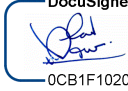

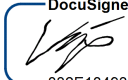


## Management response template

### UNDP management response template

Mid-term evaluation of "Support Programme for NSEDP Implementation towards LDC Graduation, MIC Transition and SDG Achievement" (MPI-MOFA Programme)

Date: 26 January 2022

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
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#### Evaluation recommendation 1.

##### **Resource Mobilization:**

The three programme stakeholders should work more closely together on the issue of resource mobilization by instilling greater synergy and energy in the process. This should be done on the basis of a well-coordinated effort that rests on the following elements:

- The parties should develop a well-thought-out resource mobilization action plan with clear roles and responsibilities identified for each stakeholder.
- The parties should make an assessment of how much additional funding they will be realistically able to mobilize for the remainder of the programme.
- The parties should also conduct a careful review of what activities are possible to achieve with the amount of financing that is realistically feasible for them to raise.
- MPI and MOFA might consider a review of the annual work plan for in light of the above-mentioned review.
- The parties should prioritize and publicize the programme in their bilateral contacts with development partners.
- MPI and MOFA could consider a more programmatic approach for the delivery of bilateral assistance and will benefit from a clearer assessment of this programme as an avenue for channeling assistance by development partners.

#### **Management response: Agree.**

The three parties (UNDP, MPI, and MOFA) have put effort to mobilize resources into the project. So far, the project has secured funding sources from Luxembourg and New Zealand. The three parties agreed that there is a need to work as one team to further mobilizing resources with consistent and clear messages about the programme' relevance, effectiveness, and contributions for the achievement of the national development agenda.

| Key action(s)   | Completion date | Responsible unit(s)                           | Tracking*  |  |
|---|-----------------|---|--|--|
|   |                 |   | Comments   | Status (Initiated, completed or no due date) |
| Carry out donor mapping and analyse the key areas of potential donor supports needed for programme support. | July 2021       | Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction Unit (LPRU) | Donor mapping was carried out and completed in June 2021 | Completed                                    |

## Evaluation recommendation 2.

### *Programme Integration and Coordination*

MPI and MOFA should strive for a more integrated “one programme” approach for this programme. They could consider the following actions:

- Strengthen the programme’s coordination mechanisms, especially the role of the PSU by giving it more access and reacting more quickly to PSU requests.
- The parties should identify activities undertaken by each department that would benefit by greater engagement by other stakeholders. PSU could assist with the analysis and keeping track of joint engagements.
- The parties should also identify synergies and collaborations more carefully in work plans.
- The programme will benefit if the number of programme board meetings will go up to two per year, as originally envisaged in the programme document. Given the online nature of most meetings now, this seems a lot more feasible than in-person meetings.

### Management response: Partially Agree.

The three parties agreed that the project should strengthen the coordination and integration. In particular, commitments from all parties concerned should to be high to enable the project to carry out joint programme activities. In particular, most programme activities are interlinked, for instance and in light of COVID-19 pandemic, in first quarter of 2021, quarterly meeting of chairs and co-chairs of SWGs could not be organised without substantive inputs from DOP (progress of 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP preparation), LSB (data collection for VNR), CDR (results of macroeconomic paper) and DIO (progress on the VNR preparation). Therefore, this highlights the greater efforts needed to be better coordinated. In addition, the Programme Support Unit needs to be more proactive in substantive discussion rather than only focusing on administrative support. In this way, PSU staff will better understand on progress of programme activities and what needs to be done to move things forward. UNDP and MPI appreciated the suggestions to have evaluators’ two programme board meetings per year. Since MPI and MoFA are core government bodies, their staff are overloaded with preparation for meetings and events. Hence, practically, it is difficult to commit to the board meeting more than once per year. The three parties believe that the project should improve the project meetings’ quality and effectiveness including the project board meeting instead.

| Key action(s)  | Completion date | Responsible unit(s)                             | Tracking  |  |
|--|-----------------|---|---|--|
|  |                 |   | Comments  | Status (initiated, completed or no due date) |
| Ensuring that Programme Annual and Quarterly Work Plans highlight joint activities with budget allocation.   | Dec 2021        | Programme PSU & LPRU                            | Joint activities were highlighted in the annual and quarterly work plans. However, due to the Covid 19 restrictions, some activities were migrated to online.                         | Completed                                    |
| Programme PSU needs to participate and prepare quality monthly briefing of programme activities implementation. Meeting minutes should clearly note issues raised, discussion points, actions and responsible parties. | Dec 2021        | Programme PSU with the supervision from DIC/MPI | Programme PSU was proactive and prepare quality monthly reports which highlight progress of programme activities and what needs to be done to collectively address programme acuties. | Completed                                    |

## Evaluation recommendation 3.

### *Communications*

- The PSU will benefit from a communications expert, even someone hired temporarily or on a part-time basis.
- The programme stakeholders should focus on communications with external audiences (including media) on the basis of a communication strategy for this programme.
- UNDP should communicate to MPI and MOFA in clear terms its expectations of documents, templates and formats for work plans, budgets, reports, etc.

- The programme will benefit from better structured communications between UNDP and the respective government departments and the PSU. This could involve regular online meetings – i.e., once a week – to discuss crucial programme-related matters.
- UNDP should strengthen communications with donors, by ensuring that reporting is timely and informative.

Management response: partially agree.

MPI-MOFA project follows the NIM SOP, which has clear standard templates for work plan, budget, and report. The templates have been shared with partners prior to the implementation of project. In addition, UNDP jointed with MPI to deliver refreshment NIM SOP trainings in 2018 and 2019. In terms of the communication with government counterparts, PSU shall act as the main coordinator together with technical support to deliver/convey clear message among partners. Moreover, the monthly meeting is also conducted at the management level between UNDP, MPI, and MOFA followed by weekly technical meetings to ensure clear messages are well communicated. In terms of communication with the donors, UNDP submitted periodic/on request reports to donors in a timely manner UNDP will utilize the in-house communication personnel to send media messages with external audiences about the project achievements and contribution to development where appropriate.

| Key action(s)                                    | Completion date | Responsible unit(s)                                       | Tracking   |  |
|--|-----------------|---|--|--|
|  |                 |   | Comments   | Status (initiated, completed or no due date) |
| Conduct weekly communication with Programme PSU. | December 2021   | Management, LPRU, DIC/MPI with support from Programme PSU | Email exchanges, virtual meetings and calls with programme PSU at least several times a week was arranged. | completed                                    |
|  |                 |   |  |  |

#### Evaluation recommendation 4.

##### *Operational Matters*

- UNDP and government departments should address the staff turnover issue. One way of dealing with this would be by creating a shadow position that could cover the primary position, in case that person leaves their job. Also, better documentation is necessary to maintain institutional memory.
- MPI and MOFA should better assess the workload of the officials they designate for the programme and ensure that these officials are able to allocate sufficient time for programme-related matters. They should plan for a greater amount of time and workload from relevant officials allocated to the activities of this programme.
- MPI and MOFA should review the current decision-making processes related to the programme and identify how within existing government rules and procedures they can accelerate the decision-making process.
- The MPI and MOFA departments should strengthen their monitoring and reporting functions dedicated to the programme.
- Board meetings should be organized well before the approval of work plans and budgets is due to allow for sufficient time for discussions and approvals.

Management response: Agree.

UNDP and MPI acknowledged the concerns over the staff turnover and movement. There has been effort to deal with staff these issues both from within UNDP and government counterparts.

| Key action(s)  | Completion date | Responsible unit(s)                           | Tracking   |  |
|--|-----------------|---|--|--|
|  |                 |   | Comments   | Status (initiated, completed or no due date) |
| Agree with MPI on key arrangements for programme operation issues. | December 2021   | LPRU, DIC/MPI with support from Programme PSU | – Quarterly meetings (DIC/MPI – programme manager and UNDP RR) was arranged to | Completed                                    |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  | update progress and approval of quarterly work plans.<br>– Monthly meetings – (DIC/MPI – DDG and Division Head and UNDP Unit Head/or PO) was arranged update and monitor quarterly work plan and quality control,<br>– Weekly communication between programme PSU/DIC division technical staff and UNDP programme analyst was arranged to follow up and highlight the priorities for the week. |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

**Evaluation recommendation 5.**  
**Capacity Development**

- UNDP should organize additional training on UNDP rules and procedures for relevant government officials responsible for planning, budgeting, and reporting. UNDP should conduct this in the broader context of capacity support for government entities implementing NIM projects.

**Management response: Agree**

Training on NIM SOP for relevant government responsible officials had been conducted as mentioned above UNDP is aware that there is a need to conduct the training more often especially when project hire new staffs.

| Key action(s)  | Completion date | Responsible unit(s)                                  | Tracking   |  |
|--|-----------------|--|--|--|
|  |                 |  | Comments   | Status (initiated, completed or no due date) |
| Carry out trainings on UNDP rules and procedures for relevant stakeholders | May 2021        | UNDP-PSU and DIC/MPI with support from Programme PSU | UNDP organized several sessions on audits, micro-assessments, the CDR bridge in the first half of 2021 | Completed                                    |

**Evaluation recommendation 6.**  
**Coordination with Donors**

- In the framework of this programme, UNDP, MPI and MOFA should conduct a careful mapping of all the other development partners providing support in the areas covered by the MPI-MOFA programme and identify potential synergies and efficiencies between this programme and development partners' projects.
- UNDP should conduct a quick assessment of how its ongoing projects could be better coordinated with the MPI-MOFA programme and identify potential practical synergies.

**Management response: Agree.**

The three parties have developed stakeholder and donor mapping. More effort will be put to identify potential synergies and efficiency between the programme and development partners' projects.

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

|  | <b>Completion date</b> | <b>Responsible unit(s)</b>                       | <b>Comments</b>   | <b>Status (initiated, completed or no due date)</b> |
|--|------------------------|--|---|---|
| Develop donor and stakeholder mapping, and identify potential synergies where relevant | July 2021              | LPRU and DIC-MPI with support from Programme PSU | Donor mapping was carried out in June 2021  | Completed   |
| UNDP to meet with other development partners working in the similar areas              | Dec 2021               | UNDP Management, and LPRU                        | UNDP met with Japanese Embassy in March 2021 and there is an on-going discussion with LuxDev on potential future collaboration. | Completed   |

**Evaluation recommendation 7.****Substantive Issues**

- Programme stakeholders should further develop the Lao Development Forum concept and come up with a plan for how the transition process could take place.
- Programme stakeholders should develop measures to engage the general public more effectively with the SDGs.
- Programme stakeholders should establish a more solid system for measuring the implementation of RTIM recommendations and more capacity building support for implementing agencies on how to implement RTIM instructions.
- Programme stakeholders should establish a more solid system for monitoring the SDG indicators that have been assigned to line ministries to integrate into sectoral plans/strategies, as well as tracking of the extent to which those indicators get incorporated into those plans/strategies.
- Programme data should be collected and reported more systematically on a gender-disaggregated basis across all components and activities. If a new phase of this programme will be undertaken, it will be beneficial to conduct a more detailed gender assessment to lay the ground for a better approach to gender mainstreaming in the new programme.

**Management response: Agree.**

UNDP and MPI commit improving the monitoring, data collection and reporting for SDG and RTIM in a more systematic way in the future programme.

| <b>Key action(s)</b>  | <b>Completion date</b> | <b>Responsible unit(s)</b>                             | <b>Tracking</b>   |   |
|---|------------------------|--|---|---|
|   |                        |  | <b>Comments</b>   | <b>Status (initiated, completed or no due date)</b> |
| Develop a concept note for the future programme taking into consideration the above evaluators' recommendations | Dec 2021               | LPRU, DIC-MPI and MOFA with support from Programme PSU | UNDP and MPI had come to the conclusion of continuing high impact work activities such as enhancing SWGs coordination. Other areas are also in the process of fine-tuning the concept note for the next phase of the programme. | Completed   |

**Evaluation recommendation 8.****Sub-national Level:**

- MPI and UNDP should assess the feasibility of providing greater capacity development support for government officials at the sub-national level.

- MPI and UNDP should also consider the possibility of greater engagement of communities at the local level on planning and SDG-related activities.

**Management response: Agree**

UNDP and MPI acknowledged the importance of engaging the sub-national levels and communities in the project intervention. Both parties agree to explore and discuss in more detail when developing a project concept note.

| Key action(s)  | Completion date | Responsible unit(s) | Tracking  |  |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|---|--|
|  |                 |                     | Comments  | Status (initiated, completed or no due date) |
| Develop a concept note for the new programme with more involvement of local government and communities | December 2021   | LPRU                | The new concept note is being developed to engage and empower stakeholders at the sub-national level, especially on SDGs planning and implementation. | Completed                                    |