**UNDP Management Response**

**Mid-Term Review, Poverty-Environment Action (PEA) for SDGs project**

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**Overall comments:**

Recommendations are noted and will be undertaken within proposed timeframes below.

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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1: Resource mobilization and financial contingency plans**The Project, having had a gap between resources pledged at design and what has actually been leveraged, will need to carry –out several processes to deal with this funding shortfall. For this, the Project should implement the resource mobilization strategy already developed in order to leverage lacking resources. Within the application of the mentioned resource mobilization plans, attempts should be made (with the support of key actors, donors, supporters, etc.) in re assignment of funds and in-kind support to reflect original commitments in order to end the funding gap. If further funding will definitely not be available in the near future, discontinue planning as if it were, and adjust planning (M&E framework, other planning instruments, etc.) to incorporate this change, working closely and communicating diligently with countries for this, particularly those countries which will be affected by cuts in resources and those who will need to reorganize use of not utilized funds, or roll –over funds due to delays or the COVID-19 emergency |
| **Management Response: Agree** |  |  |  |  |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 1.1. Review and re-assignment of funds and in-kind support to minimize funding gap’s impacts | May 2021 | PEA global teamPEA TAs/countries | Initiated |  |
| 1.2. Adjust planning by reviewing (including with COs/TA countries) and revising the project’s M&E framework | May 2021 | PEA global teamPEA TAs/countries | Initiated |  |
| 1.3. Continue implementing existing RM and partnership strategy | 2021-2022 | PEA global team | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2: Operational and programmatic issues.** The Project needs to fast track implementation of the different products/processes/activities it is assumed it will carry out. A channel for this can be by streamlining managerial and financial oversight in order to avoid further delays. Furthermore, the Project should also fast track approval/decision-making processes as much as possible. It is understood that the Project, if it so chooses to increase delivery through streamlining managerial and decision –making processes, it would do so while keeping within donor and management agency’s rules. This could be done by consolidating and streamlining the different reporting and monitoring templates and processes in order to avoid duplication of efforts, simplifying them as much as possible so that they are cost-efficient, discard processes that are not required by management/donor rules and reduce the strain on country teams regarding managerial burdens while avoiding duplication in having to report to different areas of project management. This should be done in close collaboration with the countries in training and assistance for these matters. Furthermore, approval and decision-making processes can be streamlined also by having a clear road map linked to decisions with timing clearly marked and adhering to this in order to avoid circular processes that slow down implementation of PEA programming at this stage |
| **Management Response: Partially agree**Requirements have already been made based on mandatory policies and procedures of managing agents/UNDP. Continued efforts will be made to guide TAs/COs for compliance and good quality project implementation and reporting. |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 2.1. Operational training to PEA TAs/countries has already been provided in 2019 and early 2020 to familiarize them with different reporting and monitoring templates and processes which will be continued in 2021 and beyond via implementation review meetings, operational training and timely assistance to solve issues | (Until) August 2022 | PEA global teamPEA TAs/countries | Initiated |  |
| 2.2. Country calls, among others, to review implementation progresses have been conducted in 2020 and will continue in 2021/2022 to provide a platform for exchange and facilitate project implementation. | (Until) August 2022 | PEA global teamPEA TAs/countries | Initiated |  |
| 2.3. Review of current procedures to address possible overlap in reporting and PEA approval levels; Simplification of procedures and processes to be implemented where possible to enhance operational efficiency. | (Until) August 2022 | PEA global teamPEA TAs/countries | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3: PEA’s strategic outlook and sustainability**PEA should steer its work to be fully strategic. For this, sustained and sustainable expected outcomes need to be strengthened by re-launching leadership roles from global/regional team in order to promote effectiveness and sustainability. This could be achieved by generating strategic priorities between the products and processes the Project wants to achieve placing a greater emphasis on those that generate change and are firmly implemented at the different levels. Given that the technical support provided by or through PEA is one of the key contributing factors to achievements, the Project should focus on this aspect to be strategic and adopt a leadership role in the P-E field. Assuming this, therefore, Project should be steered toward focusing upon effects/impacts/ sustainability and less on just outputs/products (such as strategically promote concrete implementation of tools, instruments, financing--both public and private, policy, etc.--to mainstream the Poverty–Environment nexus instruments being developed through PEA and that have been developed through PEI). PEA should deviate from further developing supplementary studies and instruments/tools and increase its leverage of concrete results and outcomes while developing appropriate exit strategies(unless there is an absolute need for additional analysis or tools to deepen or sustain results and without which the result cannot be achieved).Focus support on strategic outlooks, for instance in providing enhanced backing for processes that are tactical (implementation of planning frameworks and policy, support the adoption of tools in government process, backing and support for the development and adoption of tools at levels where are needed the most –such as the sub national levels) |
| **Management Response: Agree** |  |  |  |  |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 3.1 Implement the capacity building technical assistance that provides a sustainability avenue through an established helpdesk to serve partners and countries during and post PEA | August 2022 and beyond | PEA global team | Initiated |  |
| 3.2 Conduct high level visibility South-South Cooperation events/webinars on major poverty-environment-climate mainstreaming themes and produce policy papers as part of enhancing broader partnerships where PEA initiatives can be anchored. | (Until) August 2022 | PEA global team | Initiated |  |
| 3.3. Further strengthen technical support provided by PEA within existing resources  | (Until) August 2022 | PEA global team | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4: Gender Mainstreaming**A gender approach should be used to promote the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming through its systematic integration across the whole Project and all its outputs/outcomes in order to reduce inequalities and exclusion based on gender. For this, partners should be made aware of all the work done previously in PEI through specific interventions, tools, analysis, etc., on mainstreaming gender and creating gender transformative results within the PE nexus |
| **Management Response: Partially Agree**As the MTR acknowledged in pages 23 and 24, efforts have been made by countries in promoting gender equality in poverty-environment strategies and in mainstreaming in 5 (Indonesia, Myanmar, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania) out of 10 PEA TAs/countries. In addition, a Technical Assistance agreement has been signed with UN Women to: a) conduct evidence-based capacity building of targeted governments on integrating gender sensitive Climate-Smart Agriculture approaches in policies; and, b) conduct South-South cooperation on mainstreaming and implementing gender responsive CSA policies and strategies. Furthermore, another TA project is ongoing at a regional level to deal with economic empowerment of women through the adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices in Africa. |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 4.1 Gender responsive Climate Smart Agriculture promoted through technical assistance in partnership with UN-Women | October 2021 | PEA global team | Initiated |  |
| 4.2 Provide further technical advisory support to countries on how to address gender equality issues in key sectors and to include gender in poverty analytics guided by PEA’s Strategy on how to integrate gender as outlined in Annex 3 of signed ProDoc | August 2022 | PEA global team | Initiated  |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5: Adapting to COVID-19 impacts**The Project should further implement adaptation to Covid-19 processes and document what its strategies have been. For this, online and at-a-distance training and capacity-building modalities, even consultancies, need to be designed in such a way that these are dynamic and consider the different pedagogical / strategic formats, different scripts for self –learning modalities as well as other relevant characteristics for virtual capacity activities such as cultural issues. Methodically and analytically document the initiatives regarding COVID-19 adaptation or insertion of PEA in COVID-19 recuperation being carried-out at this point regarding response to the pandemic as well as the cost savings that the Project has experienced due to the pandemic’s impact |
| **Management Response: Agree** |  |  |  |  |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 5.1 PEA support incorporated at national level in UN Frameworks for immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19. | April 2021 | PEA global team, TA and COs | Initiated  |  |
| 5.2 New ways of working already adopted through virtual meetings and trainings as part of business continuity including provision of necessary ICT equipment and online platform licenses for implementing partners. | August 2022 | PEA global team, TA and COs | Initiated |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6: Partnerships**PEA should intensify its partnerships, both with traditional development partners as well as with those that tend to be external to the customary development field. For this, the search for partnerships (from the national level to the global UN system level) should be strategic and have clear aims. Promote better synergies and partnerships particularly at the national level, between different development process within the UN in order to enhance the Delivery as One and UN coordination and Delivering as One, promoting system-wide coherence through the examples of PEA and for diminishing the work in silos that often occurs at many levels. The next stage of implementation should promote anchoring PEA tools into UNDP, UNEP, UN country teams. Furthermore, engage further with other UN-wide initiatives to promote sustainability of PEA knowledge and expertise, including the expertise and knowledge that PEA uses which took over from PEI. Strategically engage with international financial institutions and regional finance actors to integrate PEA-related knowledge into their plans, in particular given the role of private sector engagement that PEA has begun to focus on in some of the countries involved and given that financial institutions are more fitting to work with the private sector. An overt partnership strategy will also aid in speeding up delivery and implementation once partners assume their potential catalytic role |
| **Management Response: Agree** |  |  |  |  |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 6.1 Advocate adoption of poverty-environment action tools/approaches through existing and new platforms and partnerships i.e. link the Poverty-Environment mainstreaming handbook to the virtual platform with complete modules on mainstreaming processes and case studies.  | (Until) August 2022 | PEA global team | Initiated |  |
| 6.2 Review and keep Resource Mobilization strategy updated | (Until) August 2022 | PEA Management | Initiated |  |
| 6.3 Enhance donor acknowledgement and visibility on PEA website and in all forthcoming PEA publications and intensify on-going partnerships and SSC | (Until) August 2022 | PEA global team | Initiated |  |

\* The implementation status is tracked in the ERC.

\* Status (Not initiated, Initiated, Completed, No Longer Applicable)