**UNDP Management Response**

**Project # 00090983 PIMS 4981 Belarus:** **Supporting Green Urban Development in Small and Medium-Sized Cities in Belarus**

**Mid-Term Review**

Date: July 2019

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**Overall comments:** An independent mid-term review of the GEF funded project Supporting Green Urban Development in Small and Medium-Sized Cities in Belarus, PIMS 4981, was conducted in the first half of 2019 by a team of experts comprising of one international and one national specialists in accordance with GEF requirements and the respective UNDP rules and procedures. The evaluation team managed to capture the key project related aspects. Actions proposed to address the MTR team are presented and described below in more detail.

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| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 1:** Shift from output-oriented approach (e.g. reports, plans, conferences) of first phase of project to full focus on long-lasting, sustainable, and impactful results. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** During the first half of the project implementation period the project team focused mainly on studies related to identification of the current situation in Belarus, capacity building and preparation of feasibility studies and design documentations required for the respective pilots. During the second half, the project will focus on practical implementation of the pilots to reduce green-house gas emissions. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 1.1. Prepare the respective ADWP focusing mainly on pilots and other actions with concrete results and long-lasting impact | May 2019 - on | UNDP and MoEnv | On-going | This to be done in consultations with the MoEnv and other national stakeholders |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 2:** Apply for extension of up to 18 months, contingent on plan/ reallocation of budget so it is available over extended period to focus on achievement of aforementioned long-lasting and impactful results. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** A discussion on the project extension and the period of this extension will be conducted in late 2019 | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 2.1. Conduct consultations with the key stakeholders to justify the need of project extension and the period of this extension. | October-early November 2019 | UNDP MoEnv PIU | Pending |  |
| 2.2. Project Board decision on extension | Dec-2019 | UNDP MoEnv PIU | Pending |  |
| 2.3 Submit request for extension to UNDP HQ | Dec-2019 | UNDP MoEnv PIU | Pending |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 3:** Pursue a set of meaningful national-level policy achievements (namely, the adoption or revision of national strategies, standards, acts, resolutions, policies, action plans, and/ or regulations to promote GUD, city EE, and SUT). Adopt a new and targeted approach to do so, with face-to-face one-on-one “briefings” of officials as centerpiece. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. The project has been doing policy related work from its commissioning. A number of legal and regulatory acts and policies have been updated based on project recommendations. For instance, the project developed green urban development plans for 3 Belarusian cities and a number of urban transportation plans. This work will continue. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 3.1 Continue work related to setting the national policies and legislation related to green urban development | Jan 2019 - on | MoEnv PIU UNDP | On-going | N/A |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 4:** Adopt new and targeted approach to influence the city planning process. Engage BelNIIP, and potentially other state and private sector urban planners (e.g. MinskGrado, Level80, etc.), in one-on-one meetings with project experts and in planning process/ policy related assignment, if possible. Bring the “clients” (MoAC and city executive committees) into the process once progress is made with the planners. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. The project has been working on city planning with the relevant central authorities and municipalities. A focused actions should be taken to engage actively in this work the Ministry of Architecture and Construction (MoAC) and its Urban Development Institute (BelNIIP) using different tools and levers. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 4.1 Arrange one-to-one meetings with the MoAC and BelNIIP | From June 2019 - on | PIU UNDP MoEnv | On-going |  |
| 4.2. Discuss with the MoEnv the ways of dealing with MoAC and BelNIIP to involve them in urban development actions | Aug-Sep 2019 | MoEnv PIU UNDP | Pending |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 5:** Building on recently launched financing support work, put substantial focus on assisting cities to prepare and secure financing for specific priority projects in the plans that have been prepared. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. The project team should intensify its work on helping the target municipalities to find sources of funding for their energy efficiency and transport related projects. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 5.1 Develop a short and clear manual on potential funding sources that Belarusian municipalities can tap into to finance their energy efficiency and sustainable transport projects and initiatives. | 2020 | PIU MoEnv municipalities. | On-going | Information gathering on available national and foreign funding sources. Working meetings with representatives of banks and companies. |
| 5.2 Conduct a row or workshops with municipalities to present the manual and discuss the funding issues | 2020 | PIU MoEnv municipalities. | Pending |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 6:** Revise approach for Polotsk/Novopolotsk demos building on recent, post-MTR mission progress in Polotsk: (i) reconsider selection of key measures, with emphasis on achieving long-term GHG ERs and making sure that the project targets, including direct ERs of 91,100 tonnes of CO2e, are met; (ii) engage city executives and coordinating committees frequently with project experts so they understand demo goals, budget, and efficacy of various options; (iii) convince cities to adopt low-cost, high efficacy measures as part of demo “package.” (See 9iii.) | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree.The project team should identify the measures brining the most significant GHG reduction results and discuss these measures with the MoEnv and the pilot municipalities. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 6.1 Develop a list of most effective GHG reduction measures in the transportation sector and discuss those with Polack/Navapolack municipalities. | By Dec 2019 | PIU MoEnv. | On-going |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 7:** Before moving forward with smart meter demo, clearly identify and confirm specific means and amount of energy savings and GHG ERs (current preliminary estimate is just 252 tons CO2 direct ERs). Adjust demo plans accordingly to maximize savings and GHG ERs. Clarify to all involved. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. To double check the planned GHG ER figures expected from the smart metering demo. Conduct consultations with specialists and Navahrudak authorities to maximize the HGH ER benefits. Based on the discussion, adjust the demo design, if needed. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 7.1 Check the figures of GHG ER from the smart demo in Navahrudak | Jul-Aug 2019 | PIU, Navahrudak minicipality | On-going | . |
| 7.2. In case, the GHG ER is not ambitious enough, conduct consultations with the EE specialists, MoEnv and Navahrudak municipality on how to increase the ER | Sep 2019 | PIU, Navahrudak minicipality | Pending | Will depend on the results of the Act 7.1 |
| 7.3 Adjust the demo design to maximize the GHG ER from the smart metering demo or propose a substitution. | Oct-Nov 2019 | PIU, Navahrudak municipality | Pending | Will depend on the results of the Act 7.1 |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 8:** Develop clear means of communicating main aim of the project (e.g. “to incorporate environmental sustainability and people-centeredness in city planning and ensure priority projects are implemented”) and ensure all stakeholders understand from the start. Eliminate confusion that “green planning” is just about “green areas” or that project is just very generally addressing the SDGs. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. The project team to intensify its work with the national stakeholders with respect to raising their awareness on green urban development using plain understandable and clear language. Carefully plan the projects PR and other informational activities and ensure allocation of sufficient resources. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 8.1 Intensify the information campaign and PR work with the national stakeholders to raise their awareness with respect to green urban development. | By Dec 2019 | PIU MoEnv UNDP | On-going | Stakeholder analysis is made. Communication strategy is developed. |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 9:** Increase focus of city official mindset change work, ensuring they understand: (i) why they need a plan rather than just measures; (ii) goals of measures; (iii) how low cost measures, such as those in transport can save money and be more effective than new infrastructure; (iv) how GUD and SUMPs should be promoted as TORs for Master Plan and its Transport Annex. Further leverage President’s Academy of Public Administration and leverage official government site visits for heads of regions, districts, and cities. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. The project team to intensify its work with the national stakeholders with respect to raising their awareness on green urban development using plain, understandable and clear language. Carefully plan the projects PR and other informational activities and ensure allocation of sufficient resources. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 9.1 Intensify the information campaign and PR work with the national stakeholders to raise their awareness with respect to green urban development. Intensify work with the Belarusian Parliament. | From Jun 2019 - on | PIU MoEnv UNDP | On-going | One awareness meeting with Belarusian Parliament was already held in June 2019. The project should consider making it regular. |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 10:** Engage city residents (and, possibly, other non-governmental and commercial stakeholders) in the planning process. Educate them as in item above. Work to achieve simple language in visions/plans that residents can understand. Ensure plans reflect their priorities. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** The project has limited power to engage city residents (and, possibly, other non-governmental and commercial stakeholders) in the national planning process. What can be done is to show the clear benefits of this engagement for the local authorities and the Government. The project will also continue arranging public consultations on strategies and programmatic documents (e.g. green urban development plans or sustainable urban transport plans) developed with project support and to inform about the progress with implementation of demo projects | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 10.1 Continue involving public in national urban planning process through consultations on the respective plans and strategies developed with project support. | From Jun 2019 - on | PIU MoEnv UNDP | On-going | Public hearings on green urban development plans and SUMP are arranged.  Information about the progress with implementation of transport demo is published regularly in local mass-media. |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 11:** Consider expanding engagement to other key groups: (i) involving private sector designers and students via competition for design of urban blocks/pilot projects; (ii) working with education sector to incorporate GUD in official university urban design curriculum; (iii) leveraging relationship with select influential think tanks and NGOs to promote policy and process change. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Procurement of services is done in accordance with the respective UNDP rules and procedures through an open competitive process. Private companies and entrepreneurs can participate. The project has been working on incorporating green urban development aspects into the curricular of the relevel Belarusian universities, particularly, the Belarusian National Technical University. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 11.1 Continue the on-going work to incorporate green urban development aspects into university curricular in Belarus. | From Jan 2019 - on | PIU MoEnv UNDP | On-going |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 12:** Exchange with GEF/WB Global Platform for Sustainable Cities to harmonize indicators and get information on/connections for channels for financing sustainable city initiatives. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. Work closely with the GEF/WB Global Platform for Sustainable Cities on indicators and potential funded sources. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 12.1 Gather information on Global Platform’s indicators, work to harmonize Belarus GUDP indicators with these, prepare table showing relationship between Global Platform indicators and indicators adopted by Green Cities for GUDP in Belarus. | By Dec 2019 | PIU | On-going |  |
| 12.2 Liaise with Global Platform to determine best funding sources for Belarus GUDP projects and compile list of funding sources and contacts. Obtain personal introductions if possible. | By Sep 2019 | PIU | On-going |  |
| 12.3 Follow up with each of the funding sources recommended by Global Platform contacts, with special attention to those with personal introductions. Introduce to these funding sources the portfolio of initiatives in pilot and other partner cities that the project aims to support in the securing of financing. | By Mar 2020 | PIU | On-going | Pending the completion of 12.1. Development of the portfolio of initiatives from GUDP, SUMP and SECAPs for pilot cities. |
| **Evaluation Recommendation or Issue 13:** Building on plans for preparation in 2019 of a video on the street lighting demo, prepare comprehensive video on all demos and other initiatives for which financing is secured. Video should be quite attractive, such as through use of drones. Also, prepare a lessons learned study and short electronic brochures on the demo projects. | | | | |
| **Management Response:** Agree. The project team led by the project communication officer should create high quality video and other materials on the project pilots. These materials should be clear and understandable for the general public. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 13.1 Create a video on the street lighting demo | By mid-Jun 2019 | PIU MoEnv | Completed | Placed on the UNDP Facebook page |
| 13.2 Create a video on the sustainable transport pilot | By Jun 2020 | PIU MoEnv | Pending | Pending completing of the transport demo |
| 13.3 Prepare short electronic brochures on each demo and each of the other financed projects installed during the project’s lifetime. | By the end of project | PIU | On-going | Information gathering |
| 13.4 Lessons learned study on each demo | By the end of project | PIU | On-going | Information gathering on the street lighting demo. Pending completing of the transport demo |