

# **Vietnam**

## **Mid-Term Evaluation**

**Thematic window: Gender Equality and Women Empowerment**

**Programme Title: Vietnam Joint Programme on Gender Equality**

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## Prologue

The current mid-term evaluation report is part of the efforts being implemented by the Millennium Development Goal Secretariat (MDG-F), as part of its monitoring and evaluation strategy, to promote learning and to improve the quality of the 128 joint programs in 8 development thematic windows according to the basic evaluation criteria inherent to evaluation; relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

The aforementioned mid-term evaluations have been carried out amidst the backdrop of an institutional context that is both rich and varied, and where several UN organizations, working hand in hand with governmental agencies and civil society, cooperate in an attempt to achieve priority development objectives at the local, regional, and national levels. Thus the mid-term evaluations have been conducted in line with the principles outlined in the Evaluation network of the Development Assistant Committee (DAC) - as well as those of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). In this respect, the evaluation process included a reference group comprising the main stakeholders involved in the joint programme, who were active participants in decisions making during all stages of the evaluation; design, implementation, dissemination and improvement phase.

The analysis contained in the mid-term evaluation focuses on the joint program at its mid-term point of implementation- approximately 18 months after it was launched. Bearing in mind the limited time period for implementation of the programs (3 years at most), the mid-term evaluations have been devised to serve as short-term evaluation exercises. This has limited the scope and depth of the evaluation in comparison to a more standard evaluation exercise that would take much longer time and resources to be conducted. Yet it is clearly focusing on the utility and use of the evaluation as a learning tool to improve the joint programs and widely disseminating lessons learnt.

This exercise is both a first opportunity to constitute an independent 'snapshot' of progress made and the challenges posed by initiatives of this nature as regards the 3 objectives being pursued by the MDG-F; the change in living conditions for the various populations vis-à-vis the Millennium Development Goals, the improved quality in terms of assistance provided in line with the terms and conditions outlined by the Declaration of Paris as well as progress made regarding the reform of the United Nations system following the "Delivering as One" initiative.

As a direct result of such mid-term evaluation processes, plans aimed at improving each joint program have been drafted and as such, the recommendations contained in the report have now become specific initiatives, seeking to improve upon implementation of all joint programs evaluated, which are closely monitored by the MDG-F Secretariat.

Conscious of the individual and collective efforts deployed to successfully perform this mid-term evaluation, we would like to thank all partners involved and to dedicate this current document to all those who have contributed to the drafting of the same and who have helped it become a reality (members of the reference group, the teams comprising the governmental agencies, the joint program team, consultants, beneficiaries, local authorities, the team from the Secretariat as well as a wide range of institutions and individuals from the public and private sectors). Once again, our heartfelt thanks.

The analysis and recommendations of this evaluation report do not necessarily reflect the views of the MDG-F Secretariat.

# **Mid-Term Evaluation of the Joint Programme on Gender Equality in Viet Nam**

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## Acronyms

CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPMU	Component Project Management Units
DVL	Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control
GAP	Gender Action Partnership
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GEL	Law on Gender Equality
GSO	General Statistics Office
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IP	Implementing Partners
JP	Joint programme
JPGE	Joint Programme on Gender Equality
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDGF	Millennium Development Goal Fund
MOCST	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
NCFAW	National Committee for the Advancement of Women
NSC	National Steering Committee
PCG	Programme Coordination Group
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PUNO	Participating UN Organisation
RBM	Results based management
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SMA	State Management Agency
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
VWU	Viet Nam Women's Union

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank the Government of Viet Nam, in particular MOLISA, and the UNCT for facilitating the evaluation process. Special thanks go to Aya Matsuura, the Joint Programme Gender Equality Specialist, for her substantive input, excellent organisational skills, in particular providing background documents and organizing interviews with the three main government departments, 12 UN counterparts and other stakeholders in a timely manner. Thanks also to Huynh Lan Phuong for insights, and interpretation and translation services.

Tony Beck, JPGE evaluator

## **Executive Summary**

### **1. Background and methodology**

The three-year UN/Government of Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality (JPGE), funded by the Millennium Development Goal Fund (MDGF) with a grant of US\$4.5 million, started in March 2009. In August 2010, JPGE reached its half-way point, and under MDGF funding was required to undergo a Mid-term evaluation (MTE).

The JPGE MTE was carried out between September and December 2010, with a mission to Viet Nam by the evaluator from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> October. The main users of the evaluation findings and recommendations were identified as the Component Project Management Units, the Programme Management Unit, the National Steering Committee, Participating United Nations Organisations (PUNOs), and the MDGF Secretariat. Main data sources were document review and interviews.

### **2. Overview of the JPGE**

The JPGE aims to provide strategic, coordinated and multi-sectoral capacity building and technical assistance for national and provincial duty bearers for implementation of relevant national legislation. It has three joint outcomes:

- 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.
- Enhanced partnerships and coordination around gender equality within and outside government.
- Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality.

### **3. Relevance and coherence**

A majority of evaluation respondents thought that the JPGE is making satisfactory progress in terms of completion of activities, but has not achieved intended levels of coherence, and remains a loosely connected set of activities.

The JPGE is highly relevant given Viet Nam's development challenges vis-à-vis gender equality. The three main focus areas of the JPGE – capacity development, networking and partnership, and support to data systems – are recognized strategies for promoting gender equality, and are central to the UN's mandate and comparative advantage. Some evaluation respondents raised concerns about the geographical focus of the JPGE, and noted that future work should extend to the Provincial level and below, while at the same time ensuring that an enabling environment is maintained at the national level.

According to most evaluation respondents, the JPGE has produced significantly more coordinated programming on gender equality. Most respondents noted that the UN had achieved a higher level of communication and coordination, and had clarified key messages, and that there was also enhanced communication between the UN and government. While this increased coherence within the UN is to be commended, it should be noted that this was not a primary objective of the JPGE, which is capacity development of government and other counterparts. And much remains to be done for the JPGE to meet its planned objectives in terms of coordination and coherence.

Almost all evaluation respondents noted that attempting to include 12 UN agencies, three main government partners, 16 Co-implementing Partners, and three joint outcomes, was over-ambitious. Involvement of some of the specialized UN agencies in the JPGE was due to concern that they be included in the One UN process. There was therefore a trade-off in the JPGE between coherence and inclusion, with the balance veering towards the latter. Nevertheless, the JPGE could have worked better as a joint programme if there had been a stronger strategic planning process, development of a shared vision for the JPGE, and greater UN senior manager leadership in strategic planning and coordination.

The JPGE lacks an adequate overarching conceptual framework to link its three main joint outcomes, and there is no shared vision for the joint programme. This is reflected in respondent perspectives on coherence. A majority of respondents (about 70 per cent) thought that the JPGE more closely resembled a loosely connected set of activities than a joint programme. A minority of respondents (about 25 per cent) thought that the JPGE was adequate as a joint programme, and the remaining 5 per cent thought that the JPGE was highly coherent. Part of the reason for the discrepancy in views is that there were different perspectives on what a joint programme should achieve.

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. This has also hindered coherence.

The third joint outcome - "Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality" - is the most problematic in terms of coherence. The missing element is a plan for the UN to support capacity development of the GSO so that it can adequately mainstream gender. This has meant for example that the JPGE has not provided input into the National Strategy on Statistics, which will be the overarching framework for national statistical work for the next five years.

#### **4. Efficiency**

The JPGE is well managed, with meetings, reporting and other management functions taking place on a regular basis and as required by the MDG-F. The evaluation also found that there had been under-investment in management and coordination functions, which constrained the JPGE's ability to provide support to the government.

Several respondents suggested that there needed to be greater clarity concerning the roles of the PMU and CPMUs. Government staffing appeared to be adequate for implementation of individual outcomes, but despite increased coordination between government departments, challenges remain in this area. The lack of a designated coordinator for the JPGE as a whole has been problematic. The JPGE has relied from the UN side to a large extent on junior staff, particularly interns and UN Volunteers in the Specialized agencies, among whom there is relatively high turnover, meaning a lack of consistency in dealings with the government. Some UN Heads of Agencies could have been more engaged.

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. All government departments and UN agencies (with two exceptions) noted that finding appropriate national and international consultants in a timely fashion was a major constraint to JPGE implementation. This has led to delays, work of a lower technical quality than anticipated, and significant problems for most stakeholders. Evaluation respondents noted that agencies were reliant on the same small number of consultants, so that there has been competition rather than coordination in this regard.

A number of respondents noted that the time-scale was likely to be too short to meet many of the JPGE objectives. The JPGE was subject to various start-up delays, including hiring of the international gender specialist. Decision-making involving a large number of partners, and staff turnover in the UN, have added to the delays. Even if a full three years is available, changes to the national culture related to gender equality, as well as full implementation of national legislation with far reaching consequences, is likely to take at least 10-15 years.

Respondents thought that there had been reduced transaction costs in relation to management. In particular the government receives and reports on funds from one source. But at the activity level government still has to deal with individual agencies.

## **5. Effectiveness**

A majority of JPGE activities are likely to be successfully implemented. Almost all training activities are being carried out as planned, four out of five study tours have taken place with the last tour planned, data gathering systems are being made more gender-sensitive, and reports, monitoring systems and other documents are being produced. Some of the output targets which are meaningful measures will be met on time, and some of these activities are likely to provide medium-term benefits to the government. A number of respondents pointed to the study on domestic violence, the first such country-wide study, as a major contribution of the JPGE. These are significant achievements and have been produced as a result of the work of committed government, UN, and other counterpart staff. However the evaluation concludes that as yet the JPGE does not add up to something greater than a series of activities, and that these activities will not jointly feed into meaningful and measurable results at the outcome level.

A capacity assessment of government counterparts was carried out in late 2009, but the capacity assessment report was not completed until September 2010, almost half way through the JPGE. Ideally this capacity assessment would have been completed before the start of the JPGE, and with 1.5 years remaining it will be challenging to implement its recommendations. Of the JPGE activities, about 25 per cent involve training. The capacity assessment noted that most training in 2009 has not been successful. Assessment of training results could be strengthened.

The weak JPGE logical framework makes it challenging to assess whether longer term results are being or are likely to be achieved. National Implementing Partners rated the likelihood of JPGE Joint Outcomes being achieved as good (4 out of 5 on a five point scale). The evaluation has a more negative perspective. Progress towards Joint Outcome 1 on capacity development is considered unsatisfactory, mainly because of the late development of a capacity development plan. Progress towards Joint Outcome 2 on coordination and partnerships is considered partly satisfactory, in that there is increased participation and coordination, but the target of effective coordination of the gender mainstreaming function by empowered government partners is unlikely to be met by the

end of the JPGE or within the foreseeable future. Progress towards Joint Outcome 3 on data is also partly satisfactory. There are a number of activities that the JPGE has undertaken which will lead to a strengthened data base, but there is no strategy for systematic and coordinated capacity development for the GSO.

## **6. Sustainability and ownership**

A number of respondents noted that follow-up to JPGE activities needs to be strengthened. There were concerns as to what would be left in terms of improved capacities after the JPGE was complete.

The evaluation found that while there was considerable government involvement with the JPGE, government ownership and leadership could be stronger. The reasons for this stem partly from the genesis of the JPGE; changes in government partners meant that MOLISA and GSO noted that they received the JPGE document after it was more or less completed and could not comment on the overall framework. Respondents noted that under the MDG-F window time was too short for adequate consultation.

One of the planned benefits of the JPGE in terms of coherence, and one area that would support sustainability, was involvement of donors and other partners. Donors and INGOs working on gender equality currently had only partial knowledge of the JPGE, although in the past it appears that they were regularly informed through the Gender Action Partnership, and greater efforts could be made again towards their inclusion.

## **7. Recommendations<sup>1</sup>**

### **Relevance and coherence**

Organize a planning workshop for all JPGE partners to:

- Clarify expectations of what the JPGE can achieve, using Gadjia's typology (Figure 1) as a basis for discussion. Promote development of a shared vision for the JPGE.
- Redefine the JPGE's outcome level targets, based on a capacity development results chain (see Figure 3 in Section 8).
- To promote coherence, discuss moving some JPGE activities to one or two 'pilot' Provinces so as to develop a plan for implementing the GEL and DVL, including required resources to develop adequate capacities for this. See Section 9 for further details.
- Set up Results Groups for each of the three Joint Outcomes to clarify the objectives of each outcome and how they fit with the overall objectives of the JPGE. Seek information from the MDG-F as to the functioning of these groups in other countries.

### **Efficiency**

UN Heads of Agencies should have a dedicated meeting on the JPGE every three months to assess progress and results.

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<sup>1</sup> In Section 9 of the main report recommendations are set out along side main challenges, responsibility for follow up, and time scale and resources required.

Consider options for streamlining hiring practices, for example pre-qualifying consultants, or working through one or more consulting company with expertise in capacity development which can bring in relevant consultants.

Amend the international staff member's job description to reflect her actual responsibilities, which include supporting the PMU in coordination.

During the planning workshop (see above), clarify the roles of PMU and CPMU.

### **Effectiveness**

Prioritize the recommendations of the capacity assessment report, develop a capacity development plan, and determine resources and timelines for recommendations. Ensure that the focus of the capacity assessment plan is at the institutional level. Training and study tours should make up one part of this capacity development plan.

Draw on expertise on capacity development from the UN Regional Office in Bangkok if required.

Develop a common methodology for the UNCT for assessment of training, based on the commonly used four point typology developed by Kirkpatrick. <http://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/>

Review methods for assessing results of training in government institutions and determine if they are applicable to JPGE training activities.

### **Sustainability**

Determine how capacities to be left with government and other counterparts at the end of the JPGE will be sustained, and develop a handover plan for all activities to the government.

Meet regularly (e.g. every 4-5 months) with donors and other international stakeholders such as the World Bank and Peace and Development, to discuss progress of the JPGE and potential interest in building on JP activities.

## **1. Introduction: Background and objectives**

In December 2006, the UNDP and the Government of Spain signed a partnership agreement for €528 million with the aim of contributing to progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other development goals through the United Nations System. The MDG Fund (MDGF) operates through UN teams in country, attempting to promote increased coherence and effectiveness in development interventions through collaboration among UN agencies. The Fund uses a joint programme mode of intervention and has approved 128 joint programmes in 50 countries. These reflect eight thematic windows that contribute towards the MDGs.

One of the thematic windows is on gender equality and women's empowerment. The programmes in this window seek to contribute to the achievement of Goal 3 of the MDGs through interventions tackling dimensions of the gender equality window and the empowerment of women, such as: capacity, access to resources and opportunities, and security. The thematic window is comprised of 13 joint programmes aiming to include gender across the board in the design and implementation of public policies.

The three-year UN/Government of Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality (JPGE) funded by the MDGF started in March 2009 with a grant of US\$4.5 million, with the overall goal of improving capacity of relevant national and provincial authorities, institutions and other duty bearers to effectively implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control. Further details on the JPGE can be found in Section 2. In August 2010, the JPGE reached the half-way point of its implementation, and under MDGF funding was required to undergo a Mid-term evaluation (MTE).

### **1.1 Objectives of the evaluation**

MDGF MTEs are intended to be formative in nature and seek improved implementation of the programmes during their second phase of implementation. They also seek to generate knowledge, identify best practices and lessons learned for transfer to other programmes. This MTE had the following objectives:

- To review the programme's design, quality, and internal coherence; its relevance vis-à-vis the One UN Plan, National Development Strategies, and the MDGs; to analyse the degree of national ownership as defined by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action; and to assess the degree of enhanced relationships and coherence of programming among UN and government agencies.
- To assess the efficiency of the JPGE's management model in planning, coordinating, managing and executing resources allocated for its implementation, through an analysis of its procedures and institutional mechanisms. This includes a review of the factors for success and limitations in inter-agency tasks within the One UN framework.
- To identify the programme's effectiveness, its contribution to the objectives of the Gender and Women Empowerment thematic window, and the MDGs.

## 2. Methodology

The MTE was carried out by an external evaluator, Dr. Tony Beck. Dr. Beck was selected as evaluator from a pre-qualified list of MDGF evaluators. Assistance and translation was provided by Huynh Lan Phuong. The evaluation followed the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation<sup>2</sup>, as specified by the MDGF. The evaluator emphasized the norm of independence, and the standard of confidentiality, during all interviews.

MDGF MTEs are intended to be relatively short exercises with a formative focus on mid-term correction. MDGF emphasizes interaction with joint programme stakeholders, a participatory approach, and a light touch. The JPGE MTE was carried out between September and December 2010, with a mission to Viet Nam by the evaluator from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> October. In advance of the mission the evaluator reviewed relevant documentation, including MDG and JPGE background material (see Annex 4 and footnotes), and prepared an Inception Report - see Annex 1 - which set out the evaluation purpose, methodology, guiding questions, and timeline. This was circulated to all stakeholders so that the evaluation focus could be agreed ahead of time. A copy of the evaluation questionnaire can be found in Annex 2. Given the JPGE's focus on capacity development, the evaluation questionnaire used the six-point typology on capacity developed for the JPGE sponsored capacity assessment. Given the evaluation objectives set out in Section 1.1, the evaluation questions were organized in five areas: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. This report is organized in similar fashion. Standard OECD-DAC definitions were used for these criteria, and evaluation questions related to each of these criteria can be found in Annex 2.<sup>3</sup> As coherence was the most challenging aspect of the JPGE, more time is spent analysing this area in this report.

The evaluator employed a utilization-focused approach<sup>4</sup> (Patton 2010) with a focus on intended use by intended users. The main users of the evaluation findings and recommendations were identified early on as the Component Project Management Units (CPMUs), the Programme Management Unit, the National Steering Committee, Participating UN Organisations (PUNOs), and the MDGF Secretariat. Recommendations in Section 9 of this evaluation report are directed to specific stakeholders.

During the evaluation mission the evaluator met and interviewed 63 people, about half in individual meetings and half in group meetings, including stakeholders from the three main government and 12 participating UN agencies. A list of interviewees can be found in Annex 3. Care was taken to interview experts from research institutes, donors and civil society, who are not directly involved with the JPGE, so as to ensure an independent perspective. The evaluation process was iterative. Three feedback/debriefing sessions were held during the evaluation mission: at the end of the first week for all JPGE stakeholders, at which 16 stakeholders participated; with the Heads of UN agencies during the second week of the evaluation (as leadership was an evaluation theme that arose early on), including the Resident Coordinator, and attended by all UN agencies; and a final debrief at the end of the mission, attended by 30 participants. The purpose of holding three feedback sessions was to discuss interim

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc\\_cat\\_source\\_id=4](http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf> Coherence was added for the purpose of this evaluation as it is not one of the five standard OECD-DAC criteria.

<sup>4</sup> Patton, M. (2010) *Utilization Focused Evaluation*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Sage Publications.

findings and recommendations in detail during the evaluation process so as to ensure a utilization focus, and allow sufficient input by stakeholders. A draft evaluation report was produced which was translated into Viet Nameese and provided to all key stakeholders for comment, including the MDG-F Secretariat. Each comment was responded to by the evaluator.

The capacity development elements of the JPGE were assessed using the six-point typology in the JPGE capacity assessment report, supplemented by typologies used by UNFPA and IDRC.<sup>5</sup> The coherence of the JPGE was assessed using Gadja's work on evaluating networks, set out in Figure 1 (and see Annex 1)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> IDRC and UNFPA have used fairly similar typologies in their capacity development evaluation. IDRC differentiates between the capacities that an organization needs to carry out its day-to-day activities (operational capacities) and the capacities needed for the organization to learn and change in response to changing circumstances (adaptive capacities); IDRC (2003) *Evaluating Capacity Development*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre; UNFPA defines six areas of capacity development which overlap to a certain extent with those of the JPGE Capacity Assessment: creating a common vision; developing human resources; developing systems; iterative planning, monitoring and evaluation of programme interventions (within counterparts); establishing partnerships and inter- and intra-organizational coordination; and mobilizing resources for sustainability. UNFPA (2003) *UNFPA's Support to National Capacity Development: Achievements and Challenges*. New York: UNFPA Evaluation Report 20.

<sup>6</sup> Gadja, R. (2004) 'Utilizing Collaboration Theory to Evaluate Strategic Alliances.' *American Journal of Evaluation* 25 (1).

Level of Integration	Purpose	Strategies and Tasks	Leadership and Decision-Making	Interpersonal and Communication
Networking 1	Create a web of communication Identify and create a base of support Explore interests	Loose or no structure Flexible, roles not-defined Few if any defined tasks	Non-hierarchical Flexible Minimal or no group decision making	Very little interpersonal conflict Communication among all members infrequent or absent
Cooperating 2	Work together to ensure tasks are done Leverage or raise money Identify mutual needs, but maintain separate identities	Member links are advisory Minimal structure Some strategies and tasks identified	Non-hierarchical, decisions tend to be low stakes Facilitative leaders, usually voluntary Several people form "go-to" hub	Some degree of personal commitment and investment Minimal interpersonal conflict Communication among members clear, but may be informal
Partnering 3	Share resources to address common issues Organizations remain autonomous but support something new To reach mutual goals together	Strategies and tasks are developed and maintained Central body of people Central body of people have specific tasks	Autonomous leadership Alliance members share equally in the decision making Decision making mechanism are in place	Some interpersonal conflict Communication system and formal information channels developed Evidence of problem solving and productivity
Merging 4	Merge resources to create or support something new Extract money from existing systems/members Commitment for a long period of time to achieve short and long-term outcomes	Formal structure to support strategies and tasks is apparent Specific and complex strategies and tasks identified Committees and sub-committees formed High	Strong, visible leadership Sharing and delegation of roles and responsibilities Leadership capitalizes upon diversity and organizational strengths	High degree of commitment and investment Possibility of interpersonal conflict high Communication is clear, frequent and prioritized degree of problem solving and productivity
Unifying 5	Unification or acquisition to form a single structure Relinquishment of autonomy to support surviving organization	Highly formal, legally complex Permanent re-organization of strategies and tasks	Central, typically hierarchical leadership Leadership capitalizes upon diversity and organizational strengths	Possibility of interpersonal conflict very high Communication is clear, frequent, prioritized, formal and informal

**Figure 1: Typology for evaluating networks. Source Gadja (2004)**

Data was triangulated between different sources to ensure validity of results, in particular between JPGE documentation, perspectives of stakeholders working on the JPGE, and

those independent of the JPGE. As requested in the MDGF Guidelines (2009)<sup>7</sup>, and detailed in the MTE Inception Report, this is an evaluation of the JPGE as a whole and not the 47 activities carried out by government departments and agencies; each agency's activities were reviewed, but only concerning their contributions to the JPGE, and not in relation to their individual results.

Although not part of the original Terms of Reference for the evaluation, the evaluator was requested to make recommendations for the next One Plan, and these are included as relevant.

### **Limitations**

The brief evaluation time period didn't allow for a full utilization focus, e.g. development of the evaluation methodology with users. Interactive feedback sessions were used instead. No field visits were made as most of the JPGE work to date has been in Hanoi. A number of evaluation meetings required translation; any limitations related to this were ameliorated by providing the translator with material in advance, and using agreed terms such as the translation of agreed UN results based management (RBM) terms into Viet Nameese.

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<sup>7</sup> P. 14 "The analysis of the joint programme is not intended to be a collection of activities and outputs from different actors but rather a complete picture in and of itself, which is more than the sum of its parts."

### 3. Description of interventions carried out

#### 3.1 National context and the role of the UN

Viet Nam is signatory to human rights conventions which guarantee equality between men and women, and has attempted to mainstream gender equality considerations into its Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy, and Socio-Economic Development Plan. State and Communist Party networks have developed a national and local machinery of women's groups made up of the Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCAW) which reports directly to the Prime Minister on issues of women's equality, and operates in partnership with the Viet Nam Women's Union, a mass organization with representation at national and local levels. Vietnam ranks higher in the Gender and Development Index for 2009 as opposed to the Human Development Index, 94<sup>th</sup> for the former as opposed to 116<sup>th</sup> for the latter.<sup>8</sup> The 2010 Viet Nam MDG report notes that there is no gender gap in education access, there is near equality in involvement in economic activity, and the National Assembly ranks 31<sup>st</sup> in the world for the percentage of female members.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, gender inequalities remain. Traditional stereotypes about women and men persist, and there is a lack of sex- and age-disaggregated data. A number of key assessments of GE in Vietnam in addition to the concluding comments from the CEDAW Committee<sup>10</sup> highlight that despite a sound policy and legal framework, institutional capacities in the area of reporting, gender analysis, data collection and monitoring remain limited and unsystematic. The Viet Nam MDG report for 2010 notes that: "Domestic violence, mainly against women and children, remains a serious problem in Viet Nam, particularly in rural, mountainous and remote areas. Among domestic violence cases, 90 percent of the victims are women; the remainder being mostly children and old people. In a survey conducted in 2006 on women and children in Viet Nam, as many as 64 percent of women aged 15-49 said they resigned themselves to violent behaviour from their husbands."

In 2006 the National Assembly adopted the Law on Gender Equality (GEL), creating the legal framework for the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women. The Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (DVL) was issued in 2007 with a view to ensuring gender equality within the family. The Government is implementing a Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (2006 – 2010). However, several respondents noted that gender equality is a relatively new concept in Viet Nam; that there is no dedicated gender equality or women's ministry suggests that the government requires sustained support to deal with the gender inequalities that exist.

Viet Nam is a One UN Pilot country – piloting attempts to make the UN a more coherent organisation by combining expertise so that the sum of individual UN agency support is greater than its parts. This is an important area in relation to the JPGE; on the one hand greater coherence might be expected of a joint programme in a pilot country, but on the other the One UN Pilot threw up challenges to jointness which are discussed below. The UNCT has been relatively proactive on gender equality issues. A Gender Advisor is in place, a gender audit was completed in 2008, and was followed by a gender

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<sup>8</sup> UNDP (2009) *Human Development Report 2009*. New York: UNDP.

<sup>9</sup> Government of Viet Nam (2010) *Millennium Development Goals 2010. National Report*. Hanoi, Ministry of Planning and Investment.

<sup>10</sup> CEDAW concluding comments on the fifth and sixth periodic reports, CEDAW/C/VNM/5-6.

mainstreaming strategy.<sup>11</sup> In 2011 the UNCT anticipates that it will implement the UNCT Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women. There is also an active gender Programme Coordination Group (PCG) (see below). The One UN evaluation in Viet Nam noted that: “Cross cutting initiatives, especially gender, have benefited from a higher profile under the reforms.”<sup>12</sup>

The Government of Viet Nam has promoted the aid effectiveness agenda, including the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action<sup>13</sup>, which tailors with the UN Delivering as One programme of which the Viet Nam pilot is one part. Aid effectiveness elements including national ownership, alignment and harmonisation of aid are relevant for the JPGE which also intends to promote these areas.

### 3.2 Overview of the JPGE

The JPGE aims to provide: “strategic, coordinated and multi-sectoral capacity building and technical assistance to build the capacity of national and provincial duty bearers so that they can 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.”<sup>14</sup> It has three main joint outcomes:

- Improved skills, knowledge and practices for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the GEL and the DVL.
- Enhanced partnerships and coordination around gender equality within and outside of government.
- Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality.

These outcomes are supported by 10 outputs and 47 activities implemented by 12 Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) and three National Implementing Partners (NIPs) and 16 Co-Implementing Partners (CIPs), representing government agencies, mass organizations, academic institutions, civil society and non-governmental organizations. The theory of change of the JPGE is given in Figure 1. The JPGE has three component projects which are Gender Equality, Domestic Violence, and Data, and each component has a lead government agency referred to as the Component Project Management Unit (CPMU). CPMUs for Gender Equality, Domestic Violence, and Data are the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MOCST), and the General Statistics Office (GSO) respectively. Each CPMU has a Director, Vice Director, one full-time project coordinator, and one accountant/secretary. Representatives of the CPMUs constitute the Programme Management Unit (PMU), the main national institution managing implementation of JPGE. There is a full-time JPGE Gender Specialist based in the offices of PMU and CPMU to provide technical support. Three UN agencies also lead coordination with PUNOs in each component project. The lead agencies are UNIFEM for component 1 on

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<sup>11</sup> UN Gender Programme Coordination Group (2008) *Gender Audit Report: United Nations Viet Nam*. Mimeo; UN Viet Nam (2009) *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2009-2011*. Mimeo.

<sup>12</sup> Poate, D. et al (2010) *Country Led Evaluation: Delivering as One. UN pilot initiative in Viet Nam*. Mimeo.

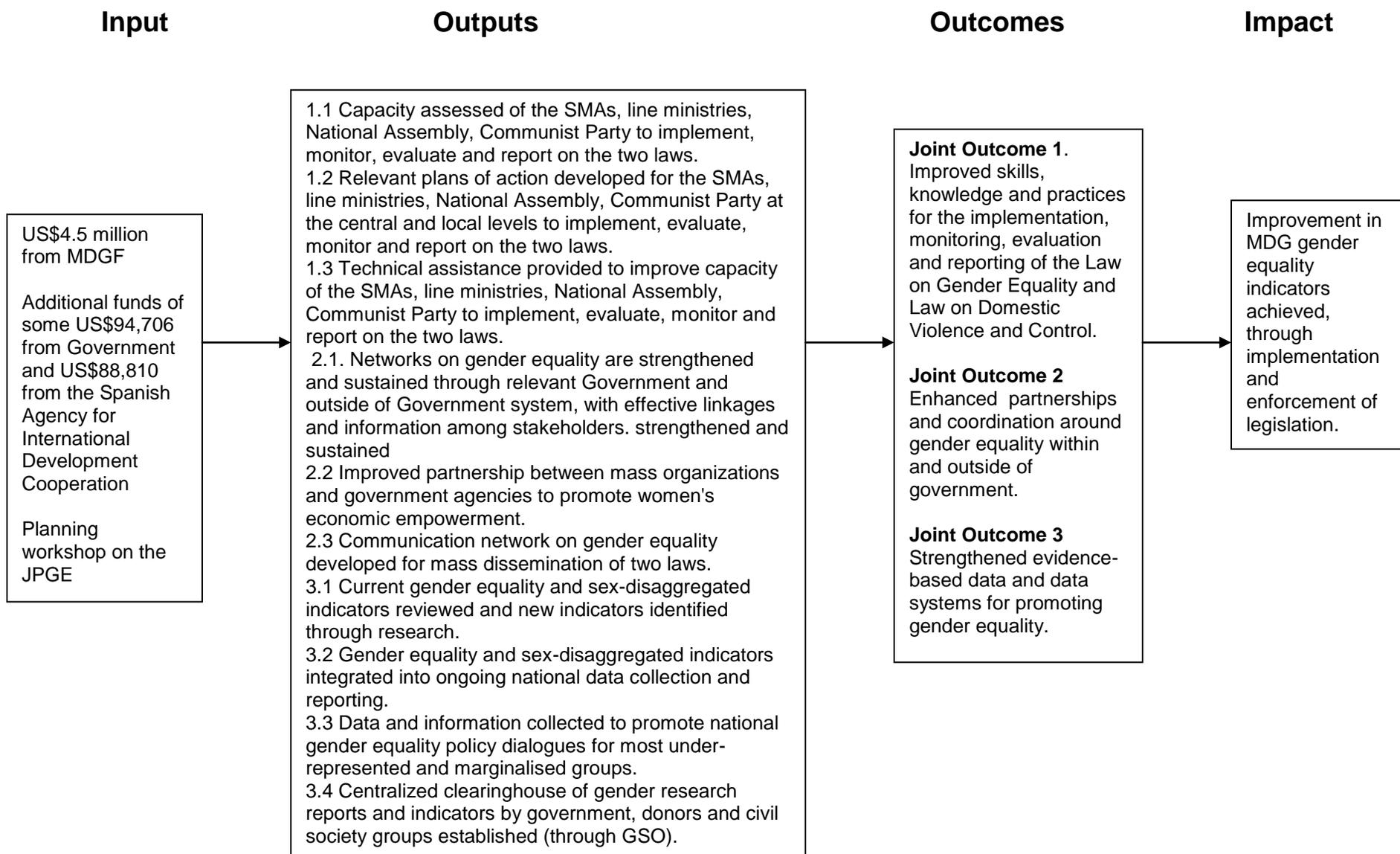
<sup>13</sup> [http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_3236398\\_35401554\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1,00.html)

<sup>14</sup> JPGE Project document, p. 6.

Gender Equality, UNFPA for component 2 on Domestic Violence, and UNDP for component 3 on Data.

The main JPGE beneficiaries are planned to be duty bearers at central and local levels. In addition, JPGE works with mass organizations, academic institutions, NGOs, and other stakeholders working on gender issues. To date, most of the activities have taken place at the central level in Hanoi, partly to prepare tools and methodologies to be applied at local levels, although some work has been carried out by some agencies with duty-bearers outside Hanoi.

**Figure 2: Theory of change in the Viet Nam Joint Programme on Gender Equality**



## **4. Relevance and coherence<sup>15</sup>**

### **4.1 Background on relevance and coherence**

The evaluation concludes that the JPGE is highly relevant given Viet Nam's development challenges vis-à-vis gender equality, its current status in relation to the MDGs, and international commitments such as CEDAW and ILO Conventions 100 and 111. The three main focus areas of the JPGE – capacity development, networking and partnership, and support to data collection – are recognized strategies for promoting gender equality, and are central to the UN's mandate and comparative advantage. As individual focus areas all stakeholders agreed that the three JPGE joint outcomes are relevant for both the government and UN. The JPGE is also relevant to the UN's mandate as defined in Viet Nam as it follows the UN's movement "upstream" in focussing more on policy, advocacy, and capacity development. Some evaluation respondents including from within government raised concerns about the relevance of the geographical focus of the JPGE, and noted that future work should be at both the central and the Provincial levels and below.

However, a majority of evaluation respondents questioned whether the three joint outcomes form a coherent joint programme. Reviewing the genesis of the JPGE will help understand the challenges it has faced in achieving coherence.

The formulation of the JPGE illustrates the challenges involved with developing a coherent joint programme: determining the number of partners to be involved, and balancing the need for inclusiveness and coherence; negotiating between government and the UN as to focus and scope; and ensuring that the joint programme is developed in a way that is flexible and allows iterations based on changing context.

The first draft of the JPGE was formulated in a two-day planning workshop in February 2007, co-organized by the UN and the NCAW, with 89 participants and participation from the government, UN and other stakeholders. The workshop discussed modalities of joint programmes, national ownership, and three joint outcomes – capacity building, enhanced data collection, and attitudinal and behaviour change, the third being replaced by partnerships and coordination in the final JPGE. However, two of the three main government partners, MOCST and GSO, were not represented at the workshop, in the case of MOCST because it was assumed that MOLISA would be the SMA, which later led to lack of ownership on the part of some stakeholders within these ministries. The main focus of the planning workshop was the GEL, as domestic violence legislation was still in progress. Earlier discussions had focussed on a joint programme on gender based violence, which was expanded to include the GEL.

Almost all evaluation respondents noted that attempting to include 12 UN agencies, three main government partners and 16 implementing agencies, and three joint outcomes, was over-ambitious. In comparison, the average number of UN agencies involved in MDG-F joint programmes is six.<sup>16</sup> There are two main reasons for the involvement of this large number of UN agencies in the JPGE. Firstly, the JPGE deals with a cross-cutting theme on which all UN agencies have a mandate to work, unlike, for example trade. It could be anticipated that more UN agencies would want to be involved

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<sup>15</sup> Relevance is defined as: "The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies."

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.mdgfund.org/>

in a gender equality joint programme than in some other areas. Secondly, the JPGE was developed at an important moment for the UNCT, as the UN Delivering as One reforms were taking shape and there was experimentation with modes of joint programming. As stakeholders noted, the involvement of some of the specialized UN agencies in the JPGE was due to concern that they be included in the One UN process. There was therefore a trade-off in the JPGE between coherence and inclusion, with the balance veering towards the latter. As one respondent noted, the development of the JPGE was “more opportunity than strategy”. Several evaluation respondents noted that if the JPGE had been developed in 2010, it would not include so many partner agencies.

The Viet Nam Delivering as One evaluation notes the overall challenges between focus and inclusiveness faced by the UNCT in relation to planning processes, which also impacted on the development of the JPGE:

In early 2006 the UNCT agreed on a ‘two track’ approach, in which agencies ready to join the unified structure could do so immediately, while the specialized agencies would opt in or out depending on their specific circumstances and within their own time frames. But after the first One Plan (OP1) was developed and before implementation could start, five of the other non-Participating Agencies intervened, arguing that they had been excluded from discussions and decisions, and that the arrangements failed adequately to support national development objectives. Accordingly the approach was revised for all 14 agencies, but with a drastic reduction in scope. .... tackling the whole 14 [UN agencies], albeit at a reduced scope, arguably provides a more challenging test for sustainable reform.<sup>17</sup>

A further constraint to JPGE coherence is the organisation of government counterparts working on the JPGE. A number of respondents, including from within government, noted that coordination between ministries could be strengthened, so this was an additional challenge that needed to be overcome. Despite the large number of partners already involved, evaluation respondents also expressed the view that civil society could be more fully involved.

#### **4.2 The JPGE results framework**

The JPGE results framework demonstrates many of the problems facing UN agencies attempting to implement results based management (RBM)<sup>18</sup>, and this has hindered coherence and the development of an overarching conceptual framework for the JPGE. The JPGE stated joint outcomes are perhaps closer to outputs, under harmonized UN RBM terminology.<sup>19</sup> Outcomes should represent changes in development conditions and/or performance, but the JPGE joint outcomes refer rather to “improved skills”, “enhanced partnerships” and “strengthened evidence based systems”, rather than the results of these initiatives. For joint outcome 2, the outcomes and outputs are at a similar level. The targets set for the joint outcomes are not specific enough about kinds of capacities that will be developed, for example the target for Joint Outcome 1 is: “MOLISA and some key line ministries have implementation strategies for GE and DV laws”. Presumably the intention was that the JPGE would support the capacity of

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<sup>17</sup> Poate, D. et al (2010) *Country Led Evaluation: Delivering as One. UN pilot initiative in Viet Nam. Executive Summary*. Mimeo, p. 1

<sup>18</sup> E.g. UNDP (2007) *Evaluation of Results Based Management at UNDP*. New York: Evaluation Office.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=224>

counterparts to create the implementation strategies; however, this would be at the output level. This target is somewhat vague, says nothing about the quality of implementation strategies, or about the capacity that has been developed, and how it is being used. At the outcome level one would expect a target such as “capacity built used to implement strategies.” Similarly for Joint Outcome 2, the target relates to coordination rather than capacity. For Joint Outcome 3, one of the three targets – “Policy is based on evidence produced by research” – is an outcome, but does not relate to capacity development.

Outputs in the results framework are not clearly connected to outcomes, breaking the programme logic. The results framework includes 27 targets and 22 indicators; including both adds an element of complexity which is perhaps unnecessary. A number of targets are somewhat vague (e.g. “SMA (MOLISA and MOCST) organizational effectiveness improved” is typical), and do not always relate to the indicators included, making it unclear which should be measured. As noted, these challenges with RBM are typical of UN strategic planning documents and results frameworks.

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 (see the recommendations, Section 9).

#### **4.3 Results on coherence**

According to most evaluation respondents, the JPGE has produced significantly more coordinated programming on gender equality. Respondents noted that the UN had achieved a higher level of communication and coordination, and had clarified key messages, and that there was also enhanced communication between the UN and government. This is corroborated by the One UN evaluation, which found<sup>20</sup>:

The Joint Programme on Gender Equality (JPGE) under the Gender PCG provides a vivid example of how the One UN Initiative has worked. Although the JPGE was developed prior to the establishment of the Gender PCG, under the gender theme group, it was nevertheless a product of reform, with a commitment to working jointly, together with a strong gender group. ....

A number of clear benefits have arisen as a result of the JPGE and Gender PCG:

- The wide UN membership of the joint programme has stimulated much greater engagement in e.g. development of manuals in support of the two laws.
- Despite some structural difficulties arising because the two laws are the responsibility of two different ministries, good communications have been

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<sup>20</sup> Poate, D. et al (2010) *Country Led Evaluation: Delivering as One. UN pilot initiative in Viet Nam*. Mimeo, p. xvi.

achieved and stakeholders in both government and the UN claim better contacts and communication between the ministries.

It is a practical example of new programming which is explicitly designed to support policy and is also supported by the UN Gender Mainstreaming Strategy that is implemented through the Gender PCG.

While this increased coherence within the UN is to be commended, it should be noted that this was not a primary objective of the JPGE, which is capacity development of government and other counterparts.

In terms of overall coherence of the JPGE as a strategic planning initiative, evaluation respondents expressed differing views. A majority of respondents (about 70 per cent) thought that the JPGE more closely resembled a loosely connected set of activities than a joint programme. A minority of respondents (about 25 per cent) thought that the JPGE was adequate as a joint programme, and the remaining 5 per cent thought that the JPGE was highly coherent and met all of the requirements of a joint programme.

Given the problems that the unwieldy formulation process of the JPGE was likely to create in terms of coherence and coordination, and Gadja's typology (Figure 1 above), it could have been anticipated that strong leadership would have been required to ensure that the JPGE became greater than the sum of its parts. In the view of this evaluation UNCT leadership for the JPGE could have been stronger, and this would likely have produced greater coherence. This is also an issue of screening; as one respondent noted, she would not have approved the project document because of the likely challenges it would face.

Gadja's framework illustrates that the more coherence there is in joint work, the greater the challenges in terms of inter-personal relations, communication, problem solving, and leadership. Currently the JPGE is at the "cooperating" level in Gadja's typology, with some elements of "partnering". However, much of the rhetoric around Delivering as One relates to partnering and merging, which creates expectations of what can be achieved in a joint programme. Part of the reason for the discrepancy in views of evaluation respondents concerning the coherence of the joint programme is that there is no shared vision of what a joint programme should look like and what it should achieve. Those who were positive about coherence focused on the number of coordination meetings, and improved communication at various levels. Those who were negative about coherence noted that the JPGE activities are pieces of a puzzle that don't fit together. As different stakeholders had different concepts, it was unsurprising that they had different views on its coherence.

The JPGE planning workshop and project document do not define what a joint programme is, but rather focus on key areas of work and modes of implementation. The UNDG defines a joint programme as: "a set of activities contained in a common work plan and related budget, involving two or more UN organizations and (sub) national partners."<sup>21</sup> In its guidance, MDGF gives the following definition: "MDG-F joint programmes are nationally owned programmes that promote pro-poor public policies,

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<sup>21</sup> [http://www.undg.org/archive\\_docs/5827-Joint\\_Programme\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.undg.org/archive_docs/5827-Joint_Programme_Overview.pdf)

strengthen national and local capacities and involve and benefit local populations.”<sup>22</sup> Neither definition provides guidance to those seeking to determine what constitutes a specific joint programme; under these definitions a joint programme could be a set of activities joined by a work-plan (networking and cooperating in Gadjja’s typology), or it could be a tightly organized set of outcomes jointly implemented by government and a number of UN agencies (partnering and merging in Gadjja’s typology).

Overall, the evaluation found that the JPGE lacks an adequate conceptual framework to make connections between the three joint outcomes, and while there has been increased communication and coordination, remains a set of too loosely connected activities. The first Joint Outcome on capacity development clearly fits with the overall objective of the JPGE, but the second and third joint outcome are only loosely connected. This was partly caused by weak strategic planning processes. Lessons were not learnt about strategic planning from the Joint Programme review commissioned by the UNCT, which noted: “In developing a joint programme, assess at a strategic level with the partners where there was a strong rationale for joint planning and implementation between the partners and where the demand is for better coordination and information sharing.”<sup>23</sup>

The concerns expressed about the JPGE being a loosely connected set of activities may also stem as much from under-resourcing as poor design. There are many initiatives that function well with 30 or more stakeholders, but the transaction costs of doing joint work in this circumstance must be factored in to planning and management. This did not happen in the JPGE - more details on this are provided in the next section.

Evaluation respondents gave mixed responses as to the potential for redesigning the JPGE given that it is at the half way stage. Stakeholders suggested holding a planning workshop to take stock of the findings of this evaluation and to determine the levels of coherence that could be achieved in the second half of the JPGE – see the recommendations for more details.

Of the three joint outcomes, the third - “Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality.” - is the most problematic in terms of coherence. During the planning workshop for the JPGE, the outcome was intended to include the following: “strengthen national authority on gender equality, including providing it with clear tasks and responsibilities especially relating to data collection, management and analysis and monitoring.” However, this focus was not retained in the JPGE, and while the Joint Outcome in the JPGE consists of a series of important activities to mainstream gender into national data collection systems, these activities are part of ongoing work by specialized agencies and may well have taken place whether the JPGE was funded or not. The missing element for this Joint Outcome is a plan for the UN to support capacity development of the GSO so that it can adequately mainstream gender. This has meant for example that the JPGE has not provided input into the National Strategy on Statistics, which will be the overarching framework for national statistical work for the next five years, and the draft of which, reviewed for this evaluation, includes no attention to gender equality or disaggregation of data by sex.

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<sup>22</sup> MDG-F (2009) *Implementation Guidelines for MDG Achievement Fund Joint Programmes*. Mimeo.

<sup>23</sup> Balogun, P. (2008) “Review of Joint Programmes in One UN Pilot: Viet Nam.” Mimeo, p. 8.

## 5. Efficiency<sup>24</sup>

The evaluation found that the JPGE is being well managed, with meetings, reporting and other management functions taking place on a regular basis and as required by the MDG-F. The evaluation also found that there had been under-investment in management and coordination functions of the JPGE, which constrained its ability to provide support to the government.

### 5.1 Coordination mechanisms

Overall direction for joint programmes in Viet Nam is provided by the National Steering Committee (NSC) which is co-chaired by the Government (either the Ministry of Planning and Investment, or MOLISA). The NSC meets about once every 4-5 months, and covers the JPGE and two other joint programmes. As meetings are relatively short – less than two hours – there is opportunity only for a brief review of progress. The next management level, the PMU, meets about every three months, and is chaired by the Deputy Director of the JPGE PMU and the Assistant Representative of UNFPA, and focuses more at the level of workplans. There appears to be no mechanism for ongoing strategic planning, which is needed in a complex joint programme like the JPGE.

The MDGF monitoring mission of October 2009 raised concerns about delineation of responsibilities within the JPGE: “One particularity in the country is that generally PMUs are created at the participating ministries for the management of the JP, and these units in turn liaise with the UN Programme team – usually linked to a relevant PCG. As such specific MDG-F Programme offices are not created at the government’s premises – avoiding the creation of parallel structures. While these PMUs seem favorable in promoting government leadership of the programme, having multiple PMUs for one JP may be challenging for the overall coordination.” This appears to be the case, and several respondents suggested there needed to be greater clarity concerning the roles of the PMU and CPMUs.

### 5.2 Staffing levels and senior management input

As noted, individual outcomes of the JPGE are supported by CPMUs within relevant government ministries with a Director, Vice Director, one full-time project coordinator, and one accountant/secretary. This appeared to be adequate for implementation of individual outcomes. Two staff are contracted by UNFPA to support overall implementation, one international, and one National Professional Officer. The international staff member was contracted as a gender specialist, but has in effect been spending about half of her time providing direct technical support to each of the CPMUs, and the other half of her time supporting the PMU with coordination of the whole programme; while the international staff member has been effective in this coordination role, this may have led to less focus on technical aspects. It would therefore be advisable to amend the international staff member’s job description for the remainder of the JPGE, in order to reflect her actual responsibilities. The work of the international and national staff members, the latter supporting administrative coordination, is much appreciated.

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<sup>24</sup> “A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.”

As noted by the Viet Nam Gender Audit in 2008, capacity for gender mainstreaming in the UNCT needs strengthening<sup>25</sup>: “A significant proportion of staff do not see gender mainstreaming as their job or as a priority. As most staff and management are not accountable for gender equality outcomes or gender mainstreaming processes, support for and implementation of gender mainstreaming is largely dependent on personal interest and commitment....A third of UN staff say they lack capacity to mainstream gender in their work and almost half would like more training.” The JPGE capacity assessment has noted a similar lack of expertise in government.<sup>26</sup> Implementing the JPGE would have been challenging even with a government and UNCT which were strong on gender mainstreaming. Given the known challenges of gender mainstreaming, the JPGE partners would have needed to be particularly proactive to ensure that the JPGE achieved its potential. And given the complex design of the JPGE and the large number of partners, the lack of a designated coordinator has been problematic. At this stage of the programme it would not be practical to hire a coordinator, even if funds were available, and setting up Results Groups (see recommendations) may be a partial substitute.

Related to this, the JPGE has relied from the UN side to a large extent on junior staff, particularly interns and UN Volunteers, among whom there is relatively high turnover, meaning a lack of consistency in dealings with the government. Several of these junior staff noted that they work on the JPGE through their time being covered by other projects, or on their own time, and they are not necessarily gender specialists. Transaction costs of coordination for individual staff are similar whatever sum UN or counterparts agencies have received from the JPGE, which works against agencies that receive smaller amounts of funding. Not all Heads of Agencies have been sufficiently engaged, either because of other priorities, or because they considered that the JPGE was being effectively run. Most gender mainstreaming evaluations point to similar structural issues, in particular lack of adequate senior management leadership, limited resources, lack of understanding of what gender mainstreaming means, and over-reliance on junior staff. This was probably compounded by inter-agency work tending to have a low priority because of the ongoing demands of individual agency programming.<sup>27</sup> Senior managers do not necessarily need to spend large amounts of time on joint programmes; rather, they need to input strategically, for example when results frameworks are being finalized and key staff are being hired.

This issue was also predicted in the UNCT review of Joint Programmes published in 2008<sup>28</sup>: “Finally, it should be noted that the efficiency of design, and possibly implementation, is affected by the rapid turn over of team members. This implies a significant overhead as new team members gain an understanding of the project/programme and also affects the team dynamic, given that many issues and

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<sup>25</sup> UN Gender Programme Coordination Group (2008) *Gender Audit Report. United Nations Vietnam*. Mimeo., p.1.

<sup>26</sup> UNIFEM (2010) “Capacity Assessment of the State Management Agencies and Other Concerned Agencies to Implement the Gender Equality Law and the Domestic Violence Law.” Mimeo.

<sup>27</sup> Beck, T. (2010) “Next steps for gender mainstreaming in the UN system.” Presentation to the UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, New York, February.

<sup>28</sup> Balogun, P. (2008) “Review of Joint Programmes in One UN Pilot: Viet Nam.” Mimeo, p. 8.

decisions are not well documented or are not easily accessible. ....UN agencies need to ensure that new staff are adequately briefed and supported when entering into a joint programme.” This is a well-known issue in the UN and the implications of allocation of responsibility for the JPGE to junior staff could have been predicted.

### **5.3 National and international consultants**

Input from consultants was planned from the origins of the JPGE, as noted in the project document (pp 10-11):

Through the various activities designed to achieve these outputs, national gender experts will serve as consultants to the process (receiving technical assistance from an international consultant and other UN agencies involved in the JP). The goal is that through this process, the JP will build on current national gender expertise to strengthen the network of researchers and trainers who will later be available to provide additional technical assistance, programme evaluations, trainings and mid-term reviews, etc. for the JP and national partners.

Data provided by JPGE show that some US\$682,000 of the JPGE budget was allocated for national consultants, and some US\$438,000 for international consultants. Planned allocations to consultants would therefore make up about 25 per cent of the JPGE budget.

All government departments and UN agencies (with two exceptions) noted that finding appropriate national and international consultants in a timely fashion was a major constraint to implementing the JPGE. This has led to delays, work of a lower technical quality than anticipated, and significant problems for most stakeholders. Agencies were reliant on the same small number of consultants, so that there has been competition rather than coordination in this regard. A roster of consultants was set up, but this has not alleviated the problem. This has also meant that each agency has had to issue and monitor individual contracts; junior UN staff may not be able to adequately supervise consultants. This is a move away from simplification and harmonisation, and the goal, noted in the project document (p. 11) of UN agencies providing technical assistance as One UN.

This relates to the design of the JPGE, which has ambitious objectives but appears to have been developed without adequate attention to the capacities needed to meet these objectives. Capacity development and technical assistance on implementing legislation are specialized areas, and the JPGE should have been designed taking into consideration available expertise nationally and internationally. This was also highlighted in the UNCT review of joint programmes<sup>29</sup>: “The Kon Tum JP [joint programme] strongly indicates the need to carefully assess during design the capacity of partners to deliver. Note that in the Gender JP, the intention is to assess capacity once implementation starts, which increases the risk that a major design assumption will be invalidated.”

Assessing efficiency involves determining if funds could have been used in a more effective manner. In the case of the JPGE, some 35 per cent of funds to date have been used on training and study tours.<sup>30</sup> While these are key capacity development activities,

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<sup>29</sup> Balogun, P. (2008) “Review of Joint Programmes in One UN Pilot: Viet Nam.” Mimeo, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> This is an estimate only as the budget codes for the JPGE do not allow a breakdown of types of programming.

they would have been more efficient if carried out as part of an overall capacity development strategy. Delays to completion of the capacity assessment have meant that many capacity development activities have taken place with no overall strategy being in place. For example, the five study tours which make up part of the JPGE are anticipated to cost some US\$300,000, which makes up about 7 per cent of the total budget. Several respondents raised concerns about the study tours, in particular choice of participants and location of the tours. Respondents noted that the JPGE had not selected the most appropriate geographical location for the tours in some cases, and that participants were changed at a late stage in planning. Study tours can be effective capacity development activities if part of an overall plan, and if there is adequate follow-up, which respondents noted was not always the case. For an equivalent sum, six students could have completed MAs in international universities. Would this have been a better way to build national capacity? It is not possible to conclude on this because of the lack of an overall capacity development plan. This issue is dealt with in more detail in Sections 6 and 9.

#### **5.4 Is the time-scale of the JPGE appropriate?**

A number of respondents noted that the three-year time-scale was likely to be too short to meet many of the objectives of the JPGE. The JPGE was subject to various start-up delays, including hiring of the international gender specialist, who began work in August 2009, about five months after the start of the JPGE. Decision-making involving a large number of partners, and staff turnover in the UN, have added to the delays. Even if a full three years was available, changes to the national culture related to gender equality, as well as full implementation of national legislation with far reaching consequences, is likely to take at least 10-15 years. This makes development of a plan for hand-over of activities to the government key, as discussed in Section 7.

#### **5.5 Transaction costs**

One of the rationales for joint programmes is that they should reduce the transaction costs of government through dealing with One rather than several UNs. Respondents thought that there had been reduced transaction costs in relation to management. In particular the government receives and reports on funds from one source. But at the project level government still has to deal with individual agencies.

## 6. Effectiveness<sup>31</sup>

### 6.1 Overview of results to date

A majority of the activities planned under the JPGE are likely to be successfully implemented. The following are the main achievements of the JPGE. Overall the JPGE has led to significantly greater coordination on gender equality programming, within the UNCT, to a certain extent between government partners, and between government partners and the UN. It has also increased good will towards the UN and reaffirmed the importance of the UN as a development partner. The JPGE is well managed, with meetings, reporting and other management functions taking place on a regular basis and as required by the MDG-F. The main achievements by Joint Outcome, mainly in relation to activities, are as follows:

- Improved skills, knowledge and practices for the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the Law on Gender Equality and Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control

Under this Joint Outcome, a study tour focusing on domestic violence prevention and control in Spain by women parliamentarians has been completed. Two studies, one on the gender responsiveness of employment and labour legislations, and a second on study reviewing implementation progress of International Labour Conventions related to gender ratified by Viet Nam, have been completed. Various training materials (on GEL, DVL, and Gender Mainstreaming in Promoting Child Rights) are being finalized for use in training, and gender mainstreaming training materials in the areas of information and communication, and education are being developed. A number of training activities have been carried out, for example in data collection and analysis. Capacity development including training on women's rights and life skills to a grassroots network of DV victims has started. A framework to implement and monitor domestic violence prevention and control is also being finalized, and frameworks are also being developed for the monitoring and evaluation of the GEL and DVL.

- Enhanced partnerships and coordination around gender equality within and outside of government

Regular meetings of the Gender Action Partnership have taken place. Support has been provided to three NGO networks to carry out grassroots studies and to share findings with policy makers to provide inputs to the development of the National Strategy on Gender Equality. A network of media practitioners who can report on gender equality is being set up.

- Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality

A number of UN agencies are involved in ongoing training and studies around data collection and analysis. Studies are being carried out or have been completed on ethnic minority women's access to legal services, the situation of sex workers, and gender and remittances. A number of respondents pointed to the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women in Viet Nam, the first such nation wide study, as a significant step forward. Results of this study have been shared with selected stakeholders to collect initial feedback. A study tour to Malaysia was completed in March 2010 to learn about the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) for further use in Viet Nam. The

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<sup>31</sup> "The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance."

compilation of data on children and gender equality for reporting on national and international commitments is also being finalized.

In terms of how far outcomes are being or are likely to be achieved, as noted in Section 4.2 it is difficult to assess this unless the JPGE results framework is revised to make the targets/indicators more meaningful measures of results. Unless this happens, it will be challenging to determine the overall results of the JPGE at the higher end of the results chain. This evaluation makes a preliminary attempt to assess progress towards achieving the three JPGE Joint Outcomes, based partly on interviews with government partners, as they were the only parties who had an systematic overview of the programme apart from the international staff member, as well as document review and the perspective of other participants. NIPs were asked to rate progress towards achievement of outcomes on a scale of 0-5 with “1” being poor and “5” excellent.<sup>32</sup> All NIPs rated progress as “good”, or 4 out of 5 on the rating scale.

However, the evaluator’s perspective is less positive than those of programme participants. The evaluation considers the following for the three JPGE Joint Outcomes:

- 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.

The evaluation considers that progress towards this Joint Outcome is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because of the status of the capacity assessment report which sets out a plan of action for capacity development. As discussed in more detail in Section 6.2, the capacity assessment report was not completed until half way through the JPGE, and there is no plan in place for its recommendations to be put into place. There are also no appropriate measures as yet developed to determine the extent to which skills, knowledge and practices have improved. The target for this Joint Outcome is: “MOLISA and some key line ministries have implementation strategies for GE and DV laws”, which is not an outcome-related target. While there have been a number of capacity development activities such as study tours and production of training materials, these do not add up to a coordinated approach towards capacity development which would be expected in a joint programme. It is also possible that any capacity developed may be lost because of a lack of follow-up.

- Enhanced partnerships and coordination around gender equality within and outside government.

The evaluation considers that overall progress towards this Joint Outcome as stated is partly satisfactory. There has been enhanced partnership and coordination around gender equality, to a large extent as a result of the JPGE. There have been regular meetings of the Gender Action Partnership, a quadripartite policy forum on gender equality, as well as greater coordination within and between government and the UN, which are significant achievements. NGO respondents did however note the need for increased participation from their part. The target for this Joint Outcome is: “Effective coordination of gender mainstreaming function by empowered SMAs (MOLISA and MOCST)”. The evaluation considers that progress towards this target is unsatisfactory; it

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<sup>32</sup> See Annex 2 for details. The scale was 0 –not applicable; 1 – poor; 2 – unsatisfactory; 3. – satisfactory; 4 – good; 5 – excellent

is unlikely that there will be effective coordination of the government gender mainstreaming function by MOLISA and MOCST by the end of the JPGE, or within the foreseeable future.

- Strengthened evidence-based data and data systems for promoting gender equality.

The evaluation considers that overall progress towards the first part of this Joint Outcome satisfactory. There are a number of activities that the JPGE has undertaken which will lead to a strengthened data base, for example: implementing a number of studies on ethnic minority women's access to legal services, situation of sex workers, and gender and remittances; the National Study on Domestic Violence against Women already referred to in this report; and the compilation of data on children and gender equality for reporting on national and international commitments. Progress towards strengthened data systems is considered by the evaluation to be unsatisfactory. As discussed in more detail in Section 4.3, there is no strategy for capacity development for the GSO, so while some training is taking place, this is not being done in a coordinated fashion, missing opportunities for a joint approach to capacity development and strengthening data systems..

## **6.2 Capacity development**

A capacity assessment of the UN in gender mainstreaming was carried out prior to the JPGE. A capacity assessment of government counterparts was carried out in late 2009, but because of delays relating to the consultants employed, the capacity assessment report <sup>33</sup> was not completed until September 2010, almost half way through the JPGE. Ideally this capacity assessment would have been completed before the start of the JPGE.

The capacity assessment is a rigorous piece of work examining capacity at the enabling environment and institutional level for national and provincial institutions, and usefully defines six types of capacity: institutional arrangements; implementation; leadership; knowledge; monitoring, evaluation and reporting; and accountability. It notes that (p. 20): "Staff working at the commune and ward levels were consistently identified as most in need of new knowledge and skills on DV [domestic violence]. This applies to staff in all government agencies and mass organisations." A key factor in successful training identified by evaluation respondents is an enabling environment from the central level for staff to use the knowledge gained. It makes the important point that capacity development needs to extend beyond training, and also notes that most training to date (end 2009) had not been successful (p. 20):

The overwhelming response to the lack of knowledge and skills to implement the two laws is the need for additional training. However, the results of the CA [capacity assessment] indicate that much training already conducted has been irrelevant, too broad, not practical enough, and not long enough to have an impact on daily work and the implementation of the two laws. .... Such results on training

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<sup>33</sup> UNIFEM (2010) "Capacity Assessment of the State Management Agencies and Other Concerned Agencies to Implement the Gender Equality Law and the Domestic Violence Law." Mimeo.

are not uncommon, if it is not carried out as part of an overall organisational strategy of learning and change.

Of the JPGE activities, about 25 per cent directly involve training. It was not possible within the timeframe of this evaluation to assess individual training exercises, but the comment of the capacity assessment that most training has not been successful is important to take into account.<sup>34</sup> Training activities do not appear to be adequately coordinated geographically. Training needs to be specific to context, and take into account the need for an enabling environment for duty bearers at the commune and ward levels to act on training received, in particular support from the central level. Assessment of training results appears to be somewhat ad hoc. Several UN agencies carry out pre- and post- training tests, but assessment of results seemed to be limited to this. Interviews with the Viet Nam Women's Union (which is not a Co-Implementing Partner in the JPGE) suggested that the government has a more sophisticated method for assessing the results of its training. Also, some training was being carried out independently of Viet Nameese training institutions.

The main issue with capacity development under the JPGE is that there is no overall capacity development plan, no delineation of what kinds of capacity is to be developed, no clear targets for capacity development, and no adequate means of measuring how well capacity has been developed and is likely to lead to longer-term results. The capacity assessment report under the JPGE does set a "baseline", but does not include measures of capacity development that can be tracked over time. Rather it includes an extensive list of recommendations.

The comment about the need for a capacity development plan is also perhaps true for the UNCT as a whole, and the UN needs to have a better sense in relation to the One Plan as to how well it has done on capacity development overall, and what has and has not worked.

Lack of a capacity development plan stems from the problems with strategic planning noted in the last section, the lack of a coordinator, as well as reliance on junior staff and limited input from Heads of Agencies. Interns, UNVs and Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) could not be expected to develop capacity development plans without direction from their managers. The result has been concern raised over the direction and purpose of the JPGE.

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<sup>34</sup> Not all training reviewed in the capacity assessment was undertaken under the JPGE, but there was sufficient overlap to extrapolate from the capacity assessment findings.

## 7. Sustainability<sup>35</sup> and ownership

The JPGE project notes on sustainability (p. 47)

activities of Joint Outcome 1 will ensure sustainability by working with the SMA and key line ministries to develop a core of tools that can be replicated for future workshops, publication and initiatives. Joint Outcome 2 ensures sustainability through the coordination of partnerships among civil society groups engaged in GE activities and by providing a venue to ensure that that research results from Joint Outcome 3 feed directly back into ongoing policy dialogue, advocacy and intervention programmes not only within the UNCT, but among Government, other donors, INGOs and civil society. This component will also establish and maintain a pool of gender expertise within government, development agencies and groups from civil society, thus enabling synergies and good practices to be shared and replicated throughout the Government. Joint Outcome 3 ensures sustainability by developing and strengthening existing research and data systems that can be adapted and expanded for use across line ministries and at the sub-national level.

A number of respondents noted that follow-up to JPGE activities was weak. As noted, training activities were not part of an overall capacity development plan and process. Tracking of the results of training was not consistent, in particular how sustainable the capacities built during training was likely to be. There were concerns raised as to what would be left in terms of improved capacities after the JPGE was complete.

In terms of ownership, the MDG-F Guidelines note (p. 8): “The MDG-F prioritizes national ownership which translates into national leadership in the management of joint programmes. Consequently the management of the programmes should reside within national entities.” The evaluation found that while there was considerable government involvement with the JPGE, there was limited government ownership or leadership. The reasons for this stem partly from the genesis of the JPGE; because of changes in government partners, MOLISA and GSO noted that they received the JPGE document after it was more or less completed and could not comment on the overall framework. Respondents noted that under the MDG-F funding window time was too short for consultation. However there is a paradox here as much of the focus of the JPGE is on capacity development, and there may be a presumption that the agency promoting capacity development will take the lead. The MDG-F could define more clearly what is meant by national ownership and leadership when funding programmes that are organized around capacity development.

One of the planned benefits of the JPGE in terms of coherence, and one area that would support sustainability, was involvement of donors and other partners. The JPGE project document notes (p. 9): “the comprehensive level of support that the JP offers across a wide range of duty bearers will be significant in identifying additional gaps and/or national partners with additional needs. This means that other donors will be able to more efficiently and effectively target their assistance so that it builds upon the capacity development work of the JP. (This has been shown by the number of donors and INGOs

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<sup>35</sup> “The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.”

who have indicated interest in building upon JP activities or providing additional financial support if gaps appear in the implementation of the programme).”

Donors and INGOs interviewed working on gender equality had only partial knowledge of the JPGE, and there appeared to be limited or no intention of building on JP activities, although in the past it appears that they were regularly informed through the Gender Action Partnership. There was one case of additional funding, from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for the study on domestic violence, but this was the exception. Lack of a JPGE coordinator has meant that adequate connections have not been sustained with donors and other organizations such as the World Bank.

## **8. Conclusions**

A majority of evaluation respondents thought that the JPGE is making satisfactory progress in terms of completion of activities. A majority of JPGE activities are likely to be successfully implemented. These are significant achievements and have been produced as a result of the work of committed government, UN, and other counterpart staff. However, the JPGE has not yet achieved intended levels of coherence, and remains a too loosely connected set of activities.

The JPGE is highly relevant given Viet Nam's development challenges vis-à-vis gender equality, its current status in relation to the MDGs, and international commitments such as CEDAW and ILO Conventions 100 and 111. The three main focus areas of the JPGE – capacity development, networking and partnership, and support to data collection – are recognized strategies for promoting gender equality, and are central to the UN's mandate and comparative advantage. Some evaluation respondents raised concerns about the relevance of the geographical focus of the JPGE, and noted that future work should extend to the Provincial level and below, while at the same time continuing to work at the central level to ensure that an enabling environment exists.

To attempt to include 12 UN agencies, three main government partners, and 16 Co-implementing Partners, with three joint outcomes, was perhaps over-ambitious. Nevertheless, the JPGE could have worked better as a joint programme if there had been a stronger strategic planning process, and if there had been more UN senior manager leadership. The JPGE lacks an adequate overarching conceptual framework to link the three joint outcomes, meaning there is no shared vision; consequently there are different perspectives of what the JPGE should be and accomplish. The JPGE results framework demonstrates many of the problems facing UN agencies attempting to implement results based management.

The JPGE has produced significantly more coordinated programming on gender equality. The UN has achieved a higher level of communication and coordination, and had clarified key messages, and that there was also enhanced communication between the UN and government.

Government levels of staffing appear to be adequate for implementing individual joint outcomes. The lack of a designated coordinator has been problematic. The JPGE has relied from the UN side to a large extent on junior staff, particularly interns and UN Volunteers in the specialized agencies, among whom there is relatively high turnover, meaning a lack of consistency in dealings with the government. Not all Heads of Agencies have been sufficiently engaged. The JPGE appears to have been designed without adequate attention to the capacities needed to carry its objectives out.

The JPGE has been hampered by the lack of a capacity development plan, including details on what kinds of capacity are going to be built, and how will this be sustained over time. Greater attention needs to be paid to sustainability of capacities developed.

### **Lessons learned**

#### **For MDG-F**

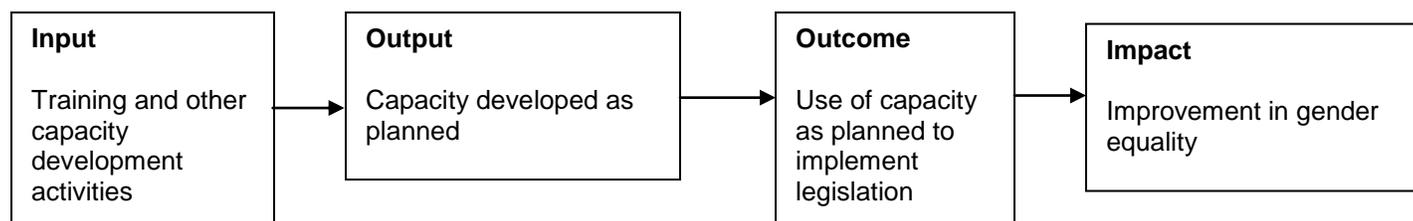
- Screening of projects to ensure that they are coherent, and that there is national and international capacity to carry them out, could be more thorough.

- An adequate window for consultation is needed, in particular for joint programmes with multiple partners.
- What is meant by national ownership and leadership could be more clearly defined when funding programmes that are organized around capacity development.
- In joint programmes with multiple partners, delays are almost inevitable. Consider ways in which this can be factored in to the planning process.
- A handover plan could be developed for three-year joint programmes where there is a strong focus on capacity development of government.
- For joint programmes with a capacity development focus, ensure that a capacity assessment is completed near the start of the programme, so that programming can be based on this.

**For the government, and UNCT in relation to Delivering as One**

- Ensure adequate input from strategic planning experts at the start and periodically throughout joint programmes, in particular where there are multiple partners and outcomes.
- Don't over rely on junior level staff. There is no substitute for senior manager leadership and strategic input.
- The UNCT needs to have a better sense in relation to the One Plan as to results achieved on capacity development, what has and has not worked, and why.
- For capacity development initiatives, ensure that the results framework has results at the correct levels of the results chain, as in Figure 3 below.
- One of the rationales for joint programmes is that they should reduce the transaction costs of government through dealing with One rather than several UNs. Respondents thought that there had been reduced transaction costs in relation to management.

**Figure 3: the capacity development results chain**



- The UNCT did not take into consideration when developing the JPGE several of the findings of its own review of joint programmes published in February 2008, which predicted several of the constraints to the JPGE. Learning mechanisms in the UNCT therefore need to be strengthened.

## 9. Recommendations

Main challenges	Recommendations	Responsibility for follow-up	Time line and resources
<p><b>1. Relevance and coherence</b>            Much of the work of the JPGE has focused on duty-bearers in Hanoi, although there has been some work carried out by some agencies with duty-bearers outside Hanoi; the JPGE focus should be extended further outside of Hanoi.</p> <p>The JPGE lacks a sound conceptual framework and subsequently its three Joint Outcomes do not cohere sufficiently, and there is no shared vision of what the JPGE should achieve.</p> <p>Many of the JPGE activities are being successfully carried out, but need to be more closely connected within a more coherent joint programme.</p> <p>The JPGE results framework demonstrates many of the problems facing UN agencies attempting to implement RBM, and this has hindered</p>	<p>Organize a planning workshop for all JPGE partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Clarify expectations of what the JPGE can achieve, using Gadja's typology (Figure 1) as a basis for discussion. Promote development of a shared vision for the JPGE.</li> <li>➤ Redefine the JPGE's outcome level targets, based on a capacity development results chain (see section 8 of this report).</li> <li>➤ To promote coherence, discuss moving some JPGE activities to one or two 'pilot' Provinces so as to develop a plan for implementing the GEL and DVL, including required resources to develop adequate capacities for this. See below for further details.</li> <li>➤ Set up Results Groups for each of the three Joint Outcomes to clarify the objectives of each outcome and how they fit with the</li> </ul>	<p>Gender Programme            Coordination Group</p>	<p>Early 2011</p> <p>Professional facilitator (with RBM expertise) and translator for workshop, approximately \$10,000 if an international facilitator is used.</p>

<p>coherence and the development of an overarching conceptual framework for the JPGE. Specific problems are lack of adequate connection between the three joint outcomes, results statements at the wrong level of the results chain, and vagueness of results statements and targets.</p> <p>Staff working at the commune and ward levels were consistently identified by the capacity assessment as most in need of new knowledge and skills on DV.</p>	<p>overall objectives of the JPGE. This is recommended by the MDG-F Guidelines (p. 12): "where joint programmes either have a large number of implementing partners and/or a large number of outcomes /outputs. They are composed of the implementing partners working on that specific component, outcome or output and usually chaired by the relevant national counterpart." Seek information from the MDG-F as to the functioning of these groups in other countries.</p>		
<p><b>2. Efficiency</b> There has been under-investment in management and coordination functions of the JPGE by the UNCT.</p> <p>National and international consultants, who are central to JPGE implementation, are being hired individually, leading to loss of efficiency, because of competition between agencies and a large number of contracting</p>	<p>UN Heads of Agencies should have a dedicated meeting on the JPGE to assess coherence, progress and results every three months.</p> <p>Consider options for streamlining hiring practices, for example pre-qualifying consultants, or working through one or more consulting companies with expertise in capacity development which can bring in relevant consultants.</p>	<p>Resident Coordinator</p> <p>PMU</p>	<p>Internal resources Ongoing</p> <p>Internal resources Ongoing</p>

<p>processes.</p> <p>The role of the PMU vis-à-vis the CPMUs is not adequately clear.</p>	<p>During the planning workshop (see above), clarify the roles of PMU and CPMU.</p> <p>Amend the international staff member's job description to reflect her actual responsibilities, which include supporting the PMU in coordination.</p>	<p>UNFPA</p>	<p>Internal resources January 2011</p>
<p><b>3. Effectiveness</b></p> <p>The capacity assessment of the government highlights key areas for capacity development.</p> <p>The JPGE lacks a capacity development plan with clear targets concerning the kinds of capacities to be developed, and an assessment of how capacity will be sustained and used after the end of the JPGE.</p> <p>About 25 per cent of JPGE funds are allocated to training,</p>	<p>Prioritize the recommendations of the capacity assessment report, develop a capacity development plan, and determine resources and timelines for recommendations and the plan. Ensure that the focus of the capacity assessment plan is at the institutional level. Training and study tours should make up one part of this capacity development plan.</p> <p>Draw on expertise on capacity development from the UN Regional Office in Bangkok if required.</p> <p>Develop a common methodology for the UNCT for assessment of</p>	<p>MOLISA and UNIFEM</p> <p>UNDP</p> <p>Resident Coordinator's Office</p>	<p>By January 2011, internal resources</p> <p>Ongoing, internal UN resources</p> <p>January 2011</p>

<p>but there is no systematic assessment of the results of training, and training does not fit within an overall capacity assessment plan.</p>	<p>training, based on the commonly used four point typology developed by Kirkpatrick.  <a href="http://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/">http://www.kirkpatrickpartners.com/</a></p> <p>Review methods for assessing results of training in government institutions and determine if they are applicable to JPGE training activities.</p>		<p>Internal resources</p> <p>February 2011 Internal resources</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b>  A number of respondents noted that follow-up to JPGE activities was weak. There were concerns raised as to what would be left in terms of improved capacities after the JPGE was complete.</p> <p>Donors and INGOs interviewed working on gender equality had only partial knowledge of the JPGE, and there appeared to be limited or no intention of building on JP activities.</p>	<p>Determine how capacities to be left with government and other counterparts at the end of the JPGE will be sustained, and develop a handover plan for all activities to the government.</p> <p>Meet regularly (e.g. every 4-5 months) with donors and other international stakeholders such as the World Bank and Peace and Development, to discuss progress of the JPGE and potential interest in building on JP activities.</p>	<p>PMU</p> <p>JPGE gender equality specialist</p>	<p>Plan developed by early 2011</p> <p>Internal resources</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Internal resources.</p>

**Recommendation to be considered for the proposed JPGE planning workshop:  
Developing a replicable gender mainstreaming plan at the provincial level for  
implementation of the GEL and DVL**

The draft National Strategy on Gender Equality (pp.18 and 22) sets out the requirements of what is essentially a gender mainstreaming plan:

(p. 18) Objective 7: Improve capacity of state management on gender equality

Specific target 1: 100 per cent of new legal documents will follow procedures for gender mainstreaming, including the assessment of impacts of these documents on women and men.

Specific target 2: The set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Law on Gender Equality will be applied.

Specific target 3: 100 per cent of ministries and sectors have divisions in charge of gender equality. 100 per cent provinces and cities have full time officers on gender equality at provincial level and at least one full time officer working on gender equality at district, and create collaborators working on gender equality and women's advancement at commune level.<sup>36</sup>

Specific target 4: 100 per cent of staff working on gender equality and women's advancement cadres at different levels will be trained professionally

Specific target 5: 100 per cent of policy making cadres in ministries and provinces will be trained on gender knowledge, gender analysis and mainstreaming skills.

(p. 22) Improve institutional capacity to serve gender equality work. Intensify direction and checking by party committees and authorities in order to reach consistency in both awareness and action in deploying implementation of objectives and targets of the Strategy

First, establish highly qualified full time staff on gender equality from national, provincial and district levels; develop network of collaborators on gender equality and women's advancement at commune and village level. Establish gender specialists who can help state management agencies to mainstream gender in sector specific programs, and in local policies and plans.

Second, cultivate assessment and evaluation skills on gender equality for policy making cadres and those who are directly involved in formulating social economic development plans. Improve capacity of training centers specialized in gender equality.

Third, build a system to supervise and evaluate gender equality work throughout the country. Organize interdisciplinary supervision and evaluation basing on systematic information, conduct sample and periodic surveys, and participatory supervision and evaluation.

Fourth, develop an effective coordination and mainstreaming mechanism for all sectors and at all levels to achieve the goal of gender equality.

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<sup>36</sup> Governmental report number 63/BC-CP dated 8 May 2010 regulated the objective "By the end of 2010, each province and city under the direct management of the government will have from two to three full time staff working on gender equality.

Fifth, leaders of party committees and authorities to regularly integrate gender equality into their work plans to strengthen directions and monitoring. Formulate a concrete roadmap to apply gender equality measures, especially in female leader preparation work.

The JPGE could support implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality, as well as bring greater coherence to its own programming, by focusing some of its activities at the Provincial level. This would involve developing a plan for implementing the GEL and DVL at Provincial level. One or two Provinces could be taken for this purpose (e.g. Provinces more and less advanced in promotion of gender equality).

The gender mainstreaming plan should be based on the capacity assessment already undertaken as part of the JPGE which has identified capacity strengths and weaknesses. Work would be carried out with provincial duty-bearers to determine what can be done to build a minimum level of capacity in a sustainable fashion, and develop a plan of action with timescale, resources and responsibility related to the GEL and DV legislation. Scaling up mechanisms should be built in from the start to ensure that what is done in the pilot Provinces can be replicated. The Government would then have the knowledge of what level of resources would be required for gender mainstreaming and implementing the GEL and DVL throughout all Provinces. The experience of government training institutes, the Kon Tum Joint Programme, and the One Plan should be reviewed vis-à-vis lessons on capacity development.

This would likely bring greater coherence to the JPGE as firstly stakeholders would be working in the same geographical location, and would have a common capacity development focus. It would also move some of the work of the JPGE to the Provincial and lower levels, as suggested by some of the evaluation stakeholders.

The following are guiding questions for a Provincial level gender mainstreaming plan:

- Can a capacity development plan be developed at the Provincial level for implementation of the GEL and DVL?
- What kinds of capacity development are needed at different levels – Provincial, district, and ward/commune levels?
- What resources are currently available to develop capacity?
- What additional resources will be required?
- What is the time-frame required to reach adequate capacity?
- How will capacity be sustained?