

UNDP Management Response

Project Title: UNDP Project “Support to Policy Research for Sustainable Development”

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Overall comments: The results of the project as a whole correspond to the expected results of the UNDAF 2016-2020 and CPD 2016-2020, as well as the objectives included in the relevant Government programs (from 2017 to 2019) in the framework of realization the Action Strategy for the five priority areas of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021. The project played an important role in the process of SDG nationalization and development of National Roadmap for SDG Implementation, also advocating for SDGs through the prism of the Government reform which was an excellent approach and undoubtedly contributed to its success. Four key concepts that were defined at the design stage, in fact, have become critical factors for success: commitment, institutionalization, adaptation and capacity building of relevant personnel. Project Management used actively and effectively an adaptive management, Results-Based Management (RBM), change management, linking the project's objectives to the interests of OPU and Government, while not compromising the mandate and mission of UNDP.

Evaluation Recommendation 1:	It is recommended to organize a seminar for exchanging of experiences on implementation of this type of the project (in EN and RU), with participation of potential beneficiaries, international development organizations, as well as donors and possibly other countries of the RBEC / CA (UNDP) region, with publication of the report.			
Management Response:	Agree. The program will benefit from learning experience of other UNDP offices in implementation of this type of projects. Yet, it will be more cost efficient to conduct the analysis based on the desk review of the existing project and program document and skype call with the relevant focal points in the UNDP COs.			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1 In future programming, where possible, ensure consultation with regional and country teams and review of the project document, lessons learned and Quality Assurance report of the projects with the similar focus	December 2020	SDC Team	Ongoing	
Evaluation Recommendation 2:	It is recommended all research results created by the project and not being confidential be published in paper format and distributed. Information products on them should be posted on the UNDP CO and OPU web portals.			
Management Response:	Agree. UNDP practices the approach were all the documents elaborated are available for the use of wider audience and are saved in the open repository / available in the e-format on			

	the UNDP web-site. All the documents elaborated in the framework of the project are open for public.			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
Ensure that the reports and other knowledge products are available on the UNDP web-site, easily accessible, searchable and downloadable.	December 2020	SDC Team and PR Specialist	Ongoing	
Evaluation Recommendation 3:	<p>It is recommended to periodically conduct consultations in the “focus group” format (with participate heads of ministries and departments) on the relevance of studies planned by UNDP. It is important to increase synergies among UN agency projects, conducts joint discussions of action plans in order to eliminate duplication, and achieve the effectiveness of the work of interdepartmental teams.</p> <p>Besides, UNDP CO needs to rethink its approaches and take a more meticulous approach to the recruitment process. Here, it becomes critical to participate as a team leader of an expert who received a PhD in leading Western universities, has skills in modeling and econometrics, and systems analysis methods.</p>			
Management Response:	<p>Agree. UNDP closely tracks reform agenda and priorities indicated by the GoU. All the research products prepared by the project were relevant, demand-based and often never conducted before. UNDP project closely collaborate in conducting research work and quarterly meetings are a good platform that help to find synergies and avoid duplication.</p> <p>It is a common practice that the head of the research team is a person with the advanced degree from foreign institution with skills which are the most relevant for each particular research work.</p>			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
Continue working closely with the GoU to follow the policy priorities and address the needs of the Government in the timely manner.	ongoing	SDC	Ongoing	
Evaluation Recommendation 4:	<p>It is recommended in the future to consolidate the efforts of other donors (WB, EBRD, IFC, IDB, EU, etc.) in the field of in-depth research, with a special emphasis on the Evidence-based policy (EBP) development. Taking into account the great need for a unified coordination of efforts to promote and awareness of the SDGs (in the Senate, NGOs, Mass-media, civil society), as well as the initiative of Uzbekistan to prepare a Voluntary National</p>			

	<p>Review (VNR) on the SDGs achievement in 2020, UNDP CO needs to continue to work in the following areas.</p> <p>a. Creating conditions for enhancing the potential of experts involved in the nationalization of the SDGs and tracking indicators, including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Methodological assistance on nationalization of indicators and adaptation of methodologies, direction for advanced training and knowledge in the field of SDGs;</i> ii. <i>Seminars for employees of territorial divisions of ministries and departments on the implementation of the SDGs, methods for calculating and nationalizing indicators;</i> iii. <i>Rendering assistance to newly created centers (CERR, IFR, IFMR) in capacity building by involving leading international experts in the process of “becoming” and organizing targeted training;</i> iv. <i>Abandonment of the practice of conducting research on the basis of outdated and questionable data, which were prepared during the period of “widespread” restriction of access to data in the country.</i> <p>b. Assistance in the quality preparation of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) on achieving the SDGs in 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>The provision of methodological and technical assistance in the preparation of VNR-2020;</i> ii. <i>Conducting online courses in the context of the SDGs and the preparation of VNR;</i> iii. <i>PR-events to promote the SDGs in the media and in the Parliament;</i> iv. <i>Support of works on improving the site www.nsdg.stat.uz, on the interface, content updating, additions with infographics and maps.</i> <p>VNR-2020 should demonstrate the relationship between the nationalization of the SDGs and ongoing reforms. That is, there is a need to compare Global indicators and National indicators in order to create a single matrix to track the results of the achievement of the SDGs.</p>			
Management Response:	Agree. SDG nationalization process is ongoing and will require joint effort to tackle all the unsolved issues with mainstreaming into national development policies, accelerating, monitoring and financing.			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
UNDP will continue working on the SDG nationalization through the existing projects. There will resource mobilization activities undertaken in order to mobilize financing for the work on support to SDG monitoring with Goskomstat. Good collaboration has been established with UNECE and UNEP on	December 2022	SDC	Ongoing	

finalizing the national SDG indicators, which needs to be continued and expanded. The work on updating of the SDG web-site was been finalized, but further work on supporting and updating the web-site will be conducted.				
Evaluation Recommendation 5:	<p>It is recommended that UNDP consider establishing, together with the Government, a project to increase the capacity of women researchers. There is a need to create a target group (critical mass) with which they will work on a long-term basis to create a “new female face” of science in the context of each region of the country.</p> <p>The multiplicative effect to strengthen and equalize the gender balance can be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Involvement of women educated in foreign universities in the process; b. Creating the conditions under which the participation of experts of both sexes will be ensured in each research project (50/50). c. “Point-by-point” involvement of UNDP in attracting international experts; d. Adequate funding from the Government to increase the motivation of experts, especially youth. 			
Management Response:	Partially agree. In the light of the large gender gap in labor force participation as well as access to higher education, there is a vast importance in creating equal opportunities to women to participate in every sphere of life.			
Key Action(s)	Time Frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
The project Support to Youth Employment is designed to create opportunities for women to develop skills that will enhance their ability to get engaged in the labor market. The project will elaborate training material and conduct start-up programme targeting women entrepreneurs.	December 2020	SDC	Ongoing	

* The implementation status is tracked in the ERC.