ANNEX 2: PROJECT QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

1. Does the project specify how it will contribute to higher level change through linkage to the programme's Theory of Change?   **Proposed Rating: 3** **Evidence:** Please refer to the Theory of Change presented on page 8-11 of the Project Document, as well as the Assumptions in the TOC matrix.
2. Is the project aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan? **Proposed Rating: 3** **Evidence:** Overall, the Core FW4A is in line with the UNDP's Strategic Plan, with its primary goal to *leave no-one behind* left behind, centring on equitable access to opportunities and a rights-based approach to human agency and human development amid the COVID-19 pandemic and during disasters and emergencies which is encapsulated in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025. This will be done by assisting the government to provide free public Wi-Fi to narrow the digital divide in the country and ensure equal access to online education, health services, and disaster and emergency preparedness and response.
3. Is the project linked to the programme outputs? (i.e., UNDAF Results Group Workplan/CPD, RPD or Strategic Plan IRRF for global projects/strategic interventions not part of a programme) **Proposed Rating: Yes** **Evidence:** Please refer to the project's Section V (Results Framework) in the Project Document.
4. Does the project target groups left furthest behind **Proposed Rating: 2** **Evidence**: The project aims to narrow the digital divide in the Philippines, especially among the disadvantaged women and men who do not have internet connectivity. The project is also targeting those who are located in rural areas in which connectivity is a more pronounced concern than in the urban areas. This is critically important amid the rising use of online and digital platforms in the delivery of various public services such as in education and health at this time of the pandemic as well as during disaster and emergencies where preparedness and response are critical. See Section II of the Project Document for more details.
5. Have knowledge, good practices, and past lessons learned of UNDP and others informed the project design? **Proposed Rating: 3** The implementation of the CoRe FW4A draws from the gains and learnings from the previous free Wi-Fi initiatives of the Philippine government as well as the project's experience since its partnership with DICT since 2018. Based on the ew context and priorities the benefits of the project will be maximized if it specifically responds to the growing issue of digital divide in the country amid the pandemic, and for disaster and emergency preparedness and response. The design also considered the comments on the MTRE to strengthen internal and external communication by strengthening social preparation.
6. Does UNDP have a clear advantage to engage in the role envisioned by the project vis-à-vis national/regional/global partners and other actors? **Proposed Rating: 2** With its technical expertise and administrative capacity, the UNDP can better assist the DICT in the initial implementation phase of the project, particularly in the procurement of ISPs and in identifying appropriate technologies and potential project sites. This will largely improve the governance on the provision of free public Wi-Fi in the country. The project will also engage

with DOH, CHED, DILG and NEDA as Project Advisors who will provide additional strategic guidance in providing internet connections to selected HEIs, public health facilities, and local government offices. Moreover, the expected outputs from the Project are also aligned with UNDP's support to *digital transformation*, *global COVID-19 response*, and improving *governance for the future*.

7. Does the project apply a human rights-based approach?

Proposed Rating: 3

The ultimate goal of the Project is to maintain the accessibility of basic education and health services among the disadvantaged women and men, on the back of the growing concern on digital divide brought by the pandemic, disasters, and emergencies. With this, the Project will uphold the basic rights of every Filipinos to education and health, while the human-centered design of these digital initiatives is also being ensured.

8. Does the project use gender analysis in the project design.

Proposed Rating: 1 or 2

Evidence: The Project will benefit all sorts of individuals regardless of their gender identity. Data disaggregating women and men users will also be collected. Moreover, gender-based capacity-building interventions are considered to ensure online protection of women and children.

9. Did the project support the resilience and sustainability of societies and/or ecosystems?

Proposed Rating: 3

Evidence: Social and environmental screening as well as formulation of the risk registry has been conducted. Sustainability plan is also outlined in the project document. The project will utilize the existing digital infrastructures and facilities in the installation of free Wi-Fi. Hence, there is no anticipated adverse negative impact on the environment from this activity.

10. Has the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) been conducted to identify potential social and environmental impacts and risks?

Proposed Rating: Yes

SESP is attached as Annex 3.

11. Does the project have a strong results framework?

Proposed Rating: 3

Evidence: Please refer to Sections II and III and V of the Project Document, as well as Section V for project results framework.

12. Is the project's governance mechanism clearly defined in the project document, including composition of the project board?

Proposed Rating: 2

Evidence: Please refer to pages Sections IV and VIII of the Project Document.

13. Have the project risks been identified with clear plans stated to manage and mitigate each risk?

Proposed Rating: 3

Evidence: Please refer to Annex 4 for the Risk Log with corresponding management and mitigation strategies..

14. Have specific measures for ensuring cost-efficient use of resources been explicitly mentioned as part of the project design? This can include, for example: i) using the theory of change analysis to explore different options of achieving the maximum results with the resources available; ii) using a portfolio management approach to improve cost effectiveness through synergies with other interventions; iii) through joint operations (e.g., monitoring or procurement) with other partners; iv) sharing resources or coordinating delivery with other projects, v) using innovative approaches and technologies to reduce the cost of service delivery or other types of interventions.

Proposed Rating: Yes

Evidence: Joint monitoring activities will be conducted by the CoRe FW4A PMO as well as with DICT. An online Network Management System will also be developed for remote monitoring of sites (refer to Section VI of the Project Document).

15. Is the budget justified and supported with valid estimates?

Proposed Rating: 3

Evidence: Please refer to Section VII of the Project Document.

16. Is the Country Office/Regional Hub/Global Project fully recovering the costs involved with project implementation?

Proposed Rating: 3

Evidence: Please refer to Output 4 in Multi-Year Work Plan in Section VII the Project Document.

17. Have targeted groups been engaged in the design of the project?

Proposed Rating: 2

Evidence: Consultations with key government partners from DICT, DOH and CHED have been conducted through project board and internal meetings, which guided the revision of the project document.

18. Does the project plan for adaptation and course correction if regular monitoring activities, evaluation, and lesson learned demonstrate there are better approaches to achieve the intended results and/or circumstances change during implementation?

Proposed Rating: Yes

Evidence: Regular reviews and monitoring and evaluation activities have been identified. Please refer to the Section VI for the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of the Project document.

19. The gender marker for all project outputs are scored at GEN2 or GEN3, indicating that gender has been fully mainstreamed into all project outputs at a minimum.

Proposed Rating: No

Evidence: Except for Output 1, all the outputs of the project are GEN2.

20. Have national/regional/global partners led, or proactively engaged in, the design of the project?

Proposed Rating: 3

Evidence: The DICT and UNDP collaborated with other concerned government agencies like CHED and the DOH. These stakeholders were also consulted in the development of the Project Document.

21. Are key institutions and systems identified, and is there a strategy for strengthening specific/ comprehensive capacities based on capacity assessments conducted?

Proposed Rating: 1

Evidence: Output 2 and 3 will focus on capacity building for the DICT and the local government offices as provided for in the Section II specifically the TOC, Section V, and Section VII of the Project Document.

22. Is there a clear strategy embedded in the project specifying how the project will use national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluations, etc.,) to the extent possible?

Proposed Rating: Not applicable.

All procurement for the CoRe FW4A will be done by UNDP following its internal procurement rules and procedures. These include hiring of the CoRe FW4A PMO and the providers of technical services (whether individuals or firms).

23. Is there a clear transition arrangement/ phase-out plan developed with key stakeholders in order to sustain or scale up results (including resource mobilisation and communications strategy)?

Proposed Rating: Yes

Evidence: Please refer to Section V, and Section VII of the Project Document.