Annex 2. Key recommendations and the management response to the 2015 independent Evaluation of UNDP’s Contribution to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

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| **Recommendation 1. UNDP should align its resources and programming with its corporate message on the centrality of supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment as a means to ‘fast forward’ development results. Gender mainstreaming should also go beyond providing sex-disaggregated data for all results areas of the Strategic Plan. In this connection, the merits of integrating the gender equality strategy as part of the next strategic plan (2018 onwards) should receive serious consideration.** | | | | |
| **Management response:**  The UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 has strongly integrated gender equality across its Integrated Results and Resource Framework (IRRF). In addition to a dedicated outcome for accelerating gender equality, it has mainstreamed gender equality across all other outcomes. The new gender equality strategy, 2014-2017 is an accompaniment to the Strategic Plan and looks at how to mainstream gender in all outcomes of the plan. The strategy, which was approved by the Executive Board, has made financial and human resource commitments to ensure that gender mainstreaming is adequately resourced. This includes as a principal objective meeting the United Nations system-wide financial target of allocating 15 per cent of the organization’s resources towards gender equality by 2017. The gender marker is tracking UNDP investments on gender and is aligned to UN-SWAP principles and standards. The gender marker is now being used as an accountability tool in the GSIC to track progress towards the 15 per cent target. UNDP will integrate the 15 per cent financial commitment into the guidelines for trust fund allocations, work with IEO to improve their evaluation of gender outcomes and draw on the gender marker findings. The merits of integrating the gender equality strategy into the next strategic plan (2018 onwards) will be considered as part of the midterm review of the current Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. Additionally, new quality assurance tools are being developed to ensure that gender analysis is integrated in all country programmes and programme documents. The text under this recommendation also suggested that UNDP strengthen its work on the crisis prevention and recovery and energy and environment focus areas. Tools and work processes will be developed (please refer to the key actions below) to address this recommendation. | | | | |
| **Key action(s)** | **Time frame** | **Responsible unit(s)** | **Tracking\*** | |
| **Status** | **Comments** |
| * 1. UNDP will expand the GSIC forum to include all central and regional bureaux, the Human Development Report Office and all professional homes, and utilize tools such as the gender marker to monitor compliance with corporate mandates and resource targets. The gender marker data will be broken down by region and Strategic Plan outcomes and outputs to be a more precise monitoring tool. The gender marker data will also be incorporated into the corporate planning system. Improvements will be made to the gender marker to improve accuracy (please see key actions under recommendation 3). | By December 2016 | Executive Office, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)/ Gender Team, regional bureaux | Completed | 1.1 The GSIC forum was expanded and now includes all central and regional bureaus, the Human Development Report office and all professional homes. Gender marker ratings were part of the reporting and the data performance was discussed according to regions and Strategic Plan outcomes and outputs. The gender marker data has been incorporated in the corporate planning system and is now available in real-time at the global, regional and country office level. |
| * 1. The merits of integrating the gender equality strategy into the strategic plan from 2018 onwards will be considered based on findings of the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. | By December 2017 | Executive Office | Initiated | 1.2 The findings of the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan are being presented to the June 2016 Annual Session of the Executive Board in June. This will inform considerations on the merits of integrating the gender equality strategy into the strategic plan from 2018 onwards planned for the third and fourth quarter of 2016. |
| * 1. UNDP standard operating procedures in crisis contexts, surge and express staff rosters (terms of reference, capacities, training) and crisis response tools all are being reviewed to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment can be addressed at the onset of crises. | By June 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team, Crisis Response Unit | Completed | UNDP reviewed its operating procedures and included Gender as a standing item in all decision-making levels including all crises boards.  • Developed a checklist to ensure that first responders address gender issues and engage women’s organizations immediately  • Revised terms of reference for SURGE advisors to strengthen gender-responsiveness  • Strengthened the Express Roster on Gender with new profiles and CVs  • Included a Gender profile in the set of “First Responders” that will be deployed within hours of the onset of the crisis  • UNDP deployed a Gender and Inclusion Specialist to Nepal after the earthquake and supported gender specialists to mainstream gender in post-Ebola recovery plans in Liberia and Sierra Leone. |
| * 1. To support the integration of gender in energy and environment programming, UNDP will develop: (a) a toolkit for UNDP staff on mainstreaming gender in environment programming; (b) a gender toolkit for GEF projects; and (c) tools for integrating gender into disaster preparedness and response. | By December 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team, BPPS/Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Team | Initiated | 1.4 Two publications ware launched in 2015 to support the integration of gender in energy and environment programming. These are “The Gender Responsive National Communications Toolkit” and “Mainstreaming Gender in Mitigation and Technology Development and Transfer Interventions” produced in partnership with UNEP. The gender mainstreaming toolkit for GEF projects is in the process of being developed. |
| **Recommendation 2. Given the uneven performance in the four focus areas of the Strategic Plan, 2008-2013 in promoting gender development results, UNDP should ensure that future assessments pay specific attention to the progress, effectiveness and quality of gender development results in the seven outcome areas of the current Strategic Plan.** | | | | |
| **Management response:**  UNDP welcomes this recommendation and will develop guidelines for integrating gender development results in thematic assessments including reviews, and will work with IEO to improve the integration of gender in all evaluations. | | | | |
| 2.1 Guidelines for integrating gender in reviews, assessments, decentralized and independent evaluations (drawing on existing tools including the IRRF, gender marker, etc.,) will be developed. | By December 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team, IEO | Not initiated | 2.1 Planned for in the third quarter of 2016. |
| **Recommendation 3. UNDP should focus on refining tools, instruments and processes developed during the period 2008-2013 and focus on further internalizing the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment to the achievement of all development goals among staff. Specific recommendations on these improvements and possible new areas of intervention are discussed below:**   * 1. **Gender analysis should become mandatory in all programming and be linked with justifying the gender marker rating of each UNDP intervention.**   2. **The gender marker should track allocations in a way that provides reliable aggregated data at different stages of the project cycle. It should be subject to random external checks and also be systematically assessed by internal audit exercises.**   3. **The Gender Seal requires senior management’s attention in terms of its future role as a corporate certification initiative.**   4. **Stronger attention should be placed on using the GSIC forum as a venue for organization-wide learning, problem-solving and sharing of instructive practices**.   5. **UNDP should strengthen capacity development processes that focus on gender mainstreaming so they are relevant and apply to staff’s daily work and needs**   6. **UNDP should consider exploring new frontiers for engaging in gender issues that go beyond women’s issues, for example the ‘masculinity’ agenda.** | | | | |
| **Management response:**  UNDP management appreciates the recognition of past efforts, and notes that UNDP will continue to refine tools, instruments and processes with a focus on internalizing gender equality and women’s empowerment towards the achievement of development goals.   * 1. **Gender analysis should become mandatory in all programming and be linked with justifying the gender marker rating of each UNDP intervention.**   UNDP will ensure that gender analysis is linked with the gender marker rating of every UNDP intervention by integrating this analysis in existing and upcoming mandatory programme/project planning, monitoring and assessment processes such as programme/project quality assurance, social and environmental screening and revision of the project document.  **3.2 The gender marker should track allocations in a way that provides reliable aggregated data at different stages of the project cycle. It should be subject to random external checks and also be systematically assessed by internal audit exercises.**  UNDP welcomes this recommendation and will include in the revised gender marker guidance note provisions for random assessments and integrated into internal audit exercises.   * 1. **The Gender Seal requires senior management’s attention in terms of its future role as a corporate certification initiative.  To facilitate this process, the Gender Seal pilot should be assessed by a team of independent advisors to guide its application as it enters a critical post-pilot phase.**   Management appreciates the recognition that the Gender Equality Seal approach can be of value to national ministries. UNDP welcomes and agrees with the recommendation for independent assessments to review, document and improve upon the experiences of the Gender Equality Seal.  **3.4 Stronger attention should be placed on using the GSIC forum as a venue for organization-wide learning, problem-solving and sharing of instructive practices.**  UNDP appreciates the recommendation for the GSIC to become a venue for learning, finding solutions and sharing of practices. UNDP has expanded the membership of the GSIC and for the first time in 2015, all UNDP bureaux reported gender equality progress and results, shared lessons learned and identified overall and bureau-specific recommendations to take forward.  **3.5 UNDP should strengthen capacity development processes that focus on gender mainstreaming so they are relevant and apply to staff’s daily work and needs.**  UNDP agrees on the importance of capacity development for gender mainstreaming and will improve existing and upcoming training tools by including gender content.  **3.6 UNDP should consider exploring new frontiers for engaging in gender issues that go beyond women’s issues, for example the ‘masculinity’ agenda.**  UNDP will consider exploring new frontiers for engaging in gender issues that go beyond women’s issues, for example the ‘masculinity’ agenda. | | | | |
| 3.1.1. Mandatory environmental and social screening procedures established for all projects above $500,000 to ensure they have gender equality as a key principal. | Continuous | BPPS/Gender Team, BPPS/Development Impact Team, regional bureaux and regional service centres | Completed | * + 1. The mandatory environmental and social screening procedures were adopted in 2015 and have gender equality as one of the three key principals. |
| 3.1.2. Gender analysis is a requirement of the mandatory project quality assurance process. | Continuous | BPPS/Gender Team, BPPS/Development Impact Team, regional bureaux and regional service centres | Completed | * + 1. UNDP has developed a gender analysis tool which was launched together with the project QA standards roll-out. |
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| 3.1.3. Quality assurance guidelines for all country programmes and global/regional programmes will address gender equality and women’s empowerment. | By December 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team, BPPS/Development Impact Team, regional bureaux and regional service centres | Completed | * + 1. UNDP’s mandatory project quality assurance (QA) procedure and guidelines has gender analysis as a one of the programming quality criteria. UNDP has developed a gender analysis tool which was launched together with the project QA guidelines roll-out to country offices in February 2016. |
| 3.2.1. The gender marker guidance note will be revised to provide more specific guidance to improve gender marker accuracy.  3.2.2. The gender marker rating will be included in the cover note for project documents and integrated in the quality assurance guidelines.  3.2.3. A sample of random gender marker audits will be undertaken each year to improve accuracy (ensuring regional balance).  3.2.4. Guidelines for integrating gender in reviews, assessments, evaluations and audits (drawing on existing tools including IRRF, gender marker, etc.) will be developed. | By December 2016  By December 2016  By December 2016  By December 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team  BPPS/Gender Team, BPPS/Development Impact Group  BPPS/Gender Team, regional bureaux  BPPS/IEO/Office of Audit and Investigations | Completed  Not Initiated  Not Initiated  Not Initiated | 3.2.1. The gender marker guidance note has been revised and refined to improve the accuracy and use of gender marker ratings. |
| 3.3. Independent assessment will be undertaken of the Gender Equality Seal to review, document and improve the tool. | By June 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team | Initiated | The terms of reference for the independent assessment of the Gender Equality Seal has been finalized. The assessment is expected to take place in the third quarter of 2016. |
| 3.4.1 The GSIC will continue to be strengthened with all bureaux reporting. Accountability tools such as the gender marker, results-oriented annual report data and gender parity data will inform the GSIC meetings. GSIC recommendations will be presented to the Executive Group and they will be reviewed for implementation by the GSIC.  3.4.2 GSIC will refresh the UNDP gender parity strategy with a view to achieving a more holistic approach to gender parity issues in UNDP. | Continuous  By November 2015 | All UNDP  GSIC, with support from Office of Human Resources | Completed  Completed | 3.4.1. Information and data analysis from the gender marker, results-oriented annual report and gender parity data now form the basis of GSIC reporting. Report findings are discussed at the GSIC meeting. Recommendations identified at the meeting have been presented to the Executive Group and the implementation have been reviewed at the following GSIC meeting.  3.4.2. UNDP has adopted a revised gender parity strategy that envisages actions in the following areas:   * 1. invest in attracting women and building a pipeline of female candidates;   2. strengthen accountability of managers for reaching gender parity targets;   3. work with leaders/managers to create and manage a truly inclusive workplace;   4. ensure that internal UNDP human resources strategies, policies, procedures and guidance promote gender inclusiveness and gender parity;   5. institute special measures to ensure an increase in the appointments/advancement of qualified women;   6. promote a culture of inclusion, with particular focus on gender. |
| 3.5 UNDP to review and improve training tools for policy and programme staff on gender mainstreaming in programming, monitoring and reporting with greater focus on improving capacity for gender analysis, accuracy and consistency in gender marker ratings and gender in areas of profession. | By December 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team | Not initiated | 3.5. Review is planned for the third quarter of 2016. |
| 3.6 UNDP to undertake research on ‘masculinities’ to better understand the linkages between masculinities and gender inequality, specifically gender-based violence. | By December 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team, Regional Bureau for Asia Pacific | Not initiated |  |
| **Recommendation 4. Country offices should prepare gender plans that identify gaps and needs in terms of technical support, capacity-building, joint action and advocacy and collective monitoring that facilitate stronger gender programming. These plans should also help to identify areas where UNDP can draw on expertise and leverage the existing capacities of other United Nations agencies active on gender issues at the country level. This process should be supported, monitored and reported upon by the respective regional bureaux to the GSIC on annual basis.** | | | | |
| **Management response:**  The Gender Equality Seal certification is the primary tool for strengthening country office capacity and ensuring collective monitoring for stronger gender programming. Currently, 29 countries have undertaken the Gender Seal certification process. This will be expanded to more countries. Regional bureaux and the GSIC will draw upon the GSIC benchmarking to measure progress. | | | | |
| 4.1 The Gender Equality Seal benchmarking to be completed by all country offices in Africa and utilized as a tool for monitoring gender capacity. | By December 2015 | BPPS/Gender Team/ Regional Bureau for Africa | Completed | 4.1. In 2015, 30 RBA Country Offices completed the self-assessment according to the Gender Equality Seal benchmarks. Based on the findings, 11 country offices are now participating in the 2015-16 certification round, while remaining offices have developed and are implementing gender action plans. |
| 4.2 The next phase of the Gender Equality Seal certification initiative will be launched with approximately 30 country offices being certified. | By December 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team/ regional bureaux and country offices | Completed | 4.2. The second round of the Gender Equality Seal was launched in August 2015, with 28 new country offices enrolling. This is in addition to 25 country offices from the first round which are participating to improve their Seal certification. |
| **Recommendation 5. UNDP currently does not have a measurement standard to systematically track the type, quality and effectiveness of its contribution to gender results that also captures the context of change and the degree of its contribution to that change. In order to address this issue, UNDP should codify the way it wishes to monitor, report, evaluate and audit its contributions to gender and this framework should be used for rigorously tracking results for gender equality and women’s empowerment at the country, regional and global levels.** | | | | |
| **Management response:**  UNDP believes that it has a range of tools for measuring progress that are used for different purposes. These comply with a range of different inter-agency standards. Taken together, these give a good view of the gender mainstreaming taking place in a given business unit. However, management will take forward the recommendation to consider adopting measures such as the Gender@Work framework to move beyond a focus on numbers of women and men towards more transformative results is worth consideration. | | | | |
| 5.1. UNDP will begin an internal dialogue bringing experts from the Gender@Work network to explore how the organization can move beyond a focus on numbers of women and men towards more transformative results. This will include the development of a capacity-building strategy to support country offices and accelerate changes.  5.2. In developing its monitoring policy, UNDP will integrate provisions for systematic tracking of the type, quality and effectiveness of its contribution to gender results.  5.3. UNDP will bring the Gender@Work framework to be discussed at the Gender Steering and Implementation Committee meetings.  5.4. The feasibility of the Gender@Work framework to become part of the UNDP results-based management policy and processes to be considered in the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2013-2017. | By December 2016  By December 2016  By December 2017  By December 2016 | BPPS/Gender Team  Executive Office, BPPS/Development Impact Group/ Gender Team, regional bureaux  Executive Office, BPPS/Gender Team, regional bureaux  Executive Office, BPPS/Development Impact Group | Not initiated  Not initiated  Not initiated  Not initiated |  |