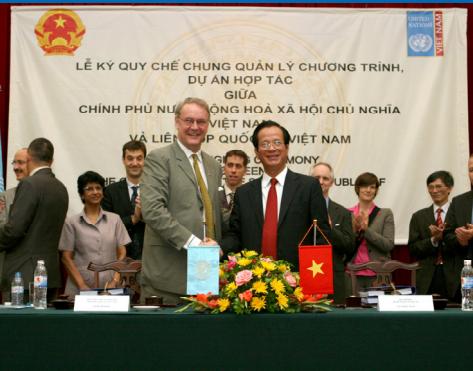


THE “ONE UN INITIATIVE” IN VIET NAM

Creating a more effective United Nations

JUNE 2010 UPDATE



The “One UN Initiative” in Viet Nam brings together the expertise, experience and capacities of the entire UN family to support national development priorities. Since Viet Nam was selected as one of eight pilot UN reform countries in December 2006, the UN has been changing the way it works to achieve greater coherence and harmonization and deliver better results for the people of Viet Nam.

In line with the Hanoi Core Statement on Aid Effectiveness, UN reform in Viet Nam is a tripartite undertaking by the Government of Viet Nam, the UN Country Team and the donor community, and the strong commitment by all three parties has contributed to making Viet Nam one of the leading global examples of the UN’s “Delivering as One” approach.

This update summarizes recent progress, illustrating how the “One UN Initiative” is contributing to more coordinated assistance and greater effectiveness of the UN’s work in Viet Nam, particularly in responding to the needs of the Government for high-quality policy support as Viet Nam transitions to a middle-income country. Examples are provided of joint policy and analytical work by UN Agencies, as well as innovative new approaches to joint programming and implementation. An overview and update of the five pillars for reform, or ‘Five Ones’ (One Plan, One Budget, One Leader, One Set of Management Practices and the Green One UN House) is followed by an overview of key priorities for 2010 and 2011.

JOINT RESEARCH & POLICY SUPPORT: “ONE POLICY VOICE”

To support the Government of Viet Nam in developing effective, evidence-based policies and programmes, UN Agencies in Viet Nam are increasingly collaborating on joint research initiatives and policy papers, especially through the work of the eight **Programme Coordination Groups** (PCGs). The eight PCGs are a unique mechanism to facilitate UN Agencies working together with their Government and civil society partners on shared priority issues. PCGs are increasingly undertaking research and developing policy papers on priority themes. A particular focus of the UN’s work over the past year has been support to Viet Nam’s strategic planning exercises, such as for the Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) for 2011-2020 and Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) for 2011-2015, as well as for a variety of sectoral plans. Some examples of recent policy papers that bring an analytical and unified UN perspective to key development challenges include the following:

- To help Viet Nam respond to **climate change**, a UN policy discussion paper provided a joint analysis with key messages from all relevant UN Agencies. The paper highlights the main climate change challenges faced by Viet Nam and makes a series of recommendations for how national policies and practices can be strengthened.
- A **multi-dimensional child poverty measurement tool** was designed to help Viet Nam analyze child poverty. Developed through a partnership between the UN, the University of Maastricht, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) and Vietnamese poverty experts, the tool incorporates the eight domains of poverty which best reflect the needs of Vietnamese children. A report containing the analysis and recommendations is helping the Government integrate the multiple dimensions of child poverty into future policy, in particular the SEDP, the National Social Protection Strategy, and the National Target Programme for Poverty Reduction.

- On the issue of **gender-based violence**, a UN paper was developed to inform strategic planning, visioning and priority-setting, as well as development of policy and programmes to prevent gender-based violence and provide support to survivors.
- The “Choosing Success” series of policy dialogue papers, prepared by Harvard University, with UN support, critically examined **macroeconomic and development policy** options available to the Vietnamese authorities. It offers a new framework for setting priorities and making strategic decisions tailored to the realities of the Vietnamese and global economy of the early 21st century, and addresses key challenges from education to infrastructure.

JOINT PROGRAMMES & MISSIONS

Where deemed useful and seen as an added value for the “One UN Initiative”, UN Agencies in Viet Nam have formalized their implementation framework in legally binding **joint programmes**. Currently, six joint programmes are established within the overall framework of the One Plan:

- The Joint Programme on **Green Production and Trade** to increase Income and Employment Opportunities for the Rural Poor (2010-2012)
- The Joint Programme on **Integrated Nutrition and Food Security** Strategies for Children and Vulnerable Groups (2010-2012)
- The Joint Programme on **Gender Equality** (2009-2012)
- The UN Joint Programme on **HIV**
- The Joint Programme on Strengthening Capacity in **Socio-economic Development Planning**, Implementation and Provision of Basic Social Services in Kon Tum (2007-2010)
- The Joint Programme to fight Highly Pathogenic **Avian Influenza** (2006-2010)

In addition, an increasing number of **joint review and monitoring missions** have taken place - either as part of



joint programme implementation or facilitated by the PCGs. Joint monitoring missions were undertaken to Kon Tum, Lao Cai and Dak Lak provinces in the past year and members of a UN joint monitoring mission visited 21 provinces as part of UN support to Viet Nam’s 2009 population and housing census.

ONE UN COMMUNICATIONS

The One UN Communications Team is a unique feature of the “One UN Initiative” in Viet Nam and ensures a **strong common advocacy** voice and **clear UN position** on issues of relevance for Viet Nam such as road safety, social security, gender-based violence, and avian and human influenza (A/H1N1), among others. In the past year a new structure and management board for the team were established, further institutionalizing this inter-agency team of communication specialists from UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS and UNV now under single management in the same office as one team. Due to its innovative structure, other “Delivering as One” pilot countries are increasingly looking at Viet Nam as a positive example to ensure stronger and more strategic communication and policy advocacy in their countries.

In the past year the team facilitated strong advocacy on issues such as children and AIDS, child poverty, milk formula and breastfeeding promotion, and the national population and housing census. Stronger UN-wide messaging was developed and implemented on issues ranging from climate change, the social impact of the economic crisis, to corruption and human rights. The team also organized a series of joint UN events to launch policy papers and advocate for priority themes such as social protection and climate change. And to support the much greater internal communication needs under the “One UN Initiative”, the Team has developed new communication tools and services, including a One UN Intranet linking all UN staff in Viet Nam electronically for the first time.

COMMON PLANNING, MONITORING AND REPORTING

Over the past year changes have been made to simplify and streamline the UN’s **planning, monitoring and reporting**. To reduce the time spent reporting on each UN-supported project, all PCGs held annual reviews for 2009 with their Government and donor counterparts for all projects within their purview. Now, instead of having several meetings with individual agencies, Government ministries have only one review and planning meeting to focus on. In addition, for the last two years a single Annual Report has been prepared for the Government, donors and other key stakeholders, instead of the usual annual reports from each of the 14 UN Agencies participating in the One Plan. And to improve planning, PCGs now prepare joint annual reports and joint annual

work plans, leading to better coordinated support, new synergies, and reduced overlap among agencies.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

In order to support the “One UN Initiative” and facilitate the intensified shift to upstream policy advice, the UN has, since 2008, pursued a more systematic approach to change management. This has included preparatory work such as measuring internal and external perceptions of the UN in Viet Nam among staff and key stakeholders in 2008 and 2009. In 2010 a Change Management Task Force was established and is now looking at the need to conduct an assessment of current staff capacities and competencies, as well as starting a UN-wide discussion to determine the staffing structures, skills and profiles needed to serve the UN in the future. It is expected that this will lead to the development of a human resources strategy to support UN reform and delivery of the next One Plan, as well as wide staff engagement in the change process.

THE FIVE “ONES”: OVERVIEW & UPDATE

ONE PLAN

The One Plan combines and synthesizes the work of the 14 participating UN organizations in Viet Nam within a single planning framework. Since the signing of the revised One Plan in June 2008, the UNCT has focused on implementation, monitoring and resourcing. To put the One Plan into action, a One Plan Management Plan (OPMP) has been finalized and agreed upon by all participating agencies. The OPMP describes how UN organizations implement the One Plan most effectively.

In order to better align and harmonize the UN’s planning with Viet Nam’s national development plan for 2011-2015, the UN requested approval for a transition year (2011). In the context of Viet Nam’s changing situation, 2011 will be a key transition period in the lead up to the next One Plan for 2012-2016, and will reflect an expanded focus by the UN on delivering high-quality policy advice and technical expertise to the Government.



ONE SET OF MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Harmonizing and simplifying business practices so they are better aligned with those of the Government is an essential part of the “One UN Initiative”. An important milestone was the signing of the **Harmonised Programme and Project Management Guidelines** (HPPMG) in May 2010 between the ExCom Agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA) and the Government. The HPPMG sets out clear lines of accountability between the parties involved in UN-supported programmes and projects by using a two-track governance system. This means that Government rules are applied when the Government implements project activities and UN agency-specific rules are applied when a UN agency implements project activities.

In the same spirit, the **Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers** (HACT) has been applied to all new ExCom projects since the end of 2008. By using the same modalities to handle payments to all implementing partners, the process has become much simpler and less burdensome for all involved. The ambition is to expand the HACT and HPPMG to all UN organizations in Viet Nam. The adoption in 2009 of the Government-UN-EU Cost Norms is another tangible contribution toward harmonization of UN Agencies’ business practices.

ONE BUDGET/ONE PLAN FUND

As part of the One Plan, a single budget provides a clear sense of total resources required to implement the One Plan, while the **One Plan Fund** (OPF) provides a streamlined way of providing un-earmarked support for the UN’s programmatic work and reduces the problem of different UN Agencies competing for the same donor funds. The total budget of the One Plan is USD 286 million for the 2008-2010 period. In addition to funds mobilised by One Plan agencies from core resources and sources other than the OPF the UN has mobilized USD 79.47 million in contributions, pledges and future commitments to the OPF.

The funding gap for the **One Plan Transition Year** (2011) is currently estimated at USD 44.2 million taking into consideration small surpluses from 2010 that can potentially be carried forward and other commitments.

KEY FIGURES: ONE PLAN BUDGET & ONE PLAN FUND

One Plan II Budget (2008-2010): USD 286 million

One Plan Fund monies received/committed/pledged (2008 - 2010): USD 79.47 million

Estimated funding gap for 2011: USD 44.2 million

The proportion of One Plan activities which is funded from the OPF has increased gradually since its establishment in 2007. The share of the One Plan funded through the OPF increased from 17 percent in 2008 to 25 percent in 2009. Current trends show the percentage of the One Plan funded through the OPF increasing to over 30 percent in 2010 as local funding arrangements pre-dating the establishment of the OPF come to an end.

The introduction of a strategic **One Plan Fund allocation process** in 2009 included specific criteria relating to the UN's normative role (i.e. in areas such as human rights and gender equality) and policy advisory function. This represents a measurable shift towards prioritizing upstream policy work through budget allocations: in other words, more and more of the UN's work is jointly funded, rather than funded via individual UN Agencies. It also represents an opportunity for the UN Country Team to undertake joint prioritization and thus ensure that the intended shift towards upstream policy work is realized by prioritizing relevant activities.

GREEN ONE UN HOUSE

The **eco-friendly and team-friendly** Green One UN House for all UN organizations in Viet Nam is essential to integration, coordination and the realization of greater synergies. The project is now fully funded with the generous commitments from Norway, the U.K./DFID, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Spain and Ireland, as well contributions from the participating UN organizations and the Sustainable United Nations (SUN) programme of UNEP. The Government of Viet Nam is contributing a high-value land site and is offering the premises rent free for ten years. In September 2009, the Prime Minister of Viet Nam formally approved the project, and since then the UN has been conducting procurement through international bidding for a multi-disciplinary design team and an independent cost consultant. The project is being managed by a project board of representatives from the UN and the Government of Viet Nam.

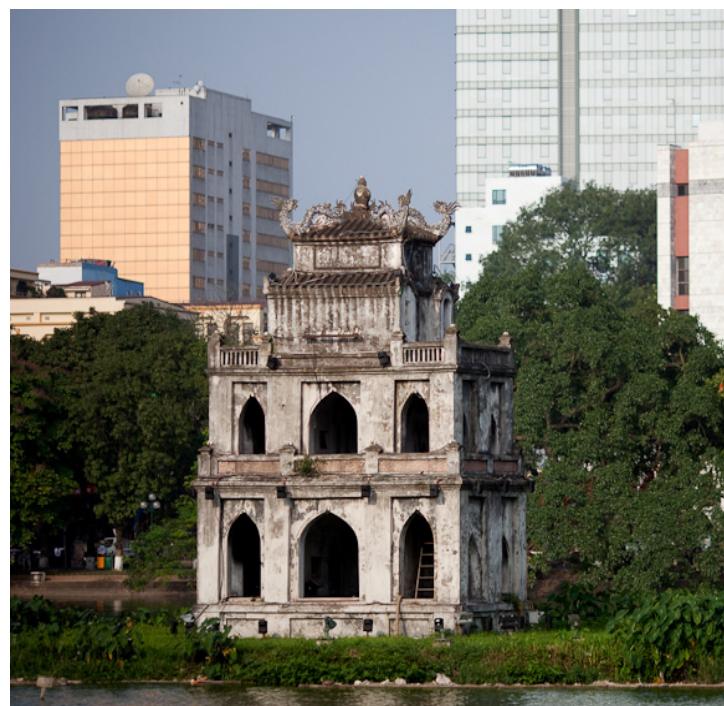
ONE LEADER

Another key element of reform is strengthening **the role of the Resident Coordinator** as the "One Leader" for the UN in Viet Nam. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) on the One Leader has been signed by all participating UN organizations, providing enhanced functions and responsibility to the UN Resident Coordinator, allowing him/her to better represent the participating agencies in the One Plan. As the One Leader, the Resident Coordinator takes the lead on common issues that require the UN Country Team to speak with one voice, and presents a common position and view. He/she guides the strategic development and

management of the "One UN Initiative" and promotes joint decisions including all representatives of the participating UN organizations. The UN Resident Coordinator has ultimate authority on allocation from the One Plan Fund, and a conflict resolution mechanism has been established for One UN issues.

ONE UN GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The governance structure for the "One UN Initiative" reflects both the role of the Government of Viet Nam as the driving force behind the reform process and the unique tripartite nature of the "One UN Initiative", with the UN working closely with both Government and donors. The **Tripartite National Task Force (TNTF)** consists of the Government Aid Coordinating Agencies (Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Office of Government), representatives from the donor community and participating UN Agencies. The TNTF is responsible for advancing UN reform by providing effective oversight of the process and putting the roadmap into operation. The **One Plan Steering Committee (OPSC)** oversees and coordinates the implementation of the One Plan to ensure the achievement of its outcomes and its contribution to national results. The OPSC is co-chaired by the Vice-Minister of MPI and the UN Resident Coordinator, and is comprised of the Government Aid Coordinating Agencies, heads of participating UN organizations and key line ministries. The **One UN Donor Group** is an informal group of donors actively engaged in the "One UN Initiative". The One UN Donor Group has agreed to principles of engagement, a voluntary mechanism to support the One UN reform process by agreeing to provide resources to the One Plan Fund rather than to the individual agencies.



LOOKING AHEAD: KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Coordinated support to Viet Nam's Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) 2011-2020 and Social and Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2011-2015

Since November 2009, the UN has increased its engagement in policy dialogue with the Government of Viet Nam to support development of the 2011-2020 SEDS and the 2011-2015 SEDP. In doing so, the UN is supporting key policymakers in Viet Nam to ensure that the most important challenges facing Viet Nam are addressed as it becomes a middle-income country in 2010. Currently, the UN, in partnership with the World Bank and other donors, is providing leadership to ensure coherent engagement of the donor community in the SEDS/SEDP process. A specific objective of the UN is to support the Government in ensuring that the next SEDP reflects a balance between economic priorities and human, social and environmental goals and targets; responds to priorities at the provincial and regional level as well as the national level; and addresses the needs of the most vulnerable, including ethnic minorities and those caught in chronic and near poverty.

Development of next One Plan (2012-2016)

Preparation of the next One Plan has begun with the recent completion of a comprehensive Joint Country Analysis (JCA). The JCA is an independent analytical review of the challenges and policy choices facing Viet Nam. It helps inform how the UN can best support the Government in the formulation and implementation of the new SEDP, and clarifies the services likely to be required from the UN. In the spirit of aid effectiveness and considering the importance of joint donor analytical work, this analysis was undertaken in close collaboration with the Like-Minded Donor Group in Viet Nam.

The JCA is being followed by a comprehensive, strategic prioritization process in order to identify the key focus areas for the UN in the 2012-2016 period. The identification of the focus areas is being done based on a detailed causality analysis, a gap analysis and an assessment of the comparative advantage of the UN vis-à-vis other development partners in Viet Nam.

A participatory and consultative process with the Government and development partners will ensure a strategic focused document in which the selected priorities have been defined on the basis of development priorities and comparative advantage, rather than UN agency mandates. Importantly, the joint key priorities are being identified *before* the individual agency processes begin, marking a significant shift in what has been common practice in many UN countries for years.

The One Plan for 2012-2016 will be both a strategic framework *and* an operational document. A new One UN Action Plan will be developed after the key priority areas have been identified, providing information on how the UN will achieve its results through joint outputs and joint key actions in the new programming cycle.

Ensure predictability of funding

The One Plan Fund is a strategic element of the reform process, and is a proven mechanism for increased coherence and focus in UN planning and programming. It will only be possible for the UN to make joint short and long-term strategic prioritizations if sufficient and predictable multi-year, un-earmarked funding is available. Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, the UN will continue to secure funds for the One Plan Fund, building on the well-established working relationship with the One UN Donor Group in Viet Nam. The UN will also explore opportunities for financial support from UN Headquarters through mechanisms such as the Multi-donor Trust Fund Expanded Window for "Delivering as One" countries.

Continue implementation of the Green One UN House project

Key future priorities for the Green One UN House project include preparing design documentation for construction tenders, obtaining a construction permit from the Ha Noi People's Committee, receiving remaining contributions towards the construction costs and finalizing the legal agreements between the participating UN organizations and the Government. In parallel, work will continue on establishing a suite of common services for the UN in Viet Nam and a change management initiative will begin to support functional clustering of staff in the completed building.



Finalize country-led evaluations of the pilot countries

In 2009, several “Delivering as One” pilot countries proposed that independent country-led evaluations of the UN reform process be undertaken. These precede and are separate from the more comprehensive evaluation called for by the UN General Assembly scheduled to take place later in 2010. The country-led evaluation in Viet Nam has been guided by a Tripartite Working Committee (Government, UN and donors) under the TNTF to provide the necessary oversight. Viet Nam’s evaluation report concluded that impressive progress has been made under the “One UN Initiative” so far. At the same time the evaluation generated a number of valuable lessons and recommendations for moving UN reform forward.

Prepare for the Ha Noi Conference in June 2010

After more than three years of piloting new ways of working together to provide more relevant, coherent and efficient support to national development priorities, the High-Level Tripartite Conference on “Delivering as One: Lessons from Country-led Evaluations and Way Forward” represents a unique opportunity to share and learn lessons and arrive at key recommendations for UN reform in the future.

The conference aims to communicate more broadly progress and critical issues; inform the forthcoming intergovernmental processes concerning system-wide coherence; and identify critical areas deserving attention to ensure a more effective delivery as one by the UN system at the country level.

For more information on the One UN Initiative in Viet Nam, and the UNCT, go to: www.un.org.vn



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