

# Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development

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### PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION

<b>PROJECT/OUTCOME TITLE</b>	Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development	
<b>COUNTRY</b>	Ukraine	
<b>REGION</b>	East/Central Europe	
<b>DATE PROJECT DOCUMENT SIGNED</b>	10 December 2018; extension signed 26 June 2020	
<b>PROJECT DATES</b>	Start	Planned end
	December 2018	December 2020; extended to 31 March 2021
<b>PROJECT BUDGET</b>	Original: 5,000,000 SEK Extension Total: 5,000,000 SEK	
<b>FUNDING SOURCE</b>	Government of Sweden	
<b>IMPLEMENTING PARTY</b>	UNDP	

### EVALUATION INFORMATION

<b>EVALUATION TYPE (PROJECT/ OUTCOME/THEMATIC/COUNTRY PROGRAMME. ETC.) FINAL/MIDTERM REVIEW/OTHER</b>	Final Project Evaluation	
<b>PERIOD UNDER EVALUATION</b>	Final Start	End
	December 2018	March 2022
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## Table of Contents

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations .....	5
Executive Summary .....	6
Introduction.....	12
Project Description .....	12
Evaluation Scope and Objectives .....	13
Audience .....	13
Evaluation questions .....	14
Evaluation Approach and Methods.....	16
Use of Best Practices .....	16
Evaluation design .....	16
Document Review .....	17
Data Analysis.....	18
Potential limitations .....	19
Findings.....	19
Project Design .....	20
Project Stakeholders.....	20
Country Context.....	20
Project Approach, Structure and Logic .....	22
Major Challenges and Adaptive Management.....	26
Project Implementation and Achievements.....	27
Relevance.....	27
Effectiveness .....	30
Efficiency .....	31
Sustainability .....	33
Impact .....	38

Cross-Cutting Issues.....	40
Project’s Contribution to Achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals.....	42
Project’s Contribution to Poverty Eradication .....	46
Lessons Learned .....	48
Conclusion .....	50
Recommendations.....	50
Annexes.....	52
Annex 1. Term of Reference .....	52
Annex 2. Evaluation matrix and data collection instruments.....	61
Annex 3. List of individuals interviewed.....	67
Annex 4. List of supporting documents reviewed.....	69
Figure 1: Theory of Change	23
Table 1: Achievement of Indicators .....	26
Table 2: Budget execution .....	32

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAH	Association of Amalgamated Hromadas
CO	Country Office
COVID	Coronavirus
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
HRBA	Human-Rights Based Approach
MDPF	Multi-Dimensional Poverty Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Report
RRF	Results and Resources Framework
SALAR	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SEK	Swedish Krona
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SMEDO	SME Development Office
TOR	Terms of Reference
UAROC	Ukrainian Association of Rayon and Oblast Councils
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNPSD	United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development
USD	United States Dollar
WHO	World Health Organization

## Executive Summary

Supported by the Government of Sweden, UNDP-implemented “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project aimed to contribute to a more efficient public administration, capable to interact and work, in a transparent manner, with the business sector, civil society, and local communities in order to promote sustainable development and Ukraine’s approximation towards the EU and to plan and implement gender equitable recovery measures in response to COVID-19 crisis, ensuring the protection of rights of the most vulnerable and continuity of the provision of the public services. Its specific purpose was to pilot at regional/local level (oblasts, municipalities, or territorial communities) the formation of multi-stakeholders (local and regional governments and councils, academia, civil society, and business) partnerships to address sustainable development challenges, including those emerged with the COVID-19 pandemic on the basis of the best international practices. In particular, the project aimed to facilitate collaborations between the public administrations and multiple stakeholders, reaching over administrative geographical boundaries to define and address common sustainable development challenges in local communities, including challenges related to the impact of COVID-19; and to develop and test mechanisms for joint problem-solving, resource pooling and implementation, as well as strengthen organizations’ capacities to collaborate effectively on selected common sustainable development challenges.

The main objective of the assignment was to conduct the forward-looking Final Evaluation of the Project “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase” (hereinafter – the “Project”) with the purpose to analyse the implementation of the project, formulate lessons learned and provide recommendations for its future replication and scaling-up. The evaluation was conducted remotely in the period of October-December 2021 in line with the OECD-DAC Guidelines on Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and UNDP Evaluation Guideline assessing project performance against the review criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact.

The data collection methodology included: a) documents review; b) performance indicators assessments; c) electronic survey; and d) key informant and group interviews. Data analysis methods included refining the descriptive statistics and content analysis. The consultant utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining a mix of qualitative information collected from interviews, quantitative results of the electronic surveys, collection of quantitative data from project monitoring and verification of the reported results to assess the success, challenges, and sustainability of “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase” project. The evaluator reviewed performance indicators found in project documentation and incorporate as appropriate to address the evaluation questions.

The “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project approach has proven to be sufficiently robust and flexible to accommodate the nature of the Ukrainian institutional context – finding a means to stimulate change notwithstanding the challenges that are encountered and serving to overcome (or bypass) certain bureaucratic obstacles present in the Ukrainian institutional context that might otherwise have obstructed change efforts.

The project initiative is regarded by stakeholders as a responsive instrument, that fits well with the dynamics seen in the democratic and environmental governance domain in Ukraine – where priorities have emerged, evolved, required urgent attention, in line with the turbulent nature of the Ukrainian policy environment. The rapid response nature of “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project has also proved its worth, according to respondents, in the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The challenge-driven partnership approach informing actions within these outputs was fundamentally based on community engagement and the principles of participatory decision-making, recognizing the imperative of fostering local ownership of the sustainable development agenda. In addition to this aspiration, the project facilitated cross-sectoral dialogue and fostered the ability of stakeholders to effectively collaborate on solutions to commonly faced sustainable development challenges. A set of critical steps were incorporated into the implementation strategy, compounding an intervention logic that within individual partnerships protected formal commitments and roles and brought together key partners, experts, and stakeholders around defined objectives.

The project provided seed funding to act as a catalyst and generated results at the institutional, organizational, and individual capacity levels. It fostered agility and mindset changes in local authorities by demonstrating practical ways of being engaged in multi-sectoral partnerships and the benefits thereof. Based on the interviews with the representatives of the local authorities, most of them see the value of partnering and cooperating with CSOs. In addition, UNDP was able to increase the awareness of local authorities on the ways of cooperating with private sector and getting co-financing from their side. The challenge-driven partnerships created evidence and instrumentalized government officials to engage businesses in solving local problems. The latter was highly praised by the respondents during the interviews.

The project expenditure appeared to have aligned with project activity in each of the output areas. The project management structure was appropriate for the size of the project and its scope of work and all outcome/output level indicator targets have been met.

The “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” successfully exhibited considerable progress and enhanced the global partnership, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It had a direct positive impact on SDGs 1, 2,3, 4,5,7, 8,10, 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17.

The project’s activities were impacted by a number of external factors, like political volatility, primarily arising from changes in the leadership at community level and government restructurings due to the changes in administrative and territorial arrangement as result of decentralization reform and related local elections cycle. In 2019 -2020, political volatility arised from regular presidential election (May 2019) and early snap elections to the Verkhovna Rada (July 2020), and also from local elections to the local governments and local councils (October 2020). The volatile political context combined with

changes in key staff at counterpart public institutions has affected the engagement of local authorities in the project's implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the project operations, with the virus-related restrictions interfering with scheduled in-person trainings, workshops, and forums. The decision to adapt these activities to an online format was made carefully. Even though the punctuality of such activities was important, maintaining high quality was prioritized, which helped to preserve healthy relationships within the stakeholders. The related risks to project activities and supported initiatives were successfully mitigated through exploring and employing alternative modalities (online versus offline events and coordination meetings, information dissemination through social networks and digital media, using groups in social media for experience exchange between the supported cross-sectoral partnerships, and so on). Another challenge that the project had to overcome was related to trust and the difference of operational modalities between local authorities, CSOs and the private sector. All had their own rules and management protocols, while synergy was needed in order to achieve sustainable results. Once an understanding was established, the process went smoothly, and no other constraints have been evidenced.

The following lessons learned have been generated based on the evaluation findings:

1. The inclusion of civil society organizations in the cross-sectoral partnerships provides strong added value and allows to draw on the network of expertise that CSOs contain through their members and experience of engaging with the respective governance domains. It also serves to reinforce the connection between governmental and non-governmental actors in addressing development challenges.
2. The UNDP's involvement in public sector reforms brings increased credibility.
3. Generally, the representatives of local authorities valued the enhanced interaction between themselves and CSOs.
4. The holistic approach, the evident changes in the level of awareness among key stakeholders about specific topics, and the great sense of appreciation expressed by the public agencies, all indicate that the "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" project has been able to adequately address the needs of beneficiary public institutions, enabling them to better delivery their services.
5. The project has been able to create solid foundations upon which to strengthen public administration systems, to identify "champions," and to support their capacity building. However, the steps so far taken (as considered by the interviewees) should be continued to achieve a long-lasting impact.
6. The evaluation found that project-supported initiatives often become a catalyst for larger-scale change or serve as a solid foundation for further capacity-building actions in public institutions.
7. The pandemic challenged the implementation of the results also created new opportunities. Shifting the delivery process to an online mode enabled the challenge-driven partnerships to save precious funds in the budget and implement new activities thus achieving a greater impact with a more diversified target group.



8. Establishing trust between the members of multi-sectoral partnership took time and, in some cases, caused challenges in managing the initiatives. However, once trust was formed, the process went smoothly.
9. The evaluation has found the SymbioCity approach to be a relevant framework to support sustainability processes. In accordance with both the desk review and the interviews, its basic feature, namely its inter-sectoral and participative/inclusive planning approach, is in line with current mainstream thinking promoted by UNDP, but the reality on the ground is slightly different. Therefore, it was adjusted to the local context, without diminishing its main features. A common denominator for all supported initiatives was that they all are linked to, and apparently fit into, the local multi-dimensional ecosystems that are congruent with the ideas in the SymbioCity approach.
10. The evaluation found that the partnerships, which include among others private sector representatives, have a higher level of sustainability and replicability. In cases where the private sector was a co-financer in the challenge-driven partnership, the integration of an "efficient" way of doing business is fostered and it increased the scalability and replicability of the results.
11. Given the demand-driven nature of the project, the impact is evidenced on each local solution level, while aggregating the influence and capturing outcomes on inter-partnership or cross-project level is limited. At the same time, due to established experience exchange mechanism and ongoing communication, the supported initiatives and partnerships have cross-fertilized each other, which can be further employed and taken to a higher level in the follow-up action.
12. Striking the balance between implementation of challenge-driven partnerships and working on policy level through development of recommendations and guidelines was challenging and required application of iterative approach in order to integrate the lessons learned at different stages of the project implementation.
13. The extent and the breadth of the project impact was higher on smaller size hromadas/communities with less financial resources invested compared to larger ones. At the same time, models and development solutions successfully piloted in the larger communities/municipalities have high replication potential and are relevant for both small and large communities. However, models and solutions implemented are equally applicable, replicable, and relevant for scaling up for all three types of hromadas, - city territorial hromada, settlement territorial hromada and rural territorial hromada, - irrespective of their sizes, along with regions on subnational level, involving several different hromadas.

This evaluation makes the following set of recommendations which are derived from the analysis presented in the previous sections of this report.

Short term recommendations:

1. Increase awareness raising efforts of the project to ensure higher level of visibility
2. Advance the policy work and direct the efforts towards institutionalization of the approaches applied through challenge-driven partnerships
3. Develop a shared platform knowledge base which would capture all intellectual outputs developed within the project (e.g., case-studies, methodologies, presentations) and all relevant holistic sustainable development approaches/concepts.

Recommendations to be reflected in the next phase of the project implementation:

4. Continue fostering inclusion of private sector companies in developing solutions for local challenges and promote their co-financing in the initiatives
5. Make grant selection criteria more detailed by elaborating sub-set of questions with respective scoring in order to streamline the initiative selection process within the steering committee members
6. Integrate common outcome measurement indicators across the challenge-driven solution to aggregate the results and capture the project impact
7. Further capacity building of local authorities in application of holistic, comprehensive and systemic approach to local development (e.g. SymbioCity Approach) is essential particularly in foster inclusive rural development
8. Create the Community of Practice among the challenge-driven partnership stakeholders to foster knowledge and experience sharing inter and intra sectors.
9. Differentiate the level of financing based on the financial affordability of Hromadas. Setting the threshold of co-financing, which is accessible for smaller size Hromadas, will enable the project team to ensure that "no one is left behind"
10. Foster the inclusion of vulnerable groups in project activities and consider supporting specific inclusion-related solutions on local level



## Introduction

This document presents the Final Evaluation report for the “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development-Pilot Phase” project implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Ukraine and funded by the Government of Sweden. The overall goal of the project is “to contribute to a more efficient public administration, capable to interact and work, in a transparent manner, with the business sector, civil society, and local communities in order to promote sustainable development and Ukraine’s approximation towards the EU and to plan and implement gender equitable recovery measures in response to COVID-19 crisis, ensuring the protection of rights of the most vulnerable and continuity of the provision of the public services.” The project has been designed to contribute to the achievement of the expected outcome of the United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (UNPSD) and the UNDP’s Country Program Document (CPD) and is strongly aligned with the overarching objective of the Government of Sweden and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for Ukraine to develop into a democratic and accountable state, thereby forging closer ties with the European Union (EU).

## Project Description

The Project builds on UNDP’s strong experience in supporting and monitoring the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ukraine. UNDP’s strategic plan focuses on key areas including poverty alleviation, democratic governance and peacebuilding, climate change and disaster risk, and economic inequality. UNDP provides support to governments to integrate the SDGs into their national and sub-national development plans and policies.

In the context of the country’s reforms towards EU integration, and in particular its decentralization reform, many responsibilities lie now with Ukrainian local authorities, and solutions for building more sustainable cities and communities can be both generated and implemented at the local level. One key requirement for initiating and promoting sustainable development changes is to build and nurture multi-stakeholders’ collaborations (challenge-driven partnerships) that generate solutions to local sustainable development challenges and find resources for their implementation. The quality of local administrations as partners is crucial to ensure that these partnerships are effective and bring in concrete results.

The Project’s overall goal is to contribute to a more efficient public administration, capable to interact and work, in a transparent manner, with the business sector, civil society, and local communities in order to promote sustainable development and Ukraine’s approximation towards the EU and to plan and implement gender equitable recovery measures in response to COVID-19 crisis, ensuring the protection of rights of the most vulnerable and continuity of the provision of the public services.

Its specific purpose is to pilot at regional/local level (oblasts, municipalities, or territorial communities) the formation of multi-stakeholders (local and regional governments and councils, academia, civil society, and business) partnerships to address sustainable development challenges, including those

emerged with the COVID-19 pandemic on the basis of the best international practices. In particular, the project aimed to facilitate collaborations between the public administrations and multiple stakeholders, reaching over administrative geographical boundaries to define and address common sustainable development challenges in local communities, including challenges related to the impact of COVID-19; and to develop and test mechanisms for joint problem-solving, resource pooling and implementation, as well as strengthen organizations' capacities to collaborate effectively on selected common sustainable development challenges.

## Evaluation Scope and Objectives

The main objective of the assignment was to conduct the forward-looking Final Evaluation of the Project "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase" (Hereinafter "Project"). The purpose of the evaluation was to analyse the implementation of the project in 2019-2021 and formulate lessons learned; and provide recommendations for scale-up and future initiatives in challenge-based partnerships.

The evaluation was conducted in line with the OECD-DAC Guidelines on Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and UNDP Evaluation Guideline. Accordingly, the consultant adhered to the principles of impartiality, independence and credibility, and stakeholders' confidentiality was protected when requested or as needed. The consultant-maintained confidentiality over the sources of data collected and used Chatham House's rule of non-attribution and paid attention that the evaluation did not put at risk any participant, in particular interviewees and participants to focus groups.

The evaluation ensured the triangulation of the data to support the credibility of the findings. The triangulation was done by:

- using different data sources (project and external)
- using different data collection methods (interviews, survey)
- combining the various expertise in the team and key informants

Table: Phases of the evaluation and utilisation-focus

Utilisation-focused activities Inception Phase	Inception report Kick-off Meeting
Data Collection and Analysis Phase	Intended users' part-taking in interviews throughout this phase (either key-informant interviews or group interviews)
Reporting and Presentation Phase	Data analysis (qualitative and quantitative), report writing, elaboration of recommendations

## Audience

The primary audience of the evaluation will be UNDP Ukraine and Sida.

## **Evaluation questions**

This final evaluation assessed projects performances against the review criteria: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**, in line with UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. More specifically, it covered, but not be limited to, the following areas and preliminary questions:

### **A. RELEVANCE**

The report examined the extent to which the project is relevant to the:

- Country context: How relevant was the project to the interventions target groups, including Government's needs and priorities? To what extent was the project aligned with the policies and strategies of the Government, SDGs as well as UNDP Country Programme Document/United Nations Partnerships Framework?
- Target groups: To what extent was the project relevant to address the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues (both at project and stakeholder's level)? To what extent did the initial theory of change for the project take those groups into consideration?
- Does the project remain relevant taking into account the changing environment while taking into consideration the risks/challenges mitigation strategy? Was there a need to reformulate the project design and the project results framework given changes in the country and operational context.
- Does the SymbioCity approach, used in the project, remains relevant and scalable in the evolving context?
- What can be done additionally to better capture the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues?
- What measures can be taken to improve the relevance of the project?
- To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?

### **B. EFFECTIVENESS**

- Assess the overall performance of the project with reference to its respective project document/cost sharing agreement, strategy, objectives, and indicators, and identify key issues and constraints that affected the achievement of project objectives. Were the planned objectives and outcomes achieved in the framework of the key project components?
- What are the results achieved beyond the logical framework? What were the supporting factors? What are the main lessons learned from the partnership strategies and what are the possibilities of replication and scaling-up? How can the Project build on or expand the achievements?
- How have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
- What measures can be taken to improve the effectiveness of the project?

- What can additionally be done to better capture the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues?
- Assess the project effectiveness at addressing the challenges around which the partnerships were formed?

### **C. EFFICIENCY**

The extent that to which:

- Was the project cost-efficient? Was the project using the least cost options? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the relevant outputs and outcomes?
- Has the project produced results (outputs and outcomes) within the expected time frame? Was project implementation delayed, and, if it was, did that affect cost-efficiency or its results?
- Are the project's activities in line with the schedule of activities as defined by the project team and annual work plans? Are the disbursements and project expenditures in line with budgets?
- Was the project management, coordination and monitoring efficient and appropriate?
- Assess the criteria of select project partners' selection.
- What can additionally be done to improve the efficiency of the project?

### **D. SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustainability is understood as the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends. Assessment of the sustainability of project results will be given special attention:

- To what extent are project results (impact, if any, and outcomes) likely to contribute after the project ends? Define the areas that produced the most sustainable results, and the most promising areas requiring further support and scaling-up in the course of future interventions.
- Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the project's long-term objectives?
- Is the projects activity likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated and increasingly contribute to the development after the project? Define which of the platforms, networks, relationships development in the framework of the Project that have the highest potential for further scaling up and/or replication.
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project results?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits?
- To what extent were capacity-building initiatives for partner organizations adequate to ensure sustainability? What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?
- Identifying possible priority areas of engagement, offer recommendations for the next phase of the Project.
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?

## **E. IMPACT**

- Has the Project contributed or is likely to contribute to long-term social, economic, technical changes for individuals, communities, local governance self-bodies and other institutions related to the project?
- What difference has the project made to the direct beneficiaries, involved in the implementation of the initiatives, as well as indirect beneficiaries (target communities)?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?

## **Evaluation Approach and Methods**

For this evaluation, primary and secondary data collection were conducted using a mixed-methods approach. Whenever possible, existing quantitative data such as project performance indicators were utilized. Additional survey-based instruments were developed to collect quantitative data to fill existing knowledge gaps. Qualitative data was collected through remotely conducted KIIs and FGDs with UNDP, Sida, grantees, beneficiaries.

The methodology for evaluation of “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase” was fully based on remote work, conducting the meetings via zoom.

## **Use of Best Practices**

The evaluation used methods that generated quality data and credible evidence that correspond to the questions being asked, taking into consideration time, budget, and other practical considerations. The evaluation used sound social science methods and included the following basic features:

1. Use data collection and analytic methods that ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that if a different, well-qualified evaluator were to undertake the same evaluation, he or she would arrive at the same or similar findings and conclusions.
2. Evaluate findings based on facts, evidence, and data; and
3. Remain vigilant and flexible to the changing environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that impacts travel to and within different countries.

## **Evaluation design**

The data collection methodology included the following: a) document review; b) performance indicator assessments; c) electronic survey; and d) key informant and group interviews. Data analysis methods included refining the descriptive statistics and content analysis. The consultant utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining a mix of qualitative information collected from interviews, quantitative results of electronic surveys, and the collection of quantitative data from project monitoring and the verification of reported results to assess the success, challenges, and sustainability of “Empowered



Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase” project. The evaluator reviewed performance indicators found in project documentation and incorporate as appropriate to address the evaluation questions.

### **Document Review**

The evaluator conducted a focused document review of relevant resources as well as the project “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase” activity documents (strategic framework, UN Country Programme Document, Project Document, Annual Reports, M&E Plan, Risks, Board Meeting Notes, Grant Agreement). The key variables of the review included the purpose, goals and objectives, interventions, results, and sustainability of each activity. In addition, UNDP-commissioned “Assessment of the Grants Programme” findings was capitalized during the final report development stage.

### **Primary data: surveys and Interviews**

The primary data collection was conducted in the Russian, Ukrainian and English languages for all respondents. The electronic survey was disseminated in Ukrainian language.

**Electronic Surveys:** The main goal of the quantitative study was to gain statistically valid and reliable data from beneficiaries. The quantitative study was conducted with partners including the representatives of challenge-driven partnerships, funded Sustainable Local Development Initiatives and Granted NGOs and charitable organizations. In total, the online survey was disseminated with 73 participants and 53 responses have been collected (response rate=73%).

Completed questionnaires were coded. The final database was cleaned. Final data Analysis involved standard frequency analysis as well as advanced statistical procedures.

**Key Informant Interviews:** The evaluator conducted qualitative, in-depth individual interviews with UNDP, donor, government, and beneficiaries through video conferencing interviews using the *Zoom* platform. In total, 30 respondents were engaged in Key Informant Interviews with, out of which 15 were Male and 15- Females. In total, the evaluator interviewed nine representatives from UNDP, UNDP-hired experts and donor along with 21 representatives of challenge-driven partnerships.

### **Inclusion Analysis**

The inclusion analysis of the study results focused on assessing the impact of project interventions on vulnerable groups. More specifically, the integration of gender, PwDs aspects and human-rights-based approach principles was assessed. Furthermore, the cross-cutting issues were an integral part of Key Informant Interview Guide and online survey questionnaires. All stakeholders were requested to provide

input on inclusion of these groups in their activities and assess the extent to which the impacted changing the dynamics in this regard.

The final report includes the analysis of integration of women, PwDs and human rights-based approach into programming and provides recommendations for its further enhancement.

Furthermore, SDG Impact Assessment Tool was utilized to measure project's contribution to UN Sustainable Development Goals. The SDG Impact Assessment Tool<sup>1</sup> is an online resource for research and educational institutions, companies, entrepreneurs, civic organisations, and public agencies to make self-assessments of impacts on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is done by assessing an object's impact on each of the 17 SDGs as either direct positive, indirect positive, no impact, indirect negative, direct negative, or more knowledge needed. The tool encourages reflection and collaborative learning of the SDGs and the links between them. For every SDG, impacts are categorised as: Direct positive impact, Indirect positive impact, No impact, Indirect negative impact, Direct negative impact, More knowledge needed. The SDG Impact Assessment tool was developed by Gothenburg Centre for Sustainable Development at Chalmers University of Technology and the University of Gothenburg/Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Northern Europe.

The inclusion analysis was further exercised through measuring the "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" project's contribution to poverty eradication in line with Sida's Multidimensional Poverty Framework. The latter seeks to analyze the ways in which the project contributes to the Multidimensional Poverty Framework through supported initiatives. Dimensions of Poverty defines a shared understanding of poverty that reflects the current realities of poverty, as well as the goals of today's international and Swedish development cooperation, and hence contributes to more effective and relevant development cooperation. Four dimensions of poverty are defined in the policy framework: 1. Resources; 2. Opportunities and choice; 3. Power and voice; 4. Human security<sup>2</sup>.

## Data Analysis

The evaluator used descriptive statistics to produce a quantitative overview of the activities. A core technical approach was triangulation: the systematic, evidence-based, careful synthesis of disparate findings (from a broad variety of data sources) to discern consistent themes, trends, and patterns. Because the evaluator synthesized data from multiple sources, the consultant employed a broad variety of analytical technical techniques throughout the final performance evaluation. These techniques were

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sdgimpactassessmenttool.org/en-gb/tool/assessments>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/dimensions-of-poverty-sidas-conceptual-framework>

be customized to fit both the available data sources and address the evaluation questions provided in this report.

#### *Thematic and content analysis*

The consultant examined qualitative data from KIIs and the online surveys to identify patterns, themes, and trends relevant to each evaluation question to better understand context and meaning. When the evaluation team found a divergence in responses, it explored possible reasons for the divergence, using other respondent group interviews and in some cases, conducting follow-up interviews with the UNDP's staff. The consultant coded its notes according to key themes of interest across the interviews. Using these coded notes, she summarized the distribution, number, and average responses by theme and respondents.

#### *Triangulation*

The evaluator made use of the various data sources through a triangulation process to enhance the credibility of the analysis. Triangulation synthesizes multiple perspectives and leads to a fuller understanding of the issues being studied. Data from various lines of inquiry including interviews, written documents, analytical procedures, and other sources (e.g., the online surveys) were considered both separately and together to develop findings and conclusions.

### **Potential limitations**

**Limited fieldwork:** Working during the COVID-19 pandemic required trade-offs in terms of the number and depth of interviews and perspectives that could be captured and the depth of analysis that could be performed. Remote fieldwork was substituted based on the pandemic. Therefore, the consultant added online survey, as one of the data collections tools, to mitigate this potential limitation.

### **Findings**

While the amount of data generated by this evaluation was enormous, the findings presented here cover only the most essential aspects of the project. The findings, and the rest of this evaluation, are organized into the following sections: **i) Project Design** and **ii) Project Implementation and Achievements**.

## **Project Design**

### **Project Stakeholders**

As per project document, the initiative should have been implemented in close dialogue with:

- SALAR (Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions). SALAR is a membership organization which supports its members with a wide range of trainings, advisory services and manuals. In relation to the SDGs implementation Agenda 2030, SALAR has compiled a large number of national experiences for the localization of SDGs by Swedish municipalities
- the "Association of Ukrainian Cities" which unites 574 Ukrainian cities, rayons in cities, settlements and villages where more than 95% of the Ukrainian urban population lives. For more than 15 years, the Association of Ukrainian Cities has contributed much to the conceptual, legislative, financial, and practical aspects of local self-government development in Ukraine
- the "Ukrainian Association of Rayon and Oblast Councils" (UAROC), created in 1991, which unites all 24 oblast councils and 429 rayon councils to ensure effective support to regional and local governance development and transformations
- the Association of Amalgamated Hromadas (AAH), created in November 2016 as a forum for discussion of the key challenges faced by the new municipalities
- WHO Representation in Ukraine which provides reliable information on the COVID-19 pandemic
- SMEDO for economic development
- civil society organizations, especially women's groups and initiatives

During the implementation period, the project closely cooperated with all the above-stated actors, except for SALAR, with whom the collaboration turned out to be challenging and not result-oriented.

### **Country Context**

Ukraine has experienced acute political, security, and economic challenges during the past six years. Since the "Maidan" revolution in 2014 the country has witnessed several momentous events, including the outbreak of conflict in eastern Ukraine between pro-Russian rebel groups and Ukrainian forces, and the annexation of Crimea by Russia.

The large-scale demonstrations in Kyiv in late 2013 led to a change in the national government in February 2014. Early Presidential elections took place in February 2014 and early Parliamentary elections in November 2014. Following the developments in Crimea during March 2014, in the spring of 2014 conflict erupted in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts when pro-Russian separatists took control of parts of the two oblasts. Despite the so-called Minsk Protocol of September 2014 (an agreement to halt the armed conflict agreed between the warring factions under the auspices of the OSCE), the renewal of cease-fire provisions, hostilities continue along the contact line splitting the two oblasts.

Despite some political fluctuations, the past half-decade has also been a time of reform, with the safeguarding of Ukraine's social, economic and environmental development remaining a key governmental priority. In particular, the implementation of public administration and anti-corruption reforms continue to be primary considerations for Ukraine as it strives towards the genuine adoption of the EU's values of transparency, inclusiveness, pluralism, and non-discrimination.

Environmental protection has also become one of the Ukrainian Government's priority directions, with the objective to establish better environmental governance across the country. Sustainable development and the prevention of environmental degradation have been identified as overarching goals as well. To promote environmental protection, including addressing climate change, through strengthened environmental governance, the Ukrainian government has initiated reforms in almost all key environmental and energy-related directions.

The process of Ukraine's approximation with the EU has remained central to the country's policy over the covered period. Importantly, in 2014, the Ukrainian government also signed an Association Agreement including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with the EU, the implementation of which will lead the country to both democratic and economic development. In order to be able to move closer to the EU, Ukraine is taking steps, with EU support, to increase its compliance with EU regulations and international agreements, build up a more transparent and efficient public administration, and at the same time giving civil society a greater influence on social development.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the global context for development as this represents a health, humanitarian and development crisis that threatens to leave deep social, economic and political scars for years to come, particularly in countries already weighed down by fragility, poverty, and conflict. Moreover, the pandemic has had a negative impact on strengthening the process of democratic institutions: stakeholders across the world are struggling to cope with the steady deterioration of the rule of law and diminished access to justice for distressed populations. There has been a sustained weakening of democratic institutions globally and the pandemic has enabled states to restrict the movement of people, to curtail basic freedoms, and to exclude marginalized populations from recovery efforts<sup>3</sup>. The novel coronavirus has attacked societies at their core, claiming lives and livelihoods.

As the world battles with the COVID-19 pandemic, sustainable development has gained new impetus. Due to the pandemic, an unprecedented health, economic and social crisis is threatening lives and livelihoods, making the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) even more challenging than before. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, progress in this regard had been uneven, and more focused attention was needed in most areas.

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<sup>3</sup> "SDG 16+ Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic - 28 & 29 January 2021", WFUNA - <https://wfuna.org/posts/sdg-16-beyond-covid-19-pandemic-28-29-january-2021>

To demonstrate its commitment to reform, the Ukrainian government has devised concrete plans to implement the UN's 17 SDGs. Ukraine is committed to achieving the SDGs. Since 2015 a series of reforms have been launched in Ukraine, aiming to implement socio-economic transformations and strengthen its democratic system. The SDGs are integrated into the state policy on 'leave no one behind' basis.

Despite the advancements with regards to institutionalization of UN Sustainable Development Goals, the lack of political will to support sustainable development in a holistic manner still exists and the engagement of public/business/civil society engagement is still very limited.

In 1991, an independent Ukrainian state – Ukraine inherited soviet form of the administrative structure. Since 2005 in Ukraine, the administrative-territorial structure of the country has changed and the formation of territorial units of the primary level – hromadas (communities) has been completed in October 2020. Currently, heads of regional and district administrations are appointed centrally, but heads of communities, mayors of cities, towns and villages are being elected.

A new wave of decentralization reform took place in 2020 with implications for financing and service delivery. The reform amalgamated 490 rayons into 136 rayons, with reduced functions. The Government is also in the process of completing the amalgamation of small rural communities and cities of oblast significance (COS) into territorial hromadas (TH) to enable full transfer from rayons to THs, with a deadline of end-2021.

## **Project Approach, Structure and Logic**

The Project's overall goal is to contribute to a more efficient public administration, capable of interacting and working, in a transparent manner, with the business sector, civil society and local communities in order to promote sustainable development and implement gender-equitable recovery measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis, ensuring the protection of rights of the most vulnerable and continuity of the provision of state services. Its specific *purpose* is to pilot at the regional/local level the formation of multi-stakeholder partnerships to address commonly faced development challenges for the local communities, including those emerging as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project facilitates collaboration between public administrations and multiple stakeholders, reaching beyond administrative boundaries to define and address common sustainable development challenges in local communities, including challenges related to the impact of COVID-19.

**Project implementation period:** 10 December 2018 – 31 March 2022

**Project target area:** 24 oblasts of Ukraine

The project is also fully aligned with and supports the Ukrainian government backed Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 in particular Goal no 11 (Sustainable development of cities and communities), and Goal no 17 (Partnership for sustainable development).

It is also in line with Strategic Priority no 1 (Pillar 1) of the UN Partnership Framework for the period 2018-2022: Sustainable economic growth, environment, and employment. The project’s approach builds on the core principle of “leaving no one behind”.

It contributes to Output 2.1 of UNDP’s Country Programme Document: *National and subnational institutions are better able to develop and implement policies and measures that generate sustainable jobs and livelihoods*; and 1.2.1 Output of UNDP Strategic Plan: *Capacities at national and sub-national levels strengthened to promote inclusive local economic development and deliver basic services, including HIV and related services*.

**Project beneficiaries:** Regional and local authorities, local communities, civil society organizations, businesses, academia

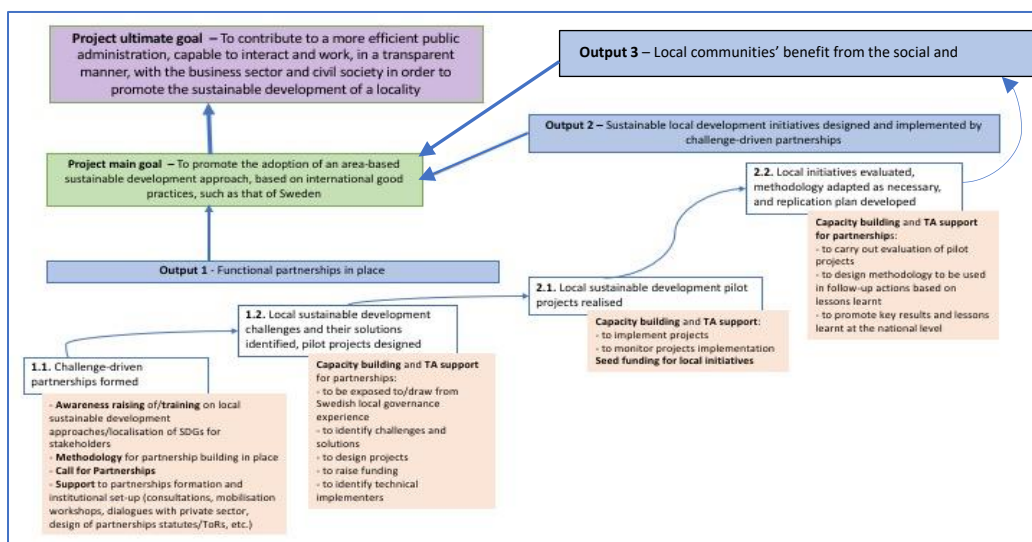
**Project budget:** SEK 10,000,000

**Project human resources:** The project team comprised of six staff members, including Project Coordinator/Team Leader; Project Associate; Finance and Procurement Associate; two Community Development Associates; and a Communications and Monitoring Associate.

The Project implementation was also supported by UNDP Country Office HR, Finance, and Procurement personnel, as well as Programme Analyst (to ensure Project’s outputs quality control and oversight).

The challenge-driven partnership approach proved to be effective for implanting sustainable development processes at the local level, and also for mobilizing local development actors and motivating them to work together. With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, this approach was employed for supporting local communities in addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and also for safeguarding the progress made in achieving SDGs at the local level. With this purpose, in June 2020, with the extension of the Project a new component was added, namely **Support to COVID-19 response and sustainable recovery**.

The project’ Theory of Change is well-structured and envisaged ultimate goal, main goal, three outputs and 12 sub-outputs.



The Project intervention focuses on *three key outputs*:

**Output 1:** Functional challenge-driven partnerships in place.

**Output 2:** Sustainable local development initiatives implemented by challenge-driven partnerships.

**Output 3:** Local communities' benefit from the social and economic improvements, realized through successfully piloted multi-stakeholder initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the implementation period, the project supported 16 challenge-driven partnerships, out of which 88% included stakeholders from local government, 38%- private sector and 19%- academia. Overall, the project was able to meet its intended outcomes and outputs and the table below summarizes the achievements per indicator.

#	Indicator	Baseline	2019		2020		2021		Comments
			Target	Target	Target	Result	Target	Result	
<b>99918 Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase</b>									
<b>Outcome-level</b>									
1	Sustainable local development based on challenge-driven partnerships successfully applied in at least 5 pilot areas and documented in success stories and lessons learned (Yes/No)	No [2018]	No	yes	Yes	Yes	n/a	n/a	7 partnerships received the first grant tranche from UNDP in the middle of November 2019
2	Percentage of partnerships members (from the private sector, civil society and local communities) who assess positively the "quality"	0% [2018]	50%	0	75%	85%	n/a	n/a	"good" - 71%, "rather good" - 14%



#	Indicator	Baseline	2019		2020		2021		Comments
			Target	Target	Target	Result	Target	Result	
	(skills and competence) of local administrations as partners								
<b>Output 1 - Functional challenge-driven partnerships in place</b>									
1.1	Recommendations for public administrations for establishing challenge-driven cross-sectoral partnerships and adoption of the SymbioCity approach at local level developed (yes/no)	No [2018]	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	The recommendations for public administration for establishing challenge-driven cross-sectoral partnerships has been recently elaborated, along with guidelines for co-funding of joint initiatives
1.2	Guidelines for public administrations on co-funding of joint initiatives within the challenge-driven partnerships developed (Yes/No)	No [2018]	Yes	0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
1.3	Number of cross-sectoral challenge-driven partnerships in selected pilot regions/municipalities/ Amalgamated Territorial Communities formed and committed to design and implement joint initiatives in the prioritized development areas	0 [2018]	5	7	7	7	n/a	n/a	7 cross-sectoral challenge-driven partnerships have been established
<b>Output 2 - Sustainable local development initiatives designed and implemented by challenge-driven partnerships</b>									
2.1	Number of local sustainable development pilot joint initiatives designed and implemented by challenge-driven partnerships	0 [2018]	2	7	7	7	n/a	n/a	7 pilot joint initiatives have been designed and implemented
2.2	Number of local initiatives evaluated, methodology adapted as necessary, and replication plan developed	0 [2018]	0	0	7	7	n/a	n/a	7 initiatives have been evaluated
<b>Output 3 - Local communities benefit from the social and economic improvements, realized through successfully piloted multi-stakeholder initiatives in response to COVID-19</b>									
3.1	Number of public servants at the local level with improved skills in recovery planning, formation and implementation of gender-equitable crisis response measures	0 [2020]			40% (50%w)	65% (55%w)	80% (50%w)		to be updated by the end of 2021
3.2	Number of local administrations participating in cross-sectoral challenge-driven partnerships aimed at addressing the COVID-19 impact on women and men and post-crisis recovery	0 [2020]			8	9	n/a	n/a	9 local administrations participated in cross-sectoral challenge-driven partnerships
3.3	Guidelines for public administrations on formation of the cross-sectoral challenge-driven partnerships and addressing COVID-19 impact on women and men and post-crisis recovery developed (yes/no)	0 [2020]			No	Yes	Yes		To be completed by the end of February 2022

#	Indicator	Baseline	2019		2020		2021		Comments
			Target	Target	Target	Result	Target	Result	
3.4.	Number of local initiatives aimed at addressing COVID-19 impact on women and men designed and implemented	0 [2020]			8	9	8	9	9 local initiatives amid COVID-19 impact on women and men have been designed and implemented
3.4.	Number of women and men in target municipalities and local communities benefiting from the implemented local initiatives (w/m)	0 [2020]			50,000 (50%w)	170,00 (51%w)	100,000 (50%w)	60,736 (direct) 1,346,000 (indirectly)	1,346,000 women and men indirectly benefitted from the implemented local initiatives

Table 1: Achievement of Indicators

## Major Challenges and Adaptive Management

Given the importance of the project, there are inevitably some substantial challenges. The project's ultimate goal is to contribute to a more efficient public administration, capable to interact and work, in a transparent manner, with the business sector, civil society and local communities in order to promote the sustainable development and Ukraine's approximation towards the EU and to plan and implement gender-equitable recovery measures in response to COVID-19 crisis, ensuring protection of rights of the most vulnerable and continuity of provision of the state services. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind the context of this evaluation, and to understand the major challenges that the project has encountered and how these have been dealt with. The following is a brief summary of the most difficult constraints to have affected the project: One such constraint was political volatility. More specifically, in 2019 -2020, political volatility arised from regular presidential election (May 2019) and early snap elections to the Verkhovna Rada (July 2020), and also from local elections to the local governments and local councils (October 2020). The volatile political context, combined with frequent changes in key staff at counterpart public institutions, has weakened the engagement of local authorities in the project's implementation, . However, the evidence that above-stated has jeopardized the sustainability of the supported interventions has not been observed during the qualitative and quantitative data collection process.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly affected the project operations, with the virus-related restrictions interfering with scheduled in-person trainings, workshops, and forums. The decision to adapt these activities to an online format was made carefully. Even though the punctuality of such activities was important, maintaining high quality was prioritized, which helped to preserve healthy relationships within the stakeholders. The related risks to project activities and supported initiatives were successfully mitigated through exploring and employing alternative modalities (online versus offline events and coordination meetings, information dissemination through social networks and digital media, using groups in social media for experience exchange between the supported cross-sectoral partnerships, and so on).

Another challenge that the project had to overcome related to trust and the difference of operational modalities between local authorities, CSOs and the private sector. All had their own rules and management protocols, while synergy was needed in order to achieve sustainable results. Once an understanding was established, the process went smoothly, and no other constraints have been evidenced.

## Project Implementation and Achievements

This section is focused on the five key dimensions of UNDP evaluations: i) **relevance** - the extent to which the project has been relevant to country priorities and needs; ii) **effectiveness** - whether the project has been on track in the achievement of desired and planned results; iii) **efficiency** - whether the process of achieving results has been efficient, iv) **sustainability** - the extent to which the benefits of the project are likely to be sustained, and v) **impact**- the extent to which the results have made the changes in people's lives.

### Relevance

The project's overall goal was to contribute to a more efficient public administration, capable of interacting and working, in a transparent manner, with the business sector, civil society and local communities in order to promote sustainable development and implement gender-equitable recovery measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis, ensuring the protection of the rights of the most vulnerable and the continuity of the provision of state services.

The "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" project is one of UNDP's strategic projects in Ukraine. From the perspective of local priorities and needs, the assessment of this project's relevance is pretty straightforward as during the interviews for this evaluation, there was unambiguous consensus among stakeholders that the project is very important for the country.

Also, the project's approach and design, as has already been discussed, has been relevant to the country's needs and conditions. The project's four-pillar approach (CSOs, Private Sector, Government and Academia) to sustainable development is highly relevant and so is the flexible approach that the project team, UNDP, and the Government of Sweden has taken in implementing this project. The project is also fully aligned with and supports the Ukrainian government backed Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 in particular Goal no 11 (Sustainable development of cities and communities), and Goal no 17 (Partnership for sustainable development). It is also in line with Strategic Priority no 1 (Pillar 1) of the UN Partnership Framework for the period 2018-2022: Sustainable economic growth, environment, and employment. The project's approach builds on the core principle of "leaving no one behind". Furthermore, it contributes to Output 2.1 of UNDP's Country Programme Document: *National and subnational institutions are better able to develop and implement policies and measures that generate sustainable jobs and livelihoods*; and 1.2.1 Output of

UNDP Strategic Plan: *Capacities at national and sub-national levels strengthened to promote inclusive local economic development and deliver basic services, including HIV and related services.*

The “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project is directly related to Sida’s results strategy for Sweden’s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey, 2014 – 2020, and contributes to the second objective included in this strategy: Strengthened democracy, greater respect for human rights and a more fully developed state under the rule of law. *Focusing on strengthened public administration and judicial systems*, the sub-results are as follows: a) More efficient public administration with administrative capacity to implement reforms for EU integration; and b) delivery of higher quality public services, based on principles of non-discrimination and equal rights and with less corruption.

The application of a holistic approach through working with key stakeholders across four layers – local government, civil society, private sector, and academia – proved helpful in achieving the expected objectives.

The stated objectives and intended activities of the project proved relevant as the issues the project attempted to address are at the core of sustainable development in the country at the national, sub-national, and local levels.

As per the project document, the “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” should have envisaged the integration of the SymbioCity<sup>4</sup> approach in its implementation, which promotes an integrated, holistic, and multidisciplinary approach to sustainable urban development, to achieve better quality urban environments via efficient resource use and synergies between different urban systems. The SymbioCity approach primarily addresses stakeholders involved in sustainable urban development at the local authority level, e.g., elected representatives on political committees and officials in departments of local councils or municipalities. Relevant regional and national departments should be involved where their functions are related to particular issues and needs. The approach can also serve as an overarching and integrating theme in the context of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation programmes and partnerships, training and educational programmes, research and development cooperation, exchange programmes and study visits, and export promotion and economic cooperation.

According to both the desk review and statements made by the interviewees, the current development trend in Ukraine translates into growing demands by both city authorities and local *hromadas* for urban

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<sup>4</sup> The SymbioCity Approach – A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Urban Development, SKL International, 2012

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54b57361e4b05fe5a237d8fd/t/56dd6fd007eaa05aaac063d1/1457352680242/SymbioCity+Approach.pdf>

support, and related approaches and cooperation, which indicates the increasing relevance of the SymbioCity approach.

The evaluation has found the SymbioCity approach to be a relevant framework to support sustainability processes. In accordance with both the desk review and the interviews, its basic feature, namely its inter-sectoral and participative/inclusive planning approach, is in line with current mainstream thinking promoted by UNDP, but the reality on the ground is slightly different. More specifically, the extent to which the project was able to implement this approach at the local level at full scale, as initially planned, is limited. However, it was adjusted to the local context, without diminishing its main features. A common denominator for all granted initiatives was that they all are linked to, and apparently fit into, a relevant set of political planning concerns that are congruent with the ideas in the SymbioCity approach. The SymbioCity approach does not need to be part of a country's formal municipal planning system and legislation, but evidence suggests that it is a prerequisite for its applicability and success that it is in accordance with already existing political objectives and can easily be linked to existing urban planning structures. Several respondents from local *hromadas* emphasized the importance of such mechanisms at the local level. Therefore, with increasing urbanization and related global processes, the development of approaches for sustainable development is an urgent task. Against this background, the SymbioCity approach, with its holistic, inter-sectoral and inclusive character, is in essence highly relevant, however, further capacity building measures or more strategic partnerships with Swedish organizations, who are more experienced in practicing the SymbioCity approach in emerging contexts is essential.

The feedback received by the evaluation team indicates a strong degree of endorsement of the relevance of the project among stakeholders, from key decisionmakers through to direct participants in the partner organizations. Encouragingly, 63% of online survey participants deemed the project relevant in addressing the needs of the target groups of the population. The same notion was evidenced through key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

### Assessment of Results

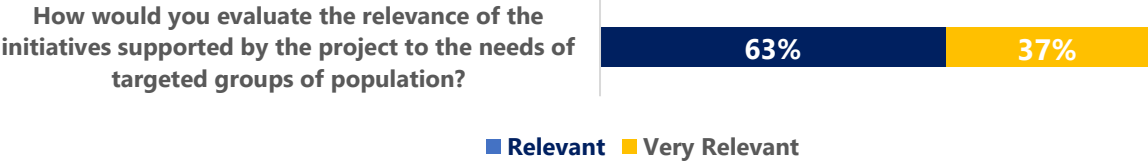


Figure 2: Assessment of Relevance

The project is regarded by stakeholders as a responsive instrument, that fits well with the dynamics seen in the domain of democratic and environmental governance in Ukraine – where priorities have emerged, evolved, and required urgent attention, in line with the turbulent nature of the Ukrainian policy environment. The rapid response nature of the project has also proved its worth, according to respondents, during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The project is highly relevant to the institutional context. The challenge of public administration in Ukraine lies in the need to effect substantive changes, bringing the country's institutional and legislative norms into line with European standards, in a context where Ukrainian state institutions face myriad internal challenges – from the shortage of financial resources, difficulties in retaining qualified staff, lack of expertise needed for European alignment, frequent patterns of reorganization and restructuring, and changes in national policy direction and decentralization. This is particularly evident at the local level. The “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project approach has proven to be sufficiently robust and flexible to accommodate the nature of the Ukrainian institutional context – finding a means to stimulate change notwithstanding the challenges that are encountered and serving to overcome (or bypass) certain bureaucratic obstacles present in the Ukrainian institutional context that might otherwise have obstructed change efforts. It is important to note that, according to the feedback received, the UNDP is held in high esteem and is seen as a guarantor of the support.

The project envisaged integrating various vulnerable groups in its implementation, e.g., women, PwDs, and youth. The analysis of their inclusion is presented under the sub-section “Cross-Cutting Issues”.

To summarize, the objectives and intended activities of the UNDP-implemented “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development-Pilot Phase” project were relevant in tackling the challenges in Ukraine as the issues that the project has attempted to address are at the core of the country's sustainable development.

## **Effectiveness**

The project outcomes and all outputs were achieved. During Phase I, the project piloted local initiatives in the areas of local economic development, energy efficiency, waste management, and sustainable mobility, while nine local initiatives supported during Phase II were a response to COVID-19 in the areas of employment (support of MSMEs and securing jobs), urban design, community engagement and education. As a result, the project empowered local communities through the provision of assists (knowledge, experience, guidance) and supported local authorities in building capacity to engage various stakeholders.

The project has accomplished most of its outputs as of December 2021. However, one of them under output 3, more specifically 3.3 *“Guidelines for public administrations on formation of the cross-sectoral challenge-driven partnerships and addressing COVID-19 impact on women and men and post-crisis*

*recovery developed (yes/no)*" are currently being developed and is expected to be finalized by the end of February 2022.

While the project has accomplished most of its outputs, the main contributors to its positive performance are its flexibility and ability to work closely with stakeholders in partnership; the relationships that were built with stakeholders, civil society, private sector and academia; and the ability to measure results occasionally with reporting and monitoring, and the evaluation of instruments. Through the project reporting, major constraints and risks were clearly identified with realistic approaches to resolve them or to respond to them also outlined. With regard to risks out of the project's control, the 'flexibility' factor kicked in, so progress continued to be made.

The project was effective in delivering solutions to specific challenges on local level, however, the extent to which it was engaged in supporting policy work, was limited. The respondents noted during the interviews "*...The idea was to firstly design challenge driven partnerships having different partners... then to make some recommendations for the local government bodies to explore an alternative financial model and to bring some income, create employment opportunities in their communities, and this has been lacking.*" In particular, development of recommendations and guidelines based on the experience gained within the project required application of iterative approach in order to integrate the lessons learned at different stages of the project implementation, therefore formulation of final version of recommendations was postponed till its final stage.

The results framework of the "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" provides outcome and output level indicators, which have been regularly followed-up in the progress reports. In addition, the contribution to UNDP Strategic Plan and Country Programme Document is being measured on an annual basis. In addition, specific results frameworks were built for each granted initiative, which envisage mostly output level indicators for each activity. Given the scope and the challenge-driven nature of the project, there were common indicators on output level across the granted initiatives, however, the project would have benefited from integration of common outcome-level indicators which would allow consolidation of results. However, the level of details at the challenge-driven partnership level was quite significant with reports submitted by grantees.

## Efficiency

The project had a total budget of SEK 10,000,000 (USD 1,085,245) over a period of two years, from December 2018 to December 2021 (now extended till March 2022).

The below charts illustrates an expenditure rate as of December 2021, which amounts to 96% of total budget with three more months till its end.

Budget Line	Amount planned in USD	Actual spending USD (December 2021)	Burn Rate
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Output 1 - Functional challenge-driven partnerships in place	72,801	72,801	100%
Output 2 – Sustainable local development initiatives designed and implemented by challenge-driven partnerships	337,949	335,566	99%
Output 3 – Local communities’ benefit from the social and economic improvements, realized through successfully piloted multi-stakeholder initiatives in response to COVID-19 crisis	374,015	360,637	96%
Management and Administration	272,369	248,575	91%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1,057,134</b>	<b>1,017,579</b>	<b>96%</b>

Table 2: Budget execution

The high levels of qualification and resourcefulness of all team members of the project were highlighted during the interviews by the vast majority of key informants. The way in which the project was structured, coordinated, led and reported was also praised by relevant stakeholders during the interviews. Financially, the project was cost-efficient and implemented in a timely manner, despite the fact that slight delays affected its implementation due to COVID-19, resulting in a request for a no-cost extension till the end of March 2022 being made to the donor. It should also be noted that the donor (Sida) has been very committed to and engaged in the project, and has shown a good degree of flexibility which has allowed the project to adapt to the rapidly-changing context, particularly during the pandemic.

It may be noteworthy that all of the online survey participants evaluated the support provided by the project to tackle the challenge defined by their partnership as either “Sufficient” or “Very sufficient”.



Figure 2: Assessment of sufficiency

Resource mobilization was ensured through local co-financing and effective fundraising. The overall budget of the initiatives implemented during the first phase reached USD 520,000, of which 52% was provided by local partners as co-financing, including funding from the local budgets, while the total budget of the initiatives supported during the second phase was USD 521,562, of which the grant share was 48% and the contribution of the grantees and their partners was 52%.

The scale of the challenge-driven partnerships is such that, in the majority of cases (according to the evidence reviewed), the expected results can be attained in a relatively short time frame, and with the



use of a relatively limited amount of funding. In the feedback, the respondents confirmed that the level of resources provided was very much in line with the requirements – allowing for substantive work to be conducted, in a focused manner.

UNDP monitoring and evaluation systems were applied. Project reporting was detailed with reports annually and regular status updates submitted to Sida. The reports indicated activities, described the context of the activities, next steps, monitoring and evaluation steps taken, public and outreach events, risks, budget status, and a performance table per the RRF. The monitoring meetings with grantees took place regularly over the project implementation period. Data for monitoring were collected at monthly basis, progress achieved was discussed along with ongoing implementation issues and advisory support to the grantees was provided from the project side.

The project developed criteria for selecting the challenge-driven partnership initiatives “Grants Selection and Approval Criteria”, which indicated eligibility criteria, co-financing terms, selection procedure. The latter was applied while screening proposals. Even though the criteria listed in the document<sup>5</sup> were comprehensive enough, the project would have benefitted from a more detailed selection criteria.

To summarize, project expenditure appears to have aligned with project activity in each of the output areas. The project management structure was appropriate for the size of the project and its scope of work.

## Sustainability

The question of sustainability of the results achieved under the “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” needs to be set against the context and scope of the project. The focus needs to be on the sustainability of the results of the challenge-driven partnerships themselves (and how this may contribute to institutional capacities). It concludes with an assessment of the question of ownership of the project results.

**Sustainability of the results of the challenge-driven partnerships:** The following patterns can be seen with regard to the prospects for sustainability:

- The design of the project, with the emphasis on demand-driven dynamics in which requests emanate from the local communities, for activities that have a clear purpose and are achievable in

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<sup>5</sup> Respond to COVID-19 crisis and promote socio-economic recovery of local communities; Fall into one of the priority areas (healthcare; education; support to MSMEs and securing jobs; age and gender-responsive urban design; community engagement (focusing on the vulnerable groups) in crisis response and recovery); Include innovative replicable and scalable solutions for improving socio-economic situation at the local level; Have clearly defined target audience addressed by the project activities; Have clear objectives to be achieved using the resources provided and within a given time frame; Have clear and measurable results related to mitigating socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

a short time frame, can be seen to establish a good basis for sustainability prospects. The realization of these prospects is contingent on institutional factors following the completion of the Sida/UNDP support.

- The long-term sustainability of the effects of challenge-driven partnerships with a technical and/or capacity-building focus is contingent on the institutional resources to ensure that the equipment/skills attained are kept up to date (and staff turnover can affect retention of the effects of training). In the evidence reviewed for the evaluation, the partnerships results have generally proven to be lasting, and sufficient for the institutions to move forward with the planned changes for which the support from private sector was provided.
- The review has indicated a wide range of examples of good practice in multiplying the effects of the support, through cascading across the hromadas/communities, rolling out similar programmes to broader audiences, and achieving synergies across partnerships.
- UNDP engagement with stakeholder communities, including public awareness activities, serves as a support to sustainability through increasing the salience of the work of the partnerships. The withdrawal of UNDP's involvement in these processes, may jeopardize the sustainability of these partnerships, however, the latter statement should be digested as an assumption, not a prediction.
- The key to the sustainability of implemented initiatives is confidence-building and established dialogue between stakeholders. And the role of UNDP in these processes is undeniable.
- The evaluation found that the partnerships, which include private sector representatives as well, have a higher sustainability rate and higher rate of replicability. In cases where the private sector was a co-financer in the challenge-driven partnership, the integration of an "efficient" way of doing business is fostered and it increased the scalability and replicability of the results. Noteworthy, that the project supported 16 challenge-driven partnerships, out of which 88% included stakeholders from local government, 38%- private sector and 19%- academia.

It may be noteworthy that 90% of the online survey respondents indicated, that their organization will continue using the gained experience after the initiative finishes and all of them assessed the results of the respective challenge-driven partnerships as "Sustainable" or "Very sustainable".



Figure 3: The project helped my organization to build a strong cross-sectoral partnership

How would you assess the sustainability of the results achieved within your implemented initiative after finishing the engagement with the project?

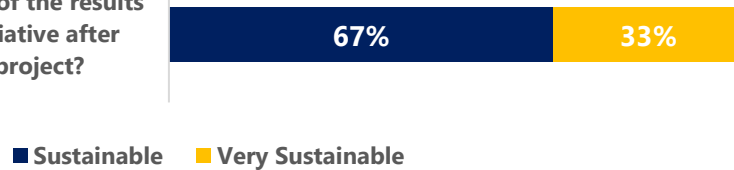


Figure 4: Assessment of Results

The evaluation envisaged assessing the sustainability, impact, replicability and the scalability of the challenge-driven partnerships. Some of the initiatives have already demonstrated the sustainability and the likelihood of replicability is high, while, in other cases, the evidence is very limited.

In order to map each supported initiative, the 5-scale measurement was introduced by the evaluator, which gauges the extent to which each specific supported partnership solution is sustainable, can be replicated, scaled up and has demonstrated the impact. The assignment of scores is based on the results of "Assessment of Grant Initiatives" commission by UNDP, along with review of reports submitted by grantees and the information collected through key informant interviews.

Noteworthy, that extent of impact is evaluated not only based on the actual number of indirect beneficiaries, but also considering the breadth and quality of impact on each individual. Furthermore, the scoring is based on the collected data from interviews and desk review of reports submitted by the grantees. Somehow, it might include respondent bias, as for partnerships' representatives, often the very notion of sustainability, replicativity and scalability was not entirely clear at the beginning.

The table below summarizes the level of sustainability and replicability of each supported challenge-driven partnership. The scoring "very high"- 5 was assigned to the initiatives, that can be carried out without any additional external support and the approach can be replicated in other settings without any alterations.

The extent to which each criterion is mainstreamed

- 1 Very low
- 2 Low
- 3 Medium
- 4 High
- 5 Very high

Based on the assigned score, the total score was calculated by multiplying the score in each criteria to each other.

#	Name of the Challenge-driven Partnership	Sustainability	Replicability	Scaling up	Impact	Gender and Social Inclusion	Average Score	Total Score (Sustainability * Replicability * Scaling up * Impact * Gender & Social Inclusion)	SDGs
1	Sustainable Mobility - Transport Infrastructure Modernization of the Town of Nadvirna	5	4	4	5	5	4.6	2000	10,11,13,17
2	Family Dairy Farms - People's Well-Being and Sustainable Rural Development	5	5	5	5	4	4.8	2500	1,2,5,8,12,17
3	The Way of a Snail. Partnership Model Based on the Example of Snail Family Farms Development	4	4	4	4	3	3.8	768	1,2,5,8,12,17
4	Revolving Fund: Partnership for Energy Efficiency in Multi-Apartment Buildings in Mykolaiv and Odesa oblasts	5	5	5	5	2	4.4	1250	7,11,13,17
5	"Zero Waste" Model in Action	4	5	4	5	2	4	800	11, 12,13, 17
6	Launching public workshops in 3 communities of Cherkasy region	3	5	5	4	3	4	900	8,11, 17
7	Creation of the transport and tourism hub in the Mamaivtsi amalgamate territorial community	5	5	3	4	2	3.8	600	11,13, 17
8	Moms in Business, - Women's economic empowerment as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic	5	5	5	5	5	5	3125	1,4,5
9	Employment Booster for ATCs: Response to economic challenges to local communities during pandemic	4	3	3	4	3	3.4	432	1,8
10	Mobile museum-laboratory for school children: access to quality education in COVID-19 pandemic situation	5	5	4	5	4	4.6	2000	4

#	Name of the Challenge-driven Partnership	Sustainability	Replicability	Scaling up	Impact	Gender and Social Inclusion	Average Score	Total Score (Sustainability * Replicability * Scaling up * Impact * Gender & Social Inclusion)	SDGs
11	Developing local infrastructure for cycling: a way to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic	4	5	4	5	4	4.4	1600	3,11
12	Gender-sensitive design of safe public spaces as a response to COVID-19 pandemic challenges	3	4	4	5	5	4.2	1200	5,11,16,17
13	Protecting jobs in rural areas affected by COVID-19 through promoting small family business under the "Shchedre Opillya" brand	3	5	4	5	3	4	900	1,16,17
14	Developing rural communities and countering COVID-19 pandemic by supporting small and micro-businesses	3	4	4	4	3	3.6	576	1,16, 17
15	Laboratory of handicraft production: a creative response to economic challenges of COVID-19 pandemic	4	5	5	5	3	4.4	1500	4,11
16	Youth school of socially responsible business: learning as a means of countering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic	3	4	4	4	4	3.8	768	1,4,17

## Impact

Throughout the implementation period, the “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project proved its ability to design and implement interventions and increase its impact trajectory even in the most fragile political context. Noteworthy, that it is reasonable to view impact as a direct immediate one and as a late long term one also effecting community member, community itself and partnership, and region.

The lead organizations (NGOs) managed to effectively use their experience and expertise to successfully implement the projects and manage the partnerships. Experience of the NGOs in organizing events enabled them to competently conduct public hearings and meetings with community residents, and prior cooperation with local or oblast authorities made it easier for the NGOs to build a good rapport with partners.

The project fostered agility and mindset changes in local authorities by demonstrating practical ways of being engaged in multi-sectoral partnerships and the benefits thereof. Based on the interviews with the representatives of the LAs, most see the value of partnering and cooperating with CSOs. In addition, UNDP was able to increase the awareness of local authorities on the ways of cooperating with private sector and getting co-financing from their side. The challenge-driven partnerships created evidence and instrumentalized government officials to engage businesses in solving local problems. The latter was highly praised by the respondents during the interviews.



Moreover, the interviews mentioned that the accumulated experience of challenge-driven partnerships as a results-based modality allowed for the agile amendment of activities, enabling mobilization of localized and community-driven COVID-19 response and recovery measures. The project approach catalysed sustainable development processes at the local level, mobilizing local development actors to act jointly in addressing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

Collaboration was one of the keys for unlocking impact with leaders from all sectors of society agreeing that solving environmental and social challenges required unparalleled cooperation.

There were three distinct levels with respect to the impact of partnerships in the project. One was what the interviewees claimed; the unusual partners and unusual direct partners, because the project comprises of work with academia. However, they said *they do not work with academia at the local level*. So, that was something important. One of the interviewees mentioned: *"...And this I would value because we started then engaging them with and outside the scope of this project."* The second one mentioned in the interviews was going into the local level of the private sector, but they were localized. And the last was the international connection with Cedar.

Noteworthy, that 57% of online survey respondents assessed the level of impact of the challenge-driven partnership to their organizations' operations as high, while 40% of them weighted it as 40%.

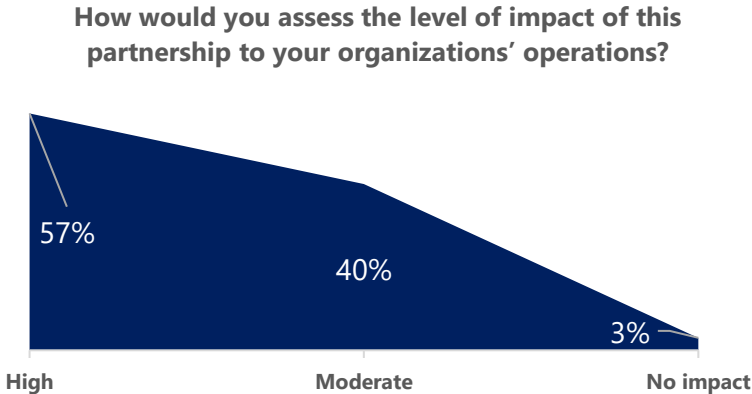


Figure 5: How would you assess the level of impact of this partnership to your organizations' operations?

In addition, the "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" project was able to challenge the stereotypes particularly in terms of women and supported their engagement in "non-female" occupations. For instance, through supporting the "Moms in Business", the project created a long-lasting impact on these beneficiary moms, who now have increased income, access to financial resources and boosted self-confidence. Another example are the dairy farms, where the rural households are able to transform their traditional cattle-breeding into a steady income-generating opportunity.

Given the demand-driven nature of the project, the impact is evidenced on each local solution level, while aggregating the influence and capturing outcomes on inter-partnership or cross-project level is limited.

## Cross-Cutting Issues

Through this project, UNDP addressed the most vulnerable communities. When it comes to people with disability, women's engagement, whether it was before or after COVID, this project added value in terms of addressing the immediate needs and the emerging priorities of these communities, specifically for women.

COVID pandemic particularly highlighted the importance of working with vulnerable groups, as there had been increased levels of domestic violence against women. So, in that sense, the general perspective was that the project addressed the most vulnerable groups to a great extent. However, the respondents also agreed that there were more opportunities and possibilities to mainstream gender. The project was not meant to address domestic violence issues, however, supported empowerment of marginalized groups and equipped them with necessary skills, knowledge and resources to create improved and safer livelihood conditions for them.

One of the interviewees discussed gender disaggregation with respect to the project. They mentioned: *"...And of course, just the generations, gender disaggregated data probably is not enough for mainstreaming gender and inclusion into the project implementation..."*

The inclusion dimension was addressed by all projects. As evidenced by the final reports, gender equality was clearly mainstreamed throughout the projects' activities and implementing partners to ensure equal access to resources for all members of the target communities, including women, men, and youth. Also, at the stage of incoming application review, social and cultural factors were under consideration, namely – geographic location, economic status, age and social status of potential beneficiaries. Under consideration of above, the initiative of Studena territorial community - Gender-sensitive design of safe public spaces as a response to COVID-19 pandemic challenges – was supported. It was aimed to overcome lack of a gender component in the provision of municipal services provided in the territorial community, to improve quality of municipal services delivered and foster formation of a gender-fair life in the administrative center of the Studena community.

Community conducted gender audit and based on results received ensured improvement of the quality of municipal services, taking into account the gender needs of residents. Territory of the city park was improved and landscaped. Five gender oriented zones were arranged in the park, – for elderly people, for pupils (area for open air lessons in natural sciences), for youth, for moms with small children, and a sports ground. A strategy for the sustainable development of Studena community was elaborated with special focus on local tourism development. As a result the whole community participated in the initiative implementation and benefitted from the activities completed.



It should also be noted that the Studena territorial community is located within a 30-kilometer territory near the border with Transnistria, officially the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, - an unrecognized breakaway state.

Furthermore, the contribution to gender equality and inclusion was targeted by the initiatives "Launching Public Workshops in three communities of the Cherkasy region" and the "Creation of the transport and tourism hub in the Mamaivtsi amalgamate territorial community" which were focused on creating community infrastructure tackling the safety needs of women, men, youth, and vulnerable community members.

The project collected and reported gender-disaggregated data, in addition to supporting specific gender-related activities. As a result, the project has contributed to providing women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land. Family farming is creating opportunities for women to access resources, technology, and a greater voice in decision-making. There is ample support for young mothers who want to learn, and to improve their economic situation. As well, a gender-oriented space has been created in the rural community, promoting the territory of Vinnytsia region, in addition to focusing on creating community infrastructure that was tackling the safety needs of women, men, youth, and vulnerable community members.

Noteworthy, that 90% of online survey respondents indicated, that they mainstreamed gender perspective into their initiatives at high extend, while 3% of them noted very limited account of this dimension. In addition, the "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" project was able to challenge the stereotypes particularly in terms of women and supported their engagement in "non-female" occupations. For instance, through the partnership "Laboratory of handicraft production: a creative response to economic challenges of COVID-19 pandemic", women were able to acquire the skills like working on laser machine, prototyping, etc.

The project activities also integrated a human-rights based approach (HRBA) as a cross-cutting theme to its interventions by drawing attention to the accountability to respect, protect, promote, and fulfill the human rights of all people. Increased focus on accountability held the key to improved effectiveness and transparency of the initiative. Another important value provided by the application of a HRBA was the focus on the most vulnerable, marginalized, and excluded in society. Capacity-building measures have a long-term effect on representation and power relations in institutions, and therefore close attention was paid during the project to ensuring that young women were proactively involved in the development and implementation of the project activities and that they equally benefitted from the results.

The inclusivity and diversity dimensions were incorporated in various initiatives. E.g., in Nadvirna, one of the key incentives was to create such an infrastructure that would made the town safe for all community members. Specifically, children who are visiting the two secondary schools in the town centre, low mobility groups, particularly older persons, and persons with disabilities.

Significantly, that 73% of online survey respondents indicated, that they mainstreamed inclusion of People with Disabilities into their initiatives at high extend, while 10% of them noted very limited account of this dimension.

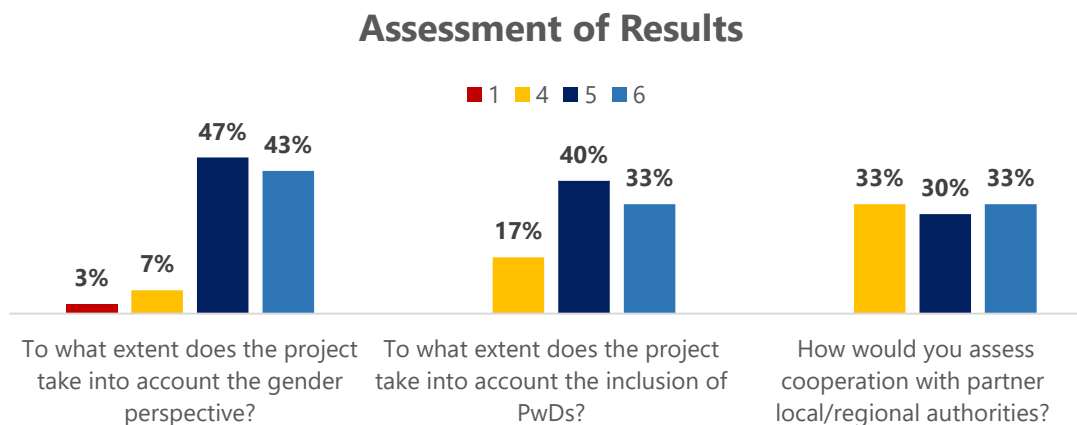


Figure 6: Assessment of Results

### Project’s Contribution to Achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals

All projects were implemented in line with the interconnected nature of the SDGs and targeted several SDGs at the same time. More specifically, the project contributed to SDG1 “No Poverty” through supporting various initiatives. For instance, several family farmers/members of agriculture cooperatives have the potential for shifting from subsistence to engaging in income generating non-agriculture sectors opportunities in rural areas, as a result of benefitting from challenge-driven partnership activities. The Ukrainian Snail Farming Cluster is creating income generation opportunities in rural areas with special emphasis on opening European markets for Ukrainian small farmers. In addition, supporting and developing small businesses in rural areas in Cherkasy, as well as empowering rural residents in Ternopil oblast, which are particularly vulnerable, in accessing adequate economic opportunities, UNDP contributed to reducing the poverty level in the country. In addition, developing a unique educational programme for young entrepreneurs on implementing social projects in Mykolaiv region, along with provision of financial sponsorship for 10 social projects, within which 20 young entrepreneurs to improve the social situation in the region has further advanced achievement of SDG 1 in Ukraine.

Through increasing the productivity and the incomes of small-scale dairy producers/family farmers, coupled with enhancing the local infrastructure for entrepreneurship through provision of equipment for business development in cities and rural communities, the project was able to contribute to progressing the SDG 2.

The principles of “green” and sustainable development of road and transport infrastructure is being implemented in the cities of Ukraine. A School of Cycling was established. Around 480 schoolchildren (250 girls and 230 boys) and 20 elderly people (18 women and 2 men) improved their cycling skills. The implementation of bicycle transportation contributed to improving the environment in terms of pollutant emission reductions, fuel economy, and noise level reduction. This will substantially decrease the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination, thus advancing health-related SDG 3.

The project inspired conditions for online learning, especially for young mothers. It also encouraged young mothers to start their own businesses, which is critically important for the post-COVID recovery of the local economy. The first interactive area of scientific education in the community and the region was established in Khmelnytskyi Oblast. A mobile museum laboratory was launched to support learning in primary and secondary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to increased potential of young student communities to study natural, physical, and mathematical sciences and contributing to achievement of SDG 4.

“Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” played a role in challenging the gender stereotypes and contributed to the progress in SDG 5 through improving access to resources, technology, and a greater voice in decision-making for rural women. In line with SDG 5, the project has contributed to providing women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land. Family farming is creating opportunities for women to access resources, technology, and a greater voice in decision-making. There is ample support for young mothers who want to learn, and to improve their economic situation. As well, a gender-oriented space has been created in the rural community, promoting the territory of Vynytsia region.

Homeowners together with local authorities and a wide range of partners (including businesses and local NGOs), joined forces on a challenge-driven initiative to implement energy efficient measures in housing properties, resulting in establishment of Revolving Fund. It directly contributes to energy efficiency pillar of SDG 7. Specific examples have been exhibited throughout the project implementation e.g., provision of support to multiple housing cooperatives from target communities in receiving energy certification. This has significant importance for city revitalization and, importantly, as a measure to reduce the load on the energy network and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

In order to advance the progress in SDG 8, the project created a basic infrastructure in Ukrainian rural communities and provided support for productive activities, decent job creation (self-employment) and entrepreneurship in Cherkasy region. An employment booster model for stimulating employment and entrepreneurship development was tested, and 11 new jobs created on its basis in Lviv. Thus, achieving full and productive employment and a response for the economic challenges the local communities dealt with during the pandemic.

Reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind are integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and specifically goal 10. Older persons, people with disabilities and children are particularly at risk of being left behind. In Nadvirna, one of the key incentives was to create such an infrastructure that would make the town safe for all community members. Specifically, children who are visiting the two secondary schools in the town centre, low mobility groups, particularly older persons, and persons with disabilities. The inclusivity and diversity dimensions were incorporated in transport infrastructure modernization of the town of Nadvirna. Hence, facilitating orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Through increasing the safety of Mamaivtci community, supporting cycling development of Myrhorod territorial community, elaboration of the strategy for the sustainable development of the Studenian community, with an emphasis on the promotion of internal and cross-border tourism, the development and piloting of the curriculum "Experimental School of Object Design" and the revitalization of "Elektrovymiriuvach" plant, the project has contributed to achievement of SDG 11 – "Sustainable Cities and Communities".

Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) were mainstreamed in the "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" project through emphasizing the importance of sustainable value chains in dairy production industry. More specifically, the initiatives have contributed to enhancing dairy plants and reducing transport footprint. The piloted business model has proved to be economically effective, and it also fits into a broader picture of water and land use, biodiversity, and animal welfare, contributing to environmental protection. The project in Cherkasy region also contributed to reducing waste generation at local level through promoting maintenance of household items, their reparation and reuse.

The project envisaged supporting climate change actions and has significantly contributed to advancement of SDG 13. More specifically, the created the infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists to reduce the negative impacts on climate change. The project provided financial support via the Revolving Loan Fund to 29 energy efficiency projects that will result in reducing energy use and carbon emission in the future. The project was also engaged different stakeholders to minimize environmental impact of zero waste model in Lviv city and stimulated business towards higher sustainability efficiency. Also, the project in Mamaivtci has made a special emphasis on development of cycling infrastructure. These efforts contribute to decreasing transport carbon footprint. Overall, the project promoted mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning.

Supporting local authorities, capacitating them to better serve their constituencies has been largely supporting by the project leading to the progress towards establishment of stronger public institutions (SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development is crucial. To bring about change around all the SDGs, actors are required to radically shift their way of thinking, acting, and working together. The evaluation evidenced specific cases of fostering the partnerships and supporting the achievement of SDG 17, when local NGOs, private sector, academia, and government were brought together to find solutions for local challenges.

It is significant that the SDG Impact Assessment (see the “Methodology” section for details) results demonstrate that during 2018-2021, “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” has had a direct positive impact on SDGs 1, 2,3, 4,5,7, 8,9,10, 11, 12, 13, 15,16 and 17. The contributions are analyzed based on what-causes-what relations, and the results determine if an impact is positive or negative and direct or indirect.

### Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development

Direct positive	1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12	13		15	16	17
Indirect positive																	
No impact						6								14			
Indirect negative																	
Direct negative																	

A positive impact help to implement the SDG, and a negative impact counteract its implementation. A direct (positive or negative) impact will have an immediate one-step effect on an SDG. An indirect (positive or negative) impact is a secondary effect further down a chain of events.

Therefore, this project successfully exhibits considerable progress and enhances the global partnership, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, the 2030 agenda is deliberately ambitious, and thus there is still much to be done.

The next sections analyze specifically the inclusion of various vulnerable groups in project activities in terms of accessing to resources, power, voice, and opportunities. It's an illustrative example and further detailed analysis is needed to get comprehensive picture.

## Project's Contribution to Poverty Eradication

This section seeks to analyze the ways in which the Project contributes to the Multidimensional Poverty Framework through support initiatives. Dimensions of Poverty define a shared understanding of poverty that reflects the current realities of poverty, as well as the goals of today's international and Swedish development cooperation, and hence contributes to more effective and relevant development cooperation. Four dimensions of poverty are defined in the policy framework: 1. Resources; 2. Opportunities and choice; 3. Power and voice; 4. Human security<sup>6</sup>. The framework comprises four main areas, each of which are introduced below, along with an outline of the Project's contribution.

**Resources: "Lack of resources means not having access to or power over resources that can be used to sustain a decent living standard and improve one's life. Resources can be both material and nonmaterial – e.g., a decent income, capital, being educated or trained, professional skills, being healthy."**

"Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" supported multiple initiatives that sought to improve availability of resources to diverse group of people.

Through capacitating local authorities, as well as improving the entrepreneurial and business skills of rural women and youth, the project has enabled communities and the authorities to access valuable resources and advance accordingly. Furthermore, creating mobile museums, online learning platforms for them has directly contributed to the "Resources" pillar of the framework. Together, these benefits will in turn boost the quantity and quality of available resources. Being richer in terms of resources creates a more positive feedback loop in terms of national capacity and efficiency, thus leading to poverty reduction.

**Opportunities and choice: "Opportunities and choice concerns what possibility you have to develop and/ or use your resources so as to move out of poverty. Access to e.g., social services, to infrastructure, to capital, to land, or to natural resources affects the opportunities and choices."**



<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sida.se/en/publications/dimensions-of-poverty-sidas-conceptual-framework>

Supporting development of cycling and transport infrastructure, along with enabling women farmers to have access to ownership and control over land, increased the likelihood of rural poor to move out of poverty. Access to capital was mainstreamed through developing Revolving Fund, funding social businesses, as well as elaborating booster models for stimulating employment and entrepreneurship.

**Power and voice: “Lack of power and voice relates to the ability of people to articulate their concerns, needs and rights in an informed way, and to take part in decision-making that relate to these concerns. Power is a relational concept that allows us to better understand socio-cultural hierarchies and relations of which gender is one, others include age, caste, class, religion, ethnicity and sexual identity.”**

“Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project enabled women farmers to have a greater voice in decision-making through accessing to ownership and control over land. In addition, creating spaces for people with disabilities and elderly population contributed “Power and Voice” pillar of the framework. With the involvement of all social groups in its initiatives, the project has created space for all of them to articulate their concerns, needs, and rights in an informed way, and to take part in relevant decision-making processes.

**Human security: “Human security implies that violence and insecurity are constraints to different groups and individuals’ possibilities to exercise their human rights and to find paths out of poverty.”**

It has been documented that impoverished populations are disproportionately affected by environmental issues and natural disasters. Therefore, with the support of the project, more and more Ukrainians are themselves assuming responsibility for creating comfortable, safe, and environmentally sound living conditions not only in their own apartments but also in the building in which they are situated.

In addition, the “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project also contributes to the outer circle of the framework presented in the graphic above, specifically to the “political & institutional context” and the “environmental context” through the elaboration of inclusive policies and channeling investments into in-house capacity building in priority areas of public administration, public service delivery, government accountability, human rights, gender equality, and environmental protection.

With active support from the Government of Sweden, many project activities are closely linked to reducing poverty by encouraging good governance, thereby increasing citizens’ power and voice; improving environmental management; supporting economic development; enhancing the social context through improving access to public services; and cultivating international support to strengthen the country’s overall development.

The project has also undertaken multiple climate-related actions, such as creating the infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists to reduce the negative impacts on climate change, providing financial support via the Revolving Loan Fund to 29 energy efficiency projects that will result in reducing energy use and carbon emission in the future. The project was also engaged different stakeholders to minimize environmental impact of zero waste model in Lviv city and stimulated business towards higher sustainability efficiency. Also, the project in Mamaivtci has made a special emphasis on development of cycling infrastructure. These efforts contribute to decreasing transport carbon footprint. Overall, the project promoted mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning.

Within Sida's Multi-Dimensional Poverty Framework (MDPF), "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" activities most closely relate to the 'Political & Institutional context' and 'Power & Voice' dimension, as the project supports public administration and governance reforms aimed at strengthening rule of law and democratic and environmental governance.

Sida/UNDP supported activities are closely linked to efforts aimed at reducing poverty in Ukraine by encouraging good governance, thereby increasing citizens' power and voice; improving the environmental context; supporting economic development; enhancing the social context through improving access to public services; and cultivating international support to strengthen Ukraine's overall development.

## Lessons Learned

14. The inclusion of civil society organizations in the cross-sectoral partnerships provides strong added value and allows the project to draw on the network of expertise that CSOs contain through their members and experience of engaging with the respective governance domains. It also serves to reinforce the connection between governmental and non-governmental actors in addressing development challenges.
15. The UNDP's involvement in public sector reforms brings increased credibility.
16. Generally, the representatives of local authorities valued the enhanced interaction between themselves and CSOs.
17. The holistic approach, the evident changes in the level of awareness among key stakeholders about specific topics, and the great sense of appreciation expressed by the public agencies, all indicate that the "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development" project has been able to adequately address the needs of beneficiary public institutions, enabling them to better delivery their services.
18. The project has been able to create solid foundations upon which to strengthen public administration systems, to identify "champions," and to support their capacity building.



However, the steps so far taken (as considered by the interviewees) should be continued to achieve a long-lasting impact.

19. The evaluation found that project-supported initiatives often become a catalyst for larger-scale change or serve as a solid foundation for further capacity-building actions in public institutions.
20. The pandemic challenged the implementation of the results. also created new opportunities. Shifting the delivery process to an online mode enabled the challenge-driven partnerships to save precious funds in the budget and implement new activities thus achieving a greater impact with a more diversified target group.
21. Establishing trust between the members of supported multi-sectoral partnership took time and, in some cases, caused challenges in managing the initiatives. However, once trust was formed, the process went smoothly.
22. The evaluation has found the SymbioCity approach to be a relevant framework to support sustainability processes. In accordance with both the desk review and the interviews, its basic feature, namely its inter-sectoral and participative/inclusive planning approach, is in line with current mainstream thinking promoted by UNDP, but the reality on the ground is slightly different. Therefore, it was adjusted to the local context, without diminishing its main features. A common denominator for all granted initiatives was that they all are linked to, and apparently fit into, the local multi-dimensional ecosystems that are congruent with the ideas in the SymbioCity approach.
23. The evaluation found that the partnerships, which include private sector representatives as well, have a higher level of sustainability and replicability. In cases where the private sector was a co-financer in the challenge-driven partnership, the integration of an "efficient" way of doing business is fostered and it increased the scalability and replicability of the results.
24. Given the demand-driven nature of the project, the impact is evidenced on each local solution level, while aggregating the influence and capturing outcomes on inter-partnership or cross-project level is limited. At the same time, due to established experience exchange mechanism and ongoing communication, the supported initiatives and partnerships have cross-fertilized each other, which can be further employed and taken to a higher level in the follow-up action.
25. Striking the balance between implementation of challenge-driven partnerships and working on policy level through development of recommendations and guidelines was challenging and required application of iterative approach in order to integrate the lessons learned at different stages of the project implementation.
26. The extent and the breadth of the project impact was higher on smaller size hromadas/communities with less financial resources invested compared to larger ones. At the same time, models and development solutions successfully piloted in the larger communities/municipalities have high replication potential and are relevant for both small and large communities. However, models and solutions implemented are equally applicable, replicable, and relevant for scaling up for all three types of hromadas, - city territorial hromada,

settlement territorial hromada and rural territorial hromada, - irrespective of their sizes, along with regions on subnational level, involving several different hromadas.

27.

## **Conclusion**

Albeit quite ambitious, the “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project is a well-managed project that is valued by all relevant partners. The project is run by a team which is competent, professional, committed and well versed with the issues covered by the project. They have established good relations with the government, private sector, academia and CSOs.

Also, the organizational structure of the project is sound and seems to respond well to the challenges that the project has faced. The project team is receiving adequate support on management matters from the UNDP CO. It should also be noted that the donor (Sida) has been very committed to and engaged with the project and has shown a good degree of flexibility which has allowed the project to adapt to the rapidly changing context around pandemic.

The “Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development” project approach has proven to be sufficiently robust and flexible to accommodate the nature of the Ukrainian institutional context – finding a means to stimulate change notwithstanding the challenges that are encountered and serving to overcome (or bypass) certain bureaucratic obstacles present in the Ukrainian institutional context that might otherwise have obstructed change efforts.

## **Recommendations**

This evaluation makes the following set of recommendations which are derived from the analysis presented in the previous sections of this report.

Short term recommendations:

1. Increase awareness raising efforts of the project to ensure higher level of visibility

2. Advance the policy work and direct the efforts towards institutionalization of the approaches applied through challenge-driven partnerships
3. Develop a shared platform knowledge base which would capture all intellectual outputs developed within the project (e.g., case-studies, methodologies, presentations) and all relevant holistic sustainable development approaches/concepts.

Recommendations to be reflected in the next phase of the project implementation:

4. Continue fostering inclusion of private sector companies in developing solutions for local challenges and promote their co-financing in the initiatives
5. Make grant selection criteria more detailed by elaborating sub-set of questions with respective scoring in order to streamline the initiative selection process within the steering committee members. Integrate common outcome measurement indicators across the challenge-driven solution to aggregate the results and capture the project impact
6. Further capacity building of local authorities in application of holistic, comprehensive and systemic approach to local development (e.g. SymbioCity Approach) is essential particularly in foster inclusive rural development
7. Differentiate the level of financing based on the financial affordability of Hromadas. Setting the threshold of co-financing, which is accessible for smaller size Hromadas, will enable the project team to ensure that "no one is left behind"
8. Create the Community of Practice among the challenge-driven partnership stakeholders to foster knowledge and experience sharing inter and intra sectors.
9. Foster the inclusion of vulnerable groups in project activities and consider supporting specific inclusion-related solutions on local level

## Annexes

### Annex 1. Term of Reference

<b>Project name:</b>	Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase.
<b>Post title:</b>	Project Evaluator.
<b>Country / Duty station:</b>	Ukraine, Home-based.
<b>Expected places of travel (if applicable):</b>	Travels to project implementation sites within Ukraine, exact locations in Ternopil'ska, Mykolaiv'ska and Zhytomyr'ska oblasts will be defined (up to 3 one-day travels).
<b>Starting date of assignment:</b>	September 24, 2021.
<b>Duration of assignment / or</b>	September 27, 2021 – November 30, 2021.

#### 1. BACKGROUND

«Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase»

The Project builds on UNDP's strong experience in supporting and monitoring the implementation of SDGs in Ukraine. UNDP's strategic plan focuses on key areas including poverty alleviation, democratic governance and peacebuilding, climate change and disaster risk, and economic inequality. UNDP provides support to governments to integrate the SDGs into their national and sub-national development plans and policies.

In the context of the country's reforms towards EU integration, and in particular its decentralization reform, many responsibilities lie now with Ukrainian local authorities, and solutions for building more sustainable cities and communities can be both generated and implemented at the local level. One key requirement for initiating and promoting sustainable development changes is to build and nurture multi-stakeholders' collaborations (challenge-driven partnerships) that generate solutions to local sustainable development challenges and find resources for their implementation. The quality of local administrations as partners is crucial to ensure that these partnerships are effective and bring in concrete results.

The Project's overall goal is to contribute to a more efficient public administration, capable to interact and work, in a transparent manner, with the business sector, civil society, and local communities in order to promote sustainable development and Ukraine's approximation towards the EU and to plan and implement gender-equitable recovery measures in response to COVID-19 crisis, ensuring the protection of rights of the most vulnerable and continuity of the provision of the public services.

Its specific purpose is to pilot at regional/local level (oblasts, municipalities, or territorial communities) the formation of multi-stakeholders (local and regional governments and

councils, academia, civil society, and business) partnerships to address sustainable development challenges, including those emerged with the COVID-19 pandemic on the basis of the best international practices. In particular, the project aimed to facilitate collaborations between the public administrations and multiple stakeholders, reaching over administrative geographical boundaries to define and address common sustainable development challenges in local communities, including challenges related to the impact of COVID-19; and to develop and test mechanisms for joint problem-solving, resource pooling and implementation, as well as strengthen organizations' capacities to collaborate effectively on selected common sustainable development challenges.

## SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The main objective of the assignment is to conduct the forward-looking Final Evaluation of the Project "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase". The purpose of the evaluation is to analyse the implementation of the project in 2019-2021 and formulate lessons learned; and provide recommendations for scale-up and future initiatives in challenge-based partnerships.

The key product expected is a comprehensive evaluation report (up to 30 pages without annexes, single spacing, Myriad Pro font, size 11), which includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Executive summary (up to 3 pages).
- Introduction.
- Assessment of scope and objectives.
- Assessment approach and methods.
- Development context and project background.
- Data analysis and key findings and conclusions.
- Lessons learned and recommendations for similar interventions (including viable ideas on areas which could be sharpened and further optimized in future interventions).
- Annexes.
- List of people interviewed; interview questions, etc.

This final evaluation will assess projects performances against the review criteria: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, in line with UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. More specifically, it will cover, but not be limited to, the following areas and preliminary questions:

## RELEVANCE

The report will examine the extent to which the project is relevant to the:

- Country context: How relevant was the project to the interventions target groups, including Government's needs and priorities? To what extent was the project aligned with the policies and strategies of the Government, SDGs as well as UNDP Country Programme Document/United Nations Partnerships Framework?

- Target groups: To what extent was the project relevant to address the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues (both at project and stakeholder's level)? To what extent did the initial theory of change for the project take those groups into consideration?
- Does the project remain relevant considering the changing environment while taking into consideration the risks/challenges mitigation strategy? Was there a need to reformulate the project design and the project results framework given changes in the country and operational context.
- Does the SymbioCity approach, used in the project, remains relevant and scalable in the evolving context?
- What can be done additionally to better capture the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues?
- What measures can be taken to improve the relevance of the project?
- To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?

#### EFFECTIVENESS

- Assess the overall performance of the project with reference to its respective project document/cost-sharing agreement, strategy, objectives, and indicators, and identify key issues and constraints that affected the achievement of project objectives. Were the planned objectives and outcomes achieved in the framework of the key project components?
- What are the results achieved beyond the logical framework? What were the supporting factors? What are the main lessons learned from the partnership strategies and what are the possibilities of replication and scaling-up? How can the Project build on or expand the achievements?
- How have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
- What measures can be taken to improve the effectiveness of the project?
- What can additionally be done to better capture the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues?
- Assess the project effectiveness at addressing the challenges around which the partnerships were formed?

#### EFFICIENCY

The extent that to which:

- The project cost was effective? Was the project using the least cost options? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the relevant outputs and outcomes?
- Has the project produced results (outputs and outcomes) within the expected time frame? Was project implementation delayed, and, if it was, did that affect cost effectiveness or results?
- Are the project's activities in line with the schedule of activities as defined by the project team and annual work plans? Are the disbursements and project expenditures

- in line with budgets?
- Was the project management, coordination and monitoring efficient and appropriate?
- Assess the criteria of select project partners' selection.
- What can additionally be done to improve the efficiency of the project?

## SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is understood as the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends. Assessment of the sustainability of project results will be given special attention:

- To what extent are project results (impact, if any, and outcomes) likely to contribute after the project ends? Define the areas that produced the most sustainable results, and the most promising areas requiring further support and scaling-up in the course of future interventions.
- Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the project's long-term objectives?
- Is the project's activity likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated, and increasingly contribute to the development after the project? Define which of the platforms, networks, relationships developed in the framework of the Project that have the highest potential for further scaling up and/or replication.
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project results?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits?
- To what extent were capacity-building initiatives for partner organizations adequate to ensure sustainability? What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?
- Identifying possible priority areas of engagement, offer recommendations for the next phase of the Project.
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development?

## IMPACT

- Has the Project contributed or is likely to contribute to long-term social, economic, technical changes for individuals, communities, local governance self-bodies and other institutions related to the project?
- What difference has the project made to the direct beneficiaries, involved in the implementation of the initiatives, as well as indirect beneficiaries (target communities)?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?

The final list of evaluation questions and tools to be proposed by the evaluator and agreed with UNDP.

## METHODOLOGY

The scope of the final evaluation will cover all activities undertaken in the framework of the Projects. Given the forward-looking nature of the evaluation, the Evaluator will: a) compare planned outputs of the project to actual outputs and assess the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the project's objectives, as well as b) provide clear recommendations to UNDP, based on identified lessons learned in key areas of project implementation.

The evaluator will be required to use different methods to ensure that data gathering, and analysis deliver evidence-based qualitative and quantitative information, based on diverse sources: desk studies and literature review, statistical analysis, individual interviews, focus group meetings, surveys, and direct observation. This approach will not only enable the final evaluation to assess causality through quantitative means but also to provide reasons for why certain results were achieved or not and to triangulate information for higher reliability of findings. The concrete mixed methodological approach will be detailed in the inception report and stated in the final report. All data provided in the report should be disaggregated by gender and vulnerability.

The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with UNDP Country Office (CO), project team, government counterparts, international partner organisations all stages of the evaluation planning and implementation. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with UNDP strategic priorities, including eradicating poverty, accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development and building resilience to crises and shocks.

The evaluation of project performance will be carried out against the expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework, which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. All indicators in the Logical Framework need to be assessed individually, with final achievements noted. An assessment of the project M&E design, implementation and overall quality should be undertaken. The evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including project budget revisions. Project cost and funding data will be required from the project, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained.

**The conclusions** related to the implementation of the project should be comprehensive and balanced, and highlight the strengths, challenges and outcomes of the project. They should be also well-substantiated by the evidence and logically linked to the assessment findings. In addition, they should also provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to project beneficiaries, UNDP and Sida.

**The recommendations** for the project should identify how best practices and achievements of the project can be scaled up or proliferated to increase the positive impact of similar intervention countrywide. The recommendations need to be supported by an evidential basis, be credible, practical, action-oriented, and define who is responsible for the action - to have



potential to be used in decision-making.

The evaluator should provide a proposed design, methodology of evaluation (methods, approaches to be used, evaluation criterion for assessment of each component to be proposed), detailed work plan and report structure to UNDP prior to the start of fieldwork; these documents and the list of partners and other stakeholders to visit should be agreed with UNDP. While proposing the methodology, the Consultant should be guided by UNDP approach to project evaluations.

The evaluator is expected to develop and present a detailed statement of evaluations methods/approaches in the inception report to show how each objective and evaluation criterion will be assessed.

The methodology will be based on the following:

1. Desk review of the documents listed below (but not limited to):
  - a) The original project documents, monitoring reports, action plans, M&E frameworks, and financial documents (such as the cost-sharing agreement with donor).
  - b) Notes from meetings involved in the project (such as Board meeting minutes, National Steering Committee meeting minutes).
  - c) Other project-related material produced by the project (such as datasets, publications, audio-visual materials and consultancies reports).
2. Interviews with the relevant UNDP Country Office and the project's management and staff, Sida and various national and sub-regional authorities dealing with projects' activities as necessary, to provide in-depth briefing on the projects, results, context of partnerships with different stakeholders etc. as well as vision for future.
3. Interviews and focus groups discussions with projects partners at the national and local levels and beneficiaries.

De-briefing session will be arranged for discussing the evaluation findings, results and recommendations.

## DELIVERABLES

The Consultant should provide the following deliverables for the evaluation of the project "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development – pilot phase":

<b>Deliverable #</b>	<b>Task description</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
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Deliverable 1	<p>Conduct desk research of core documentation (small grants agreements, project documents, annual work plans and progress reports 2019-2021, project implementation plans, board meeting minutes, with annexes etc.). The set of documents to be reviewed will be prepared by UNDP. Develop an evaluation strategy and plan.</p> <p><b>Output:</b> The inception report (with detailed description of the methodology and evaluation matrix) is produced; annotated structure of the report is developed; a toolkit for gathering data (questionnaire and interview plans, a questionnaire for a beneficiary satisfaction survey) is designed. All documents are submitted to UNDP for final approval.</p>	October 1, 2021
Deliverable 2	<p>Conduct necessary consultations, field visits, interviews with the project staff and partners. Examine how stakeholders assess the project and what their concerns and suggestions are. Clarify issues that emerge from the preliminary analysis of the project requiring hard and soft data to substantiate their reasoning. Collect and analyse feedback from the partners.</p> <p>Produce a draft report of the evaluation covering all items detailed in the paragraph #2 of the present TOR with definition of the lessons learned and recommendations for the follow-up phase of the project.</p> <p><b>Output:</b> draft report produced and submitted for UNDP comments (UNDP review will take up to 10 days). Initial findings discussed in a wrap-up session with Project team and UNDP CO (can be done on-line via video conference).</p>	November 2, 2021
Deliverable 3	<p>Collect, review and incorporate comments from UNDP into the final version of the evaluation report.</p> <p>Prepare a detailed PowerPoint presentation of the evaluation study and present (in English) the results during the meeting between UNDP, Sida in Kyiv, Ukraine (<i>can be arranged remotely via Skype depending on meeting arrangements. If travel occurs, UNDP will cover all related travel expenses</i>).</p> <p>Consultations regarding UNDP expectations from the presentation will be held with the Contractor prior to the event.</p> <p><b>Output:</b> Final evaluation report containing all required annexes indicated in paragraph #3 of the present TOR, submitted to UNDP, Sida for final review and approval. PowerPoint presentation prepared and delivered during the joint meeting of interested parties (to cover major findings and lessons learned from the evaluation as defined in section 3 of this TOR with diagrams/pictures, where applicable).</p>	November 16, 2021

The detailed structure of the final report should be agreed with UNDP and reflect all key aspects in focus. Payment will be based upon satisfactory completion of deliverables. 100% of the total amount shall be paid upon completion of the Deliverables 1-3.

## MONITORING/REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The consultant will interact with UNDP project and CO staff to receive any clarifications and guidance that may be needed. He/she will also receive all necessary informational and logistical support from UNDP CO and the Project. On a day-to-day basis, consultant's work will be coordinated with UNDP Project Manager. The satisfactory completion of each of the deliverables shall be subject to the endorsement of the UNDP CO Partnership and Coordination Officer.

The consultant will inform UNDP of any problems, issues or delays arising during the implementation of the assignment and take necessary steps to address them. The key product expected is two comprehensive evaluation reports (with parameters indicated above in section 2)

The report must be as free as possible of technical jargon in order to ensure accessibility to its wide and diverse audience. The Report should be prepared in English. All reports and results are to be submitted to the UNDP in electronic form (\*.docx, \*.xlsx, \*.pptx, and \*.pdf or other formats accepted by UNDP).

## COMPETENCIES

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards.
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP.
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism.
- Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

## FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

### Lump sum contract

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount, and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables (i.e. whether payments fall in instalments or upon completion of the entire contract). Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including travel, per diems, and number of anticipated working days).

### Travel costs

Logistics arrangements for any travel or events in Ukraine involving the Consultant will be provided by UNDP. Air tickets to join duty station/repatriation travel Duty Station will be provided by UNDP. In general, UNDP should not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket. Should the Consultant wish to travel on a higher class he/she should do

so using their own resources. All other envisaged travel costs must be covered by the Consultant and included in the financial proposal. The official UNDP DSA rate for Kiev is currently \$205 per day. The means of reimbursement will be via signed F10 form and payment/reimbursement into the nominated bank account of the consultant.

The Basic Security in the Field II and Advanced Security in the Field courses must be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel. Individual Consultant is responsible for ensuring he/she has vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. Consultant is required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under <https://dss.un.org/dssweb/>

In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon, between the respective business unit and Individual Consultant, prior to travel and will be reimbursed.

## Annex 2. Evaluation matrix and data collection instruments

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	DATA SOURCE	METHODOLOGY
1. Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Country context: How relevant was the project to the interventions target groups, including Government’s needs and priorities? To what extent was the project aligned with the policies and strategies of the Government, SDGs as well as UNDP Country Programme Document/United Nations Partnerships Framework?</li> <li>- Target groups: To what extent was the project relevant to address the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues (both at project and stakeholder’s level)? To what extent did the initial theory of change for the project take those groups into consideration?</li> <li>- Does the project remain relevant taking into account the changing environment while taking into consideration the risks/challenges mitigation strategy? Was there a need to reformulate the project design and the project results framework given changes in the country and operational context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Country programme document of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Annual ROAR of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Project Document (including amendments)</li> <li>- Symbiocity Approach</li> <li>- Project Annual Reports</li> <li>- Risk registry</li> <li>- UNEG guidance on integrating gender equality and human rights in evaluation</li> <li>- Key Informant Interviews</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donor</li> <li>- UNDP team</li> <li>- Project team</li> <li>- State institutions</li> </ul>	<p>Document reviews (e.g. to compare achieved results and set benchmarks.)</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews / Focus Group Discussions and Survey with identified data sources.</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	DATA SOURCE	METHODOLOGY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the SymbioCity approach, used in the project, remains relevant and scalable in the evolving context?</li> <li>- What can be done additionally to better capture the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues?</li> <li>- What measures can be taken to improve the relevance of the project?</li> <li>- To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?</li> </ul>		
2. Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assess the overall performance of the project with reference to its respective project document/cost sharing agreement, strategy, objectives and indicators, and identify key issues and constraints that affected the achievement of project objectives. Were the planned objectives and outcomes achieved in the framework of the key project components?</li> <li>- What are the results achieved beyond the logical framework? What were the supporting factors? What are the main lessons learned from the partnership strategies and what are the possibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Country programme document of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Annual ROAR of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Project Document (including amendments)</li> <li>- Project Annual Reports</li> <li>- Risk registry</li> <li>- UNEG guidance on integrating gender equality and human rights in evaluation</li> <li>- Grant agreements</li> <li>- Board meeting notes</li> <li>- Board meeting presentation</li> </ul>	<p>Document reviews (e.g. to compare achieved results and set benchmarks.)</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews / Focus Group Discussions</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	DATA SOURCE	METHODOLOGY
	<p>of replication and scaling-up? How can the Project build on or expand the achievements?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?</li> <li>- What measures can be taken to improve the effectiveness of the project?</li> <li>- What can additionally be done to better capture the needs of vulnerable groups and gender issues?</li> <li>- Assess the project effectiveness at addressing the challenges around which the partnerships were formed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online survey</li> <li>- Key Informant Interviews</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donor</li> <li>- UNDP team</li> <li>- Project team</li> <li>- State institutions</li> <li>- Grantees</li> </ul>	
3. Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was the project cost-efficient? Was the project using the best value for money principle? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the relevant outputs and outcomes?</li> <li>- Has the project produced results (outputs and outcomes) within the expected time frame? Was project implementation delayed, and, if it was, did that affect cost-efficiency or results?</li> <li>- Are the project's activities in line with the schedule of activities as defined by the project team and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Country programme document of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Annual ROAR of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Project Document (including amendments)</li> <li>- Cost-share agreement with donor</li> <li>- Project Annual Reports</li> <li>- Risk registry</li> <li>- Grant agreements</li> <li>- Board meeting notes</li> <li>- Board meeting presentation</li> <li>- Online survey</li> </ul>	<p>Document reviews</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews / Focus Group Discussions, Survey with identified data sources.</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	DATA SOURCE	METHODOLOGY
	<p>annual work plans? Are the disbursements and project expenditures in line with budgets?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was the project management, coordination and monitoring efficient and appropriate?</li> <li>- Assess the criteria of select project partners' selection.</li> <li>- What can additionally be done to improve the efficiency of the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key Informant Interviews</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donor</li> <li>- UNDP team</li> <li>- Project team</li> <li>- State institutions</li> <li>- Grantees</li> </ul>	
4. Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent are project results (impact, if any, and outcomes) likely to contribute after the project ends? Define the areas that produced the most sustainable results, and the most promising areas requiring further support and scaling-up in the course of future interventions.</li> <li>- Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the project's long-term objectives?</li> <li>- Is the projects activity likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated and increasingly contribute to the development after the project? Define which of the platforms, networks, relationships development in the framework of the Project that have the highest potential for further scaling up and/or replication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Country programme document of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Project Document (including amendments)</li> <li>- Project Annual Reports</li> <li>- Risk registry</li> <li>- UNEG guidance on integrating gender equality and human rights in evaluation</li> <li>- Grant agreements</li> <li>- Board meeting notes</li> <li>- Board meeting presentation</li> <li>- Online survey</li> </ul>	<p>Document reviews</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews / Focus Group</p> <p>Discussions, Survey with identified data sources.</p>



Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	DATA SOURCE	METHODOLOGY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project results?</li> <li>- Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits?</li> <li>- To what extent were capacity-building initiatives for partner organizations adequate to ensure sustainability? What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?</li> <li>- Identifying possible priority areas of engagement, offer recommendations for the next phase of the Project.</li> <li>- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key Informant Interviews</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donor</li> <li>- UNDP team</li> <li>- Project team</li> <li>- State institutions</li> <li>- Grantees</li> </ul>	
5. Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has the Project contributed or is likely to contribute to long-term social, economic, technical changes for individuals, communities, local governance self-bodies and other institutions related to the project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Country programme document of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Annual ROAR of UNDP Ukraine</li> <li>- Project Document (including amendments)</li> </ul>	<p>Document reviews</p> <p>Key Informant Interviews / Focus Group</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	DATA SOURCE	METHODOLOGY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What difference has the project made to the direct beneficiaries, involved in the implementation of the initiatives, as well as indirect beneficiaries (target communities)?</li> <li>- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project Annual Reports</li> <li>- Risk registry</li> <li>- UNEG guidance on integrating gender equality and human rights in evaluation</li> <li>- Grant agreements</li> <li>- Board meeting notes</li> <li>- Board meeting presentation</li> <li>- Online survey</li> <li>- Key Informant Interviews</li> </ul> <p>Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donor</li> <li>- UNDP team</li> <li>- Project team</li> <li>- State institutions</li> <li>- Grantees</li> </ul>	<p>Discussions, Survey with identified data sources.</p>

### Annex 3. List of individuals interviewed

№	Name	Gender	Position /Organization
1	Maria Gutsman	Female	Programme Analyst, UNDP in Ukraine
2	Mustafa Sait-Ametov	Male	Regional Development Programme Manager, UNDP in Ukraine
3	Manal Fouani	Female	Deputy Resident Representative in Ukraine
4	Iryna Skaliy	Female	Programme Officer, SIDA, Embassy of Sweden to Ukraine
5	Yuriy Voitsytskyy	Male	Expert
6	Olga Kashevska	Female	UNDP Regional coordinator in Rivne oblast
7	Lesia Popeliukh	Female	UNDP Regional coordinator in Rivne oblast
8	Ihor Nazar	Male	UNDP Regional coordinator in Lviv oblast
9	Lyudmila Voronova	Female	City Council
10	Vitali Yaremchuk	Male	European Solidarity - Chernivetska region
11	Natalia Mikolaivna	Female	Mamaevskaya rural united territorial community
12	Mykola Kostrytsya	Male	Department of Economic Development of Zhytomyr City Council
13	Vita Bazan	Female	NGO CREATIVE SENSOR (CREATIVE SENSOR)
14	Andrey Chyburovskiy	Male	PJSC "Elektroizmeritel"
15	Roman Sakh	Male	OO "Scientific and artistic platform Ostrov"
16	Datsko Tetyana Fedorivna	Male	Local Association of Local Self-Government Bodies "Dnepropetrovsk Regional Association of Local Self-Government Bodies"
17	Maryna Lytvyn	Female	Resource Center for Sustainable Development NTU "Dniprovsk Polytechnic"
18	Nika Musaieva	Female	NTU "Dnipro Polytechnic" Center for the Development of Entrepreneurship "Business Incubator"
19	Mykola Trehub	Male	National Technical University "Dnipro Polytechnic"
20	Nadiya Drobik	Female	Ternopil National Pedagogical University named after Volodymyr Hnatiuk.
21	Gayana Muradova	Female	

№	Name	Gender	Position /Organization
22	Ivan Pankiv	Male	Charitable organization "Lviv Agrarian Consultative Service"
23	Oleksandr Lisovskiy	Male	Rivne Regional Charitable Foundation "Love Ukraine"
24	Oleksandr Solovey	Male	
25	Fedir Shvets	Male	
26	Brevda Maxim	Male	Individual entrepreneur
27	Gizhko Natalia	Female	Agency for Regional Development of Vinnytsia Region
28	Novoselsky Taras	Male	Nadvirnyansky city council
29	Irina Mironova	Female	"Zero Waste Lviv"
30	Olena Nyzhnyk	Female	Independent Consultant

#### **Annex 4. List of supporting documents reviewed**

- ✓ "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development- Pilot Phase" Project Document
- ✓ "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development- Pilot Phase" Amendment
- ✓ "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development- Pilot Phase" Annual Report Year I with Annexes
- ✓ "Empowered Partnership for Sustainable Development- Pilot Phase" Annual Report Year II with Annexes
- ✓ Project Status Reports
- ✓ Logical Framework
- ✓ Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- ✓ Assessment of Local Sustainable Development Solutions-Report
- ✓ Low-Value Grant Agreements (16 of them)
- ✓ Report submitted by partners
- ✓ Development Solutions and Recommendations
- ✓ Project Board Meeting Notes
- ✓ UN Country Programme Document
- ✓ Results-Oriented Annual Reporting (ROAR) – 2018, 2019, 2020



# PLEDGE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT IN EVALUATION

By signing this pledge, I hereby commit to discussing and applying the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and to adopting the associated ethical behaviours.

## INTEGRITY

I will actively adhere to the moral values and professional standards of evaluation practice as outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and following the values of the United Nations. Specifically, I will be:

- **Honest and truthful** in my communication and actions.
- **Professional**, engaging in credible and trustworthy behaviour, alongside competence, commitment and ongoing reflective practice.
- **Independent, impartial and incorruptible.**

## ACCOUNTABILITY

I will be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken and responsible for honouring commitments, without qualification or exception; I will report potential or actual harms observed. Specifically, I will be:

- **Transparent regarding evaluation** purpose and actions taken, establishing trust and increasing accountability for performance to the public, particularly those populations affected by the evaluation.
- **Responsive** as questions or events arise, adapting plans as required and referring to appropriate channels where corruption, fraud, sexual exploitation or abuse or other misconduct or waste of resources is identified.
- **Responsible** for meeting the evaluation purpose and for actions taken and for ensuring redress and recognition as needed.

## RESPECT

I will engage with all stakeholders of an evaluation in a way that honours their dignity, well-being, personal agency and characteristics. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Access to** the evaluation process and products by all relevant stakeholders – whether powerless or powerful – with due attention to factors that could impede access such as sex, gender, race, language, country of origin, LGBTQ status, age, background, religion, ethnicity and ability.
- **Meaningful participation and equitable treatment** of all relevant stakeholders in the evaluation processes, from design to dissemination. This includes engaging various stakeholders, particularly affected people, so they can actively inform the evaluation approach and products rather than being solely a subject of data collection.
- **Fair representation** of different voices and perspectives in evaluation products (reports, webinars, etc.).

## BENEFICENCE

I will strive to do good for people and planet while minimizing harm arising from evaluation as an intervention. Specifically, I will ensure:

- **Explicit and ongoing consideration of risks and benefits** from evaluation processes.
- **Maximum benefits** at systemic (including environmental), organizational and programmatic levels.
- **No harm.** I will not proceed where harm cannot be mitigated.
- **Evaluation makes an overall positive contribution** to human and natural systems and the mission of the United Nations.

I commit to playing my part in ensuring that evaluations are conducted according to the Charter of the United Nations and the ethical requirements laid down above and contained within the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. When this is not possible, I will report the situation to my supervisor, designated focal points or channels and will actively seek an appropriate response.

Maya Giorbelidze

(Signature and Date) September 24, 2021