

Final Evaluation

MDG-F Joint Programme on Gender Equality  
in Viet Nam

Final Report

Volume 1, Main Report

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28 March 2012

**Disclaimer**

This report was compiled by a team of independent external experts. It is solely a reflection of their findings and assessments in course of the evaluation. It does not necessarily represent the views, or policy, or intentions of the United Nations Agencies or the MDG-F Secretariat.

## List of abbreviations

AA	Administrative Agent
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CIP	Co-Implementing Partner
CPMU	Component Project Management Unit
DaO	Delivering as One
DVL	Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control
DFR	Draft Final Report
DOU	Delivery as One UN
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FR	Final Report
GAP	Gender Action Partnership
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GEL	Law on Gender Equality
GoV	Government of Viet Nam
GSO	General Statistics Office
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
JP	Joint Programme
JPGE	Joint Programme on Gender Equality
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDGF	Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund
MDGF SC	MDGF Steering Committee
MDTF	Multi Donor Trust Fund
MOCST	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MDG-F Joint Programme on Gender Equality, Viet Nam, Final External Evaluation	

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MR	Monitoring Report
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NCFAW	National Committee for the Advancement of Women
NSISGD	National Statistical Indicator System for Gender Development
NIP	National Implementing Partner
NSC	National Steering Committee
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PCG	Programme Coordination Group
PCM	Project Cycle Management
PMC	Programme Management Committee
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PUNO	Participating UN Organisation
RBM	Results based management
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SMA	State Management Agency
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNODC	United Nations Organization on Drugs and Crime
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VWU	Viet Nam Women's' Union
WB	The World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

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Herewith we would like to thank all partners and institutions who supported this evaluation - prior to the field phase and during the mission to Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

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I also would like to express gratitude to the Resident Coordinator, Ms Pratibha Mehta, and the Country Representative of the UN Managing Agent UNFPA, Mr Bruce Campbell for their time allocated for this evaluation and their interest in an open dialogue on first findings and recommendations.

Monika Zabel and Van Anh Phung Thi

Brussels and Ha Noi, March 2012

## Executive Summary

The Joint Programme on Gender Equality in Viet Nam is one of 128 Joint Programmes funded by the MDG Achievement Fund worldwide. It is the first of three JPs that is financed by the MDG-F in Viet Nam.

Over a period of three years twelve UN agencies and programmes, i.e. FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNWOMEN UNODC, and WHO; in partnership with the Government of Viet Nam have aimed to provide strategic, coordinated and multi-sectoral capacity building and technical assistance to foster the capacity of national and provincial duty bearers. This support aimed to put them in a position to better implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Law on Gender Equality (GEL) and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (DVL) from 2009-2011. With the 12 UN agencies forming a critical mass and aiming to speak with one voice, the JPGE strived for changes at the highest level towards gender equality in Vietnam.

Based on a review of the literature, UN experiences working on gender equality initiatives, and as a result of extensive consultation with national partners in Vietnam, the Vietnam Joint Programme on Gender Equality (JPGE) has identified the following three problem areas, which it sought to address:

1. Despite a sound policy and legal framework supporting gender equality, institutional capacities in the area of reporting, gender analysis, data collection and monitoring remain weak and unsystematic.
2. Institutional weakness is evident in the area of networking and sharing of information, data, research and experiences on issues of gender equality.
3. Institutional weakness is also evident in the area of gender equality research and sex-disaggregated data collection, analysis and dissemination systems.

The Joint Programme specifically aimed to build national institutional capacity to fill the above listed gaps and has developed the following three Joint Programme Outcomes with its related outputs to do so:

**Strategic Result: Improved capacity of relevant national and provincial authorities, institutions and other duty bearers to effectively implement the GEL and DVL**

**Joint Outcome 1:** Improved skills knowledge and practices for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control.

**Joint Outcome 2:** Enhanced partnerships and coordination around gender equality within and outside of government

**Joint Outcome 3:** Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality.

The JPGE is the first experience in Viet Nam setting up a complex Joint Programme mainstreaming Gender Equality and Domestic Violence in 17 NIPs and CIPs and 12 UN agencies. Several new and valid experiences have been gained in course of its implementation, for example by UNFPA as MA for a pass through mechanism for the funds allocated to the GoV, a financial management system composed of pass through and parallel funding mechanisms, and the piloting of HPPMG. The PMU hosted in Molisa and co-chaired between Molisa and UNPFA, overseeing the three CPMUs working on the three components of the JPGE are another innovation in the history of cooperation of GOV and UN.

The JPGE has created new forms of closer cooperation among the GoV agencies, among the UN agencies, and between both groups. New experiences in peer reviewing, knowledge sharing and jointly developing research pieces. The document of outstanding dimension is National Study on Domestic Violence against Women, an example for the joint work of UN Women and The World Bank is the Gender Assessment Report also compiled in course of the JPGE.

A challenging set up as the JPGE with many aspects of tested for the first time has obviously shortcomings as well. The time and quality of human resources involved for a JP of this dimension and its coordination requirements was underestimated. None of the UN partners but ILO had budgeted focal points representing their agency in the programme coordination mechanisms.

As a consequence most UN agencies working in the JPGE have involved Junior Professional Officers (JPOs), UN Volunteers (UNVs) or Interns. High staff turnover rate due to short term contracts has caused some discontinuity in implementation, resulting in reduced efficiency and effectiveness of implementation. This has caused also critical comments of some of the NIPs.

The lack of sufficient and all-encompassing M&E results framework and quality assurance mechanisms shared by all agencies involved is a shortcoming in the JPGE Management. This refers mainly to the lack of a capacity building strategy and respective shared evaluation tools applied on training provision by all implementing partners

The continuation of the partnership between GoV and UNCT in working on GE, DV and GBV is secured under the One Plan 2012-2016 approved in February 2012. This means a good opportunity to sustain achievements of the JPGE. If also those outputs of the JPGE that have been completed just prior to or at the closing ceremony 16 March 2012 will be utilized and applied under One Plan there is a fair chance to sustain several of the achievements of the JPGE. Care has however to be taken of a truly joint implementation of the One Plan and the joint approach of UN agencies working towards the same outputs and outcomes.

## Recommendations for the transition of JPGE Gender Themes to One Plan

Recommendation 1
Before embarking on the implementation of One Plan to take stock and using the momentum gained with a joint approach in implementation of the JPGE. What has worked well, where are gaps left, or how can products only very recent or in draft made available (M&E frameworks, action plans) be sustained, which actions have not led to the expected results (outputs and contributions to outcomes)? Work proactively on closing these gaps or work on the sustainability, as inputs to the next five years of implementation on GE related subjects in the OP and beyond.
Issue/s to be addressed: How to generate a seamless transition and continuation between JPGE and One Plan on the Gender theme. This was already summarized in the sustainability plan, however, it shall be updated to the status at JPGE end.

Recommendation 2
Address the question if and how existing coordination mechanism established under JPGE shall be set forth, with human resources allocated, and how some new ones shall be established. Discuss the role of UN Women in their strengthened role as agency in coordination of the gender related outputs of the OP. Also address which can be the role of the gender expert in RCO within the OP.
Issue/s to be addressed: Potential risk of weakening or losing coordination and joint implementation mechanisms and information exchange established in JPGE by 30 March 2012. GAP is engrained as indicator 2 under 2.4.4 of One Plan as an indicator of sustainability. The Gender PCG with its working groups, co-chaired by MOLISA and UN Women, is planned to continue in the next OP.

Recommendation 3
Elaborate on joint working groups around one or several outputs of the One Plan to use synergies, combined knowledge and joint implementation mechanism. After introducing the GE and DV subjects broadly with 12 UN agencies under the JPGE, consider to form smaller joint UN teams of 3 to 5 agencies and respective GoV partners to address specific subjects with a few relevant UN agencies, for example ILO, IOM, UNFPA and UN Women contributing to the same output 2.4.3 of One Plan. Stand alone activities by singular UN agencies and a "silo-like" approach mean a backlash and shall be by all means avoided in particular for horizontal themes.
Issue/s to be addressed: Secure coherence of interventions between the UN agencies and utilization of synergies beyond lifetime of JPGE.

Recommendation 4
Continue to actively utilize the Gender Action Partnership (GAP), as a coordination and information forum to bring closer not only the UN agencies and the various stakeholders involved line Ministries, but continue to involve also other donors like WB and their initiatives and NGOs. The latter reported about difficulties to meet Ministries on their own directly. To secure alignment and complementarity of other donors as well, as well of the NGO who are one element of sustainability of the JPGE. Consider UN

Women to heading the GAP from the donor side.

Issue/s to be addressed: Secure coherence and coordination between the different stakeholders supporting GE in Viet Nam.

#### Recommendation 5

Discuss how the clearly and repeatedly detected gap in accessible quality M&E expertise, as well as for the JPGE itself as also in the set up and operation of M&E systems for internal project management use as well as for macro systems at GoV side, for the monitoring of progress in implementation of laws. Indicators in One Plan need partly revision as well, as they are showing several weaknesses observed also in earlier documents. Consider to involve the M&E Expert and the UN M&E working group, or evaluation expertise at Regional Offices in Bangkok or HQ level.

Issue/s to be addressed: Low quality or none existence of M&E systems for project management as well as of QA systems.

#### Recommendation 6

Once the source(s) of M&E expertise are identified, give priority on the approval and operationalization of the M&E frameworks for MOLISA (GEL) and MOCST (DVL), thus to allow a sustainable and measurable implementation of the respective strategies and Action Plans within and beyond the period of One Plan. Base the work on the versions of the M&E frameworks already composed under the JPGE and avoid inefficient duplication of efforts. Both tasks will remain under ONE PLAN outputs areas 2.4.3 and 2.4.4.

Issue/s to be addressed: Monitoring of the strategies and action plans needs to be introduced frontloaded at the beginning of One Plan implementation.

#### Recommendation 7

Organize a M&E training workshop to bring all GoV and UN agency staff involved on the same page about RBM, PCM and M&E, ideally also on special indicators of gender-monitoring. Draft M&E plans for GEL and DVL or the results framework of One Plan can be used as case studies to work on.

Issue/s to be addressed: Existing M&E systems are Low quality or none existence of M&E systems for project management as well as of QA systems.

#### Recommendation 8

Assume the comparison of existing training assessment methods, between the UNCT members and also between the GoV agencies involved (MOCST, MOLISA, MoH, MoET....), and to develop a joint training assessment tool that can be used by all UN agencies. In this way results encompassing various inputs from various providers. Training quality starts already with the selection of participants. A small guideline with the major steps and templates should be compiled from the existing material. In course of the evaluation all standards between very good to not existent have been observed.

Issue/s to be addressed: Training efficiency of JPGE has been hampered by varying quality control mechanisms throughout the process at output and sometimes also at activity level, and of varying quality

and existence of assessment tools for capacity building and training. Whereas some training activities have shown and documented good results, some courses rendered less than 10% success rate, measured in utilizing newly accumulated knowledge.

#### Recommendation 9

In cooperation with Ministries involved in 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 capacity building activities under One Plan, work at a joint capacity building strategy and implementation plan with set targets and on joint set of training and human resources development assessment methods. JPGE partners shall be in the position to provide good practices and Apply similar or same training assessment methods among all partners involved. Make a transparent training assessment a must for any training activity and to utilize it for a continuous improvement process. Do not provide any further capacity training under outputs 2.4.3. and 2.4.4 as long as no capacity building strategy and plan have been completed.

Issue/s to be addressed: In course of the JPGE some QA issues have been detected, i.e. provision of capacity building measures without a detailed plan and strategy of what kind of capacity is going to be built. Greater attention need to be paid to the sustainability of capacities developed.

#### Recommendation 10

After a period of six to eight months to assess the impact of the capacity building and training provided under JPGE; apply lessons learned as well for new overall capacity building measures foreseen under One Plan. Capacities at central level have been created, but the impact of training and knowledge transfer should be also verified at provincial and district level, possibly combined with initiatives in the same regions or via electronic media where possible. Follow up is required to verify if the training provided was useful for the task the respective trainee has to perform.

Issue/s to be addressed: Training assessments has been performed only rather patchy in course of the JPGE.

#### Recommendations 11:

Working towards a new corporate culture in line with One UN as future model, including required changes at HQ level.

Although HPPMG have been introduced in Viet Nam many processes are not harmonized yet. Review financial, management and reporting modalities among UN agencies and to explore how these modalities could be better aligned among UN agencies. This process has to be initiated at respective HQ level.

Issue/s to be addressed: Each UN agency has its own set of rules and procedures to implement programmes and projects. This becomes an obstacle when joint programmes want to work in an Applying the "One UN" concept necessitates the harmonization of these rules and procedures at HQ level. This will optimize the implementation effectiveness and efficiency of future joint programmes or approaches, for UNCT members as well as for the partners in GoV .

#### Recommendation 12

GoV should use wherever possible existing staff for gender related aspects under the One Plan, as now

GoV staff has been trained and with expected enhanced capacity being a sustainable elements in the structure who are knowledge carrier.

Issue/t to be addresses: Avoiding the establishment of parallel structures and involve in-house staff.

#### Recommendations 13

Appreciate the necessity to find suitable and, if required, highly qualified staff for potentially high value added work pieces, as well in policy advice work as for technical assistance. Should junior staff get involved s/he needs to be backed and supervised by an experience senior staff member.

Issue/s to be addressed: Staff turnover and not sufficient qualified junior staff were considered as hampering factors, and often coinciding with each other.

#### Recommendation 14

Establish a consultant roaster used and fed jointly by all agencies member of the UNCT; consider to put search profiles at [www.unjobs.org](http://www.unjobs.org) or the [www.devex.com](http://www.devex.com) or on [www.un.org.vn/](http://www.un.org.vn/) @ jobs or tenders, respectively. The entry to the consultant roaster can be combined with some online test to secure a certain quality.

Multi-agency activity planning shall anticipate potential bottlenecks in availability.

Issue/s to be addressed: Constant lack of suitable consultants was indicated by several stakeholders interviewed as one of the hampering factors of the JPGE. Availability of consultants had often determined the time of the work not the process necessities. Activities were planned in a way that has created bottlenecks in already scarce consultant profiles.

#### Recommendation 15

National and International consultants working under the same project shall be passing the same recruitment process, the selection process shall be performed by a committee composed by members of the respective governmental entities and representatives of the UNCT or the JP team.

Issue/s to be addressed: Parallel recruitment of national consultants by the GoV and international candidates by the UN agencies participating in the JP was perceived as time intensive and as a challenge to coordination.

#### Recommendation 16

“Heavy bureaucratic procedures” must be anticipated for future programme as an aspect to be duly taken into account in the risk management as part of the programme proposal.

Issue/s to be addressed: “Heavy bureaucratic procedures” were indicated as constraint for achievement of certain results, or as constraint to introduce changes to the M&E results framework. It should be constraints that can be overcome as they are system immanent and were well known already when the JPGE was designed.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) is an international cooperation mechanism aiming to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) worldwide. Established in December 2006 with a contribution of €528 million Euros (\$US 710 Mio) from the Spanish Government to the United Nations system, the MDG-F supports national governments, local authorities and citizen organizations in their efforts to tackle poverty and inequality. In September 2008 at the UN High Level Event on MDGs, Spain committed an additional €90Mio to the MDG-F.

It has currently 128 programmes in eight thematic windows in 49 countries across five regions of the world. All country programmes are working through the UN system and with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

With the aim of improving aid effectiveness all MDG-F financed programmes build on the collective strength of the UN bringing several Agencies together to address issues that cut across the mandate of individual organizations. Through this process, the MDG-F is pioneering a new work paradigm between the UN agencies and provides a concrete boost to efforts to deliver as one<sup>1,2</sup>.

<b>Programme Title:</b>	Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality
<b>Programme number &amp; MDTF ref:</b>	MDG-F-1694 -B-VNM Gender Equality (67156)
<b>Thematic Window:</b>	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
<b>Approved Budget by NSC (US\$):</b>	4.5million USD from MDGF, 88,810 USD from AECID and 94,706 USD from the Counterpart Fund, in total 4,683,516 USD
<b>UN as a Managing Agent:</b>	UNFPA Viet Nam
<b>National Implementing partners:</b>	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Ministry of Sports, Culture and Tourism, General Statistics Office
<b>Participating UN Organizations:</b>	UNFPA, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNWOMEN, UNODC, and WHO
<b>UN Coordinating Agencies:</b>	UNWOMEN <sup>3</sup> (for component project with MOLISA), UNFPA (for component project with MOCST), UNDP (for component project with GSO)
<b>Budget Tranches transferred on:</b>	27 April 2009; 28 January 2010; 16 March 2011  30 April 2012, end of implementation 30 March 2012

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<sup>1</sup> ([www.mdgfund.org/aboutus](http://www.mdgfund.org/aboutus))

<sup>2</sup> [www.uneval.org/documentdownload?doc\\_id=139&file\\_id=512](http://www.uneval.org/documentdownload?doc_id=139&file_id=512)

<sup>3</sup> Former UNIFEM as still used in the project document

**Indicative end date:**

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Based on a review of the literature, UN experiences working on gender equality initiatives, and as a result of extensive consultation with national partners in Vietnam, the Vietnam Joint Programme on Gender Equality (JPGE) has identified the following three problem areas, which it sought to address:

4. Despite a sound policy and legal framework supporting gender equality, institutional capacities in the area of reporting, gender analysis, data collection and monitoring remain weak and unsystematic.
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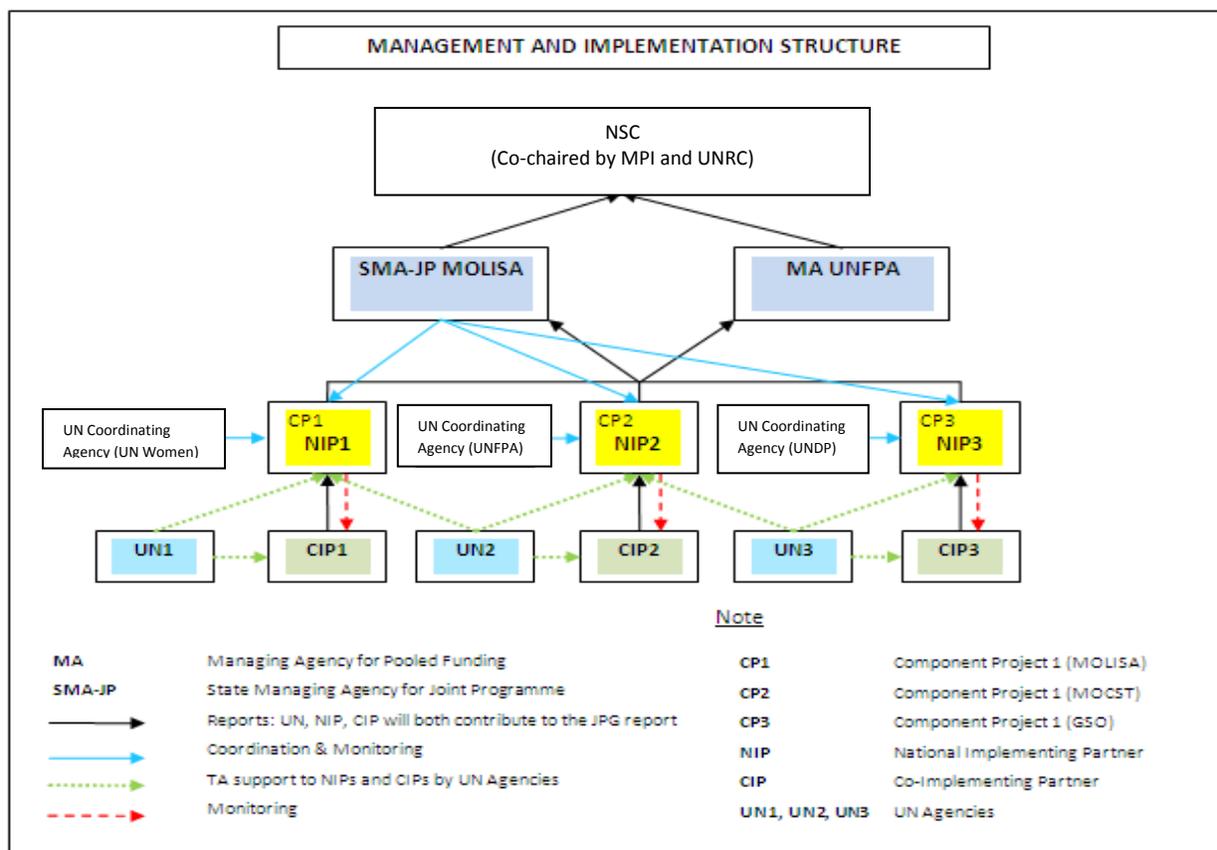
**Joint Outcome 2:** Enhanced partnerships and coordination around gender equality within and outside of government

**Joint Outcome 3:** Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality.

## 1.2 Management Structure

Picture 1 below describes the current management structure of the JPGE. The National Steering Committee was originally co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and the UN Resident Coordinators' Office. Since two other MDG-F funded JPs have been launched the NCS is co-chaired by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). The overall operational coordination for the JPGE lies at the GoV's side with MOLISA being the State Management Agency (SMA), whereas at the UN team UNFPA is the Managing Agent of the JPGE.

**Picture 1, Organisational Structure for the JPGE**



## 1.3 Financial Management and Expenditure Situation to date

Table 1, Budget and expenditure summary (in USD)

Project: MDGF-1694-B-VNM Gender Equality						
Organization	Project Reference	Approved budget (real time)	Budget share	Transfers (real time)	Expenditure	Delivery rate1)
UNICEF	SC090290	2,995.00	0.07%	2,995.00	2,941	98%
IOM	CT.0417	52,803.00	1.17%	52,803.00	49,512	94%
FAO	TFES35VN09231	90,000.00	2.00%	90,000.00	61,392	68%
UNIDO	FMVIE09005	127,311.00	2.83%	127,311.00	127,244	100%
WHO	55256	172,270.00	3.83%	172,270.00	157,104	91.2%
UNODC	MDGF-1694-B-VNM	209,083.00	4.65%	209,083.00	209,068	100%
UNDP	00071329	215,367.00	4.79%	215,367.00	161,981	75%
UNESCO	225VIE6000	215,875.00	4.80%	215,875.00	208,151.18	97%
UNWOMEN	70846	242,681.00	5.39%	242,681.00	228,251	94%
ILO	VIE/09/52/UND	424,960.00	9.44%	424,960.00	383,338	90%
UNFPA	ESC01	2,746,655.00	61.04%	2,746,655.00	2,458,100	89%
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,500,000.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>4,500,000.00</b>	<b>4,047,082.18</b>	<b>90%</b> (average)

1) The term delivery rate relates to financial expenditure, not to performance against the set implementation framework, thus expenditure rate would be the more suitable term.

Source: monitoring report Jul-Dec 2011, updated JPGE information of 24 March 2012

Of the MDG-F budget of 4.5 Mio USD, 48% of are under national implementation whereas 52% are under direct implementation of 11 UN agencies. The Government of Viet Nam was expected to contribute an amount of VND 1,610,000,000 (current exchange rate 21.000 VND: 1 USD) to the total JPGE budget.

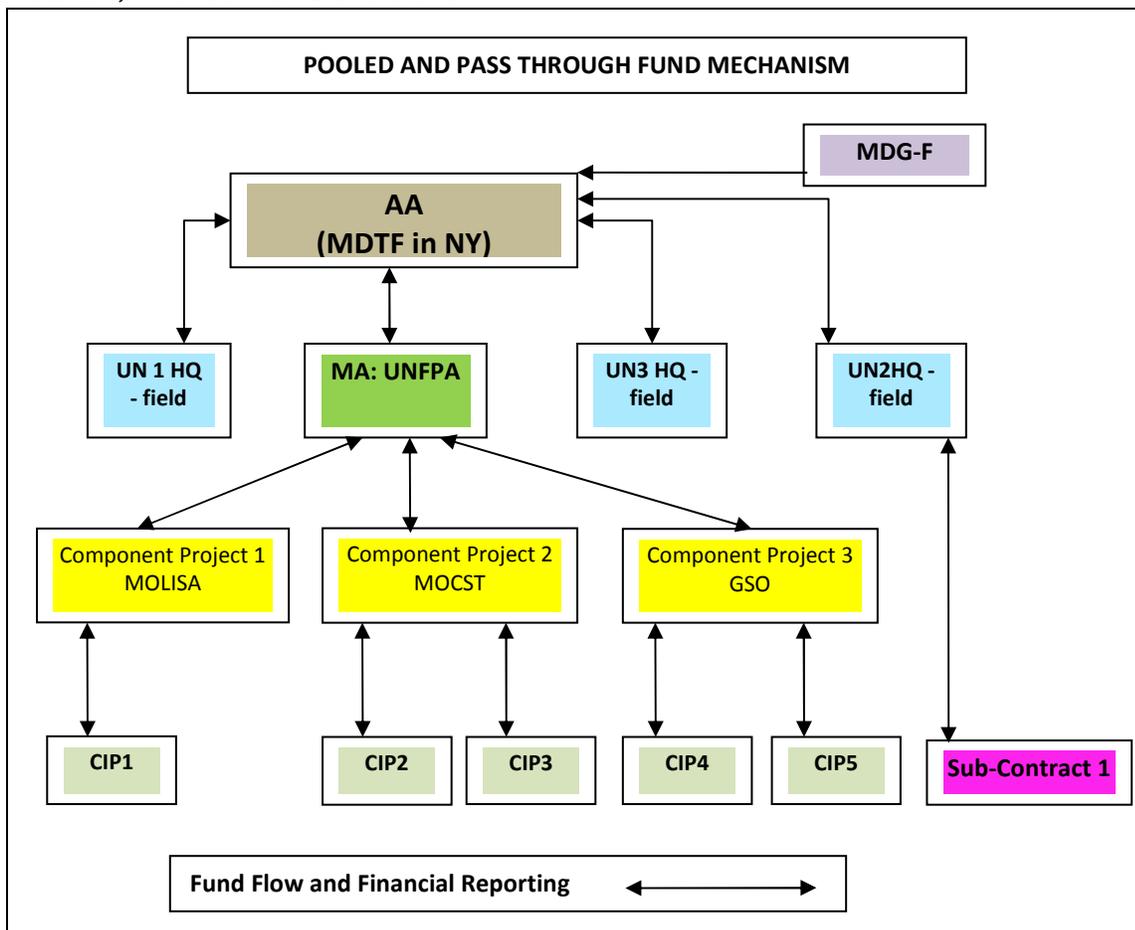
Table 2, JPGE Budget, National Implementation and Direct Implementation

TOTAL BUDGET FOR UN-GOVT JOINT PROGRAMME ON GENDER (in USD)	
<b>National Implementation</b>	
MOLISA (Including PMU activities)	1,263,074
MOCST (Including CPMU activities)	294,161
GSO (Including CPMU activities)	600,670
<i>Sub-Total</i>	<b>2,157,905</b>
<b>Direct Implementation</b>	
UNFPA (Including PMU/CPMU activities: Salary for JPG Specialist and the JPGE Programme Officer, JP workshop, Annual JP Review meeting, etc.)	588,750
Other UN Agencies	1753,345
<b>Total MDGF Support</b>	<b>4,500,000</b>
<b>Additional funds mobilized for GSO Component project</b>	<b>88,810</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>4,588,810</b>

The financial management of the JPGE is explained in picture 2 below<sup>4</sup>. The MDG Achievement Fund has opted for a combination of Pooled Funds and a Pass-Through Fund Management. The donor and the participating UN organizations have agreed to channel the funds through one UN organization for its three component projects for national execution only. The programmatic and financial accountability for individual programme components rests with the participating organizations and (sub-) national partners managing those respective components of the joint programme.<sup>5</sup>

The UN organization receiving the money from the MDG-F and distributing to Joint Programmes globally is the Administrative Agent (AA). The Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) office in New York is acting as AA for this JP. The MPTF Office is disseminating funds to the participating UN agencies at HQ level through a simplified fund transfer mechanism. The Managing Agent at UN side, UNFPA, beneficiary of the by far biggest share of the JPGE budget is handling the funds for the three JPGE component projects with the three National Implementing Partners. The funds of 4.5 Mio USD in total were transferred in three instalments according to a breakdown of funds decided between the agencies in the work plan for the next implementation period.

**Picture 2, Financial flows of the JPGE**



<sup>4</sup> Project Document

<sup>5</sup> Technical Brief, Module 6: Different Fund Management Options; no year

## 2 Description of the Evaluation

### 2.1 Objective of the Evaluation

The Implementation Guide for Joint Programmes under the Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund (MDG-F) stipulates that **all joint programmes will commission and finance a final independent evaluation**. The evaluation team was composed of an International Evaluation Expert (Team Leader) and a National Gender Expert.

The Final Evaluation is assessing the final performance of the programme towards its completion.

1. Measure to what extent the joint programme has fully implemented their activities, delivered outputs and attained outcomes and specifically measuring development results.
2. Generate substantive evidence based knowledge, on one or more of the MDG-F thematic windows by identifying best practices and lessons learned that could be useful to other development interventions at national (scale up) and international level (replicability).

This final evaluation of the JPGE in Viet Nam has the following **specific objectives**:

1. Assess to what extent the JP has contributed to solve the needs and problems identified in the design phase.
2. Assess JP's degree of implementation, efficiency and quality delivered on outputs and outcomes, against what was originally planned or subsequently officially revised.<sup>6</sup>
3. Assess to what extent the JP has attained development results to the targeted population, beneficiaries, participants whether individuals, communities, institutions, etc.
4. Assess the joint programme contribution to the objectives set in their respective specific thematic windows as well as the overall MDG fund objectives at local and national level. (MDGs, Paris Declaration and Ha Noi Core Statement, Accra Principles, and UN reform).
5. Identify and document substantive lessons learned and good practices on the specific topics of the thematic window, MDGs, Paris Declaration and Ha Noi Core Statement, Accra Principles, and UN reform with the aim to support the sustainability of the joint programme or some of its components.

This Final Evaluation uses an expedited process to carry out a systematic, fast-paced analysis of the design, process and results of the joint programme, based on the scope and criteria included in the terms of reference. This will enable conclusions and recommendations for the JPGE to be formed within a period of approximately three months, in this particular case from January to March 2012.

The JPGE in Viet Nam has had a MDG-F managed Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) at its mid point in October 2010. Its final version was released in January 2011. Conclusions and recommendations to follow up of this evaluation serve as a valuable input to estimate programme progress in the Final Evaluation. This

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<sup>6</sup> An overview of the revisions that have taken place so far has not been found in the documentation.

final evaluation is also taking stock of how the recommendations have been agreed and implemented, and it comments on the final status. Another relevant document is the Independent Review of Joint Programmes under Delivering as One Initiative in Viet Nam, July 2011. The Sustainability Plan developed by the stakeholders of the JPGE at the end of 2011, and the draft of One Plan 2012-2016 (version December 2011) have also been considered for analysis.

## 2.2 Scope of the Evaluation

The MDGF M&E System sets out four units of analysis, i.e. (1) **Joint Program level of analysis**, it is the building block for the M&E system, most of the information, evidence, conclusions and findings of the MDGF activities will be based on the study and monitoring of JPs. The final evaluation will draw on primary and secondary data at central, national and local level; (2) The **Country level of analysis**; (3) The **Thematic Window level of analysis**; (4) The fourth one is the **MDG-F level of analysis**. It consists of a systematic and rigorous synthesis of the three previous units of analysis.

For the subject of this Final Evaluation, i.e. the JPGE, the main dimension will be the joint program level. A first frame for the evaluation dimensions is set out in the ToR. The Evaluation questions are clustered in three blocks, i.e. Design Level, Process Level and Result Level.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 3, MDG-F Monitoring and Evaluation Dimensions**

First Level M&E Level, Joint Programs		Related Themes and Questions (See ToR for evaluation questions )
Monitoring Aspects	Input, Products, Results, Processes	
Evaluation Aspects	<b>Design Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Relevance</b></li> <li>- <b><i>Quality of design</i></b></li> <li>- <b>Ownership in the design</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Process Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Efficiency</b></li> <li>- <b>Ownership in the process</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Results Level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Effectiveness</b></li> <li>- <b>Sustainability</b></li> </ul>

Source: MDG M&E System, page 9, and ToR JPGE Final Evaluation

<sup>7</sup> See ToR, pages 11 to 13, Annex 1.

## 2.3 Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation implementation is based on a three phase approach. A draft work plan is attached in Annex 4.

- Desk Phase (home base)
- Field Phase (in Ha Noi) took place from 30 January to 10 February 2012. In course of the discussion prior to the mission it was indicated that there is no relevant implementation to be visited outside Ha Noi. Once in country evaluators have proposed a short (0.5 to 1 day) field visit to one of the sites outside Ha Noi where capacity building has taken place. This did however not materialise.
- Reporting Phase (home base)

This evaluation is based on a mixed method approach. The starting point was the desk phase with an analysis of the literature readily made available prior to the submission of the Inception Report. Furthermore there has been a short briefing between the JPGE coordinator and the Evaluation Team Leader. The deliverable of the Desk Phase was the Inception Report (IR). The IR has been approved by the Final Evaluation Reference Group.

The field phase has started with a briefing of the evaluators by the managing agency, UNFPA, and the RCO team in Hanoi. Thereafter the main stakeholders (see stakeholder map) have been interviewed, first in semi-structured in- depth interviews, separate for each Agency, and thereafter in group interviews, according to their managerial functions (PMU, CPMU, NSC, etc).

The field phase in Viet Nam was concluded by a debriefing for the main stakeholders at central level, presenting first preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations. The debriefing can be also used to clarify with the respective stakeholders at central level, if necessary, remaining questions and queries.

The third and final phase of this evaluation will be the reporting phase. The report is structured as indicated in the ToR and follows the levels of analysis and questions set out in the ToR for this assignment (see Annex 1). First, a draft final report was submitted and time allocated for feedback by the evaluation reference group. After analysing the feedback the final report has been submitted to the managing agent of the JPGE, UNFPA, for further dissemination. .

## 2.4 Constraints and Limitations encountered

This evaluation has been performed in a friendly and cooperative spirit. The constraints encountered have been of technical nature.

The limitations encountered were foreseeable as potential bottlenecks in course of the preparation of the mission and indicated in the Inception Report as “subjects to further research”.

The most severe constraint is the absence of a well designed internal M&E Results Framework, to be used as base for the management system and M&E system<sup>8, 9</sup> of the JP. This does not only constitute a

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<sup>8</sup> The JPGE results framework demonstrates many of the problems facing UN agencies implementing results based management. Specific problems are vagueness of outcome and output results statements, and results statements at the wrong level of the results chain. Many of the output level targets and indicators are not meaningful measures. MTE, 2011, page iv

constraint to the programme implementation and internal monitoring, but also means a limitation in performing the final evaluation. The same comment was already made by the colleague who performed the MTE end of 2010, but no improvements in the system have been observed since then. Thus one of the main sources of data typically used as input for an evaluation, mainly to assess the programme progress, the degree of achievement and the quality of results achieved, was not available for this work. Instead, observation and evidence based techniques were applied, as well as triangulation and summarized statements like “the majority of the stakeholders interviewed was of the opinion...” used, as already adopted by the MTE evaluation.

A second constraint experienced was the time frame allocated to perform this evaluation, given the multitude of implementers and stakeholders involved and to be interviewed. The field phase was limited to 10 working days in country, in the understanding that no longer field trips will be possible to observe implementation outside of Ha Noi. Upon arrival in Viet Nam the evaluators proposed a small 0.5 to 1 day trip to one of the provinces where people have been trained and some implementation took place. Finally this did also not seem to be possible, other but a few interviews with trained staff in person in Ha Noi or at the phone. Thus a robust statement about the general quality of JPGE implementation outside Ha Noi (coverage) cannot be made.

## 2.5 Deliverables of the Evaluation and Dates of Submission

Inception Report	16 January 2012 (English Version)/18 January 2012 (Vietnamese Version)
Comments on IR by evaluation reference group	01 February 2012
Field Phase Viet Nam	30 January to 10 February 2012
Draft Evaluation Report	15 March 2012 (English Version)/18 March (Vietnamese Version)
Feedback on DFR	23 March 2012
Final Evaluation Report	28 March 2012 (English Version)/30 March (Vietnamese Version)

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<sup>9</sup> For a results framework to be functional, there needs to be a plausible assumption that outputs will lead to outcomes. The assumption in the JPGE is that strengthened capacity will lead to better implementation of legislation, but there are a number of risks related to this assumption. The implementation of legislation is subject to a number of factors other than improved capacity, for example motivation of government and the civil service, role of the judiciary, effectiveness of civil society, the role of rights holders, the macro-economic and international political environment, and levels of education. The JPGE needs a mechanism for determining the extent to which its capacity development activities are feeding into longer-term results, as part of its capacity development strategy, MTE, 2011, page 12

## **3 Evaluation Findings**

This chapter presents the major findings of this final evaluation, based on the main JPGE documents and on the interviews with key stakeholders of the JP. The findings are clustered around four DAC evaluation criteria indicated in the evaluation framework of the ToR, i.e. Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability.

The JPGE has had a MTE end of 2010 that concluded with an evaluation report in January 2011. Recommendations and reactions of the MTE are also considered in the report, as well as the Independent Review of five Joint Programmes in Viet Nam” conducted in early 2011 to review and assess the implementation modalities of five Joint Programmes (of which three are under the MDG-F scheme) in Viet Nam.

### **3.1 Design Relevance and Quality of Design**

#### **3.1.1 Relevance and Coherence of the Design**

The objectives addressed in the JPGE were and are of high relevance for Viet Nam in its expressed strive for Gender Equality. Chosen strategies for promoting GE – Capacity development, partnerships and support to data systems - are core of UN's mandate.

Laws for Gender Equality and Law on Domestic Violence, respectively, were passed by the National Assembly of Viet Nam in 2006 and 2007, and GoV was discussing with UN agencies already about facilitating implementation of the laws when the MDG-F window was available. JPGE was designed in response to this.

The problems addressed in the prodoc, i.e. weakness of institutional capacities in implementing and reporting, gender analysis, data collection and monitoring, networking and research, were correctly identified.

In earlier phases of the design a four pillar model to be implemented as four separate projects (preferred option of the GoV) was discussed and dropped, due to the requirements of the MDG-F for JPs. Three of the pillars were merged to one PMU chaired by MOLISA and three CPMUs under the umbrella of one JPGE were established.

This set up was relevant to work closer together and to coordinate between the three entities involved (MOLISA, MOCT, GSO) at GOV level and with the UN agencies.

JPGE builds on previous experience of individual UN agencies with National Partners and takes it to a new level of working jointly together in implementation with several agencies and some new partners on GE related topics.

### 3.1.2 Quality of the Design

Designing the JPGE was the first attempt of an integrated approach between twelve UN agencies and 3 National Implementing Partners and 16 co-implementing Partners to work together in a MDG-funded Joint Programme in Viet Nam.

The evolution of the programme document was a difficult task particularly as there were no procedures for this kind of planning. This resulted in a lack of clarity on whom - and at what level -- from the Government and the UN should join certain meetings. This resulted in the decision-making process taking longer time. But once signed by the Heads of Agencies and the Government, the document provided a solid basis for activities.

One of the NIPs interviewed commented: "This is the first time we have been able to see all the activities together", but also that "some of the studies on which the planning had been based were too rigid and not all activities have proved useful". However it has to be borne in mind that the initial draft of the JP project document was written 2 years prior (2007) to the signature of the project document in 2009, so the situation had changed over those two years. Several respondents and the Mid Term Evaluation commented that the design of the JP had allotted insufficient time for its activities especially factoring in the time needed to establish the JP.<sup>10</sup>

The final evaluation team would like to add a few other flaws of this programme at its design stage:

- The challenges for the UN agencies and the different Ministries of working together in an integrated way were underestimated in the design of the JPGE. Certain behavioral and process changes were required to successfully implement a programme of the breadth and depth of the JP.
- There is a perceived lack of clarity in the MDG-F instruction documents regarding how to cover staff cost in the budget. For this JP it was conservatively interpreted. To keep the overall staff cost at UN agency level cost low, there was no staff cost budgeted for the focal points working in the twelve agencies of the JPGE. This programme requires an intensive coordination effort that typically cannot be catered alongside with a number of other projects in the portfolio. However, the overall coordination function was budgeted and paid by the JPGE.
- The time frame required for reaching the outputs and outcomes, i.e. implementing policies and systems, and providing related policy advice in a concerted, joint manner was underestimated, i.e. 3 years implementation period is too short.
- The M&E Results Framework development in course of the project document (prodoc), shows a number of significant weaknesses that have been pointed out already in the MTE, for example the indicators chosen are not SMART, mainly activity oriented and not results based. There was an attempt in taking corrective measures in a workshop following the MTE, however, no actual changes were applied in the M&E Results Framework one month prior to JP's end date.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See Independent Joint Programme Review Viet Nam, July 2011

<sup>11</sup> The JPGE management was arguing that due to heavy and long bureaucratic process any changes in the M&E results framework would not have been possible. The evaluation appreciates that bureaucratic processes might have been long and

- The MDG-F (Funds of the Government of Spain channeled through the UN-system) with its specific requirement has been triggering an integrated approach of the UN agencies in the direction of Delivering as One. Viet Nam being one of the One UN pilot country. It has also contributed to observe the existing differences between the administrative and structural differences between the participating UN agencies with more clarity. The JPGE has contributed to the UN Reform process in Vietnam, and it has enabled the UNCT members to design and implement a large scale JP and gain valuable experience to drafting the One Plan 2012-2016. Lessons learned in the JPGE have been well documented<sup>12</sup>.

Gender as a cross-cutting theme was already starting to benefit from a higher profile under the UN reform when the JPGE was designed<sup>13</sup>. The JPGE was, however, the first experience of a complex Joint Programme with its multitude of UN, GOV and other implementing partners. It did not stop with joint programming, but included also elements of joint planning and implementation, channeled through a PMU co-chaired by a GoV and an UN agency. This has contributed to a fostered ownership of national implementation partners. Furthermore, peer review, data exchange and access to research work are amongst the new forms of cooperation indicated as advantages of the JPGE. The MDG-Fund with its JP scheme has certainly contributed to the Delivering as One objectives. In summary, Viet Nam being a One UN Pilot country has received important impulses through the JPGE. Experiences and lessons on coordination and management can be applied for other Joint Programmes in the One Plan 2012-2016.

### 3.1.3 Ownership of the Design

There is a clear recognition of country ownership in the design. The JPGE shows a structure with a national implementation with a PMU chaired by MOLISA and co-chaired by UNFPA, and in parallel a direct implementation of UN agencies with national partners. UNFPA is acting as managing agent for the part of the JPGE under national implementation. Due to the choice of management and financial modalities introduced, the national ownership has been fostered or confirmed, respectively.

The JP's PMU was established within MOLISA. The PMU members are the Directors and Deputy Directors of the Component Project Management Units (CPMUs) of MOLISA, MOCST and GSO and their supporting staff. Other national counterparts implement some of the Programme's activities and are defined as Co-implementing Partners (CIPs) without the status of National Implementing Partners (NIPs), meaning they do not receive MDGF funding directly from UNFPA at country level (if not authorized by the NIP) but are contracted by the NIPs to implement activities. The PMU manages issues that affect all components, but it also acts as Component Project Management Unit (CPMU) for the component that is sited in MOLISA. Separate CPMUs have been set up in GSO and MOCST, each consisting of a Director, Deputy Director, a (national) coordinator and other recruited or assigned staff. The JP did not develop its own implementation manual, but a regulation on the functions and tasks of CPMU and its key staff was provided for the PMU at its establishment. One Gender Specialist, recruited by the UN, is based in PMU/CPMUs in rotation and provides technical support to PMU/CPMUs and acts as programme coordinator. One Gender Programme Officer, also recruited by the UN, is based in UNFPA to work on administrative and operational issues.<sup>14</sup>

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heavy, but this is a risk foreseeable from the outset of the JPGE. Respective measures should have been taken in time. Making the agreed targets at activity, output and outcome level measurable is a precondition for the MDG-F to grant a JP.

<sup>12</sup> Lessons Learned Manual and a Sustainability Plan, 2011

<sup>13</sup> Country-led Evaluation Delivering as One, 2010.

<sup>14</sup> See Independent Joint Programme Review Viet Nam, July 2011

## 3.2 Efficiency (process)

### 3.2.1 Effect of the Mid Term Evaluation

One of the questions addressed in the ToR under efficiency was related to the usefulness, the degree to which the improvement plan has been implemented and the effect of the MTE on the JPGE.

As most of the recommendations addressed in the MTE are pointing to improvements in efficiency and effectiveness (1-7) and sustainability (8-9)), an overview of the assessment to which the recommendations of the MTE have been taken in to account is presented in table 4 below.

**Table 4, Overview to which extent the improvement plan of the MTE have been agreed and implemented**

Recommendation No.	Agreed/ disagreed by JPGE	Achieved Yes/No/ partly achieved	Status 03/2012 and Comments of the Final Evaluation Team (after receiving last status updates of end of 03/2012)
<b>Recommendation 1</b> – Organize a planning workshop for all JPGE partners to: a) clarify expectations of what the JPGE can achieve. Promote development of a shared vision b) Redefine the JPGEs outcome level targets c) To promote coherence, discuss moving some JPGE activities to one or two pilot Provinces d) Set up Results Groups for each of the three Joint Outcomes	Agreed to a, b, c	a) and c) achieved	Workshop was held Nov 29, 2010  a) expectations were clarified at the workshop 10/2010  c) with the remaining budget provincial training on GE in 16 (of 63) provinces with about 90 participants each have been conducted under the MOLISA component, as there was a remaining budget re-allocated to his activity.
		b) partly achieved	b) were discussed at the workshop, but it were not reflected in the outcome level targets in the official documents  “Discussed and the revised outcome statements have been developed for operational use. However, they were not reflected in the official document due to long and heavy bureaucratic process it would take to reflect in the official document”. <sup>15</sup>
	Disagreed to d		d) no action taken as disagreed.
<b>Recommendation 2</b> - UN Heads of Agencies (HoA) should have a dedicated meeting on the JPGE ..... every three months.	Disagreed		Evaluators appreciate the fact that JPGE was already rather time intensive.  However, they also consider meetings at HoA level as very useful, in particular if junior/medium level staff is seconded as focal points

<sup>15</sup> This is an explanation provided by the JPGE as a comment on the draft final report. Evaluators have changed the status from not achieved to partly achieved. Question which are the binding targets remain, and also why this “heavy bureaucratic process” has not been anticipating as a risk factor for JP implementation.

			to represent an agency at some of the meetings, to find some fast track solutions.
<b>Recommendation 3</b> - Consider options for streamlining hiring practices.	Disagreed		Evaluators appreciate disagreement, but would recommend a joint consultants' pool for the UNCT a valuable contribution to alignment and to facilitate access to high quality consultants (it was indicated as a problem not to find sufficient qualified consultants in the JPGE MR).
<b>Recommendation 4</b> - To clarify roles of PMU and CPMU during the planning workshop	Agreed	achieved	A reminder was made at the workshop, and according to MOLISA PMU it has been clarified for application in the remaining period. No information on what has been clarified and applied as a consequence.
<b>Recommendation 5</b> – a) Prioritize the recommendations of the capacity assessment report; b) develop a capacity development plan (....)	Agreed	achieved for a)	Prioritization exercise took place at the planning workshop 29 November 2010. The priority areas and the follow-up actions were integrated into the Annual Workplan 2011-2012.
		not achieved for b)	A commonly agreed Capacity development plan was not produced or implemented.
<b>Recommendation 6</b> – Develop a common methodology for the UNCT for assessment of training (....)	Agreed	not achieved	Improvement Plan states: "agree to further collaboration amongst UN agencies in the JPGE and the UN M&E Working Group on a common methodology"  A common methodology for the assessment of training was NOT developed  Evaluators consider this recommendation as of great importance, as a) such a scheme does currently not exist throughout the JPGE and b) without this common assessment methods JPGE outputs cannot be compared and measured. A crucial instrument of QA is missing. So far it depends on the people involved in each of the UN agencies if and how the training assessment is performed. This is still a valid recommendation for the time after finalization of the JPGE, as the same omission will otherwise continue in the assessment of training in the implementation of One Plan.
<b>Recommendation 7</b> – Review methods of assessing results of training in government institutions and determine if they are applicable of JPGE training activities	Agreed	Review of Methods partially achieved (one method assessed as not applicable)	There are no standard procedures for assessing training results available at GOV institutions.  A review of methods of assessment of training results at government institutions was restricted to a visit to the Women's' Union by two JPGE staff members in February 2011. It was concluded that the methods currently used cannot be applied / transferred to JPGE training activities. .  Evaluators consider this recommendation as of great importance,

			as a) such a scheme does currently not exist throughout the JPGE and b) without this common assessment methods JPGE outputs cannot be compared and measured. This is still a valid recommendation for the time after finalization of the JPGE, as the same omission will otherwise continue in the One Plan.
<b>Recommendation 8 –</b> Determine how capacities to be left with government and other counterparts at the end of the JPGE will be sustained (....)	agreed	achieved	Sustainability Workshop mid October 2011,  A JPGE Sustainability Plan was developed involving all stakeholders.
<b>Recommendation 9 –</b> Meet regularly with donors and other international stakeholders to discuss progress of the JPGE and potential interest in building on JP activities	agreed	achieved	Donors participated in GAP meetings, though participation was not consistent (mostly WB and DFID) to discuss potential areas to support and utilization of Trust Fund.  Evaluators consider this recommendation as important, also in the light of continuation of coordination beyond JPGE end.

## Capacity Development

The JPGE was setting up a design with rather ambitious objectives without having a clear status on which level and quantity of capacity was available. The JPGE had the intention to assess the available capacity only once the implementation had started, increasing the risk that a major design assumption, i.e. that a certain amount of capacity is available, would not hold true.

The findings and results of the capacity assessment were shared at the dissemination workshop held on 17 December 2009 in Hanoi. The final edited and printed version of the report was made available around September 2010, i.e. at halftime of the JPGE implementation period. Many training and capacity development activities had taken place in the meantime.

The MTE<sup>16</sup> strongly recommended developing an overall and commonly agreed capacity development plan (R5). Assessing efficiency involves determining if funds could have been used in a more effective manner. Capacity development activities are more efficient if carried out as part of an overall capacity development strategy. The significant delay in the capacity assessment results meant that numerous capacity development activities have taken place with no overall strategy being in place. Study tours alone accounted for 300.000 USD, or 7% of the JPGE's total budget.

Evaluators received several comments expressing concerns about the composition of the study groups chosen for these tours. According to an UN stakeholder's information the composition of the groups followed the criteria of the national implementation partners. However, nothing was mentioned if these criteria were shared with the coordination mechanisms of the JPGE. For a similar amount of budget per person other strategic decisions could have been taken.

<sup>16</sup> MTE of JPGE in Viet Nam, January 2011

The JPGE has also not succeeded in implementing the Recommendations R 5b and 6 following the MTE, although they agreed upon them. These recommendations concern capacity development and training related outputs, i.e. commonly agreeing on an overall capacity development plan, developing common training assessment methodologies and reviewing existing/applied training assessment methods at UN agencies as well as at NIP, respectively. It can be safely assumed that this means efficiency and effectiveness losses in delivering outputs, but can however not be quantified in the absence of a capacity development plan and of common methods on how to measure achievements of trainings.

### 3.2.2 JPGE Management Model

The contracting and management model as shown in picture 1 is providing some potential efficiency gains compared to the implementation of single bilateral contracts between UN agencies and GoV partners:

- Joint programming and joint implementation. Having one Project Document instead of three with the three GOV implementing agencies and channeling eleven vertical activity management channels into only one reporting channel has shown how the accountability for implementation of a cross cutting theme across many agencies could be achieved with a reasonable economy of effort.<sup>17</sup>
- Having one Managing Agent from the UN (UNFPA) has proven an advantage in managing and coordinating activities in the JPGE and in streamlining the financial management and reporting requirements.<sup>18</sup>

Inbuilt coordination mechanisms have further contributed to JPGE's efficiency potential.

- A key role has the JP Gender Specialist, who was recruited by the UN, and is based in PMU/CPMUs in rotation, and also providing technical support to PMU/CPMUs and acts as programme coordinator. She navigates the various systems and secures that the required networking takes place.
- Through the monthly JPGE Task Force meetings and other coordination meetings under the Gender Programme Coordination Group the JP has been a catalyst of all agencies involved to increase their understanding of what other agencies do. The Gender Programme Coordination Group is composed of three subgroups, of which one is the JPGE Task Force for discussing operation and coordination issues.
- The level of required coordination and related time and human resources input must be considered as high, but it has also taken into consideration that the JPGE and its magnitude is the first of its kind in Viet Nam and for some forms of coordination and management mechanisms it has been a first "pilot" programme.
- The "joint governance" of the JPGE has in the perception of the majority of partners at GOV and UN contributed to a national ownership and a joint awareness rising. One governmental partner pointed out that now all implementers are on the same level in their awareness, one of the experts of MOLISA PMU stated at a JPGE Task Force meeting that "the biggest achievements of JPGE is communication: the awareness of and information about the two laws (i.e. of GE and DV) has been disseminated at different levels, and the capacity has been built". It was also

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<sup>17</sup> This was already confirmed by the Independent Review of Joint Programmes under Delivery as One Initiative in Viet Nam, July 2011.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

confirmed that the knowledge about gender equality has been enhanced in course of JPGE implementation.

- The positive effects that were happening through establishment of joint coordination mechanism, peer reviewing processes and knowledge sharing, would certainly not have happened to this extent or at all without the interventions of the JPGE. These unplanned positive effects will hopefully be set forth and facilitate the future work, as well as between the UN agencies (already proven in the One Plan 2012-2016), signed by the Prime Minister on 29 February 2012, as well as with the (same) partners in GoV.

**Table 5, Overview of strengths and weaknesses of the joint implementation approach of JPGE**

Strengths	Weaknesses/Omissions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Managing Agent following the pass through financial management mechanism; minimizes the financial reporting burden on Government agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High time and resources input for coordination required, independent of actual budget share of an agency</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Joint Project Document instead of three. Full overview of all activities and results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No entity empowered to take final decisions, neither at UN nor at GOV level</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New culture of information and knowledge sharing in particular for research work (for example DV study and other studies, circulating and agreeing ToR etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure of introducing a functional M&amp;E systems<sup>19</sup> with SMART<sup>20</sup> indicators at the correct result levels for the JPGE</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange of data and access to data, incentive for some of the agencies to join JP even with little or no budget share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of a common methodology for the UNCT for assessment of training</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination function in the PMU</li> <li>• Coordination mechanisms (working groups and regular meetings) introduced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of a common methodology for the GOV agencies' assessment of training</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint governance and ownership in the JPGE at GoV level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of a commonly agreed capacity development plan</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and information flow through the participating agencies at UN and GOV level, bringing all partners at the same knowledge level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy bureaucratic procedures have been felt as a limitation to bring some of the outputs from its development to its implementation</li> </ul>

For a cross cutting subject as Gender Equality the model of a JPGE with its high number of IPs and its joint approach was a good model helping to raise awareness and to bring the subject to a broad attention. It contributed to create a critical mass among the IPs and the stakeholders. A few lessons learnt can be derived for future implementation of Joint Programmes in general that will be stressed in chapter 4.1. A trade off can be observed between efficiency (at activity level) and the level of jointness, in particular considering the teething problems the JPGE had being the first JP of its kind. The broad awareness it has created would not have been possible applying a single-project approach due to the multitude of partners involved at the same time striving jointly for the same objectives of this cross cutting subject.

<sup>19</sup> Other but colour coded quarterly update on activities as per MDG-F template and PMU meetings.

<sup>20</sup> Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

### **3.2.3 Quality Assurance and M&E Systems**

Introducing Quality Assurance systems are a must in project management. For a JP of this magnitude, involving many implementers and co-implementers as well as contracted consultants to implement the majority of the activities, this can be and has been a challenge. In the Prodoc there has been an internal M&E systems envisaged to be introduced (a M&E results framework and a M&E system are prerequisites of the MDG-F for JPs)<sup>21</sup>. In practice the internal monitoring was performed mainly at activity level on a quantitative basis mainly performed by each agency.

Furthermore the introduction of evaluation and assessment systems for trainings and capacity building measures planned would have been required, following existing good practice. The evaluators observed a variety of different forms and approaches towards training assessments, from rather detailed systems, to observation of randomly chosen interventions visited resulting in training reports to no quality assurance at all. There are some good examples of monitoring the process downstream, also along the lines of contracting and subcontracting and those can provide input into a joint training assessment method. The QA of training activities does not only consist of evaluation of training activities, but also encompasses also the selection of trainers, course participants and selection of participants of study tours according to pre-defined profiles. This selection should ideally be performed by the Joint Programme Management.

The systems have, according to sources at GoV, been developed and finalized shortly before JPGE's end, but the official approval process has not been completed. An implementation of M&E systems for the two new laws, indicator for the achievement of process output 1.2 has so far not taken place. This information was only provided as comments to the DFR, and the evaluators have had no opportunity to see these frameworks in course of their country mission yet.

For future programmes of this dimension a QA system shall be agreed and established beyond the borders of single agencies and should be jointly agreed and monitored, making it an important element of joint programme management<sup>22</sup>. It should not only longer be at the discretion of each single UN agency, if and how to perform QA but a joint and harmonized approach, as it exists already for financial reporting between UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF under HPPMG.

### **3.2.4 Human Resources – Quality, Availability and Staff turnover**

As discussed under 3.1 Design, there is a lack of clarity in the guidelines for application for JPs under the MDG-F regarding budgeting human resources cost, in particular for the focal point in the participating

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<sup>21</sup> For further reference MDG-F has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation strategy for the Fund: the MGD-F Programme Implementation Guidelines and the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy "Learning to Improve". Implementation Guidelines for MDG Achievement Fund Joint Programmes, June 2009; M&E Evaluation System "Learning to Improve", no year; Revised Standard Joint Programme Document, April 2008.

<sup>22</sup> There have been some cases reported by stakeholders that indicated participation of people that were not matching fully the agreed criteria.

agencies. Table 6 below presents an overview how the distinct agencies have responded to the staffing question. Only two agencies of the twelve agencies involved have a budgeted focal point, i.e. the Managing Agent UNFPA and ILO. The three main GOV partners have a fully JPGE paid coordinator in their respective CPMUs and Gender Specialist/Coordinator of the JPGE is also budgeted in the prodoc. The remaining 10 agencies have currently staffed their focal points as following: 2 Junior Programme Officers, 6 National Programme Officers, one consultant and 1 national UN Volunteer.

Regarding the involvement of junior personnel there have been different viewpoints among the stakeholders interviewed. Some praising the fresh ideas, however, the majority of the stakeholders interviewed were criticizing the lack of technical knowledge when involving junior staff to provide advice when required. As reflected by an NIP CPMU staff member interviewed by the Final Evaluation: "... it took a lot of time to explain for the new staff who took over the job and sometimes it seemed like starting again from the beginning".

The Independent Joint Programme Review (2011) stated:" ....there has been criticism of this programme (JPGE) relating to insufficient capacity in individual UN agencies. The UN frequently staffs its gender capacity with junior personnel including volunteers or interns. While junior personnel can bring commitment and recent experience of emerging best practice, they are sometimes on limited appointments, and if they do not stay long enough to have significant impact, their contribution may not be a sufficient return on the investment of time taken to orient. One of the NIPs commented: "We don't know who to talk to for advice: some do well; others do nothing"

This finding is in line with the comment of the MTE in this respect: "The JPGE appears to have been designed without adequate attention to the capacities needed to carry out its objectives. Between 30 and 50 per cent of JPGE funds are being used to hire consultants"<sup>23</sup>. All Government departments and UN Agencies (with two exceptions) noted in the MTE also that finding appropriate national and international is not an easy task. It is not uncommon that retired ex staff members of the Ministries are engaged as consultants in the JPGE.

### **Staff turnover**

In addition to some quality issues, staff turnover has been reported as an element jeopardizing efficiency. Several of the stakeholders had up to three changes of staff in the role as respective focal point, in a period of three years. This is partly, but not exclusively, related to the fact that short term contracts have been signed, according to the contractual options each agency had. As mentioned UN volunteers and JPOs have been involved as a relatively inexpensive human resource with typically short term contracts. It has been stated at earlier occasions<sup>24</sup> "efficiency of design, and possibly of implementation, is affected by the rapid turnover of team members. .... This implies UN agencies have to ensure that new staff has to be adequately briefed and supported (by senior management) when entering into a joint programme. This is a well-known issue in the UN and implication of allocation of responsibility for the JPGE to junior staff could have been predicted<sup>25</sup>.

In the overview below it is shown how the staffing was composed, how much time was allocated by the focal points and which was the percentage of budget by each of the participating agencies.

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<sup>23</sup>, MTE on the JPGE in Viet Nam, January 2011

<sup>24</sup> ibid

<sup>25</sup> Balogun, 2008, Review of JP in One UN Pilot: Viet Nam

**Table 6, Human resources involved in the JPGE and funding sources**

Agency	Form of arrangement for human resources allocation	% of salaries for JPGE Task Force Member paid by JP	% of overall JP budget <sup>26</sup> allocated to each of the agencies
<b>UNFPA</b>	<p>Dedicated Focal Point on JPGE - Until September 2011</p> <p>After September 2011, another program officer, paid by UNFPA, has been assigned to replace and work fulltime for JPGE under supervision of the UNFPA Gender Team Leader. The UNFPA Gender Team leader spent about 30% of her time providing technical support for the component of UNFPA execution under JPGE and supervision/oversight.</p>	<p>100% salary for the focal point paid by JPGE until April 2012, though the PO left in Sept 2011</p> <p>0% salary paid by JPGE for other UNFPA programme staff supporting JPGE.</p>	<p>13%</p> <p>or</p> <p>61%<sup>27</sup>.</p>
<b>UNDP</b>	<p>UNDP Programme Official/UNDP gender focal point responsible for UNDP component of JPGE (60% of her time), the remaining time dedicated in UNDP participation in UN gender PCG/sub working group and UNDP internal gender equality strategy implementation and monitoring.<sup>28</sup></p> <p>From Nov 2011 with the departure of the Programme Official (according to the office restructuring on gender equality work of UNDP VietNam) the work on JPGE UNDP component is taken care of by IEG Unit Head (5% of his time). In addition, a Programme Associate (10% of her time) is assigned to provide implementation support of the UNDP component in the JPGE.</p>	0%	4.8%
<b>UN Women</b>	International Gender Expert (JPO). 50% time allocation	0%	5.4%

<sup>26</sup> Referring to USD 4,500,000 funded by MDG-F

<sup>27</sup> Including pooled funds for National Implementation by MOLISA, MOCST, GSO, and PMU/CPMU as pooled funding

<b>FAO</b>	National Programme Officer who looks after JPGE as part of her work.	0%	2%
<b>UNICEF</b>	National Programme Officer who looks after JPGE as part of her work.	0%	0.07%
<b>ILO</b>	ILO Focal Point, ILO staff (National Programme Officer), is responsible for the JP and for the linkages and synergy of the JP with the ILO and other UN 's programmes, projects and activities. Time allocation on the JPGE is estimated to 80%.	100%	9.4%
<b>UNESCO</b>	Junior Professional Officer (JPO) until October 2011. Time allocation is estimated to be 50%.	0%	4.8%
<b>IOM</b>	National Programme Officer. Time allocation estimated to be around 50%.	0%	1.2%
<b>UNIDO</b>	National Programme Officer, is responsible for the JP and for 6 other projects, served as secretary of one Program Coordination Group (PCG) at the time of the main implementation and other country office's works. Estimated time allocation of approximately 3% to the JP; the remaining time dedicated to the other projects and other country office's works.	0% for focal point	2.8%
<b>UNODC</b>	Focal Point is Consultant coordinating a larger programme on the component covered by the MDGF. Approximate time allocation is difficult to determine (around 15%)	0%,	4.6%
<b>WHO</b>	National Programme Officer.	0%	3.8%
<b>UNAIDS</b>	National UN Volunteer.	0%	0%
<b>MOLISA</b>	The GE Dept is responsible for this project the Deputy Director of the PMU/senior officer of the GE Dept (Ms.Nguyen Dieu Hong) is the focal person for the issues related to policy and GOV views. <sup>29</sup> Relating to the other issues of project the focal person is Ms.Tran Phuong Nhung – coordinator of the PMU working as a contracted –full time staff	0% for the Deputy Director.  100% for the Coordinator.	24%
<b>MOCST</b>	Project Coordinator recruited by the MOCST CPMU. 100% of time	100% for the	4%(MOCST Budget:

<sup>29</sup> According to the Project Document, the budget allocated by the JPGE to the MOLISA component is about 24% compared with total budget of the JPGE (4,5 million USD in total of JPGE of which 1,083,979 Million USD for the MOLISA component)

		coordinator	178,510)
<b>GSO</b>	Project Coordinator (GSO Staff), spends 95% of time on JPGE.	100% for the coordinator	8.9%(GSO Budget: 399,875)
<b>JP Gender Specialist/ Coordinator</b>	International Professional Officer. 95% of time spent for JPGE while other 5% spent on some work by One UN or UNFPA.	100% paid by JPGE	

### **3.2.5 Ownership in the process**

The agencies directly involved in the JPGE are showing commitment, and this is documented in the action plans or similar documents they have developed in course of the JPGE (MOLISA and MOCST) and an Internal Policy to Regulate the Gender Mainstreaming (GSO), respectively. Table 7 below provides a short overview and an assessment of the status for ownership at the end of the JPGE implementation (indicators chosen by the evaluators)





Table 7, Indicators of Ownership

NIP/ Criterion	MOLISA	MOCST	GSO	MOH	MOET
Existence of Public Policies prior to JPGE start examples)	++ Gender Equality Law (GEL)	++ Domestic Violence Law (DVL)	Not applicable	0 (GEL/DVL)	0 (GEL)
Availability of new public policies and/or related legal framework by partner in course of the JPGE	++ National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) , National Programme on Gender Equality (NPGE)	++ Multi-agency collaboration guideline for the implementation of DVL (output 1.2)	+ + NSISGD (list of indicators) Study on DV against Women	n/a	n/a
Action Plans for Ministry in place and budget allocated	++ Approved Plan of Action on GE Budge source: State budget and programs, projects Amount of budget allocated: n/a	++ Approved Plan of Action on GE Budget source: Annual regular budget; Budget from Programmes, Projects, Other sources. Amount of budget allocated: n/a	Not applicable	+ Action Plan developed and signed in June 2011, but no budget allocated by GoV and no contributions pledged so far for AP's six objectives	- Plan of Action on GE approved on 9 March 2012.

<b>Guidelines</b>			+ Guidelines for collection of data for NSISGD; Data book on NSISGD launched on 16 March 2012, not yet available at the time of the evaluation		
<b>Outputs anticipated under JPGE Actions of JP, either pending or not completed</b>	M&E framework to monitor the GEL (output 1.2)	M&E framework to monitor the DVL (output 1.2)			
<b>CPMU staff will continue to work in their GOV entity upon JPGE end. Salaries paid by GOV</b>	3 PMU staff was hired externally and will finish work by end of JPGE	2 PMU staff was hired externally and will finish by end of JPGE	All CPMU staff are GSO Staff and will stay at GSO	n. applicable	n. applicable
Scoring: ++ very positive; + positive; 0 neutral; - negative; --very negative					

The Ministry of Health is also showing a high degree of commitment, demonstrated also in fundraising initiatives of the respective Unit under the Ministry to secure the funding for the implementation of the action plan, as reported.<sup>30</sup>

Documents produced have ownership of the Government of Viet Nam (National Strategy on GE, National Programme on GE, Plans of Action for Ministries approved by Vice Minister), however to various extents in the various Ministries and entities (see overview).

There is a clear financial commitment of the GoV, an important indicator for ownership. At the time of the evaluation it was however not possible to break the total amount down to the various NIPs benefitting from it and on how much exactly will be allocated to the distinct action plans developed under the JPGE.

The total budget for the National Programme on GE<sup>31</sup> is estimated to be VND955 billion, including,

- Allocation from the State budget: VND790 billion (including VND326 billion from the national budget and VND464 billion from local budget).
- Overseas assistance, contributions of the community and other eligible sources: VND165 billion

The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Ministry of Finance are responsible for calculating and identifying a consistent amount of fund needed from the State budget at national level for the implementation of the National Program on Gender Equality in the period of 2011-2015, as in line with the Law on State Budget and its implementation guiding documents.

According to the NPGE the total budget under the National Strategy (2011-2020) the National Programme on Gender Equality (2011-2015) - the Government of Viet Nam had agreed to allocate 955 billion Vietnamese dong (VND) of which 790 billion VND<sup>32</sup> are from the state budget, for the implementation in 60 cities and provinces throughout the country.

MOLISA, GSO and MOCST also stated that they have their annual budget allocated from Government to continue their work in gender equality, collecting NSISGD data and domestic violence control and prevention, respectively. In the Ministry of Health, there is no concrete financial commitment for the implementation of the action plan reported.

It was also stated across the interviewed stakeholders, in particular in the main NIP partner Ministries that there is an increased awareness on the subjects of GE and Domestic Violence. One of the NIP staff stated that “while working on the research on domestic violence against women we found out that some assumptions we had before needed to be revised, such as the reason for domestic violence is happening mainly because of poverty, and that DV happens more frequently in rural areas. The research data has shown a different picture. Evaluators also observed a good understanding and knowledge about DV and the DVL while interviewing DV victims who benefited from training programme under JPGE.

Representatives of local NGOs (DOVIPNET and NEW, CWD) also demonstrated a good understanding and knowledge of DV terms and DVL and messages on gender equality. Some of the interviewees (farmers union, local NGO representatives of DOVIPNET and NEW, CWD) confirmed that information

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<sup>30</sup> Action Plan implementation will be supported by the One Plan, gender selected abortion is one of the indicators

<sup>31</sup> Decision No: 1241 /QĐ-TTg by PM approving National Programme on GE

<sup>32</sup> Equals 38 million USD

sharing and capacity building at provincial and district level have contributed to raise awareness for DV (and to get a better understanding what all falls under DV) and GE.

### 3.3 Effectiveness of results

#### 3.3.1 Progress towards achievement of anticipated results

The implementation logic of the JPGE is composed of ten outputs grouped along the three outcomes. As reference for any achievements as of to date the table 9 below summarizes the outcome, targets and achievement as at the end of the JPGE. The full results framework is attached as Annex 2.

At the point of the Final Evaluation the implementation of the JP remained mainly activity-oriented.(see table 8 in italics) In the Annual Workplan 2011/2012 there are 10 outputs with 15 output targets identified. According to the JPGE internal monitoring 13 output targets have been fully achieved by end of the JPGE, and two partly achieved, as shown in table 8 below.

So far there is no monitoring system for performance measurement of the JP in place. This omission was indicated at various. QA tools are generally poorly developed in this JP. There is no joint quality assurance tool in place.

**Table 8, Progress in Outputs, Self-Assessment of JPGE indicated in the Monitoring Report July to December 2011**

Fully Achieved:
• 1.1. Capacity assessment report <i>printed and distributed</i> to key duty bearers.
• 1.2 At least one Plan of Action on Gender Equality by a ministry <i>developed</i> . (Four Plans of Action on Gender Equality have been developed and approved: MOLISA, MOCST, MOH, and MOET)
• 1.2 Key duty bearers <i>briefed</i> about the Multi-agency collaboration guideline for implementation
• 1.3 5 training materials/guides <i>finalized</i> to support the implementation of the two laws
• 1.3 700 officials (at least 50 per cent women) <i>trained</i> on gender mainstreaming, gender equality and gender-based violence in respective sectors
• 1.3 At least 01 Plan of Action on Gender <i>developed</i>
• 2.1 2 key gender issues fed into national policy dialogues
• 2.1 70 per cent of network members who agree that their gender work is more successful due to the gender network (GAP) supported under JPGE
• 2.2 One workshop <i>organized</i> for government, mass organizations, VCCI and civil society to share experience on women's economic empowerment, and to discuss policy recommendations.
• 3.1 Calculation on GGI, GDI and GEM completed to feed into compilation of gender statistics
• 3.2 Gender data from national surveys to feed into the national gender statistics indicator system (NGSIS).
• 3.3 Currently available data stock-taken and reviewed and new data collected through 3 research works on vulnerable groups disseminated for advocacy purpose
• 3.4 National Gender Statistics Indicators <i>completed</i> (a list of indicators) Guidebook on collecting data on Gender Development (GD) and a Data book on NSISGD <i>presented</i> at the closing ceremony on 19 March 2012 in Ha Noi

Partially Achieved:

- 1.2 M&E frameworks for GEL and DVL finalized drafts have been circulated and sent to GED and Family Department of MOCST, respectively. They were pending clearance from the departments of the related Ministries, however have been approved after the evaluation mission was completed.
- 2.3 A communication network on gender equality developed and operational, with operational and sustainability strategy in place. So far neither a structure nor a strategy in place.

**Table 9,  
Overview joint outcomes, targets and achievement at programme end**

IMPACT: IMPROVEMENT IN MDG GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS ACHIEVED THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF LEGISLATION	Target	Achievements to date (03/2012) as stated by JPGE	Comments by Final Evaluation Team
<p><b>Joint Outcome 1:</b></p> <p><b>Improved skills, knowledge and practices for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the Law on Gender Equality and Law on Domestic Violence and Control.</b></p>	<p>MOLISA and some key line ministries have implementation strategies for GE and DV laws;</p>	<p>The National Strategy on Gender Equality was approved in Dec 2010 to support the implementation of GEL. Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2011 – 2015) by MOCST, and MOH approved, Plan of Action on DV Prevention and Control by MOCST 2008 – 2015 is available.</p>	<p>Four action plans MOLISA, MOCST, Ministry of Health, in particular for the implementation of DV and GE completed. Fifth</p> <p>MOET POA approved; on 9 March only</p> <p>No finalized M&amp;E frameworks for GEL and DVL available and approved to monitor and report against at the time of the evaluation mission; M&amp;E frameworks not shared with evaluators. Communicated by JPGE end of March that the frameworks have been very recently finalised.</p> <p>No Overall Capacity Development Plan or Strategy available for a coordinated approach towards CA and training available;</p> <p>Multi-agency collaboration guideline for the implementation of DVL (output 1.2); approved in December 2011</p> <p>Guidelines for collection of data for NSISGD; Data book on NSISGD (both have been presented at the closing ceremony on 16 March 2012); evaluators did not receive copies of the documents while on mission.</p>

<p><b>Joint Outcome 2:</b></p> <p><b>Enhanced partnerships and coordination around gender equality within and outside of government.</b></p>	<p>Effective coordination of gender mainstreaming function by empowered SMAs (MOLISA and MOCST)</p>	<p>Increased presence and role of SMAs in coordination of gender architecture: MOLISA coordinated with various stakeholders in the process of finalizing the National Strategy on Gender Equality.</p> <p>MOLISA, with support from JPGE, organized Gender Action Partnership (GAP) meetings which were participated by government, UN, academic, donor community, and civil society organizations.</p>	<p>Enhanced partnerships observed; revitalized Gender Action Partnership (GAP) is meeting regularly; also greater coordination among the GOV NIPs, among the UN agencies, and between both. 2 NGOs and VCC I reported direct contact with GOV through coordination mechanisms but also reported need to intensify the exchange.</p>
<p><b>Joint Outcome 3:</b></p> <p><b>Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality.</b></p>	<p>Availability of data for monitoring of GE and DV laws</p> <p>Availability of system to monitor implementation of GE and DV laws</p> <p>Policy is based on evidence provided by research</p>	<p>Data for monitoring of GE and DV laws and other gender issues being compiled:</p> <p>Various surveys and studies implemented and completed with JPGE support: National Survey on Women's Health and Life Experience, Enterprise Survey, Rural and Agricultural Survey, Compilation of data on children and gender equality to meet requirements of national and international commitment, studies on ethnic minority women's access to legal services, situation of sex workers, and gender and remittances.</p> <p>Study tour to Malaysia completed in March 2010 to review the use of Gender-related Development Index (GDI). GDI being calculated.</p> <p>National Statistical Indicator System on Gender Development approved by the Prime Minister in October 2011.</p>	<p>No strategy or integrated plan for commonly agreed capacity development in place; capacity development goals available for distinct activities.</p> <p>National Gender Statistics Indicators completed (a list of indicators)</p> <p>Gender Clearing House not established at the time of the evaluation, Gender Clearinghouse was still being piloted.</p> <p>The Information Centre of MOLISA just responded to UNDP to address comments and inquiries. Planned to be finalized by 25 March 2012.</p> <p>Nothing observed by the evaluators in course of their mission.</p>

Source: Prodoc, 2007, Annual Workplan 2011/2012, MR July to December 2011 and interview with coordinator on updates since December 2011, Comments of JPGE on the DFR about achievements after Final Evaluation Mission.

The indicators applied to measure achievement are mostly activity related (see column Achievement to date), also at output and at outcome level. This was already pointed out at the MTE evaluation and shall not be repeated in the evaluation in detail. Lessons Learned and Recommendations will take up on this fact. It remains thus still difficult to measure the degree of achievement at output and outcome level in the absence of an M&E system.

It was also stated in the lessons learned chapter that single interventions (one of a kind training, for example) will not be effective in reaching the outputs expected.<sup>33</sup>

It was observed in the interviews conducted that awareness among the stakeholders has been raised both, in gender equality and especially in gender mainstreaming skills and domestic violence control and prevention. Through the National Study on Domestic Violence Against Women (2010) a new level of discussion on the subject matter was initiated, there was enough evidence found to recognize that this study has influenced the national policy dialogue about DV as a key gender issue.

The trained participants of gender mainstreaming informed that they applied their learnt knowledge in the work by organizing workshops to disseminate the information after their study, delivered training to district levels to raise awareness, implemented pilot projects of gender mainstreaming at district level and integrated gender lenses in their daily work as duty bearers.

In course of some interview there was anecdotal evidence provided about an activity related to output 1.3. (DVL). There were 96 people trained in a train-the-trainer (ToT) course in four pilot provinces, supported by the JPGE. However, it was reported that only 10 % of the people trained have been perceived by the instructors as fit to provide trainings. Among this core group of nine, however, so far only two people are providing trainings.

This fact points to either a wrong selection<sup>34</sup> of participants or a wrongly estimated demand for the subject being trained. The cost per “successful operating trainer” is obviously significantly higher if the number of successful participants (i.e. those being in the position to provide trainings themselves) diminished substantially below the anticipated number.

Annex 9 provides an overview on the outcomes and outputs, targets and achievement, as well as the evaluators’ comments.

“Heavy bureaucratic procedures” were indicated as constraint for achievement of certain results, or as constraint to introduce changes to the M&E results framework. Evaluation team appreciates that the procedures can be sometimes heavy, but it should be constraints that can be overcome as they are system immanent and were well known already when the JPGE was designed.

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<sup>33</sup> Review of JPs in Viet Nam, 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Selection was unilaterally done by court colleague or police academy with the help of a profile sent to them by the training provider in charge.

### **3.3.2 Contribution of the JPGE to MDGs and to Delivering as One at Country Level**

#### **Millennium Development Goals**

The JPGE has without any doubt significantly contributed to the awareness raising and knowledge dissemination about GE and DV in Viet Nam, thus its objectives are fully in line with the Goal 3 of the MDGs, i.e. Promote gender equality and empower women. This was confirmed by the vast majority of the interviewed stakeholders in GoV and the co-implementing partners.

The Report published on Domestic Violence with contribution of the JPGE provided for the first time robust data and helped to contrast existing perceptions, for example that DV is linked to poverty or to marginalized groups. Gender based violence is now acknowledged to be a serious problem in Viet Nam. Through working together with the respective Ministries on action plans with indicators to implement the National Strategy on Gender Equality, some of the related problems can be addressed, for example persistent discriminatory attitudes and behavior against women, persistent son preference and devaluing of girls, as demonstrated in the rising sex-ratio at birth. The data from DV survey shall contribute to strategic planning and orientation for national response to DV in the next five years

After launching results of DV survey, State managing agency (MOCST) on DV law together with UN had organized an orientation workshop for national response to DV. The outputs of this workshop contributed to developing GBV interventions for the next One Plan.

The JPGE will in any case only be able to contribute (contribution) to the achievement of the MDGs, no direct and singular correlation (attribution) can be drawn. Effects have to be observed in a longer timeline than just three years.

An example is the support of female Parliamentarians to address domestic violence and gender equality issues (with additional funds of the Spanish Cooperation in Vietnam). There was a regional workshop held in 2009 and a study tour to Spain organized for the target group in 2010. At the same time there was a decrease in the proportion of female Parliamentarians in Viet Nam between 2007 and 2010 from 27.3 to 24.4%.

**Table 10, MDG3, Promote gender equality and empower women - Development and Status of achievement of set Indicators for Target 4<sup>35</sup>**

Indicator	2005, in %	2010, in %	Source
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	47.7	47.9	GSO, MDG report August 2010 - MPI
Ratio of girls to boys in lower secondary education	47.9	48.5	GSO, MDG report August 2010 - MPI
Ratio of girls to boys in higher secondary education	48.9	52.6	GSO, MDG report August 2010 MPI
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	27.3 (2002-2007)	24.4 (2007-2011)	GSO, MDG report August 2010 MPI
<b>Indicators on GE and DV</b>	<b>2006, in %</b>	<b>2010, in %</b>	
Sex at birth ratio of girls to boy	100/109.8 (2006)	100/ 111,2	GSO, website (Primary Statistical data of VN socio-economic overview period 2006-2010); <a href="http://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=418&amp;ItemID=10879">http://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=418&amp;ItemID=10879</a>
Indicator on Domestic Violence			
Domestic violence experienced	21.2% <sup>36</sup> (2006)	34.0 <sup>37, 38</sup> (2010)  58.0 <sup>39</sup>	GSO, National Study on Domestic Violence against Women, GSO, 2010; <a href="http://www.gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=487&amp;ItemID=10693">http://www.gso.gov.vn/default_en.aspx?tabid=487&amp;ItemID=10693</a>

Source: MDG report 2010, Hanoi, Ministry of Planning and Investment; National Study on Domestic Violence against Women, GSO, 2010

The reported domestic violence rate has increased from 2006 to 2010, from 21% to 34%. When all three main types of partner violence – physical, sexual and emotional – are considered, more than half (58 percent, in 2010) of Vietnamese women report experiencing at least one type of domestic violence in their

<sup>35</sup> Target\_4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

<sup>36</sup> Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism: Results of Nationwide Survey on the Family in Viet Nam 2006: Key Findings, MOCST, Ha Noi Viet Nam.

<sup>37</sup> National Study on Domestic Violence against Women, GSO, 2010.

<sup>38</sup> Percentage referring to ever-married women report that they have suffered physical or sexual violence from their husbands at some time in their lives,

<sup>39</sup> National Study on Domestic Violence against Women, GSO, 2010.

lifetime. The sex birth ratio of girls to boys increased from 100/110 in 2006 to 100/111 in 2010. These increases should not be interpreted as a failure of the JPGE.

The JPGE has contributed to establish certain indicators and certain definitions of DV for the first time. The data time line on DV is not comparable, however, as they have not been collected following the same methodology. The better a system/State addresses GBV/DV, the better is the reporting of cases. It can be safely assumed that the increase partly stemmed from clarification of the definition of domestic violence and from better reporting.

The MoH has, for example included respective indicators in its action plan to combat gender selective abortion practices.

### **Delivering as One UN**

The JPGE contributes to the One Plan (2007 – 2011) Outcome 4 (The principles of accountability, transparency, participation and rule of law are integrated into Viet Nam's representative, administrative, judicial and legal systems), and output 4.11 (Gender Joint Programme: Improved capacity of relevant national and provincial authorities, institutions and other duty bearers to effectively implement the law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence).<sup>40</sup>

The MDG-F with its Joint Programmes has triggered an integrated approach of the UN agencies in the direction of delivering as One UN, not only in programming, but very importantly, also in some elements of implementation of the JP. This has contributed to the alignment of processes, for example one signature of one agreement encompassing 12 agencies.

Apart of the Study on Domestic Violence other research studies and toolkits such as on Gender Mainstreaming have become available for GoV officers who work in the respective field as guiding material.

The JPGE has also forced the UN agencies to work closer, and also closer with the national implementation partners in GoV that were leading the national execution part of the JP.

The implementation as a JP has made it clearer that the procedures among the UN agencies are (still) very different and not aligned yet, thus a kind of wrong assumption regarding the status of development of "One UN" when setting up the mechanism. Many of the further required alignment of processes and tools are not in the hands of the UNCT country offices, but have to be initiated and supported at UN HQ and respective Regional Office level.

Through the experience gained in the implementation the JPGE has paved ground for the joint programming and implementation of the next ONE PLAN (2012 - 2016) for Viet Nam. There is a development from a programme "stapled" of single agencies work to a joint work approach. This development is now "slightly engrained" in the working culture. At the same time it remains a challenge not to lose the momentum and backlash into a situation where each agency signs individual project documents and work in parallel with a NIP (also known as silo effect) for each of the GE related projects (or outputs and activities) under the One Plan that follow up on the JPGE, and of other projects.

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<sup>40</sup> Sustainability Plan of JPGE, 2011

### **3.3.3 Alignment of methodologies, financial instruments and processes**

On the positive side, some of the management tools introduced have contributed to alignment of the process, i.e. UNFPA as managing agent is channeling funds for NIP and is responsible for national implementation and coordinates and consolidates financial reporting under direct implementation from all 11 PUNOs. This has contributed to facilitation of financial management and related reporting requirements.

The introduction of Harmonized Programme and Project Guidelines (HPPMG)<sup>41</sup> in May 2010 has certainly contributed to the efficiency of Delivering as One, though not directly related to the outputs of the JPGE. For the time being, these guidelines enable UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA to simplify and harmonize their practices and harmonized guidelines, and make them more suitable to the GOV's current system.

## **3.4 Sustainability of Results**

### **3.4.1 Elements of sustainability of the JPGE**

- Documents produced in course of the JPGE have generally the ownership of the Government of Viet Nam (National Strategy on GE, National Programme on GE, Plans of Action for Ministries approved by Vice Minister). The degree of ownership in the POA, however, varies substantially. The PoA for the MOET has been signed only on 9 March.
- The evaluators observed in course of the evaluation a good and increased awareness on the subjects of GE and Domestic Violence observed. Increased awareness and even revision of earlier existing perceptions has been confirmed at the Ministry and GSO level
- It can be assumed that capacities at central level have been created, but its impact should be followed up in six to eight months from now. With the current information available, nothing definite can be stated on the quality and depth of capacity created at provincial and district level. The quality assurance and follow up mechanism vary significantly between training and capacity building related outputs. Even less can be stated about the capacity building results and how they will be sustained related to work at provincial and district level.
- The NGOs and VCCI with gender focus involved in the JPGE are also forming a sustainable element as they will continue to work for the same cause, i.e VCCI on female leadership.
- There is a financial commitment from the GoV to implement the National Strategy on Gender Equality with budget indicated in the National Programme on Gender Equality 2011-2015. The indicated allocation from the State budget is VND790 billion, or approximately 38 Mio USD.

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<sup>41</sup> The HPPMG is a key element of the One Set of Management Practices, one of the five pillars of the One UN Initiative that is piloted in Viet Nam, Its introduction coincided with the implementation of the JPGE in 2010

- The action plans have to receive an approval for their individual budgets before they can be implemented. Some of the action plans are already integrated into the work under One UN
- Employed staff at MOLISA, MOCST and GSO will continue. The Director and the Deputy Director of the PMU (MOLISA) will re-assume their work in the GED, with 13 staff members focusing on the implementation of the GE Strategy and action plan. The Director and vice director of CPMU (MOCST) will continue to hold a leadership role at the Family Department of MOCST. The Situation in GSO is similar. The Directors of the respective units that worked closely with the JPGE are committed to the cause being a declared interest of the GoV.
- The majority of PMU and the CPMU staff except the GSO CPMU staff are temporarily contracted staff and will end their contracts with end of the JPGE. They are now trained in the subject matter of GE and DV and will meet market demand (individual sustainability).
- At the end of the JPGE there are also a number of elements that could not be sustained<sup>42</sup>, as for example a commonly agreed Overall Capacity Development Plan, Introduction/Alignment of Training Assessment Methods), and/or outputs that have not been achieved. These should be completed or introduced without further delay under the next programme, in order not to lose momentum again. To establish baselines and utilize what has been achieved under the JPGE. Further scaling up of activities should be on hold until management and planning mechanisms as mentioned above are in place.
- The current One Plan (2012-2016) has been developed in consultation with the UN agencies, government agencies, and other key stakeholders. Subjects for further collaboration have been indicated by the respective NIPs involved in the JPGE in course of the discussions. It has been approved on 29 February 2012. There are two explicit outputs gender equality and gender-based violence.

### **3.4.2 Sustainability Strategy and Transition to One Plan 2012 - 2016**

Towards the end of JPGE implementation NIPs, CIPs, and UN partners discussed a phase out strategy and a sustainability plan for the programme. The attempt was to align sustainable elements for continuation and the omissions of the JPGE to perform frontloaded in the current One Plan.

On 29 February 2012 the One Plan for following five years has been approved. It shows continuation in some of the topics addressed in the JPGE and sets them forth, in particular in the UN Focus Area 2, i.e. Access to Quality Essential Services and Social Protection, the outcome 2.4, and within anticipated outputs 2.4.3 and 2.4.4. An overview on these two outputs, baselines and indicators is shown in table 10 below.

GBV issues will be addressed in the OP 2016-2016, but also under output 3.2.

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<sup>42</sup> For Joint Outcome 1 the Prodoc states that it "will ensure sustainability by working with SMA and key line ministries to develop a core of tools that can be replicated for future in workshops, publications and initiatives".

Under the JPGE remained some unfinished outputs or unimplemented earlier agreed recommendations, respectively, which are key for the successful implementation of One Plan 2012-2016, and at the same time useful lessons learned taken from the JPGE. These aspects relate to management tools as M&E systems based on a well designed M&E Results Frameworks, strategic planning for human capacity building and aligned methods for training assessment (all addressed in chapters 3.2 and 3.3., efficiency and effectiveness.

They coincide with following remaining challenges addressed in the One Plan' rationale for outputs 2.4.3 and 2.4.4, respectively:

- ...challenges remain in relation to the capacity of government institutions and mass organizations to implement, **monitor and evaluate these policy commitments.**
- Major challenges to policy implementation include **insufficient coordination**, financial resources, **human resource capacity and strategic monitoring of programme investments** to ensure desired results are achieved.
- The national action plan on prevention and control of domestic violence and **the monitoring and evaluation framework for the implementation of the Law will be implemented for the first time**
- there is not yet **a plan and a national multi-sectoral coordination mechanism**<sup>43</sup> for response and prevention activities of GBV in order to harmonize all relevant ministerial and related agencies, and data collection systems to include monitoring for GBV<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> MOCST's Multi-agency collaboration guideline for the implementation of the DVL was issued on 22 Dec 2011. It is one of the deliverables of the JPGE

<sup>44</sup> So far a comprehensive minimum intervention package for GBV victims is not available in Viet Nam.

**Table 11, Excerpt Results Matrix of One Plan 2012 - 2016**

<b>Outcome 4</b> , By 2016, national and sub-national institutions, in partnership with communities, more actively address inequalities through implementation and monitoring of laws, policies and programmes that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment, and an effective and sustainable response to HIV, reducing stigma and discrimination			
<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Output Indicators, Baselines, Targets, Means of Verification</b>	<b>UN Agencies</b>	<b>Key Partners (Line Management Ministries/ Agencies)</b>
<b>Output 2.4.3:</b> Gender-related legal and policy frameworks, programmes and practices strengthened to effectively address gender inequality and inequity, gender discrimination and gender-based violence	<p><b>Indicator 1:</b> Number of policy advice papers/policy options covering: (a) gender equality and inequity, and (b) gender-based violence prepared and submitted for consideration to GoV during 2012-2016 Baseline (2012): Not applicable at the start of the One Plan 2012-2016 Target (2016): At least 4 MoV: Policy advice papers on gender equality and GBV</p> <p><b>Indicator 2:</b> Availability of minimum comprehensive GBV package Baseline (2011): Not applicable at the start of the One Plan 2012-2016 Target (2016): One MoV: Reports of MOCST</p>	ILO (activity 1 and 3), IOM(activity 4), UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA (activity 3), UNICEF, UNODC, UNV, UN Women (activities 1 and 4), WHO	GOPFP, MOCST, MOH, MOLISA, OOG
<b>Output 2.4.4:</b> Multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms effectively guide comprehensive evidence-based planning, budgeting, M&E for a sustainable response to gender inequality, inequity, discrimination and gender-based violence	<p><b>Indicator 1:</b> Availability of a national planning and M&amp;E Framework on gender-based violence as part of the multi-sectoral coordination mechanism Baseline (2011): Not applicable at the start of the OP 2012-2016 Target (2016): One MoV: Planning and M&amp;E Framework document available</p> <p><b>Indicator 2:</b> Extent to which the gender action partnership (GAP) is fully operational as a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism on gender equality Baseline (2011): GAP established Target (2016): Annual joint GAP reports developed MoV: Meeting minutes, GAP joint reports</p>	UN Women (activity2) UNFPA (activity1 and 2) UNODC, UNV,	MPI, MOCST, MOLISA and NCFAW

**Table 11, Rationale for output 2.4.3 (excerpt)**

“Gender equality and women’s empowerment are prerequisites for achieving the MDGs and are fundamental to Viet Nam’s continued social and economic development. ***Key gender issues in Viet Nam include effectively combating gender-based violence, addressing the rapidly rising sex-ratio at birth, empowering Vietnamese women leaders, and enabling the creation of decent, secure employment opportunities for women; and have been identified as priority areas by the Government of Viet Nam.*** The first ever National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020 sets out specific targets for achieving gender equality in seven areas. The Gender Equality department of MOLISA and the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) are working on the implementation of this strategy and an associated National Programme on Gender Equality...”

The subjects indicated above as priority areas of the GoV can be matched with competence areas of UN agencies, as an example:

- Women and leadership – UNDP, UN Women
- Gender Based Violence – UNFPA, UN Women, UNODC, UNAIDS
- Increasing sex ratio at birth / Value girl children – UNFPA, UN Women
- Decent and secure employment opportunities for women / Informal economy – ILO, IOM

In course of the transition from JPGE to One Plan 2012-2016 the UN and the NIP teams shall not lose momentum in their good advancements in coordination they have achieved. A fall back into a “silo-like” implementation after a joint planning would be against the spirit of Delivering as One, could jeopardize efficiency gains at the GoV partners side (UNFPA as single MA with a coordinative function, streamlining the contracting and implementation process).

## 4 Conclusions and lessons learned

### 4.1 Conclusions

The JPGE is the first experience in Viet Nam setting up a complex Joint Programme mainstreaming Gender Equality and Domestic Violence in 17 NIPs and CIPs and 12 UN agencies. Several new and valid experiences have been gained in course of its implementation, for example by UNFPA as MA for a pass through mechanism for the funds allocated to the GoV, a financial management system composed of pass through and parallel funding mechanisms, and the piloting of HPPMG. The PMU hosted in Molisa and co-chaired between Molisa and UNPFA, overseeing the three CPMUs working on the three components of the JPGE are another innovation in the history of cooperation of GOV and UN.

The JPGE has created new forms of closer cooperation among the GoV agencies, among the UN agencies, and between both groups. New experiences in peer reviewing, knowledge sharing and jointly developing research pieces. The document of outstanding dimension is National Study on Domestic Violence against Women, an example for the joint work of UN Women and The World Bank is the Gender Assessment Report also compiled in course of the JPGE.

A challenging set up as the JPGE with many aspects of tested for the first time has obviously shortcomings as well. The time and quality of human resources involved for a JP of this dimension and its coordination requirements was underestimated. None of the UN partners but ILO had budgeted focal points representing their agency in the programme coordination mechanisms.

As a consequence most UN agencies working in the JPGE have involved Junior Professional Officers (JPOs), UN Volunteers (UNVs) or Interns. High staff turnover rate due to short term contracts has caused some discontinuity in implementation, resulting in reduced efficiency and effectiveness of implementation. This has caused also critical comments of some of the NIPs.

The lack of sufficient and all-encompassing M&E results framework and quality assurance mechanisms shared by all agencies involved is a shortcoming in the JPGE Management. This refers mainly to the lack of a capacity building strategy and respective shared evaluation tools applied on training provision by all implementing partners

The continuation of the partnership between GoV and UNCT in working on GE, DV and GBV is secured under the One Plan 2012-2016 approved in February 2012. This means a good opportunity to sustain achievements of the JPGE. If also those outputs of the JPGE that have been completed just prior to or at the closing ceremony 16 March 2012 will be utilized and applied under One Plan there is a fair chance to sustain several of the achievements of the JPGE under the One Plan and beyond. Care has however to be taken of a truly joint implementation of the One Plan and the joint approach of UN agencies working on the same outputs and outcomes.

The main strengths and weaknesses are summarized in the SWOT analysis in table 12 below.

**Table 12, SWOT Analysis of the Joint Programme**

Strengths	Weaknesses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First experience in Viet Nam setting up a complex Joint Programme mainstreaming GE and DV with 12 UN agencies and 17 NIPs and CIPs</li> <li>• Strong commitment and ownership of GoV NIP in the JPGE</li> <li>• UN as a strong partner in Viet Nam</li> <li>• Pilot country for Delivering as One</li> <li>• Pilot country for HPPMG</li> <li>• First time experience UNFPA as MA for pass through mechanism</li> <li>• JPGE aligned with GOV strive to operationalise the GE and DV laws</li> <li>• Participation of different gender stakeholders in GAP; cooperation in Gender Assessment Report</li> <li>• First study performed and data material on domestic violence in Viet Nam generated</li> <li>• New experiences in peer reviewing, knowledge sharing and jointly developing research pieces - for the UN agencies and the GoV - on the GE/DV theme</li> <li>• Participation of agencies (UNAIDS) with no or low budget share in the JPGE driven by the incentive of data access and exchange</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of a M&amp;E results framework used as a management instrument</li> <li>• No joint instrument to assessing training and capacity building throughout the participating UN and GoV agencies</li> <li>• Absence of approved and used M&amp;E systems for implementation of GEL and DVL</li> <li>• Human Resources - Staffing, turnover of staff</li> <li>• Underestimation of time and HR required for such a complex JP</li> <li>• Quality assurance throughout the process (also related to the instruments applied) not available</li> <li>• Lack of strategic planning, no capacity building plan</li> <li>• PMU and CPMUs will dismantle after project end and most of the staff will no longer work for the respective entities</li> <li>• Questions of secured budgets at some of the participating NIP to continue and roll out the work started under JPGE</li> </ul>	<b>Internal – attributes to the organisation</b>
Opportunities	Threats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue partnership between GoV and UNCT in working on GE, DV and GBV under the One Plan 2012-2016, Focus Area 2, mainly under Outputs 2.4.3 and 2.4.4</li> <li>• GAP as JPGE supported mechanism to foster partnership with CSOs and other donors will continue</li> <li>• UN Women in a coordinating role on gender</li> <li>• Revisit choice of partners for the next JP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of clarify on budgeting staff for JPs</li> <li>• Varying commitment of partners</li> <li>• Lack of Financial Sustainability of some concrete partners beyond JPGE end</li> <li>• Representation of Civil Society in the process was limited</li> <li>• Beyond completion of JPGE: Losing the momentum of joint work approach and processes - not only in programming but also in implementation - started under JPGE - under the One Plan agreement</li> </ul>	<b>External – attributes to the environment</b>
<b>Positive, potentially helpful</b>	<b>Negative, potentially harmful</b>	

## 4.2 Lessons learned

In course of the implementation of the JPGE there have been several good practices and lessons learned generated that can be possibly transferred to similar joint programmes.

### Design

- Application of parallel and pass through approach in the financial management. This has allowed the GoV to work just with one MA, facilitating the reporting and administrative requirements.
- Fixed funding, i.e. pass through mechanism with a MA in country brings a number of advantages for the Government.
- Sustainability considerations have to start already with the Project Document.
- Challenges of the implementation (including the joint implementation in itself) have been underestimated, as well as the resources required.
- Having staff paid from JP budget is difficult for participating UN agencies having a smaller budget share.
- Placing PMU and PCMUs in Governmental premises contributes to identification and ownership.

### Design, in particular related to the MDG-F JP modality

- triggers an integrated approach of the UN agencies in the direction of Delivering as One
- has forced the UN agencies to work closer together and to work closer together with the implementation partners at Governmental and NGO level
- has made it clearer that the procedures among the UN agencies are (still) very different and not aligned – wrong assumption regarding the status of development of “One UN” and Delivering as One
- has fed experience to the development of new Joint Programmes and One Plan 2012-2016 in Viet Nam.
- JP Modality and how it was interpreted in Viet Nam has generated a number of positive aspects for the GoV (see above under design).

### Effectiveness and Efficiency

- Management structures, roles of participating agencies and management tools as QA, coordination and M&E tools have to be set up frontloaded.
- Introducing management structures and tools first is of crucial importance, as “retrofitting” turns to be a cumbersome exercise that often fails.

- Introduction of the HPPMG as a key element of the One Set of Management Practices; not directly related to the JPGE, but a lesson learned for other UNCTs.
- Assess the capacities of participating agencies (UN and government) first to create a baseline and translate it into a capacity building plan/strategy. Well trained human resources that remain in the system do also mean an element of sustainability.
- coordination mechanisms as GAP and Gender PCG have improved contacts and partnerships with CSOs.
- Through communication in JPGE, GAP and Gender working group a bridge between national NGOs and the GOV offices has been built. It became possible for the NGOs involved in the JPGE to participate in some consultative meetings of the National Assembly.
- The JPGE has helped paving ground to new topics and areas, i.e. a first encompassing study on Domestic Violence, research works for example on trafficking of boys , Domestic Violence and Gender Equality at local level (rising public awareness and eliminating traditional discriminatory beliefs).
- Through the JPGE and its coordination and management mechanism, dialogue between MOLISA and MOCST got closer.
- JPGE has fostered closer relation between GOV and UN agencies
- Peer reviewing of major policy documents and research work between UN agencies are beneficial. Benefits are knowledge increase and support by peers for agencies with less resources or those less experienced in specific fields.
- PR and communication strategy of the JP has have not had much effect; a communication and advocacy strategy for the JPGE exists as a document produced by the coordinator and information about JP can be found on the website. The term Joint Programme is however not well known among the public. In particular at community level the stakeholders and public are more familiar with the name of the distinct implementing agencies.
- MDG-F Secretariat should assume a more proactive and pronounced role in the process in case certain prerequisites and targets cannot/have not been achieved, providing content support and advisory. Make transfer budget tranches conditional to achievement of implementation of programme milestones and the fact that they can be measured.

### **Sustainability**

- Continuation not only of the themes addressed in the JPGE, but also of the systems and mechanisms established as part of its joint implementation and set forth beyond JPGE's end are valuable elements of sustainability.

The Lessons Learned below have been compiled by the JPGE in their Lessons Learned document<sup>45</sup>. The evaluators agree with those lessons and thus include them into this chapter.

- Working together with many UN agencies and government institutions through the Joint Programme implementation is a good entry point to share updates of activities by implementing partners to avoid overlaps and create synergy. The message from the UN (on promotion of gender equality and elimination of gender-based violence) can also be clearer and stronger as messages from various UN agencies are collected and consolidated prior to sharing with the government
- Joint Programmes can facilitate collaboration with UN and government agencies beyond traditional partners (e.g. UNFPA & MOLISA, MOCST & UNODC, etc) to collect comprehensive views from different perspectives in planning and implementing project activities
- Broad coverage of issues in one Joint Programme may reduce effectiveness and efficiency due to significant time required for coordination and increased amount of risks to manage (e.g. delay of one activity causing delay of other activities, staff turnover, multiple reporting). Joint Programmes may increase effectiveness and efficiency by having narrower and clearer focus
- The amount of work required by Joint Programmes should not be underestimated and sufficient resources should be budgeted to secure staff to ensure smooth implementation of project without interruption caused by staff change. Currently, the Joint Programme on Gender Equality does not include staff cost under each PUNO to manage the implementation of activities as one of the aims of having Joint Programmes is to reduce the transaction/operational cost. However, Joint Programmes need to secure sufficient and appropriate human resources to implement activities and to ensure quality. Partially due to the fact that staff cost is not secured to recruit a staff to manage Joint Programme activities, existing staff of PUNO are assigned for JPGE work, and there is a high staff turnover rate as many of the assigned staff hold short-term contracts. Most of the UN staff in charge of the Joint Programme are Junior Professional Officers (JPOs), UN Volunteers (UNVs) or Interns. High staff turnover rate can cause discontinuity in implementation, resulting in reduced efficiency and effectiveness
- Regular exchange of information on progress and discussion on challenges and solutions is a minimum requirement for coordination (e.g. participation of JPGE colleagues in monthly JPGE taskforce meetings is important to ensure synergies and joint working arrangements)
- Complying with many reporting requirements (by the donor, the government, One UN, and each Participating UN Organization) consumes significant amount of time and creates burden for staff involved in the Joint Programme
- In terms of capacity building, when many activities are planned without follow-up support (e.g. one time training, without planned follow-up activities), there is a reduced chance of influencing long-term change, or sustainability. In designing a programme, or programme activities for capacity building, follow-up plan should be a part of an integral plan so that application of new

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<sup>45</sup> No date

knowledge and skills in practice can be supported after training, and there may be higher chance of sustainability.

## 5 Recommendations

### Recommendations for the transition of JPGE Gender Themes to One Plan

Recommendation 1
Before embarking on the implementation of One Plan to take stock and using the momentum gained with a joint approach in implementation of the JPGE. What has worked well, where are gaps left, or how can products only very recent or in draft made available (M&E frameworks, action plans) be sustained, which actions have not led to the expected results (outputs and contributions to outcomes)? Work proactively on closing these gaps or work on the sustainability, as inputs to the next five years of implementation on GE related subjects in the OP and beyond.
Issue/s to be addressed: How to generate a seamless transition and continuation between JPGE and One Plan on the Gender theme. This was already summarized in the sustainability plan, however, it shall be updated to the status at JPGE end.

Recommendation 2
Address the question if and how existing coordination mechanism established under JPGE shall be set forth, with human resources allocated, and how some new ones shall be established. Discuss the role of UN Women in their strengthened role as agency in coordination of the gender related outputs of the OP. Also address which can be the role of the gender expert in RCO within the OP.
Issue/s to be addressed: Potential risk of weakening or losing coordination and joint implementation mechanisms and information exchange established in JPGE by 30 March 2012. GAP is engrained as indicator 2 under 2.4.4 of One Plan as an indicator of sustainability. The Gender PCG with its working groups, co-chaired by MOLISA and UN Women, is planned to continue in the next OP.

Recommendation 3
Elaborate on joint working groups around one or several outputs of the One Plan to use synergies, combined knowledge and joint implementation mechanism. After introducing the GE and DV subjects broadly with 12 UN agencies under the JPGE, consider to form smaller joint UN teams of 3 to 5 agencies and respective GoV partners to address specific subjects with a few relevant UN agencies, for example ILO, IOM, UNFPA and UN Women contributing to the same output 2.4.3 of One Plan. Stand alone activities by singular UN agencies and a "silo-like" approach mean a backlash and shall be by all means avoided in particular for horizontal themes.
Issue/s to be addressed: Secure coherence of interventions between the UN agencies and utilization of synergies beyond lifetime of JPGE.

#### Recommendation 4

Continue to actively utilize the Gender Action Partnership (GAP), as a coordination and information forum to bring closer not only the UN agencies and the various stakeholders involved line Ministries, but continue to involve also other donors like WB and their initiatives and NGOs. The latter reported about difficulties to meet Ministries on their own directly. To secure alignment and complementarity of other donors as well, as well of the NGO who are one element of sustainability of the JPGE. Consider UN Women to heading the GAP from the donor side.

Issue/s to be addressed: Secure coherence and coordination between the different stakeholders supporting GE in Viet Nam.

#### Recommendation 5

Discuss how the clearly and repeatedly detected gap in accessible quality M&E expertise, as well as for the JPGE itself as also in the set up and operation of M&E systems for internal project management use as well as for macro systems at GoV side, for the monitoring of progress in implementation of laws. Indicators in One Plan need partly revision as well, as they are showing several weaknesses observed also in earlier documents. Consider to involve the M&E Expert and the UN M&E working group, or evaluation expertise at Regional Offices in Bangkok or HQ level.

Issue/s to be addressed: Low quality or none existence of M&E systems for project management as well as of QA systems.

#### Recommendation 6

Once the source(s) of M&E expertise are identified, give priority on the approval and operationalization of the M&E frameworks for MOLISA (GEL) and MOCST (DVL), thus to allow a sustainable and measurable implementation of the respective strategies and Action Plans within and beyond the period of One Plan. Base the work on the versions of the M&E frameworks already composed under the JPGE and avoid inefficient duplication of efforts. Both tasks will remain under ONE PLAN outputs areas 2.4.3 and 2.4.4.

Issue/s to be addressed: Monitoring of the strategies and action plans needs to be introduced frontloaded at the beginning of One Plan implementation.

#### Recommendation 7

Organize a M&E training workshop to bring all GoV and UN agency staff involved on the same page about RBM, PCM and M&E, ideally also on special indicators of gender-monitoring. Draft M&E plans for GEL and DVL or the results framework of One Plan can be used as case studies to work on.

Issue/s to be addressed: Low quality or none existence of M&E systems for project management as well as of QA systems.

#### Recommendation 8

Assume the comparison of existing training assessment methods, between the UNCT members and also between the GoV agencies involved (MOCST, MOLISA, MoH, MoET...), and to develop a joint training

assessment tool that can be used by all UN agencies. In this way results encompassing various inputs from various providers. Training quality starts already with the selection of participants. A small guideline with the major steps and templates should be compiled from the existing material. In course of the evaluation all standards between very good to not existent have been observed.

Issue/s to be addressed: Training efficiency of JPGE has been hampered by varying quality control mechanisms throughout the process at output and sometimes also at activity level, and of varying quality and existence of assessment tools for capacity building and training. Whereas some training have shown and documented good results, some courses rendered less than 10% success rate, measured in utilizing newly accumulated knowledge.

#### Recommendation 9

In cooperation with Ministries involved in 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 capacity building activities under One Plan, work at a joint capacity building strategy and implementation plan with set targets and on joint set of training and human resources development assessment methods. JPGE partners shall be in the position to provide good practices and Apply similar or same training assessment methods among all partners involved. Make a transparent training assessment a must for any training activity and to utilize it for a continuous improvement process. Do not provide any further capacity training under outputs 2.4.3. and 2.4.4 as long as no capacity building strategy and plan have been completed.

Issue/s to be addressed: In course of the JPGE some QA issues have been detected, i.e. provision of capacity building measures without a detailed plan and strategy of what kind of capacity is going to be built. Greater attention need to be paid to the sustainability of capacities developed.

#### Recommendation 10

After a period of six to eight months to assess the impact of the capacity building and training provided under JPGE; apply lessons learned as well for new overall capacity building measures foreseen under One Plan. Capacities at central level have been created, but the impact of training and knowledge transfer should be also verified at provincial and district level, possibly combined with initiatives in the same regions or via electronic media where possible. Follow up is required to verify if the training provided was useful for the task the respective trainee has to perform.

Issue/s to be addressed: Training assessments has been performed only rather patchy in course of the JPGE.

#### Recommendations 11:

Working towards a new corporate culture in line with One UN as future model, including required changes at HQ level.

Although HPPMG have been introduced in Viet Nam many processes are not harmonized yet. Review financial, management and reporting modalities among UN agencies and to explore how these modalities could be better aligned among UN agencies. This process has to be initiated at respective HQ level.

Issue/s to be addressed: Each UN agency has its own set of rules and procedures to implement programmes and projects. This becomes an obstacle when joint programmes want to work in an Applying the "One UN" concept necessitates the harmonization of these rules and procedures at HQ level. This will

optimize the implementation effectiveness and efficiency of future joint programmes or approaches, for UNCT members as well as for the partners in GoV .

#### Recommendation 12

GoV should use wherever possible existing staff for gender related aspects under the One Plan, as now GoV staff has been trained and with expected enhanced capacity being a sustainable elements in the structure who are knowledge carrier.

Issue/t to be addresses: Avoiding the establishment of parallel structures and involve in-house staff.

#### Recommendations 13

Appreciate the necessity to find suitable and, if required, highly qualified staff for potentially high value added work pieces, as well in policy advice work as for technical assistance. Should junior staff get involved s/he needs to be backed and supervised by an experience senior staff member.

Issue/s to be addressed: Staff turnover and not sufficient qualified junior staff were considered as hampering factors, and often coinciding with each other.

#### Recommendation 14

Establish a consultant roaster used and fed jointly by all agencies member of the UNCT; consider to put search profiles at [www.unjobs.org](http://www.unjobs.org) or the [www.devex.com](http://www.devex.com) or on [www.un.org.vn/](http://www.un.org.vn/) @ jobs or tenders, respectively. The entry to the consultant roaster can be combined with some online test to secure a certain quality.

Multi-agency activity planning shall anticipate potential bottlenecks in availability.

Issue/s to be addressed: Constant lack of suitable consultants was indicated by several stakeholders interviewed as one of the hampering factors of the JPGE. Availability of consultants had often determined the time of the work not the process necessities. Activities were planned in a way that has created bottlenecks in already scarce consultant profiles.

#### Recommendation 15

National and International consultants working under the same project shall be passing the same recruitment process, the selection process shall be performed by a committee composed by members of the respective governmental entities and representatives of the UNCT or the JP team.

Issue/s to be addressed: Parallel recruitment of national consultants by the GoV and international candidates by the UN agencies participating in the JP was perceived as time intensive and as a challenge to coordination.

#### Recommendation 16

"Heavy bureaucratic procedures" must be anticipated for future programme as an aspect to be duly taken

into account in the risk management as part of the programme proposal.

Issue/s to be addressed: "Heavy bureaucratic procedures" were indicated as constraint for achievement of certain results, or as constraint to introduce changes to the M&E results framework. It should be constraints that can be overcome as they are system immanent and were well known already when the JPGE was designed.

Please find further recommendations addressed to the MDG-F Secretariat in Annex 7 of Volume 2 of this evaluation report.

## ANNEXES (Volume 2)

- Annex 1 Terms of Reference,  
Including list of documents consulted
- Annex 2 Joint Programme (JP) Document
- Annex 3 M&E Results Framework as of MR II/2011  
included a commented version by evaluators
- Annex 4 Draft Work Plan
- Annex 5 Stakeholder Map
- Annex 6 One Plan (2012 – 2016)
- Annex 7 Recommendations for the MDG-F level of analysis
- Annex 8 Meetings with stakeholders by the Evaluation Team at the field phase
- Annex 9 Outcomes, outputs, targets....