


Management response template

UNDP management response template

UNDP Laos PDR Country Programme (2017-2021) Evaluation

Date: 20 May 2021

Prepared by: Catherine Phuong	Position Deputy Resident Representative Unit/Bureau: UNDP Lao PDR	Signature: 
Cleared by: Ricarda Rieger	Position: Resident Representative Unit/Bureau: UNDP Lao PDR	Signature: <i>Ricarda Rieger</i>
Input into and update in ERC: Souphalack Bounpadith	Position: Head of PSU/M&E Focal Point Unit/Bureau: PSU, UNDP Lao PDR	Signature: <i>Souphalack Bounpadith</i>

Evaluation recommendation 1.

Strategic positioning:

Review the functioning of SWGs and redefine their role and results framework to ensure that these provide strategic inputs to the RTM process as well as to sector plans on an ongoing basis. This will need to be driven from the top with strong facilitation and leadership, working with relevant Ministries. The Government institutions provide the leadership for the SWGs, but UNDP can play a facilitating role in strengthening their capacity and this will need senior level engagement. This will be a demanding ask, so UNDP may, in consultation with GoL, prioritise a limited number of SWGs to start with.

Management response: Partially agree

The sector working groups are integral parts of the government structure in support of NSEDP. Although UNDP is a technical agency co-chairing the RTP including SWG mechanism, UNDP does not have the final decision/authorities to modify them. However, UNDP will provide recommendation to the government to strengthen the RTP and SWG, and UNDP stands ready to support the government in the next programme cycle should the government request such support.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Raise with MPI and take stock the implementation of key recommendations from 2016 RTP/SWG review	December 2021	Chanthalath, Poverty Reduction Unit	RTP including SWG mechanism was reviewed in 2016. However, stock-taking of the current implementation status of those key recommendations has not been carried out during	Initiated

			the last four years. Therefore, the time for this stock-taking is right as we embark on the first year of the 9th NSEDP	
Together with MPI, and chairs/co-chairs of all SWGs/Sub-SWGs, identify further actions to strengthen RTP including SWGs	December 2021	Chanthalath, Poverty Reduction Unit	Strategic movement for MPI and UNDP as a technical lead on RTP and SWG mechanism to discuss with all chairs/co-chairs of SWGs and Sub-SWGs on how we can further improve the RTP, particularly SWG mechanism in light of the 9th NSEDP and COVID recovery framework	Initiated
<p>Evaluation recommendation 2.</p> <p>Strategic positioning:</p> <p>Linking the above process of SWG development, facilitate development of clearly defined results frameworks, involving relevant Ministries and provincial departments, for each key sector, prioritising the most critical ones first.</p> <p>Management response: Agree</p> <p>UNDP will review work plans and work processes of relevant SWGs to strengthen alignment with UNDP CPD and will identify priority targets or results for the SWGs to inform development of annual activities. Should support beyond 2021 be required by MPI, UNDP will work on strengthening the SWGs.</p>				
Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Review challenges and effectiveness of relevant SWGs in achieving stated outcomes or objectives in 2021	30/11/2021	Unit Heads (relevant to different SWGs)	UNDP reviewing specific TORs for workshops under SWGs to ensure alignment with outcomes and objectives;	Initiated
Active participation in AWP development discussions for SWGs	30/11/2021	Unit Heads (relevant to different SWGs)	Review of GSWG AWP conducted and feedback on effectiveness provided.	Initiated
Detailed review of AWP to propose greater alignment with UNDP CPD	31/12/2021	Unit Heads (relevant to different SWGs)	Agreement to review AWP before draft development for 2022 period	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 3.**Strategic positioning:**

Building on its Governance initiatives, UNDP should develop a comprehensive SDG support strategy to guide Lao PDR's attainment of the SDGs, linking it to the ninth NSEDP which is under development. It may be that UNDP prioritises a limited number of SDGs which are most-critical and where UNDP has or can mobilise top-class expertise.

Management response: Agree

UNDP will continue to support the integration of the SDGs in the new NSEDP, sectoral and province development plans including the M&E framework. UNDP will prioritize a number of SDGs and look to coordinate with other UN agencies and development partners to identify UNDP added value to maximize impact and accelerate the achievement of SDGs. The new CPD will be the primary guiding document for UNDP's SDG implementation support strategy.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Provide support to the GOL to integrate national SDG indicators and targets into the 9 th NSEDP M&E framework which has been recently finalized	31/12/2021	All Senior Management	<p>- UNDP contributed to UN efforts to support the development of a M&E framework for the 9th NSEDP.</p> <p>- UNDP together with other UN Agencies support the government to finalize the national SDG indicators with proper baseline and updated data.</p>	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 4.**UNDP Internal capacity**

Through advanced training, coaching, secondment from other UNDP offices and continuing professional development, as well as, where possible, fresh recruitment, develop high level staff skills in the following core areas:

- a. Developing theories of change and their use in programme design and results management.
- b. Strengthening internal monitoring and data collection system focusing on results
- c. High-level technical expertise in the area of rural livelihoods and UXO, in particular
- d. Development policy analysis and advocacy.

Management response: Agree

UNDP encourages staff to develop their knowledge, skills and expertise throughout their career with UNDP. Staff identify specific learning goals as part of their annual goals. Staff and supervisors will review the goals twice per year. Learning sessions will be organised for all staff.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Develop a stronger TOC of the new UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD 2022-2026) with a clear articulation of the pathway changes to achieve expected results in the next five years. The CPD TOC will be used for program design, monitoring, and evaluations.	30/06/2021	DRR with support from PSU and programme team leaders	UNDP programme staff jointly developed the TOC for the new CPD. The TOC was assessed as an example of a strong CPD TOC by the UNDP Regional Office	Completed
Staff enter their learning plan and career goals in the PMD.	30/06/2021	All staff	All staff including FTA and SC have defined their learning plans in the PMD starting from April 2021	Completed
PSU with support from BRH M&E specialist will work with programme units to establish monitoring and data collection system.	30/12/2021	PSU and programme team leaders	PSU has started to review the existing monitoring and data collection mechanism to identify its strengths and weaknesses. PSU will suggest ways to improve it and discuss actions with programme units.	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 5.**UNDP Internal capacity**

Senior managerial inputs need to go into exploring synergistic partnerships with UN organisations and other Agencies which may have technical capacity in specific areas of UNDP's programming interest, namely agriculture and biodiversity, rural livelihoods, digitisation.

Management response: Agree

Since 2019, UNDP has proactively sought agency synergies, initially within the UNCT based in Lao PDR, and since 2020 also with non-resident agencies. This included but is not limited to COVID response and Digitalization, where collaboration was sought and achieved with WHO and UNDESA respectively. Building on the good experiences, UNDP will further reach out and regularly engage UN organizations to ensure top quality technical solutions.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed)

				or no due date)
Contribute to UNSDCF formulation and identification of indicators, and joint outputs	30/6/ 2021	Senior Management with support of Programme Team Leaders	UNDP has contributed to the UNSDCF formulation. UNDP had proactively worked with other UN partners to identify and develop joint outputs.	initiated
Develop more joint initiatives with other UN agencies	30/12/ 2021	Programme Team Leaders	UNDP is currently finalizing a GCF proposal with FAO. Renewed cooperation with OHCHR has been initiated. UNDP is still implementing joint programmes with UNFPA and UNCDF.	initiated

Evaluation recommendation 6.**Programme issues & resource mobilisation**

The community radio programme which has proven to be effective with a relatively small investment should be continued, and if resources allow, expanded. In this regard, UNDP may also consider using the Service User Feedback Survey (SUFS); these surveys elicit people's views on public service delivery in order to measure the level of satisfaction and to identify where services could be improved.

Management response: Agree

UNDP are developing a sustainability strategy for the Community Radio project (EPPCR) including how to build the capacity of the core project team and design funding mechanisms that allows different donors to fund specific community radio programming, including by establishing new stations in rural communities. UNDP is also beginning to integrate the EPPCR project with other programmes of the CO, including Ending Violence Against Women project, and the SUFS project. UNDP will also connect the feedback provided to citizens, and EPPCR programming, including call-in shows, to provide feedback and experiences of local communities for delegates of National and Provincial Peoples' Assemblies to better represent the interest of their constituents.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Develop sustainability strategy for EPPCR in consultation with Project Team	30/4/2021	Team Leader, Governance Unit	Sustainability Report drafted and shared with national partners MICT for feedback	Completed
Include EPPCR and SUFS in the new National and Provincial Peoples' Assemblies Project (STEPS)	31/7/2021	Team Leader, Governance Unit	EPPCR and SUFS has been included in the Project Document of the STEPS Program	Completed

Evaluation recommendation 7.**Programme issues & resource mobilisation**

The governance and public administration reforms undertaken by the GIDP project, if they continue to be used by the government, will set the conditions for UNDP to end its broad support to the programme. However, ongoing support to the GSWG and the DDF could be valuable in maintaining UNDP's policy influence and participation in the governance reform process. The support to DDF should continue along with advocacy with the central government to gradually take over total funding of these in a phased manner. This will require new agreements to be drawn up with the government setting annual increase in government funding and corresponding decrease in UNDP allocations over the next three years.

Management response: Partially Agree

UNDP is reviewing the GIDP programme, including the impact of the different components such as DDF, SUFS and the GSWG, status of relationship with MOHA and other partners, and capacity of the Governance Unit, to develop new programming on Public Administration Reform and Inclusive Governance. UNDP is discussing with development partners on specific components of the GIDP programme to match the impactful initiatives with interests of donors.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Review of GIDP Programme on effectiveness and sustainability of components	30/9/2021	Team Leader, Governance Unit	Programme Effectiveness and sustainability included in TOR of Final Evaluation due to be conducted by July 2021, including recommendations for sustainability of initiatives	Initiated
Discussions with development partners on developing new programming on Public Administration Reform and Inclusive Governance	31/12/2021	Team Leader, Governance Unit	Discussions held with development partners on new programming, including Irish Aid, and plans for focus on Public Administration Reform shared with development partners at CPD Consultation in May 2021	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 8.

Programme issues & resource mobilisation

UNDP should develop the digitisation initiative to cover e-governance and related areas of the GoL in a phased manner through developing partnership with agencies (DESA) specialised in complex process of government digitisation.

Management response: Agree

UNDP is prioritizing digitalization in both existing portfolios where possible and in developing new programming. UNDP is partnering with UNDESA under the GDP programme in supporting the digitalization of One Door Service Centres (ODSCs) in 44 districts across Lao PDR. UNDP has included specific references to digitalization in the new CPD and have included in the CPD M&E framework indicators on digitalization taken straight from the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021-2025). In 2021, UNDP is conducting a Digital Maturity Assessment of a number of government partners to establish a baseline for future support.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Include support and targets on promoting digitalization in the new CPD	31/6/2021	Team Leaders	The theme of digitalization has been mainstreamed throughout the new CPD, with numerous references included to digital solutions, capacity building on digital skills, etc.	Completed
Digital Maturity Assessment conducted	31/12/2021	Team Leader, Poverty Unit	ToRs were approved by Ministry of Technologies and Communications. Consultants to be recruited in May/June.	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 9.**Programme issues & resource mobilisation:**

Ensure that when undertaking capacity building interventions, there is a clear baseline of the capacity gaps identified and a change pathway defined clearly before embarking on the process. One-off interventions, without clear links to the change pathway need to be avoided.

Management response: Agree

Capacity needs assessments and the establishment of baselines will be required as an initial step for new projects, where appropriate.

Key action(s)			Tracking
---------------	--	--	----------

	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Capacity assessments should be conducted before designing new projects and/or at the beginning of new projects	30/12/2021	Programme and Team Leads	A capacity needs assessment for NRA is being organised to set some baselines for the new UXO programme starting in 2022. Similarly, a baseline assessment will be conducted at the beginning of the new programme on NA/PPAs.	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 10.
Programme issues & resource mobilisation:

UNDP needs to develop a robust resource mobilisation strategy to strengthen its role in the country. In particular, UNDP needs to rebuild its relationships with key funding organisations, such as the EU. It should also explore funding opportunities for the GoL from the private sector.

Management response: Agree

UNDP will develop a clear resource mobilization strategy, based on the priority development issues outlined in the CPD, the NSEDP, added value of UNDP programming in relation to existing programmes funded by other donors and emerging trends in cooperation programming. UNDP is reaching out to development partners to strengthen coordination and collaboration, including the EU.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Develop Resource Mobilization Strategy	31/8/2021	DRR with support from Team Leads	Initial discussions took place during all staff meetings in Q1 and Q2, as well as during the Country Office retreat in February 2021.	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 11.
Programme issues & resource mobilisation :

Develop an inventory of all local EWS supported by UNDP and explore linking these up with the nationally adapted Disaster Monitoring and Response System (DMRS) being currently developed in the country.

Management response: Agree

Resurrection of the disaster inventory database (LaoDi) which moved between ministries (MONRE to MLSW - NDMO) is now underway, the collection and validation of information as well as output products will be an ongoing process in 2021-2022. An inventory of all local EWS systems supported by UNDP will be developed and if possible linked to the database.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
Contracting of database consultant	30/3/ 2021	Team Leader, NRM CC DRR	procurement action undertaken to contract consultant on disaster inventory database. First phase to be completed in 2021.	completed
Restarting of database and analysis of status of data	30/3/2021	Team Leader, NRM CC DRR	database has been reactivated, is now going through an updating and validation process. Analysis of current status determined.	completed