Management response template

**UNDP management response template**

**Armenia Independent Country Programme Evaluation Date:** 31 December 2019

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| **Evaluation recommendation 1. Theory of Change.** UNDP should develop its future programme interventions based on clear theories of change derived from its vision for Armenia. UNDP should translate its vision for a green and inclusive economic revolution into theories of change for defined issues that need to be addressed, taking advantage of the synergies produced by combining its different technical expertise and facilitating coordination among various line Ministries. When defining the theories of change, UNDP should take into full account existing initiatives by other stakeholders, to enhance the impact of its work through a multiplier effect. In this process, UNDP should use the SDGs accelerators as reference framework, to ensure full alignment between its vision and the support to areas where Armenia is lagging more behind. | | | | |
| **Management response:** Theory of Change (TOC) is a formal part of the current and planned CPD. Following a 2018 Velvet Revolution and subsequent change of governance structures, during 2019, UNDP Armenia Country Office held series of different format cross programme reviews (i.e., Retreats, Sustainability Review, Sensemaking exercise, etc) to identify and discuss in details new approaches in programming, emerging priorities and needs, new development pathways. Such exercises are being performed also in the process of identifying of programmatic priorities for the new CPD process. The inputs obtained through the ICPE stakeholders debrief are considered equally valuable in this regard. Besides the focus on identifying comprehensive and relevant programmatic avenues and obtaining stakeholders inputs, particular attention will be paid on enhancing impact management and measurement (IMM) of UNDP interventions in conjunction with its current methodology of Results-Based Managements. UNDP is building its new TOC based on its experience of SDGs accelerators ideated and tested through the current programme cycle, thus connecting its vision and expertise with most acute development needs in Armenia with the focus on leaving no one behind. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Comments** | **Status**  **(initiated, completed or no due date)** |
| 1.1 Develop 2021-2025 CPD based on the UNDP’s Theory of Change methodology | By 15 March 2020 | Deputy Resident Representative and Programme team |  | initiated |
| 1.2 Discuss and validate draft CPD with its ToC development pathways with RBEC colleagues, as part of Integrated Programme Assessment (IPAC) process, as well as with national and international development partners and UN Agencies, including as part of UNSDCF formulation process | By 30 March 2020 | RR, DRR, Programme team |  | planned |

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| **Evaluation recommendation 2. SDG.** UNDP should support the revitalization of the inter-national committee for the implementation of SDGs and continue advocating with the Government for the full alignment of national and sectoral policies with SDGs. In partnership with the United Nations Resident Coordinator, UNDP should re-invigorate the dialogue around SDGs, to ensure the alignment of national policies to the agreed goals and targets. In order to enhance accountability and inclusiveness, UNDP should promote a more active role of the Parliament and civil society in the discussion around SDGs. In addition, UNDP should continue working with SCA and other partners to improve the quality and accuracy of SDGs-related statistics, promoting their use to inform policies and strategies. | | | | |
| **Management response:** UNDP, in its role of SDG integrator, jointly with UN Agencies and with overall RCO leadership is currently involved in supporting the revitalization of the national committee for the implementation of the SDGs (the process was idle since May 2018), now likely to be branded as National Sustainable Development Council. UNDP continues advocating for need of nationalized and localized SDG targets and respective alignment of national and sectoral policies, including SDG financing. UNDP, with its role of integrator and with application of its country development platforms will participate jointly with the United Nations Resident Coordinator in re-invigorating dialogues around the SDGs, SDG Financing and SDG implementation at national and local level. Through its existing and new projects, UNDP will continue promoting and advocating for accountability and transparency of public institutions, among other, through more active role of the Parliament, civil society, private sector and individual citizens. UNDP will also focus on improving quality and accuracy of SDG-related statistics, including through innovative and non-conventional means such as big data and artificial intelligence, to inform development policies and strategies. UNDP is also actively supporting, again together with the RCO office, the Armenia VNR process. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status (initiated, completed or no due date)** |
| 2.1 In collaboration with RCO, UNDP to proactively engage in the revitalization of the national sustainable development infrastructure in the country. In its integrator role, UNDP will focus on aligning national and sectoral policies with the SDGs, SDG financing and aid effectiveness. | By 31 December 2020 | CO Management, Programme Management and Portfolio Leads, in cooperation with RCO |  | initiated |
| 2.2 In new CPD 2021-2025 ensure proper reflection on the role of the Parliament, civil society and citizens in SDG nationalization and integration. | By 31 September 2020 | CO Management, Programme Management and Portfolio Leads |  | initiated |

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| **Evaluation recommendation 3. Integration and local development.** UNDP should promote a more integrated vision of local development, reinforcing the synergy among its portfolios, following an area- and outcome-based development approach. UNDP should ensure that all its interventions at local level are implemented in close coordination with local stakeholders and are inscribed into existing institutional frameworks and structures, to promote synergy and sustainability. UNDP’s support to municipal participatory budgeting processes under the Governance/Gender portfolio and the work in support of community-based organizations under the Inclusive Growth portfolio should be better coordinated. The Sustainable Resilience and Growth portfolio could also be linked more closely with projects aimed at improving the management of protected areas, for the promotion of green tourism. | | | | |
| **Management response**: Synergies of the LD portfolio are increasingly strengthened with the other environment and governance portfolios. Rolling sensemaking exercises are envisioned to deep dive into the underlying correlations and develop programmatic and ABD approaches. Such correlations will be duly noted in the new CPD. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status (initiated, completed or no due date)** |
| 3.1 Through new programme cycle and in ongoing projects where feasible – i integrate local development initiatives with environment, governance and overall socio-economic work. Ensure stronger impact, bottom-up synergies and sustainability policies via ongoing co-design and quality assurance and continuous sensemaking across projects and portfolios. | 31 December 2020 | Programme management, Portfolio Lead from all three clusters, M&E officer |  | initiated |
| 3.2 Establish effective practices of collaboration and synergies among the projects of different portfolios that focus on area development, social services, sustainable agriculture, management of protected areas, promotion of green tourism, etc. | 31 December 2020 | Programme, Portfolio Leads, M&E officer |  | initiated |

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| **Evaluation recommendation 4. Inclusive Growth:** In the area of inclusive growth, UNDP should enlarge its support for employment creation and build on good practices to affect impact at a broader scale. UNDP should expand its work in this area by reinforcing its support to SMEs’ participation in value chains and promoting integrated rural development approaches with the participation of all relevant national stakeholders - including the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Environment. UNDP should take stock of the work conducted in Tavush and evaluate the effectiveness of its community initiatives, to promote their institutionalization and scaling up, as relevant. In addition, UNDP should identify ways to strategically support the implementation of the employment strategy to promote the development of capacity demanded by the market and thus reduce inequality. In the area of tourism, UNDP should agree with national stakeholders the transfer of the TRM to the State Tourism Committee and agree with the latter on a strategy to institutionalize the tourism and research centers. | | | | |
| **Management response:** UNDP will strengthen its work on inclusive growth affecting impact at broader scale. There are several new projects that will serve as platforms for these exercises, such as Green Agriculture in terms of SME’s and value chains, Sustainable Communities in Gegharkunik and Vayots Dzor in terms of stock-taking and elevating the work done in Tavush and through the Integrated Rural Tourism Project. Increased focus on job creation and particularly jobs foresight and future jobs is expected. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| 4.1 Through its new programme cycle in 2021-2025, UNDP aims to further focus on employment creation and build higher-impact sustainable development practices at a broader scale. UNDP will focus on SME’s effective participation in value chains and promoting integrated rural development approaches closely collaborating with the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Environment. | 31 December 2021 | Socio-Economic portfolio |  | initiated |
| 4.2 UNDP will evaluate its work in Tavush region and effectiveness of its community initiatives to learn on its actual results and define scale up strategy. Tavush work will be taken forward through new LD projects which have been launched in 2020.UNDP will engage youth, women and men to co-design and apply sustainable employment and livelihood strategies at local level, thus affecting also local in inequalities. In the area of rural tourism development, UNDP will collaborate with partners to transfer Tourism Resource Management tool to the State Tourism Committee and apply for research and inform policy and decision making | 31 December 2020 | Socio-Economic portfolio |  | initiated |
| **Evaluation recommendation 5. Democratic Governance:** UNDP should seek ways to strengthen its governance portfolio in support of national institutions, through initiatives on open governance and an improved system of checks and balances in the country. UNDP should expand its portfolio in the areas of institution building in support of the Parliament, public administration reform, and rule of law. In the implementation of the agreed reforms, UNDP could consider adopting a model similar to the one successfully applied in Georgia, where basket funds and flexible funding arrangements have allowed financing different initiatives in support of emerging needs. | | | | |
| **Management response:** A comprehensive, multi-annual Parliament programme has been initiated in Autumn of 2019, among other with strong focus on open governance, transparency and accountability. The office is increasingly engaged in Justice and anti-corruption activities. Reinforcement of the goverance work is an important target for the office for 2020 and for the new CPD going forward. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| 5.1 In the he CPD 2021-2025 ensure that there is stronger emphasis on Governance comprehensive portfolio, with stronger emphasis on: (i) supporting the National Assembly to strengthen its legislative and oversight capacities, promoting open governance; (ii) developing capacities of human rights and electoral management bodies, including for inclusive and gender-responsive development practices; (iii) strengthening integrity of judiciary and public service, and fighting corruption practices; (iv) supporting public administration reform focusing on civil service office, police and customs; (v) supporting the government in fulfilling its human rights commitments, putting the ambitious HR Action Plan into action. Additionally, ensure that there are stronger interconnections between the governance work and the other thematic portfolios. | 31 December 2021 | Democratic Governance portfolio |  | initiated |
| **Evaluation recommendation 6. Gender equality and empowerment of women.** UNDP should further support national institutions in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, adopting a comprehensive approach that focuses on addressing structural and root causes behind GBV and what is preventing women and girls from fully enjoying their rights. UNDP should lead the UNCT’s efforts in support of a new women national machinery, and - together with other GTG members - define a joint approach to address the institutional and cultural barriers that affect women’s capacity to participate in political and economic life, as well as the factors behind the high rate of GBV. Any future intervention in this area should aim at tackling behavioral change and cultural assumptions about the role and rights of men and women in the society, including among members of national institutions. The CO should also consolidate the creation of women’s networks in politics and business, to stimulate the discussion about the role of women in society and set positive examples for young girls to look up to. | | | | |
| **Management response:** UNDP Armenia accept the recommendations and will address through below actions. In 2020, UNDP took over on rotational basis the chairmanship of the UN Gender Theme Group | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| 6.1 UNDP will put a stronger focus on Strategies, action plans and new pipeline projects are in place on UNDP’s work to support national institutions in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, adopting a comprehensive approach that focuses on addressing structural and root causes behind GBV and what is preventing women and girls from fully enjoying their rights. | By 31 December 2020 | Human Rights Project  also Gender Programme  and other new projects |  | initiated |
| 6.2 Strategies, action plans, new pipeline projects and TORs developed on UNDP’s support/lead of UNCT’s efforts to support a new women national machinery. Through the new programme cycle UNDP will take a more active stance in defining with GTG members a joint approach to address the institutional and cultural barriers that affect women’s capacity to participate in political and economic life, as well as the factors behind the high rate of GBV. Monitoring/tracking framework in place to measure behavioral change and cultural assumptions about the role and rights of men and women in the society, including among members of national institutions. UNDP Armenia will also deepen and consolidate its work on creation of women’s networks in politics and business, to stimulate the discussion about the role of women in society and set positive examples for young girls to look up to. | By 31 December 2020 | Senior Management and  Gender Programme |  | initiated |
| **Evaluation recommendation 7. Human rights:** UNDP should strengthen its support to human rights to further integrate the 2030 Agenda principles of leaving no one behind. UNDP should enhance its work in the area of human rights, and in particular on abuses by enforcement officials, antidiscrimination, and people with disabilities. Planned interventions should not be limited to the reinforcement of national strategic and planning capacity but ensure the implementation of on the ground solutions to protect the rights of the most vulnerable. The collaboration with IOM and UNHCR in the area of migrant rights through enhanced border management should be strengthened. | | | | |
| **Management response:** CO will deepen integration of Human-Rights Based Approaches and 2030 Agenda principles of leaving no one behind in programme and projects. This has been an important aspect in the rolling sensemaking exercises. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
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| 7.1 CO will work on incorporation of Human-Rights Based Approaches (HRBA) and 2030 Agenda principles of leaving no one behind in programme and projects, which will serve as an Annex to CPD 2021-2025. Planned interventions will focus on implementation of the ground solutions to protect the rights of the most vulnerable and will explore also opportunities to strengthen collaboration with IOM and UNHCR in the area of migrant rights through enhanced border management practices. | By 30 September 2020 | CO Human Rights Focal Point |  | initiated |
| **Evaluation recommendation 8. Innovation:** UNDP should develop a strategy for its innovation work, to better define its goals and reflect on the sustainability of the structures it has created. UNDP should better define the contribution of its innovation work, including funding to start-up, to the CO’s programmatic goals, to ensure that any intervention supported in this area is aligned with the expected outcomes, and technology is fully harnessed to promote broader corporate results. The strategy should not just focus on innovation as technology, but also consider how behavioral science experiments could be integrated into projects to identify successful practices in development. The respective roles of the three Labs and their sustainability should be clarified. | | | | |
| **Management response:** At the end of 2019, UNDP Armenia formalized a team-lead role for the innovation portfolios, as a major step in consolidating its innovation platforms and bringing innovation as a more integral part of the overall CO portfolio. Behavioral science, data and acceleration platforms are increasingly part of the thematic project designs. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status (initiated, completed or no due date)** |
| 8.1 CO will codify its strategy of innovation work, among other, to serve as guidelines for new commers, programme and project colleagues from other portfolios. It will be well connected with CO programmatic goals and results framework and will contain recommendations on sustainability mechanisms of innovative interventions | By 31 December 2021 | Innovation Portfolio Team Leader |  | initiated |
| **Evaluation recommendation 9. M&E:** UNDP should reinforce its M&E system to track progress against well-defined outputs and outcomes and use results to inform regular discussions with the CO’s Senior Management. Based on issue-based theories of changes, UNDP should identify  appropriate outcome level indicators to determine progress on the expected behavioral change (at individual or organizational level) to which different projects will contribute. Progress against key outcome indicators should inform regular discussion within the Senior Management Team. The CO should monitor with particular attention the success of pilot and innovation initiatives, even after project’s completion, to derive lessons learnt and inform possible scaling up. The CO should seek out support of UNDP Headquarters for training on project’s design and monitoring, focusing on the quality of RRFs and the identification of appropriate tools and methodologies for data collection and reporting. | | | | |
| **Management response:** As of beginning of 2020 the CO has a dedicated M&E officer, as an important step in consolidating the M&E function in the office. The office also works increasingly on reviewing its RBM approach and increasing the correlations between RBM and Comms functions. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Completion date** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Comments** | **Status (initiated, completed or no due date)** |
| 9.1 CO will discuss and design ways of reinforcing M&E system (institutional capacity; human resources, training programs) with respective action plan developed. | By 30 December 2020 | Senior Management |  | initiated |
| 9.2 In new CPD 2021-2025, which will be developed based on the UNSDCF 2021-2025, lower level outcome indicators will be used. [N.B., Armenia CPD 2016-2020 was developed through broad consultative process and received positive feedbacks during the appraisal reviews, including for Results Framework]. | By 30 June 2020 | DRR, RBM Officer |  | initiated |
| 9.3. Through the development of 2021-2025 CPD, “Fully-Costed Evaluation Plan 2021-2025” will be prepared with a broader focus on thematic and outcome evaluations. CO will adhere to UNDP new Evaluation Guidelines, which set a mandatory requirement of midterm evaluations for all projects above USD 5 million. | By 31 December 2020 | DRR, RBM Officer |  | initiated |

\* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the ERC database.