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Minutes of the Local Project Appraisal Committee: “Strengthening the Resilience of Post Conflict Recovery and Development to Climate Change Risks in Sri Lanka”

Tuesday, November 12, 2013 at the UN Conference Room, 202-204, Baudhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07.

Co-Chairs:

Mr. Shantha Bandara, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development
Ms. Lovita Ramguttee, Deputy Country Director, United Nations Development Programme

Present:

Mrs. Wasantha Samaraweera, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management
Mr. Dhamma Dissanayake, Director General, Jana Sabha, Ministry of Economic Development
Mr. Jayathilake Herath, Director Divi Neguma, Ministry of Economic Development
Ms. Anoja Herath, Assistant Director, Climate Change Division, Min. Environment and Renewable Energy
Mr. Kamalathanasan, Development Officer, Ministry of Economic Development
Mr. Ananda Mallawatantri, Assistant Country Director, UNDP
Ms. Dhanushki Abhayarathne, Programme Analyst, UNDP
Ms. Zoe Keeler, Gender Focal Point, UNDP
Ms. Sureka Perera, Programme Associate, UNDP
Ms. Tharuka Dissanaikie, Consultant (Project Development), UNDP

Excused: Ms. Rizna Anees, Director, Dept. of External Resources (ERD)

I. Opening Remarks

Mr. Shantha Bandara, Additional Secretary, Rural Development, Ministry of Economic Development (MED) welcoming the participants explained the role of the Rural Development division of MED. Mr. Bandara highlighted that the focus of the Divi Neguma Programme of the MED is to build the capacity of individuals and family units while the Gama Neguma programme is focusing on village and township development. Mr. Bandara indicated that the proposed project activities have the potential to add value to both Divi Neguma and Gama Neguma programmes in the areas of improving the resilience at household level and ensuring food security and nutrition in villages. According to Mr. Bandara the Divi Neguma programme will be further strengthened with the establishment of the Divi Neguma Department in 2014.

Ms. Lovita Ramguttee, Deputy Country Director, UNDP welcoming the officials from Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Disaster Management to the UN premises outlined the expectations of the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC) meeting on the “Strengthening the Resilience of Post Conflict Recovery and Development to Climate Change Risks in Sri Lanka” project. In her remarks Ms. Ramguttee indicated that the purpose of the discussion is to obtain participants views on the proposed in the project document before finalizing it. Reviews and observations are requested particularly on the project relevance, the appropriateness of the approach and suitability of its implementation arrangements.

II. Project Presentation

Mr. Ananda Mallawatantri, Assistant Country Director, UNDP presented the project.

While describing the process adopted to prepare the project document he said that the project was developed in consultation with the key Ministries including Economic Development, Finance and Planning, Environment, Disaster management, Agriculture and Agrarian Development. A number of policy and research documents, workshops and consultative sessions provided the inputs to the project development. The project concept was strengthened much during a two day consultation in May 2012 with the participation of technical agencies, MED senior staff, heads of District Planning Units of all 25 districts, District Samurdhi Directors with Hon. Basil Rajapakse, Minister of Economic Development in attendance. The draft final project was presented to Dr. P.B. Jayasundara, Secretary for both Ministries of Finance and Planning and Economic Development in March 2013 and revised based on his inputs. The project document was approved by the National Planning Department in October 2013.

The presentation outlined the climate problem in Sri Lanka, a few climate adaptation best practices that had been field tested before, selection of target districts through scientific vulnerability assessment, consultative process during project design, project framework including components and outputs, project implementing arrangements and GEF monitoring requirements.

The project design has three key outcomes with a number of outputs under each outcome:

Outcome 1: Enabling climate-change resilient development planning at district and sub district levels

- Output 1.1: Climate risk assessments conducted in 12 vulnerable districts detailing climate related hazards, vulnerability hot spots and sensitive natural resources
- Output 1.2: Climate risks incorporated in to District and Divisional Development Plans in 12 targeted districts
- Output 1.3: Village Development Plans (VDPs) and Village Resource Management Plans (VRMPs) incorporate climate smart measures in all GN divisions in 12 target districts

Outcome 2: Increased capacity in key rural development programmes and related sectors to implement climate change adaptation measures

- Output 2.1: Development planners, district engineers, urban and rural infrastructure planners are trained to recognize climate risk problems and apply or recommend targeted risk reduction/ risk management measures
- Output 2.2: Develop institutional processes to review climate risks in new rural development investment
- Output 2.3: Knowledge codified and shared to enable replication and up-scaling of climate risk management beyond Gama Neguma and Divi Neguma

Outcome 3: Implementing climate-resilient village economic development plans in vulnerable districts

- Output 3.1: Increasing climate resilience in rural livelihoods through climate smart VRMPs
- Output 3.2: Rural Infrastructure constructed through the Gama Neguma Programme in 60 villages incorporating climate and disaster resilience measures

Mr. Mallawatantri also described the management arrangements. The project is designed under the UNDP Nationally Implementation (NIM) modality that require MED to be in the lead. The main mechanism for financial management is through the fund transfers to MED through the Treasury for the

project to spend under government procedures, based on an agreed Annual and Quarterly work plans. There is however, a provision in the project for UNDP to supply direct services to the project based on common understanding and a written request from the Ministry. As such UNDP services are available for MED to hire staff or consultants to the project or certain procurement. A quick capacity assessment would be conducted in the inception phase of the project to determine to what level the Ministry requires such direct project services.

He concluded by thanking the support given by many agencies towards the highly consultative process in the project development. The project is very strategic for UNDP given that the recent country programme action plan (2013-2017) focuses on building resilience to impacts of climate change across sectors. The project also provide an opportunity to mainstream a large number of tools UNDP helped to develop under the Disaster Management Ministry such as Village Development Planning, Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture, Rainwater Harvesting etc. The compilation of the project document is in line with the Results Based Management Framework of UNDP, UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for the period 2013-17 and guidelines stipulated by the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) managed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The Project Document clearly outlines the project implementation arrangements, monitoring and evaluation framework, key stakeholders and risks to the project.

III. Record of Discussion

The Chair, Mr. Shantha Bandara opened the floor for discussion. The discussion continued for about an hour and summarized below:

1. Linkage between the project and the MED rural development work: Mr. Shantha Bandara, Additional Secretary reiterated the objectives of the project and linkages to the rural development - to improve village and divisional level planning for climate change, to train and build human capacity to deliver rural development projects more effectively and to invest in selected risk prone villages through resilience building activities. The project development has been supported by a number of technical agencies and other Ministries, especially Ministries of Disaster Management and Environment. Mr. Bandara also mentioned the Ministry of Agriculture and Coast Conservation Department as key partners to the project development and implementation. He thanked the Ministries of Disaster Management and Environment and Renewable Energy for their presence at the meeting.
2. Composition of the Project Board (National Steering Committee): Ms. Wasantha Samaraweera, Additional secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management raised a query on the potential members on the project board/ national steering committee. It was decided that the Ministry of Disaster Management, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Development, Department of Coast Conservation along with Dept. of National Planning and External Resources Department to be permanent members of the Project Board.
3. Meeting with the Secretary, MED: It was unanimously decided that MED and UNDP should consult the Secretary, MED to finalize Management Arrangements. During the discussion it is proposed that the functions of the Project Director and support staff will be carried out by MED staff and UNDP will provide technical staff to strengthen and complement the work of MED staff. There were other NIM procedural issues such as the capacity assessment of implementing partner, and micro assessment required for financial procedures that also needed to be discussed with the Secretary prior to signature of the Project Document.

4. Emphasis on capacity building in the project framework: At the design stage based on the MED and National Planning Dept. directions, less attention was paid to training and capacity development but more focus on ground level activities. MED further requested that Component 2 should be revisited and more funds be allocated to actual investments in Component 3. Mr. Mallawatantri in response pointed out there were some capacity gaps and issues in project delivery to the grassroots, hence the training elements were incorporated. Ms. Tharuka Dissanaikie, said that capacity development elements were built in to reflect the needs expressed by District Planning Directors and MED officials. There was an explicit request to train village level mobilisers delivering Divi Neguma on the ground too. It was agreed to review the distribution of the budget between the components during the inception phase.
5. Incorporating gender considerations in to the project: Ms. Zoe Keeler, UNDP's gender focal point requested that the project document incorporate more detail of how women's participation would be ensured in the planning and training components, especially in community level risk assessment and training of village level mobilisers. She also requested some strong indicators be included in to the project results framework to reflect gender considerations. This was agreed to by both UNDP and MED.
6. Using existing resources produced by relevant Ministries: The issue of existing material and resources was brought up both Ministry of Disaster Management and Ministry of Environment. The idea is project output delivery could be made more effective by utilizing information and assessments generated by these Ministries, especially the Hazard Profiles for Sri Lanka produced by Disaster Management Centre, and vulnerability assessments conducted by the Ministry of Environment in generating the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS).
7. Impact monitoring in the long term: Mrs. Samaraweera, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management raised the issue of monitoring impacts in the medium and long term. She said that impact of this project is very important as it has tried to mainstream climate-related disaster risk reduction in to two of the country's largest development programmes. The impacts and results are important to inform other future development programmes. Ms. Lovita Ramguttee agreed that results are important for UNDP and such evaluations would be conducted yearly, mid-term and end of project cycle as per Global Environment Facility's stringent monitoring and reporting regime. The MED agreed that it is important for the Ministry to evaluate the project results and impacts periodically during and beyond project period, so that activities delivering best impacts could be incorporated in to future programmes.
8. Inception Workshop: Month of January 2014 was suggested as a possible timeframe for the inception workshop. This is to allow time for the meeting with the Secretary, MED and the capacity/micro assessments required for finalizing implementation modality and arrangements. It was decided to set the date for the inception workshop in consultation with the Secretary MED.
9. Hiring of Project Technical Manager: Mr. Mallawatantri said that it would be ideal if the project manager is on board by the time of the inception meeting. The Terms of Reference for Project Technical Manager has been developed and included in the project document. However the hiring of Project Manager and the other PMU staff will be discussed with Secretary, MED prior to reaching a decision on if the PM will be externally recruited or an existing officer would be seconded to work exclusively for the project.

IV. Summary of Decision and Action Points

The meeting approved the project technical and management approach with minor revisions as discussed. The project will be nationally implemented by the Rural Development Division of the Ministry of Economic Development. Upon incorporation of the meeting recommendations, the Project Document will be submitted for the signature by Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and forward to the External Resources Department. Upon receipt, UNDP will sign the Project Document and share copies with ERD, Ministry of Economic Development. Guidance will be sought from the Secretary, MED on the staffing and establishment of the project office. The inception workshop will be planned in January 2014 to commence the project.

V. Concluding Remarks

In her concluding remarks, Ms. Lovita Ramguttee said that UNDP is happy to be associated with the project, and would support its implementation and monitoring. She assured MED of UNDP's cooperation and support to deliver project outcomes through results based management.

Mr. Jayathilake Herath, Director Divi Neguma, MED delivered the vote of thanks. In his remarks Mr. Herath, who had been involved in project development from 2011, said that he strongly believes in the successful delivery of the project. Further Mr. Herath highlighted the importance of obtaining the blessing of the Minister of Economic Development and Secretary to the project. The implementation will be a collective effort between a number of agencies and MED appreciates the support tendered by the Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy and Ministry of Disaster Management during project development and expects a high level of collaboration during implementation. He thanked UNDP for all the support and technical assistance during project development.

Approved: 
Ms. Lovita Ramguttee
Deputy Country Director

Date: 27/11/2013

