NGOs or local resource person/s to support project implementation. This would contribute to drawing on local resources and in connecting them even more in the change process.
 |
| **Management Response:** This recommendation is partially accepted. Twinning of CRH grantees with NGOs is already implemented under NGO grants. The project supports the solution to leverage local trainers as resource persons for coaching CRHs on small grant proposal writing and implementation. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Time frame** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Local trainers to be leveraged as resource persons for coaching CRHs on small grant proposal writing and implementation. | 2020/07 | SRBM | Initiated |  |
| 1. The grants made available to NGOs by the small grant scheme need to be increased. From discussion with NGOs it became evident that they had difficulties in completing commitments with the approved funds. It is recommended that the project makes available fewer grants, but larger amounts with multi-year applicability. This needs to be done without increasing transactions costs. This support to hurals “in order to increase pro-poor focus of its interventions, oversee the executive’s performance in delivering the services and implementation of government programmes aimed at poverty reduction” for women, young people, the poor and vulnerable groups would provide strategic direction. Such support over a longer period of time would increase citizen awareness.
 |
| **Management Response:** Recommendation partially accepted.While the multi-year approach for NGO grants has some potential, keeping the one-year duration of the NGO grant cycle allows for new NGOs to compete every year and is hence fairer.For the remainder of the duration of the project, one single grant cycle of extended duration will be implemented, from Spring 2019 to Spring 2020 (before the elections). This will apply to both the NGO and CRH grants. In addition, NGO grantees should continue carrying out capacity-building activities under the grant scheme after the October 2020 elections, thus targeting some newly elected CRHs as well.NGOs should work toward linking marginalized groups to CRHs (see recommendations 8.3.3 and 8.4.1). |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Implementation of small grant program with modified duration.  | 2020/07 | SRBM | Initiated | All aimag and district CRHs aware of this change (communicated in March 2019). |
| 1. The criteria for hural / NGO selection must be reviewed to boost effectiveness, sustainability and relevance. Small grants must reinforce project priorities of increasing pro-poor focus of its interventions and developing public hearings initiated by hurals on general oversight.
 |
| **Management Response:** Fully accepted. The pro-poor focus of grants will be reinforced in the call for proposals and review of applications. Other criteria for selection will be reviewed too, in accordance with the recommendations and past experiences, consulting with UNDP’s Operational Guide on Grants. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Revision of the criteria of selection for small grants (including: increased pro-poor orientation). | 2019/06 | SRBM | Initiated |  |

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| **Recommendations (8.4): Youth, vulnerable and marginalised** |
| 1. The project’s aims with regards to improving inclusiveness should be clarified first before strategic entry points are identified. It is recommended to establish synergies with existing projects that target the poor and marginalized. This could e.g. be envisioned through the grant scheme under Output 2 or in the frame of the planned activities towards increasing citizens’ awareness about their elected representatives. It may provide a catalyst to greater participation by youth. The appropriate time is now. The grant scheme might provide for opportunities to address issues of inclusion more prominently.
 |
| **Management Response:** Fully accepted. Further synergies as well as initiatives targeting these target groups will be sought after. For instance, an inclusiveness component (i.e., need for elected representatives to involve marginalized groups) will be embedded in follow-up activities of the WLT (AWP 3.1). Regarding the small grant scheme, see above comments. CRH good practices for engaging (with) youth will be disseminated. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Time frame** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Inclusiveness component (i.e., need for elected representatives to involve marginalized groups) to be embedded in follow-up activities of the WLT (AWP 3.1).Further synergies / entry points for more inclusiveness to be leveraged.Strengthening of inclusiveness component in small grant scheme (see above). CRH good practices for engaging (with) youth will be disseminated. | 2019/122020/122019/062020/12 | SRBMSRBMSRBMSRBM | InitiatedInitiatedInitiatedInitiated |  |

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| **Recommendations (8.5): Institutionalisation of www.khural.mn** |
| 1. The website evidently needs further updating and technical support. The working group tasked with the working of the website can propose actions necessary to ensure that the website fulfils the invaluable dissemination need with enhanced technological competence and transparency. The website is the most visible dimension of hural developments and actions and adds value to the effectiveness of project dissemination.
 |
| **Management Response:** Fully accepted. The technical issues experienced in the months leading up to the MTR have now been fixed by the Cabinet Secretariat. A full upgrade of the website is planned in 2019 via consultancy (AWP 2.5). Training of website admins planned in 2019 AWP (2.5). Further involvement of the related secretary working group is planned.  |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Time frame** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Full upgrade of the website via consultancy (AWP 2.5).Training of website admins (AWP 2.5).Support to related secretary working group in preparing their annual work plan, and follow-up on it. | 2019/122019/122019-20/12 | SRBM | Initiated |  |

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| **Recommendations (8.6): Project communication** |
| 1. It is recommended that a comprehensive MIS on the number of participants who have undergone training by level of hurals, by region, kind of programme, gender, age, etc. be prepared. This would also provide a baseline for future. The project has a number of reports, surveys etc. but not a comprehensive data picture across all participants. It can then be incorporated with the Training hub proposed by NAoG.
 |
| **Management Response:** This recommendation is partially accepted. Comprehensive data on the profile of CRH representatives has already been collected by the project. A comprehensive picture of the number and profile of training participants as suggested could be given based on this data (because the different trainings organized so far were organized for all CRHs country-wide and with very high attendance). This data gathering could make especially sense for the remaining years, since thematic trainings are provided on a demand basis. The Local Governance Research and Innovation Hub to be set up at NAoG (AWP 3.9) could be instrumental in this regard for data collection and storage. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Time frame** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Data gathering concerning participants to different trainings organized by the project.Support to establishment of Local Governance Research and Innovation Hub at NAoG and steering of their work for data collection and storage (AWP 3.9). | 2019/122019-20/12 | SRBMSRBM | InitiatedInitiated |  |
| 1. The project has achieved much in capacity building. A document that captures the journey of capacity building in strengthening representative bodies, in building individual and institutional capacities and its impact on the functioning of hurals, is necessary for institutional memory, for dissemination and for reflection. Documentation must include stories of change at the individual and institutional levels backed by evidence of change at the behavioural, attitudinal, and functional levels. Evidence from the Performance management framework and hural survey would be relevant for this documentation.
 |
| **Management Response:** Recommendation fully accepted. The need for a more systematic picture of the capacity-building journey beyond anecdotal / isolated reports is acknowledged.A compilation of good practices and results is planned in 2019 (AWP 2.4). Accordingly, stories of change at the individual and institutional level will be collected from existing and new documentation and reports. The final knowledge and communications product can include lessons learnt to be disseminated to the government of Mongolia, to the general audience via social media as well as to other countries (via UNDP and SDC networks). |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Compilation of good practices and results (stories of change at the individual and institutional level), including lessons learned (AWP 2.4). Dissemination of knowledge and communications product to domestic and international audience. | 2019/122019-20/12 | SRBMSRBM | Initiated |  |
| 1. The PIU requires technical support for strengthening both M&E and communication.
 |
| **Management Response:** Fully accepted.See below, recommendation 8.7.3 (ad-hoc short term support to be considered). A specific support and advisory system for the project M&E and Communications will be established at the UNDP CO M&E and Communications unit. A coaching / peer-to-peer arrangement and the plan will be developed in consultation with the UNDP Human Resources. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Ad-hoc support.Support and advisory system to be set up for the project M&E and Communications. | 2020/12 | SRBM, CO M&E | Initiated |  |

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| **Recommendations (8.7): Project management** |
| 1. It is recommended that to further strengthen capacities in technical guidance and advocacy in local governance in the project, a senior professional be appointed as an Advisor / Consultant. The individual should have a strong background in local governance and be well acquainted with Mongolian law and practice. The individual should preferably be a Mongolian national. This not is suggested as a permanent advisor/ consultant, but to provide critical backstopping support when required.
 |
| **Management Response:** This recommendation is fully accepted. An advisor on local governance is strongly needed and on an urgent basis, given the planned timeline for LATUG draft / revision (AWP 1.8).Additionally, an international consultant is planned to be hired for a short-term assignment to provide input on the final draft of the revised LATUG (AWP 1.2). |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Time frame** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Hiring of a local governance advisor (AWP 1.8).Hiring of an international consultant for the final LATUG draft (AWP 1.2). | 2019/12 | SRBM | Initiated |  |
| 1. For strengthening ownership of the PS in activities that needs its attention, such activities may be included in the work plan of the Parliament with allotted responsibilities.
 |
| **Management Response:** This recommendation is fully accepted.Discussions were held with the respective Heads of the Legal Department and Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Parliament Secretariat regarding alignment with their annual plans. A comprehensive work plan was shared by the PS concerning the cooperation with the Swiss Parliamentary Services (SPS). Furthermore, the development of an evaluation methodology, which should benefit support by the SPS, has been included in the 2019 work plan of the PS. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Discussions with the respective Heads of the Legal Department and Information, Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the Parliament Secretariat regarding alignment with their annual plans – including for the cooperation with the Swiss Parliamentary Services (SPS).  | 2019/02 | SRBM, PS | Done |  |
| 1. The present UNV leaves early next year. It is strongly recommended that the process for recruitment of the new UNV be initiated at the earliest and that the individual be appointed a full month ahead of the departure of the present UNV. This would make for a better handing over and integration into the project.
 |
| **Management Response:** Fully accepted. Recruitment for the next UNV will be done asap. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Recruitment for the next UNV.  | 2019/03 | SRBM, UNDP CO | Initiated | Call for applications closed on 5 March 2019, selection ongoing. |
| 1. It is also recommended that a local consultant be hired to reinforce the M&E and also support documentation. This would depend on budget availability. Short term consultancy may be considered.
 |
| **Management Response:** Partially accepted.SRBM already has an M&E officer as well as a UNV working on knowledge management. Short term consultancy for final reports and specific assignments may be considered. UNDP CO support will be arranged through specific coaching schedules.  |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Short term consultancy for final reports and specific assignments considered on a needs basis. UNDP CO support to be arranged through specific coaching schedules.  | 2020/12 | SRBM, UNDP CO |  |  |
| 1. Support staff should be recruited as per the project need.
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| **Management Response:** Fully accepted. Grants assistant is planned to be hired. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Timeframe** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| Hiring grants assistant. | 2019/05 | PS / SRBM | Initiated |  |

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| **Recommendations (8.8): The Parliament Secretariat** |
| 1. The ownership of the PS in activities under its oversight needs to be more manifest to stakeholders. Greater visibility of its contribution and leadership to strengthening hurals as representative bodies would immensely serve sustainability and motivate greater participation of stakeholders.
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| **Management Response:** Fully accepted. Addressed in recommendation 8.7.2. |
| **Key Action (s):** | **Time frame** | **Responsible Unit** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comment (if any)** |
| See recommendation 8.7.2. |  |  |  |  |

**Signed by:**

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