

UNDP Management Response**Evaluation:** Final Evaluation of Rule of Law Partnership in Uzbekistan Project (ROL #00081933)**Date:** December 2021**Prepared by:** Kamila Mukhamedkhanova DocuSigned by: Kamila Mukhamedkhanova Position: Cluster Leader on Effective Governance

Unit/Bureau: UNDP Uzbekistan

Cleared by: Doina Munteanu DocuSigned by: Doina Munteanu Position: DRR

Unit/Bureau: UNDP Uzbekistan

Approved by: Matilda Dimovska DocuSigned by: Matilda Dimovska Position: RR

Unit/Bureau: UNDP Uzbekistan

Input into and update in ERC: Gulnora Ibragimova DocuSigned by: Gulnora Ibragimova Position: SPIU Associate

Unit/Bureau: UNDP Uzbekistan

Evaluation Recommendation 1: Extend the project for another six years. The project is high in demand by the implementers and users. The interventions like E-SUD, Mediation, Alternative Dispute Resolution Systems, Legal and Judicial Capacity development, Human Rights recognition, and Gender mainstreaming and women legal empowerment are just gaining recognition and attention of the policy makers in Uzbekistan. This is the right time to invest more in the people and institutions of Justice in Uzbekistan. Sudden closure of the project immediately after the pandemic might disturb the culture established by the project all these years. Therefore, extension of the project for six more years is recommended.

Management Response:

UNDP notes the recommendation, however the extension for another six years is not possible given the lack of dedicated funding for the intervention. Nevertheless, UNDP will aim to engage on the suggested topics for designing a new project with national judicial bodies. The new project will cover topics like Judicial Capacity development, Human Rights recognition, Gender mainstreaming and women legal empowerment, etc., and will be implemented Jointly with the Ministry of Justice, Ombudsperson's Office and Supreme Court.

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1. Discuss with the Ministry of Justice, Ombudsperson's Office and Supreme Court the possibility of launching a new project on rule of law and human rights	Dec 2021 - Jan 2022	EG Cluster Leader		

Evaluation Recommendation 2: Design a Project for Six Years with a two years' work plan to be revised every two years of implementation- thrice during the life of the revised project: A project with six years project cycle divided into three sub-project cycles is needed. Once the project is designed based on the lessons learned and assessment of needs, a clear work plan for two years at a stretch should be developed for implementation. Once the first two-year cycle is successfully implemented, again based on the experiences, another work plan for the second two-year cycle should be developed. This will give enough breather for the implementers. Sometimes, it so happens that the activities and results planned now might become redundant over a short period of time of two to three years due to various political and economic reasons. Therefore, a long duration project with committed funding with short duration project cycles is recommended as an extension to the current project.

Management Response: This recommendation is well noted; however its feasibility needs to be further considered. The fast pace of reforms requires UNDP to be more agile to meet emerging needs of the Government of Uzbekistan. Donors operating in Uzbekistan usually provide funds for up to 4-5 years. It is not feasible for UNDP to convince them to provide funds for more than 4 years. UNDP's Project and Programme Management procedures allow the units to review and adjust the project's work plan and objectives through project board decisions (annually) and medium-term evaluations (biannually).

Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
2.1. Include costed monitoring and evaluation plan in the new programmatic intervention on rule of law to keep the project's focus in line with the national priorities and development needs.	Jan-Feb 2022	EG Cluster, Project Manager		
<p>Evaluation Recommendation 3: Re-formulate the Results and Resources framework in the new project with organization/institution specific deliverables with specific components: The project under evaluation suffers from clarity of activities to be taken up by different institutions/organizations it partners with. The output 'Supreme Court is equipped with knowledge, regulatory mechanisms and capacitated staff to increase independence of judiciary, fairness of trials and efficiency of court administration' is confusing and very vast if interpreted. It belongs only to the Supreme Court, not to the other organisations the project is partnering with like: the Ministry of Justice; the Supreme Judicial Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Strategy Development Centre; Lawyer Training Centre under the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Tashkent State Law University, etc. Each of these organisations/agencies/institutions should have a separate and distinct set of activities, outputs, actions, and resources allocated.</p> <p>Management Response: UNDP notes the recommendation and for future interventions will cooperate with national partners, as well as donors to formulate a more clear and tangible Results and Resources Framework. UNDP will also strive to define clearer project goals and targets, ensuring they are better aligned to each national partner individually.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
3.1. Ensure goals and targets for new RoL interventions are clearly aligned with individual partners, identified as responsible actors in Government' action plans.	March 2022	EG Cluster Leader		
<p>Evaluation Recommendation 4: Identify Project Outcomes, Outputs, Activities, Actors, and Resources: The project document should clearly identify these in addition to relating the project activities to UNSDCF outcomes, and CPD outputs. Project outcomes, and outputs are a must in any project design. Then these should be linked to different identified components. (Proposed components could be: Capacity Development Component; Access to Justice Component; Alternative Dispute Resolution Component; Human Resources Management in Judiciary Component; Institutional Development Component; E-Governance/E-SUD component etc.).</p> <p>Management Response: UNDP takes note of the recommendation and agrees with it, as it is in line with UNDP programming procedures.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
4.1. All UNDP interventions are linked to UNSDCF Outcomes, and – as per the UNDP rules and procedures outlined in the POPP – must have clear outputs, activities, responsible actors and resources allocated. UNDP will continue implementing this	March 2022	EG Cluster, SPIU		

approach in all its interventions., including the new intervention on RoL currently under development.				
<p>Evaluation Recommendation 5: Identify all the activities of the proposed project cycle at the time of design of the project with national ownership. Introducing new activities in the middle of the project will lack ownership and interest to implement. All the proposed activities for achieving the outputs should be identified at the beginning of the project and discussed with the implementing partner/user government. A brainstorming session to design the project and its activities recommended to have full ownership of the project. All the partners of the project should be engaged in the new project design.</p>				
<p>Management Response: UNDP takes note of the recommendation, which is in line with its standard programming policies and procedures as outlined in POPP and UNDP Uzbekistan SOP for programme and project management.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
5.1. UNDP will consider an inception period of 3-6 months for the new rule of law project, to ensure that the project strategy and activities are validated with the national stakeholders in joint meetings.	March 2022	EG Cluster, Project Team		
<p>Evaluation Recommendation 6: Capacity Needs Assessment should be conducted: A capacity needs assessment should be conducted before designing the project for the next phase. If available capacities are not sufficient to run the project to produce desired results, specific capacity development interventions can be programmed.</p>				
<p>Management Response: UNDP takes note of the recommendation and agrees with it, which is in line with its standard programming policies and procedures as outlined in POPP and UNDP Uzbekistan SOP for programme and project management.</p>				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
6.1. UNDP will consider an inception period of 3-6 months for the new rule of law project, to ensure that the project strategy and activities are validated with the national stakeholders in joint meetings	March 2022	EG Cluster		
<p>Evaluation Recommendation 7: Shift the Project Office from the Supreme Court to the Ministry of Justice. Or open an independent office for the project: The current arrangement of functioning the project from the premises of the Supreme Court has been challenging on many counts. The successes of the project have covered up the challenges faced by other users, UNDP project staff and others. Now, for the next phase, the project should function from the Ministry of Justice Premises drawing one national officer from each client organization. If that is not possible, the project may run from an independent premise identified specifically for the project.</p>				

Management Response:				
UNDP takes note of the recommendation. It must be noted that the location of projects in premises of the main national partner of the NIM projects has always been seen as an in-kind contribution by the national partner. In addition, it also gives an advantage for project staff to effectively communicate with the National Project Coordinator on a regular basis.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
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7.1. UNDP will decide on the new project team's dislocation based on the availability of office space at the premises of the national partner (preferred option) and will consider independent office as a second option.	March 2022	EG Cluster		
Evaluation Recommendation 8: Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) System that includes Mediation should be strengthened during the next project cycle through policy initiatives: During the evaluation, it is gathered that the Mediation and Pro-Bono legal aid supported by the project and the training to the mediators was found to be expensive to the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry was not in favour of spending budgets on this. However, ADR systems reduce cases in the courts, Mediation saves time, money, and relationships of the disputants, and therefore it should be encouraged with a policy initiative. During the next project cycle, a policy initiative of ADR systems should be supported with technical expertise to formulate the ADR policy with necessary budgetary support from the Ministry of Justice.				
Management Response:				
UNDP acknowledges the role of mediation in improving access to justice by vulnerable groups and will consider interventions on building capacity of national partners on this topic within the new project.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
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8.1. Consider including in the new project in the field of RoL activities related to conducting policy analysis on improving the quality of mediation services by mediators in cases affecting vulnerable groups.	March 2022	EG Cluster, Project Manager		
Evaluation Recommendation 9: Avoid multiple agencies doing similar jobs. During the evaluation, it is observed that other agencies like TetraTech, GIZ, UNODC, and OHCHR are also working with the Government of Uzbekistan on the Rule of Law and Justice sectors. A dialogue with these agencies is required to avoid multiplicity of agencies, and duplication of work. Necessary partnerships should be developed to combine similar interventions by different agencies.				
Management Response:				
UNDP takes note of the recommendation, however there are platforms coordinating activities of the actors in the Rule of Law sector, functioning as donor platforms. Also it shall be noted that the multitude of actors in the field is a rather new phenomenon, and going forward coordination efforts need to be further reinforced.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
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9.1. Engage in regular meetings between donors/agencies working in the rule of law area to avoid duplication of activities and explore synergies.	quarterly	EG Cluster		
Evaluation Recommendation 10: There should be an Exit strategy for the project. The proposed project should have an exit strategy to close the project at the end of the project cycle and make the project interventions sustainable through full government involvement and ownership.				
Management Response: UNDP takes note of the recommendation and agrees with it, which is in line with its standard programming policies and procedures as outlined in POPP and UNDP Uzbekistan SOP for programme and project management.				
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
10.1. Include a clearly defined exit strategy to the project document of a new rule of law project.	March 2022	EG cluster		