Management Response to the Midterm Review of the Country Progrmme Document (CPD) for Thailand 2017-2021

Midterm Review Mission Completion Date: 27 December 2019

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Context, background and findings

The CPD Thailand 2017-2021 mid-term assessment concluded that the country programme is relevant to national development priorities and the CO's performance has established a good foundation for development effectiveness and sustainability. UNDP Thailand has positioned itself as a valued partner in the country through the provision of technical expertise, project assurance and programme management support during the first half of the CPD period.

There were excellent partnerships with core ministries, and this further solidifies the CO's role as a key development partner in the country. The relationships established with the civil society, donor agencies and academia has enabled UNDP to be viewed as a successful development partner with the solid technical capacity to effectively support the country in its pursuit of sustainable development. Albeit early on, UNDP Thailand has also been proactively pursuing and promoting partnerships with the private sector to address specific issues such as water and sanitation (i.e., Coca-Cola Foundation). Based on these successes, the office should further and systematically pursue such partnerships.

During the remaining period of the CPD, areas noted for further strengthening include economic and social inequality, environmental degradation and climate change, youth and women empowerment, democracy and social cohesion, public services, and innovation to support building a knowledge intensive economy; all of which are outlined in the CPD and should be integrated in a cross-cutting manner in the next country programme design. It is further noted

that the CO has the capacity to capitalize on the gains realized through the outcomes of the CPD, and firmly establish itself as a valued partner of the Thai Government, civil society, donor agencies, academia, and the private sector, with potential involvement of the legislative and judicial branches. This will provide the base for greater sustainability of outcomes and positive change, which will have a demonstrable impact on alignment with UNDP corporate goals and the well-being of the people in Thailand.

The MTR made two levels of recommendations for the next CPD design. Of these, XX are supported, XX are partially supported and X is not supported. Actions to implement recommendations are detailed in this management response.

Recommendation and management response

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At Programme Level: Relevance
It has been observed that the CPD for the period is relevant to the Thai context and reflects the country's needs and priorities. However, it seems that UNDP is not familiar to some institutions and people, particularly those in non-government sector and outside the capital.

Recommendation 1:
UNDP should communicate more on its efforts, working through SDGs localization and engaging multi-stakeholders in social innovation development and initiatives, as well as engaging more with the private sector for sustainable results.
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<td colspan="5">Management Response: Agreed</td>
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<tr>
<td rowspan="2">Key Actions</td>
<td rowspan="2">Timeframe</td>
<td rowspan="2">Responsible</td>
<td colspan="2">Tracking</td>
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<td>The senior management of CO will hire a full-time staff to lead the SDGs localization programmatic issues.</td>
<td>April – December 2021</td>
<td>Resident Representative</td>
<td>All staff should share responsibility of work and accountability on their inputs.</td>
<td>A JPO programme specialist (SDGs Localisation) was recruited and has been on board in April 2020.</td>
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<td>The senior management of CO has tasked the team leader for governance unit to develop a work programme on SDGs localization for the Country Office.</td>
<td>April – December 2020</td>
<td>Resident Representative</td>
<td>Team Leader for Democratic Governance and Social Inclusion had engaged select CO staff to design a concept for SDGs localization and presented the work</td>
<td>Implementation is in progress.</td>
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| | | | programme to all staff. Several activities are now being implemented through various projects. | |

At Programme Level: Effectiveness

The CPD effectiveness is mixed. It seems higher in the IGSD programme, where the adoption of regional fund management tools has allowed for enhanced planning and monitoring. There appears to be too small projects/activities, particularly in the DGSA programme. Programming, planning and management processes were observed to be very different across programmes. In some projects, the excessive number of stakeholders and activities hindered the impact and effectiveness of planned actions. The achievement of project results seems uneven across thematic areas. It depends upon project structure, number and typology of actions, nature of the IPs, as well as institutional context.

Recommendation 2:
- Continuous capacity building of national and local institutions.
- Exploring strategic innovative partnerships and enhancing national-local cooperation.
- Re-think the structure of programmes and projects – more focused can make more impact (i.e. innovative project design that require inclusive and integrated approaches).

Management Response: Agreed

Key Actions	Time Frame	Responsible Unit	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
Project managers and programme staff to provide training (subject matters, procedural) to national/local institutes in order to enhance effective delivery of project interventions.	April 2020 – Dec 2021	CO project and programme colleagues	Training activities have been organized periodically to increase the knowledge of CO staff and beneficial partners during the last year.	Ongoing
Be proactive in fostering innovative partnerships with non-conventional partners to create development results.	Mar 2020-Dec 2021	RR/DRR	Partnerships have been established with non-conventional partners like financial institutes (e.g. KTB, Krungsri, BAAC, SEC, SET) and private sector partners (e.g. True, CP All, CP Group, Blue Carbon Society, Cargill) and is ongoing	Ongoing

Key Actions	Time Frame	Responsible Unit	Comments	Status
			New partnership with parliamentary members was also formed to enhance their legislative roles.	
Redesign CO structure to be more integrated across programmes	Jan-Dec 2020	RR/DRR	Senior management has lead several milestones in view of revisiting the current CO structure to move away from a siloed approach to an more integrated programme including a sensemaking workshop and several consultations with staffs.	Ongoing

At Programme Level: Efficiency

The project managers noted some improvements, but stakeholders concluded that much needs to be done to improve resource planning, programme management, reporting (timing and format). Project resources seem correctly and reasonably allocated, albeit adjustment required in some projects.

Recommendation 3:

- Strengthening and enhancing M&E with IT systems
- Resource Mobilization Strategy

Management Response: The country office takes note of this recommendation and will consult with RBAP Director on a resource mobilization strategy for CO's investment.

Key Actions	Time Frame	Responsible Unit	Tracking	
			Comments	Status

Request more resource from RBAP for investment on M&E capacity strengthening	Jan-Dec 2020	RR/DRR	In view of strengthening the M&E capacity of the CO, this position was institutionalized (in consultation with staffs during the CO restructuring process) in the new proposed CO structure for the Bureau's consideration	Has not started.
Pro-active role to access non-vertical funding resources	Jan 2020-Mar 2021	RR/DRR	In view of diversifying the CO resource mobilization efforts, the CO reached out to several non-vertical fund 'donors' including access to IKI Urban Resilience facility, Citi Foundation, UK Pact and the Royal Thai Government among others	In progress.

At Programme Level: Sustainability

Sustainability is still an issue and not adequately supported by management mechanisms and tools. Sustainability elements should be inserted in the CPD, in project documents (i.e., exit strategy) and in reporting arrangements. The use of knowledge resources developed within the programmes or projects is not obvious. However, the support of UNDP to Thailand's policies through capacity building and other actions will continue.

Recommendation 4:

- More attention is required by IPs and UNDP programme staff/project personnel to make further use of the knowledge resources.
- Insert a sustainability (exit strategy) section in all projects' templates – including reporting - and in the CPD.
- Focus on institutional sustainability, ensuring as much as possible that training material and knowledge resources are duly embedded in the beneficiary institutions.

Management Response: The recommendation is partially supported. The exit strategy is not appropriate term for the CPD. Suggest to use the term "sustainability/continuity" strategy since the CPD supports Thailand development process towards SDGs achievement by 2030 and beyond.

Key Actions	**Time Frame**		**Tracking**

		Responsible Unit	Comments	Status
The programme officers ensure all knowledge products to be used by the beneficiary institutions.	April 2020 – Dec 2021	Project managers	Most knowledge products are kept as electronic files within UNDP and the implementation partners. Several training materials made by UNDP, such as technical manual for economic valuation for peat swamp, new government procurement procedures guidebook, Biodiversity Benefit Index manual for local government, among others are available in electronic files.	In progress.

At Strategic Level

Recommendation I: UNDP to further enhance and broaden the outreach of its advocacy to the general public, particularly those living in poverty, disadvantaged, and vulnerable people.

Management Response: Agreed

Key Actions	Time Frame	Responsible Unit	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
To invest in communication personnel, budget, and improve efficiency and effectiveness of teamwork.	April 2020– Dec 2021	Senior Management, All staff	A new communication officer who replaced the departed staff was recruited whereas two communication officers from Nepal CO were assigned to support the CO during the recruitment period. CO's visibility has increased significantly over the period.	Completed

| Communication calendar for globally recognized days to be prepared for timely promotion through several modes of communication channels such as Resident Representative's twitter, UNDP CO Facebook, Instagram, annual report, human story, news, short films. | April 2020– Dec 2021 | Senior Management, All staff | Several modes of mass communication have been engaged to promote CO's work on climate action, LGBTI, gender, biodiversity, BIOFIN, human rights, etc. | In progress. |

At strategic level

Recommendation II: UNDP's relative strength is its close cooperation with the relevant government institutions and in the setting of priorities for capacity building as the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development, including community participation and engagement through integrated solutions (i.e. data and analytics, innovation and learning, and financing expertise) to allow development transformation within these institutions.

Management Response: Agreed.

Key Actions	Time Frame	Responsible Unit	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
CO to engage non-state actors and vulnerable peoples (e.g. youth, PwD, LBGTI, Indigenous peoples) in tackling development challenges through integrated solutions	Feb 2020 – Dec 2021	Programme/ Project officers	CO organized YouthCo: Lab to empower youth creativity for resolving development issues and provide economic opportunities for themselves.	In progress

At strategic level
Recommendation III: To promote its SDGs integration and localization role, UNDP Thailand should become more active in the area of programme synchronization and coordination between specialized institutions of the government and the UN system. This might counteract projectisation and labour-intensive project cycle management.

Management Response: Agreed.

Key Actions	Time Frame	Responsible Unit	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
CO to initiate proactive integration of thematic areas and SDGs localization through existing projects/initiatives. This should also be reflected in a streamlined programme reporting at the end of the year.	Jan 2020-Dec 2021	RR/DRR	The new JPO Programme Specialist (SDGs) was being recruited and expected to be on board in Q2/2020. This position will lead the SDGs localization effort across the CO.	In progress

At strategic level

Recommendation IV: UNDP Thailand is not fully capitalizing on its full potential with regard to building partnerships. Conscious outreach to bilateral and embassies, as well as the private sector and foundations, for collaborations, through designing specific resource mobilization strategies and institutionalizing regular programme meetings that cut across development sectors, is highly recommended.

Management Response: Agreed

Key Actions	Time Frame	Responsible Unit	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
Senior management of CO to reach out to the selected embassies and private sector partners who share same interests/objectives in order to advance the SDGs.	April 2020 – Dec 2021	RR/DRR	Proactive outreach to targeted embassies and private sector has started	In progress.

At strategic level
Recommendation V: UNDP could support more effectively Thailand's efforts in decentralizing development, social innovation and reducing inequalities by using its global experiences and networks.

Management Response: Agreed				
Key Actions	**Time Frame**	**Responsible Unit**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status**
Global Human Development Report shall be used an instrument for positioning UNDP CO Thailand to advocate with the parliament and NESDC and private sector.	April 2020 – Dec 2021	Senior management	GHDR 2019 launched in Dec 2019 focused on inequality issue. The launch event highlighted Thailand context and stimulated a dialogue among academics.	Completed for 2020 and continue for 2021