Implementation Stage Quality Assurance Report

Form Status: Approved

Overall Rating: Satisfactory

Decision: Continue as planned: The project is of sufficient quality to continue as planned. All management actions must be addressed in a timely manner.

Portfolio/Project Number: 00096923

Portfolio/Project Title: Plastic Waste Management Programme: A Partnership

Portfolio/Project Date: 2018-01-01 / 2024-06-15

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Quality Rating: Exemplary

1. Is the project pro-actively identifying changes to the external environment and incorporating them into the project strategy?

- 3: The project team has identified relevant changes in the external environment that may present new opportunities or threats to the project’s ability to achieve its objectives and the assumptions have been tested to determine if the project’s strategy is still valid. There is evidence that the project board has considered the implications, and documented any changes needed to the project in response. (all must be true)

- 2: The project team has identified relevant changes in the external environment that may present new opportunities or threats to the project’s ability to achieve its objectives. There is some evidence that the project board discussed this, but relevant changes may not have been fully integrated in the project. (both must be true)

- 1: The project team may have considered relevant changes in the external environment since implementation began, but there is no evidence that the project team has considered changes to the project as a result.
Evidence:

- This project is in line with MoEFCC PMW 2016, and 2018 Rules and in line with SBM strategy for SWM. It is creating a more systemic approach in managing the plastic waste effectively, i.e., creating citizens’ behavior actions; setting up decentralized Material Recovery Facilities (MRF) and mainstreaming waste pickers (Safai Sathis), who are largely women. The evidence is based on the agreements with City Commissioners (CCs) and they are allocating space and funds respectively.

- Project is also aligning with the emerging needs of the Extended Producer’s Responsibility (EPR) requirements. Evidence, Project was also nominated by CPCC to facilitate the formulation of the EPR strategy. Also, the new EPR guidelines have picked the entire UNDP model as a case study without mentioning UNDP but terminologies are similar to UNDP.

- MRFs being set up were only for plastics largely; but agreements with CCs have led to have the dry waste also collected, in fact this has led to increase the benefits to all relevant stakeholders. Evidence are in the CCs agreements where we mention dry waste, including plastics. The project has successfully established Material recovery facility in 27 since its inception in 2018. In remaining cities we are in a process to establish SK. In these cities we are operating from DWCC. Overall, the project has its presence in 38 cities in 19 states across the country.

- The model has helped in collection of more than 5,000 MTs of plastic waste in last 2.5 years leading to mitigate more than 76,000 MTs of CO2 emissions. Checked plastic ingress in seas, rivers and landfills as it has been either recycled into new trades effectively or met its life cycle approach through co-processing.
2. Is the project aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan?

- Yes, project is aligned with the UNDP strategic plan.
- Project promotes systemic sustainable development and have established MRFs; instituted self-help groups (SHGs) of women and linked them to banks, opening individual bank accounts; savings and increased incomes for all engaged in plastic waste recycling. Evidence the monthly and quarterly reports of the partners with proper data and with verifiable support systems.
- The project has helped in creating jobs, equal pay for both men and women and provide fare wages/price for the collected waste plastic. Evidence the monthly reports and spot meetings with waste pickers, increased number of people in better working conditions.
- The project promotes women empowerment- SHGs are being formed, for social security- bank accounts, insurance and regular health camps are being conducted for them and their families.

Evidence:

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Relevant

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

3. Are the project’s targeted groups being systematically engaged, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized, to ensure the project remains relevant for them?
3: Systematic and structured feedback has been collected over the past two years from a representative sample of beneficiaries, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized, as part of the project’s monitoring system. Representatives from the targeted groups are active members of the project’s governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) and there is credible evidence that their feedback informs project decision making. (all must be true)

2: Targeted groups have been engaged in implementation and monitoring, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized. Beneficiary feedback, which may be anecdotal, has been collected over the past year to ensure the project is addressing local priorities. This information has been used to inform project decision making. (all must be true)

1: Some beneficiary feedback may have been collected over the past year, but this information has not been used to inform project decision making. This option is also selected if no beneficiary feedback has been collected.

Not Applicable

Evidence:

- Yes, project is systematically engaging with the marginalized groups including Safai Sathis, kabadiwallahs (waste traders), scrap dealers, micro-entrepreneurs etc., in this project.
- The project is working towards strengthening the social construct and uplifting livelihood of the waste pickers. While small enterprises started with a handful of Safai Sathis, the project is working towards increasing its reach so that more Safai Sathis are benefitted. See the monthly/quarterly reports.
- Project is facilitating social security through social inclusion—opening of bank accounts, insurance, Health camps, access to clean drinking water and toilets etc. at the Swachhta Kendra.
- Project has effectively implemented strategic communications plans to increase awareness amongst the Safai Sathis with respect to health, hygiene and safety practices.
- Feedback and stories of waste pickers on how project has helped in their life transition has been captured and it has been published and circulated through videos and Project Newsletters.

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4. Is the project generating knowledge and lessons learned (i.e., what has worked and what has not) and has this knowledge informed management decisions to ensure the continued relevance of the project towards its stated objectives, the quality of its outputs and the management of risk?
1: There is limited or no evidence that knowledge and lessons learned have been collected by the project team. There is little or no evidence that this has informed project decision making.

Evidence:

- Yes, project is generating relevant knowledge, lessons sharing through several workshops, meetings within range of stakeholders. New agreements getting signed with partners; new partners like HDFC Bank, Naya Re Energy and CCIF have been on-boarded. The project has started working extensively in the domain of dry waste management in rural area in the states of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh under Swachh Bharat Mission - Grameen (Phase II) with Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti as the overarching Ministry.
- The programme has also been nominated for expert committees instituted by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), DDWS and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- Best Practices and SOPs are formed and are reshaped with learnings happening e.g. new points added while issuing the contracts; new machines like hand pressed balers added. New partnerships with bulk generators, research institutes such as University of Basel. The team is also in talks with the office of Principle Scientific Advisor to undertake market ready innovations that can be implemented. These innovations have been developed by esteemed IITs of the country. Team members understanding the terminology of waste management issues and risks at various levels in safety at the Swachhta Kendras.
- With each city having a different waste generation and management set up, important lessons are learnt by project team considering ‘one model fits all’ is not the appropriate policy. After several hit and trial methodologies, each city enters into the mode of seamless operations. Working with the urban local bodies can be challenging thus helping the team learn its lessons.
- The project is also working & helping in establishing a systems approach globally for various countries that want to establish a similar set up of plastic waste management with their respective stakeholders.
5. Is the project sufficiently at scale, or is there potential to scale up in the future, to meaningfully contribute to development change?

- 3: There is credible evidence that the project is reaching a sufficient number of beneficiaries (either directly through significant coverage of target groups, or indirectly, through policy change) to meaningfully contribute to development change.
- 2: While the project is currently not at scale, there are explicit plans in place to scale up the project in the future (e.g., by extending its coverage or using project results to advocate for policy change).
- 1: The project is not at scale, and there are no plans currently to scale up the project in the future.
Evidence:

- Since its inception in 2018, the project is now spread across 35 cities in 19 States across the country. With 5 donors on-board, PWM’s reach is increasing by the day.

Data assimilation has shown the beneficiaries are in increasing in all aspects in collection, segregation and recycling. The project has achieved 40% of the scale it aims at reaching by year four. 57% of onboarded waste pickers are women.

- Project has formed and linked 100 SHGs for Safai Sathis across 38 cities. In these cities scale up plan is being formulated.

- Apart from Implementing partners for the project Enterprise, Special and Informal Sector partner have been formed. It is done to strengthen the capacity of the organization working in the plastic waste domain. This will help in achieving the project target.

- Partners such as Recykal have been onboarded that are working towards conducting sensitization and awareness campaigns in schools and colleges under the IEC. Recykal is also working with MoHUA and UNDP to establish a digital waste exchange market that will enable traders/brand owners/recyclers/kaba diwallas/independent Safai Sathis an accessible platform for purchase and sale of waste.

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Principled

6. Are the project’s measures (through outputs, activities, indicators) to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant and producing the intended effect? If not, evidence-based adjustments and changes have been made.

Quality Rating: Satisfactory
The project team has systematically gathered data and evidence through project monitoring on the relevance of the measures to address gender inequalities and empower women. Analysis of data and evidence were used to inform adjustments and changes, as appropriate. (both must be true)

**Evidence:**

- The project is focused on the aspect of addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. Regular partners' meeting, engaging with Safai Sethis, ensuring equal pay for all, maintaining monthly, quarterly and filed visit reports are some of the tools that the project team is using to identify areas for increased intervention.
  - To increase the number of women Safai Sethis special awareness campaigns are organized, and several surveys have been conducted with the help of ULB officials. A baseline study of each city has been conducted to understand the existing number of registered Safai Sethis in the city and the gender ratio.
  - The project is conducting campaigns to sensitize Safai Sethis and strengthen their social construct. Health Camps, trainings about financial literacy, importance of health and hygiene, has helped the project to engage with more women waste pickers. Project is also establishing creches at the center so that women could bring their children.
  - Awareness campaigns on women health issues; e.g. Menstrual hygiene management is being implemented by the IPs. Information on vaccinations for children is being encouraged in the project.
  - A survey amongst implementation partners has been conducted to measure the understanding the partners have regarding the gender based component. Based on this survey two orientation & sensitization trainings have been conducted with third party experts from BMGF etc.

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7. Are social and environmental impacts and risks being successfully managed and monitored?

3: Social and environmental risks are tracked in the risk log. Appropriate assessments conducted where required (i.e., Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Substantial and High risk projects and some level of social and environmental assessment for Moderate risk projects as identified through SESP). Relevant management plan(s) developed for identified risks through consultative process and implemented, resourced, and monitored. Risks effectively managed or mitigated. If there has been a substantive change to the project or change in context that affects risk levels, the SESP is updated to reflect these changes. (all must be true)

2: Social and environmental risks are tracked in the risk log. Appropriate assessments conducted where required (i.e., Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Substantial and High risk projects and some level of social and environmental assessment for Moderate risk projects as identified through SESP). Relevant management plan(s) developed, implemented and monitored for identified risks. OR project is categorized as Low risk through the SESP.

1: Social and environmental risks have not been tracked in the risk log. For projects categorized as High, Substantial, and Moderate Risk there is no evidence that social and environmental assessments have been completed and/or management plans or measures development, implemented or monitored. There have been substantive changes to the project or changes in the context but SESP has not been updated. (any may be true)

Evidence:

- With the outbreak of COVID 19 and project completing two years of its operations a fresh Risk Log was prepared considering social, environmental and economic risks that can impact the project. The Risk Log has been uploaded on ATLAS.
  The project is medium risk.
  Monitoring & Evaluation teams from UN Headquarters has assessed the project. A team of external evaluators as the Mid-Term Review (MTR) team of three experts have conducted almost 10 meetings with project managers and external stakeholders to monitor and recommend on the project.
  Satisfactory

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8. Are grievance mechanisms available to project-affected people and are grievances (if any) addressed to ensure any perceived harm is effectively mitigated?
3: Project-affected people have been actively informed of UNDP’s Corporate Accountability Mechanism (SRM/SECU) and how to access it. If the project is categorized as High, Substantial, or Moderate Risk through the SESP, a project-level grievance mechanism is in place and project affected people informed. If grievances have been received, they are effectively addressed in accordance with SRM Guidance. (all must be true)

2: Project-affected people have been informed of UNDP’s Corporate Accountability Mechanism and how to access it. If the project is categorized as Substantial or High Risk through the SESP, a project-level grievance mechanism is in place and project affected people informed. If grievances have been received they are responded to but face challenges in arriving at a resolution.

1: Project-affected people not informed of UNDP’s Corporate Accountability Mechanism. If grievances have been received they are not responded to. (any may be true)

Evidence:

Although at many places the implementing partners have been told about the UNDP’s Corporate Accountability Mechanism (SRM/SECU) and how to access it. But every month we are adding new partners and they are all updated on that.

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Management & Monitoring

9. Is the project’s M&E Plan sufficient and adequately implemented?

3: The project has a comprehensive and costed M&E plan. Baselines, targets and milestones are fully populated. Progress data against indicators in the project’s RRF is being reported regularly using credible data sources and collected according to the frequency stated in the Plan, including sex disaggregated data as relevant. Any evaluations conducted, if relevant, fully meet decentralized evaluation standards, including gender UNEG standards. Lessons learned, including during evaluations and/or After Action Reviews, are used to take corrective actions when necessary. (all must be true)

2: The project has a costed M&E Plan, and most baselines and targets are populated. Progress data against indicators in the project’s RRF is collected on a regular basis, although there may be some slippage in following the frequency stated in the Plan and data sources are not always reliable. Any evaluations conducted, if relevant, meet most decentralized evaluation standards. Lessons learned have been captured but may not have been used to take corrective actions yet. (all must be true)

1: The project has an M&E Plan, but costs are not clearly planned and budgeted for, or are unrealistic. Progress data is not being regularly collected against the indicators in the project’s RRF. Evaluations may not meet decentralized evaluation standards. Lessons learned are rarely captured and used. Select this option also if the project does not have an M&E plan.
Evidence:

- Project has developed comprehensive costed M&E plans; many of the baselines are defined and the SOPs on Monitoring, data recording, operations of MR, finance, Procurement and data recording formats are developed. It has been circulated among all the partners and the donors. These manuals are regularly updated on feedback and learnings.
- Progress data is collected from Implementing and enterprise partners in the form of monthly and quarterly report. These reports are then analyzed, and the results are submitted to donors.
- City reports, government reports, letters to pollution control boards, municipal corporations, fact sheet etc. are prepared to showcase the progress of the project.
- Regular review meetings are conducted not only with donors but also country office and procurement team to evaluate progress being made.

10. Is project’s governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) functioning as intended?

3: The project’s governance mechanism is operating well, and is a model for other projects. It has met in the agreed frequency stated in the project document and the minutes of the meetings are on file. There is regular (at least annual) progress reporting to the project board or equivalent on results, risks and opportunities. It is clear that the project board explicitly reviews and uses evidence, including progress data, knowledge, lessons and evaluations, as the basis for informing management decisions (e.g., change in strategy, approach, work plan) (all must be true to select this option)

2: *The project’s governance mechanism has met in the agreed frequency and the minutes of the meeting are on file. A project progress report has been submitted to the project board or equivalent at least once in the past year, covering results, risks and opportunities. (both must be true to select this option)*

1: The project’s governance mechanism has not met in the frequency stated in the project document over the past year and/or the project board or equivalent is not functioning as a decision-making body for the project as intended.
Evidence:

- Yes, Project has formalized formation of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and Project Steering Committee (PSC) for the project. Regular review meetings are conducted with all the donors.
- Project has conducted 1 PAC meeting and 16 Review meetings has been conducted with donors and MOM for meeting has been documented.

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11. Are risks to the project adequately monitored and managed?

- 3: The project has actively monitored risks every quarter including consulting with key stakeholders, including security advisors, to identify continuing and emerging risks and to assess if the main assumptions remain valid. There is clear evidence that relevant management plans and mitigating measures are being fully implemented to address each key project risk, and have been updated to reflect the latest risk assessment. (all must be true)
- 2: *The project has monitored risks every year, as evidenced by an updated risk log. Some updates have been made to management plans and mitigation measures.*
- 1: The risk log has not been updated as required. There may be some evidence that the project has monitored risks (including security risks or incidents) that may affect the project’s achievement of results, but there is no explicit evidence that management actions have been taken to mitigate risks. In the case of a deteriorating security environment, no consultation has occurred with the UNDP Security Office on appropriate measures.

Evidence:

- Yes, project has started to monitor risks against the identified risk logs. The consultations are in progress at all levels and this is an on-going process to ensure seamless operations.

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12. Adequate resources have been mobilized to achieve intended results. If not, management decisions were taken to adjust expected results in the project’s results framework.

- Yes
- No

Evidence:
- Adequate funding is mobilized from donors and utilized to achieve intended results.
- Funding has been affected due to COVID-19

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13. Are project inputs procured and delivered on time to efficiently contribute to results?

- 3: The project has an updated procurement plan. Implementation of the plan is on or ahead of schedule. The project quarterly reviews operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addresses them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true)
- 2: The project has an updated procurement plan. The project annually reviews operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addresses them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true)
- 1: The project does not have an updated procurement plan. The project may or may not have reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner, however management actions have not been taken to address them.

Evidence:
- Yes, Project has a stringent procurement plan which is discussed and updated periodically with the UNDP CO; more thoughts are put together and discussed at all levels in the advancement of the scaling up of operations.

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14. Is there regular monitoring and recording of cost efficiencies taking into account the expected quality of results?
3: There is evidence that the project regularly reviews costs against relevant comparators (e.g., other projects or country offices) or industry benchmarks to ensure the project maximizes results that can be delivered with given resources. The project actively coordinates with other relevant ongoing projects and initiatives (UNDP or other) to ensure complementarity and seek efficiencies wherever possible (e.g., joint activities.) (both must be true)

2: The project monitors its own costs and gives anecdotal examples of cost efficiencies (e.g., spending less to get the same result.) but there is no systematic analysis of costs and no link to the expected quality of results delivered. The project coordinates activities with other projects to achieve cost efficiency gains.

1: There is little or no evidence that the project monitors its own costs and is considering ways to save money beyond following standard procurement rules.

Evidence:

Yes, Project monitors the costs component wise funds. The donors also review on monthly basis the budgets and costs. Plastic waste management is a 1st project to be implemented at a such scale in UNDP. Plastic waste handling and recycling is being carried out by the informal sector hence Industry benchmarks doesn’t exist largely.
- Nevertheless, project has made it mandatory for all the implementing partners to submit the QPR along with Fund Utilization Certificate. It helps in comparative study of fund allocation and targets achieved keeping in mind the field ground reality.

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Effective

Quality Rating: Exemplary

15. Is the project on track to deliver its expected outputs?

- Yes
- No
Evidence:
- Project is delivering the expected outcomes, this is being recorded and monitored through monthly, quarterly reporting.

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16. Have there been regular reviews of the work plan to ensure that the project is on track to achieve the desired results, and to inform course corrections if needed?

- 3: Quarterly progress data has informed regular reviews of the project work plan to ensure that the activities implemented are most likely to achieve the desired results. There is evidence that data and lessons learned (including from evaluations and/or After Action Reviews) have been used to inform course corrections, as needed. Any necessary budget revisions have been made. (both must be true)
- 2: There has been at least one review of the work plan per year to assess if project activities are on track to achieving the desired development results (i.e., outputs.) There may or may not be evidence that data or lessons learned has been used to inform the review(s). Any necessary budget revisions have been made.
- 1: While the project team may have reviewed the work plan at least once over the past year to ensure outputs are delivered on time, no link has been made to the delivery of desired development results. Select this option also if no review of the work plan by management has taken place over the past year.

Evidence:
- Yes, 16 review meeting have been conducted with the UNDP Top management and Donors. In this meeting project performance, achievement and way forward is discussed. MoM of these meetings is documented, and important decisions taken in these meetings are effectively implemented.
- Yes, Progress and challenges are mapped in the quarterly report. It helps in decision making and effective steps are taken to achieve the project objective and target.

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17. Are targeted groups being systematically identified and engaged, prioritizing the marginalized and excluded, to ensure results are achieved as expected?
3: The project is targeting specific groups and/or geographic areas, identified by using credible data sources on their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project’s area of work. There is clear evidence that the targeted groups are being reached as intended. The project has engaged regularly with targeted groups over the past year to assess whether they are benefiting as expected and adjustments were made if necessary to refine targeting. (all must be true)

2: The project is targeting specific groups and/or geographic areas, based on some evidence of their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project’s area of work. Some evidence is provided to confirm that project beneficiaries are members of the targeted groups. There has been some engagement with beneficiaries in the past year to assess whether they are benefiting as expected. (all must be true)

1: The project does not report on specific targeted groups. There is no evidence to confirm that project beneficiaries are deprived and/or excluded from development opportunities relevant to the project area of work. There may have been some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they are benefiting as expected, but it has been limited or has not occurred in the past year.

Not Applicable

Evidence:

- Yes, the project is intending waste pickers, sweepers as deprived and marginalized and also specific geographies as slums.
- The project is systematically working towards involving, engaging and the strengthening the social construct to have a better livelihoods promotion, actions for better skills and incomes.
- Project is clearly having this targeted through specific IEC programs and reported through the monitoring reports, Creating financial inclusion of waste pickers by opening their bank accounts, provide them Insurance, Health camps.
- Project is enhancing their income by ensuring they get a better price both for the goods collected and to be sold above the market rates, Project is conducting capacity building exercise where institutions like NIUA, NULM, Sector Skill Council Green Jobs is being onboarded to train the waste pickers on health hygiene, financial literacy, waste characterization etc.

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Sustainability & National Ownership  
Quality Rating: Satisfactory

18. Are stakeholders and national partners fully engaged in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the project?
3: Only national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) are used to fully implement and monitor the project. All relevant stakeholders and partners are fully and actively engaged in the process, playing a lead role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true)

2: National systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) are used to implement and monitor the project, but other support (such as country office support or project systems) may also be used if necessary. All relevant stakeholders and partners are fully and actively engaged in the process, playing an active role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true)

1: There is relatively limited or no engagement with national stakeholders and partners in the decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring of the project.

Not Applicable

Evidence:
- Yes, National partner and stakeholders are effectively being partnered to implement the project.
- This is evident that all program ideas are shared with them and feedback seemed to strengthen the decision-making systems together. Regular mails and ideas generation and implementation is all discussed.

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19. There is regular monitoring of changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems relevant to the project, as needed. The implementation arrangements\(^5\) have been adjusted according to changes in partner capacities.

3: In the past two years, changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems have been comprehensively assessed/monitored using clear indicators, rigorous methods of data collection and credible data sources including relevant HACT assurance activities. Implementation arrangements have been formally reviewed and adjusted, if needed, in agreement with partners according to changes in partner capacities. (both must be true)

2: In the past two years, aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems have been monitored by the project using indicators and reasonably credible data sources including relevant HACT assurance activities. Some adjustment has been made to implementation arrangements if needed to reflect changes in partner capacities. (both must be true)

1: Some aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems may have been monitored by the project, however changes to implementation arrangements have not been considered. Also select this option if changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems have not been monitored by the project.

Not Applicable
Evidence:
- Yes, analytics is done, monitoring is being carried out through review of agreements with partners. The indicators are drawn into for capacity and performance assessment.
- With range of partnerships emerging with institutions, the project is stressing more on regular monitoring.

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20. The transition and phase-out arrangements are reviewed regularly and adjusted according to progress (including financial commitments and capacity).

3: The project’s governance mechanism has reviewed the project’s sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project is on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan has been adjusted according to progress as needed. (both must be true)

2: There has been a review of the project’s sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project is on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan.

1: The project may have a sustainability plan, but there has not been a review of this strategy since it was developed. Also select this option if the project does not have a sustainability strategy.

Evidence:

This is being worked out in terms of sustainability plan. The ideas are being generated, included to address them effectively. The team and the project has the ability to think and reflect on issues and find the desired answers both in terms of the process to be followed and the capacities required.

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