**UNDP Management Response Template**

**ICPE Seychelles**

**STATUS UPDATE**

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**Overall comments: The ICPE evaluation has made some pertinent observations, findings and recommendations. This Management Response reflects below on the recommendations provided by the ICPE Team**

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| **Evaluation Recommendation 1:**  In developing the new Country Programme Document care should be taken to reflect Seychelles’ needs and issues as a small island state that has attained high-income status, and UNDP's capacity to provide support. UNDP should focus its limited resources on strengthening the focus of the program on environmental management and climate change, and synergies between its different components. | | | | |
| **Management Response:**  ***Partially Agree***  In formulating the new Seychelles Country Programme Document (CPD), UNDP will consult with the Seychelles Government and other national stakeholders (academia, private sector, civil society organizations) on the key development priorities and the required UNDP support to Government to facilitate sustainable growth of its’ economy. The new CPD will be fully aligned with the National Development Priorities and within the UN Strategic Partnership Framework for Seychelles. It is expected that the new Seychelles CPD will focus on assisting the country to shift towards a Blue Economy building on sound management of its unique natural resources and addressing the challenges climate change poses to Seychelles as a small island state and large ocean economy.  Links will be made between natural resources management and climate change adaptation and facilitating Seychelles economic sectors including tourism and fisheries which are largely dependent on effective management of risk. Human rights, social justice and gender equality will also inform the foundation of the new Seychelles CPD. The Country Office will, therefore, align the new CPD to the newly approved National Development Strategy 2019-2023, the UN Strategic Partnership Framework 2019-2023 and the Seychelles Long term Vision 2033 with emphasis on strengthening areas of UNDPs comparative advantage. Emphasis will also be placed on de-risking overreliance on vertical funds through programme diversification in line with UNDP Strategic Plan six signature solutions.  As noted in the UNDP Human Development Report 2019, inequality matters. It should be noted that though Seychelles is ranked as a high-income economy, the gap between the rich and the poor has increased with the latest poverty digest indicating almost 40% of households below the poverty line. Thus, whilst important, environment related development issues are still perceived by a significant share of the population as a low priority issue compared to their socio-economic challenges. Thus, the Government’s capacity to plan and implement actions to protect the country’s environment; and, to use its natural resources in a sustainable way, while valid, also presents a need to rationalize this development priority with the citizens socio-economic development expectations to address social issues.  New thinking - particularly in the face of sweeping technological change and the climate crisis will be needed to rationalize the climate action imperatives with the socio-economic. UNDP is well positioned to support platforms for dialogue and knowledge development to address some of the priority social issues and safeguard erosion of past gains in human development. As a small island country, Seychelles is particularly vulnerable to the global climate change; and, to internal and external threats to its’ rich but fragile terrestrial and marine biodiversity. All this provides policy space and a programming environment for UNDP beyond a narrow environment focus to assist Seychelles to address its sustainable development challenges through world-class international expertise and promoting innovations capitalizing on what has been done to date.  UNDP will provide strategic interventions targeting the issues of high priority for the country, which can result in the most significant and durable development impact. It should be noted that the Seychelles Government values UNDP as a reliable, professional and impartial partner; and has expressed its’ readiness and willingness to continue and further expand its cooperation with UNDP.  Though continuing to tap into vertical fund mechanisms such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Adaptation Fund (AF), UNDP will actively explore other options available to finance its Seychelles technical assistance programmes, including expansion of cooperation with the European Union and building new relationships with bilateral donors and the private sector. UNDP will also discuss with the Seychelles Government options to obtain governmental cost sharing of UNDP-led programmes beyond the existing parallel co-financing provided by the country to some projects. UNDP will also work to utilize the available in-house knowledge, expertise and funding opportunities through cooperation with the Africa Regional Service Centre and the UNDP Global Policy Network. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 1.1. Consultations with the key Seychelles partners on the country priorities and needs. | Aug 2019 - forward | UNDP | Ongoing | * Regular country programme missions have been conducted to the Seychelles and clear priorities articulated by the government which include priorities for socio-economic development support and public administration reform including digitalisation; private sector engagement and SDG investment. * The MCO is also working in collaboration with the UNCT on the Common Country Analysis |
| 1.2 Formulation of the new Seychelles CPD reflecting the country priorities and fully aligned the UNDP Executive Board requirements. | February 2020 | UNDP | On Going | * The CPD was extended to December 2023 to align with the UNCT Strategic Partnership Framework. * A road map for development is under review, considering the ICPE recommendations * The MCO is also undergoing the Gender Seal Process for completion in FY 2022 to better inform the CPD design process. |
| 1.3 Exploring options to expand the donor basis beyond GEF and EU (e.g. governments of countries, private sector, etc.). | 2019 and forward | UNDP | **Completed** | * The Seychelles office secured resources through the Rapid Response Facility for COVID-19 responses; and the Africa Bureau Finance Hub, International Istanbul Centre or Private Sector Development. * The CO is also supporting the INFF, SDG Investor Mapping and Climate Finance assistance through technical advisory services |
| 1.4. Engage with the Seychelles Government in a discussion of getting governmental cash co-financing of UNDP-led programmes. | Feb 2020 - forward | UNDP | On going | * The COVID-19 pandemic has severely constrained the fiscal space in Seychelles, and as such this option remains deferred |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 2:**  The Country Office should ensure future project designs avoid unnecessary proliferation of project components and counterparts and include only well-reasoned straightforward M&E frameworks and targets. Where designs include plans for complex physical works that have not been subject to detailed feasibility studies, sufficient time should be allocated to complete this work, and flexibility should be provided to accommodate and respond appropriately to the outcomes of this work. | | | | |
| **Management Response:**  ***Partially Agree***  The UNDP Seychelles will pay special attention to ensuring that project design including the scope of activities, expected outcomes and outputs, RRF, budget, M&E framework are presented in as clear and concise a manner possible to national partners; and with a manageable number of counterparts and clear, concise, meaningful and monitorable outcomes and indicators. This requirement will be included in the terms of reference of any specialists engaged in designing new projects.  It should be pointed out, however, that the Project Documents for some donor templates remain very complex and require a significant amount of technical information and data. Similarly, donor requirements for project reporting also continues to be complicated. Thus, for UNDP to comply with the respective donor requirements, we are obliged to follow templates and procedures that often do not lend themselves to simplicity and clarity. The matter is further complicated when considering regional projects. Considering the ICPE recommendations, while some project documents will remain complex and highly technical; UNDP Seychelles will encourage counterparts to seek simplified and accessible design for greater efficiency and effectiveness in implementation. In addition, to address the issue of project complexity, UNDP will engage with national project partners at the earliest possible stage of project formulation to ensure common understanding of the UNDP and donor requirements regarding technical assistance projects. UNDP will also seek feedback from national partners on the project design and will address, to the extent possible, partners’ suggestions for simplification.  UNDP agrees with the necessity to allocate enough time and resources to conduct assessments and feasibility studies prior the beginning of extensive physical works. For all new projects which include have significant physical works; activities on the respective assessments/feasibility studies will be included in the project scope; and, adequate resources (time, financial and expertise) will be incorporated into project design.  UNDP welcomes the Evaluation conclusion that enough flexibility should be allowed in complex projects to provide for adaptive management in response to changing situations and circumstances. UNDP has been applying adaptive management to its project when required and will continue to do so. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 2.1. Ensuring the design of new projects is not overcomplicated and overburdened with excessive number of partners, outcomes, outputs and indicators. | 2019 and forward | UNDP | On-going | The Seychelles office has mobilised resources for both the environment and socioeconomic development portfolio. Due attention has been paid to design, partnerships, outputs and outcomes.   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | SN | Project title/topic | Donor | (M USD) | Expected years of implementation | | 1 | **ISLANDS- Chemicals and Waste** | GEF | 2.5 | 2021-2025 | | 2 | **GEF7 Blue Economy** | GEF | 4.9 | 2022-2028 | | 3 | **Covid Project Funding Windows** | UNDP | 0.5 | 2021-2022 | | 4 | **SDG Investor Mapping, Development Finance Assistance Mapping** | UNDP | 0.38 | 2022 - 2023 | |  | **Total** |  | **USD 8.28** |  | |
| 2.2. Engaging local counterparts in project design at the earliest possible stage. | 2019 and on | UNDP | **Completed** | * The LPAC process and regular steering committee meetings have ensured continuous engagement and buy-in of local counterparts |
| 2.3. Ensuring that projects with significant physical works have quality feasibility studies completed prior the actual physical works start. Project design should also provide for enough resources (time, financial, human) for such studies. | 2019 forward | UNDP | **Completed** | * The reviewed physical works project was completed on time and under budget, with the MCO returning ~200K to the EU, notwithstanding price inflation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. * Going forward, and in line with new GEF regulations, the UNDP projects are to be implemented using the full NIM modality; and the necessary studies and commitments of Government of Seychelles assured during the design phase and oversight provided during implementation. |
| **Evaluation Recommendation 3:**  The country office should improve results-based management by ensuring program level reporting frameworks include objectives, and targets and related indicators only if there is a realistic prospect for UNDP to have a measurable influence over them; building increased M&E and research capacity into individual project designs, or by establishing a shared resource that can provide analytical support across the PCU; developing a shared narrative across the program about the challenges it is helping Seychelles government to address. | | | | |
| **Management Response:**  ***Agree***  To address the recommendation, UNDP will conduct regular training of the Seychelles CO team and project personnel on results-based management. With improvements in monitoring and evaluations; documentation; and communication of results and lessons learned are being taken on board. Following the ICPE, Bureau for Africa Regional Service Centre colleagues provided in-depth training on project management requirements and reporting and M&E to project colleagues in April 2019. UNDP will consider, funds permitting, engaging a dedicated monitoring and evaluation specialist as a part of the UNDP Seychelles team.  Currently, the Seychelles CO have very limited capacity to monitor, measure and disseminate the impact of UNDP interventions in Seychelles, along with monitoring and evaluating the sustainability and the scale of replication of the results of UNDP projects and initiatives. To address the issue, UNDP will explore various options to include a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist into the Seychelles CO team who will also cover the M&E needs of UNDP-led projects. The main task of the specialist will be to monitor achievement of the key results of the UNDP actions along with advising the Project Coordination Unit on monitoring and evaluation issues. The specialist will also lead monitoring and evaluation of a long-term impact of UNDP interventions and the sustainability of results and the extent of successful experience replication throughout the country.  Meanwhile, the communications function as part of RBM will be integrated into the various projects as a core development function. In the interim, and to address the lack of communication personnel, the Country Office has augmented its capacity through fielding detailed assignments of a communications specialist to the country office.  It should be noted that the indicators under the Adaptation Fund do not adhere to an RBM approach; but were agreed at the design stage using criteria laid out by the donors. Furthermore, a lack of national capacity to critically review the log frame at the inception stage required revisions at Mid-Term review stage. Furthermore, the time lag between programme design and implementation can cause a logical disconnect with agreed indicators due to an evolving development context. For example, the Adaptation Fund project was developed in 2012, while funds were made available only in 2014. Similarly, for the GEF6 cycle PIF was readied in 2015, while funds for full Project Preparation were made available only in 2018 with the project document to be approved in late 2019.  Under the GCCA+ project all cost estimates were done by the Ministry of Environment Energy and Climate Change and UNDP called in at a later stage after negotiations were completed to implement the project. The limited consultation on costs and community views resulted in significant cost under estimation for the transportation of goods by sea to La Digue. The result was the need for UNDP as the implementing partner to raise significant resources in a very limited market to cover additional costs – which in turn resulted in delayed delivery. National Stakeholders have expressed that this finding should be raised at COP events or channeled through partnerships to bring to the attention of donor parties through Country led interventions highlighting complexities of SIDS. | | | | |
| **Key Action(s)** | **Time Frame** | **Responsible Unit(s)** | **Tracking** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| 3.1 Conduct regular RBM training of the CO team and project personnel. | 2019 and on | UNDP, Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) | On-going | * The Gender and M & E Focal point has undergone training supported by the Bureau in FY 2021; staff continue to engage in the offered corporate training. |
| 3.2 Explore various options to engage a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to cover the needs of the Seychelles UNDP Office and UNDP-led projects. | 2019 - 2020 | UNDP, PCU | **Completed** | * A Gender and M & E Focal point has been recruited for the MCO since FY 2020. * The CO has agreed with the Seychelles Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment to establish three (3) core pots including an M & E and Reporting Officer, which post will be established by end FY 2022. |
| 3.3 Explore various options to engage a dedicated Communication Specialist to cover the needs of the Seychelles UNDP Office and UNDP-led projects. | 2019 - 2020 | Completed | **Completed** | * A Communications Specialist and 2 Communications Assistants have been recruited for the MCO since FY 2020 – with optimized coverage for both country offices. * The MCO maintains active social media pages across several platforms, maintains an active webpage, and has produced annual reports for each year since 2019; and published various research and analytic publications |