### PROJECT QA ASSESSMENT: DESIGN AND APPRAISAL

#### **OVERALL PROJECT**

EXEMPLARY (5)	Highly Satisfactory (4)	Satisfactory (3)	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (2)	INADEQUATE (1)  ©OOOO
At least four criteria are rated Exemplary, and all criteria are rated High or Exemplary.	All criteria are rated Satisfactory or higher, and at least four criteria are rated High or Exemplary.	At least six criteria are rated Satisfactory or higher, and only one may be rated Needs Improvement. The Principled criterion must be rated Satisfactory or above.	At least three criteria are rated Satisfactory or higher, and only four criteria may be rated Needs Improvement.	One or more criteria are rated Inadequate, or five or more criteria are rated Needs Improvement.

#### **DECISION**

- APPROVE the project is of sufficient quality to be approved in its current form. Any management actions must be addressed in a timely manner.
- APPROVE WITH QUALIFICATIONS the project has issues that must be addressed before the project document can be approved. Any management actions must be addressed in a timely manner.
- DISAPPROVE the project has significant issues that should prevent the project from being approved as drafted.

#### RATING CRITERIA

#### For all questions, select the option that best reflects the project

a number of ways, such as:

#### **STRATEGIC**

- Does the project specify how it will contribute to higher level change through linkage to the programme's Theory of Change?
  - 3: The project is clearly linked to the programme's theory of change. It has an explicit change pathway that explains how the project will contribute to outcome level change and why the project's strategy will likely lead to this change. This analysis is backed by credible evidence of what works effectively in this context and includes assumptions and risks.
  - 2: The project is clearly linked to the programme's theory of change. It has a change pathway that explains how the project will contribute to outcomelevel change and why the project strategy will likely lead to this change.
  - 1: The project document may describe in generic terms how the project will contribute to development results, without an explicit link to the programme's theory of change.

\*Note: Projects not contributing to a programme must have a project-specific Theory of Change. See alternative question under the lightbulb for these cases.

Evidence			
3			
4			

The theory of change is a framework that helps organizations to identify and articulate their goals, and the steps they need to take to achieve them. EDI in the public sector can contribute to the theory of change in

- Improved data quality: EDI can improve the quality and accuracy of data by reducing errors and minimizing manual data entry. This can help organizations to make betterinformed decisions, and to track their progress towards their goals more effectively.
- Increased efficiency: By automating administrative processes, EDI can help organizations to work more efficiently, freeing up time and resources to focus on higher-value tasks. This can help organizations to achieve their goals more quickly and effectively.
- Better collaboration: EDI can facilitate collaboration between different organizations and stakeholders by enabling the exchange of data and information in real-time. This can help organizations to work together more effectively towards shared goals.
- Enhanced transparency: By using EDI to track and report on their activities, organizations can enhance their transparency and accountability. This can help to build trust with

	3		
4. Does the project target groups left furthest behind?	4		
RELEVANT			
3. Is the project linked to the programme outputs? (i.e., UNDAF Results Group Workplan/CPD, RPD or Strategic Plan IRRF for global projects/strategic interventions not part of a programme)  Output  Description:	The project contributes to the achievement of Outcome 1 of the UNSDCF-TKM2021-2025:  By 2025, the population of Turkmenistan has access to a more efficient, innovative and transparent system of public administration based on the rule of law, respect for human rights, gender equality and labour rights, and on quality data.  Indicative CPD Output 1.2: State institutions have improved public administration system with electronic government systems and digital public services for the population with special focus on services for vulnerable groups.		
<ul> <li>2. Is the project aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan?</li> <li>3: The project responds to at least one of the development settings as specified in the Strategic Plan¹ and adapts at least one Signature Solution². The project's RRF includes all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true)</li> <li>2: The project responds to at least one of the development settings as specified in the Strategic Plan⁴. The project's RRF includes at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true)</li> <li>1: The project responds to a partner's identified need, but this need falls outside of the UNDP Strategic Plan. Also select this option if none of the relevant SP indicators are included in the RRF.</li> </ul>	Evidence  This project responds to two development settings: Accelerating structural transformation for sustainable development and Build resilience to shocks and crises, and adapts two signature solution: Strengthen effective, inclusive and accountable governance and Enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies as per Strategic Plan IRRF.  Project support country in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a set of 17 interconnected goals that aim to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and promote peace and prosperity for all.		
	stakeholders and to demonstrate their commitment to achieving their goals.  Overall, by improving data quality, increasing efficiency, facilitating collaboration, and enhancing transparency, EDI in the public sector can contribute to the theory of change by helping organizations to achieve their goals more effectively and efficiently.		
	stakeholders and to demonstrate their commitment to		

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The three development settings in UNDP's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan are: a) Eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions; b) Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development; and c) Build resilience to shocks and crises

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The six Signature Solutions of UNDP's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan are: a) Keeping people out of poverty; b) Strengthen effective, inclusive and accountable governance; c) Enhance national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies; d) Promote nature based solutions for a sustainable planet; e) Close the energy gap; and f) Strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

- 3: The target groups are clearly specified, prioritising discriminated and marginalized groups left furthest behind, identified through a rigorous process based on evidence.
- 2: The target groups are clearly specified, prioritizing groups left furthest behind.
- <u>1:</u> The target groups are not clearly specified.

\*Note: Management Action must be taken for a score of 1. Projects that build institutional capacity should still identify targeted groups to justify support

#### Evidence

The target groups that can benefit from EDI in the public sector are:

- Government agencies and employees: EDI can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government processes and services, enabling agencies to provide better services to citizens and businesses.
- Citizens and businesses: EDI can improve access to government services and information for citizens and businesses, enabling them to interact with government agencies more easily and efficiently. For example, citizens can access government services online, and businesses can use EDI to exchange information with government agencies in real-time.
- Vulnerable and marginalized populations: EDI can improve access to services and information for vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as people living in rural areas, people with disabilities, and low-income households, under condition that government will subsidise device and communication cost.

Overall, EDI development in the public sector has the potential to benefit a wide range of population groups, including government agencies, citizens and businesses, vulnerable and marginalized populations.

- 5. Have knowledge, good practices, and past lessons learned of UNDP and others informed the project design?
  - 3: Knowledge and lessons learned backed by credible evidence from sources such as evaluation, corporate policies/strategies, and/or monitoring have been explicitly used, with appropriate referencing, to justify the approach used by the project.
  - <u>2:</u> The project design mentions knowledge and lessons learned backed by evidence/sources, but have not been used to justify the approach selected.
  - 1: There is little or no mention of knowledge and lessons learned informing the project design. Any references made are anecdotal and not backed by evidence.
- \*Note: Management Action or strong management justification must be given for a score of  $\bf 1$

3

#### Evidence

UNDP has a wealth of knowledge, good practices, and past lessons globally and locally, that can be used for successful development of EDI. UNDP also has a knowledge of local contexts of development of public digital goods in Turkmenistan which can provide valuable insights into local conditions, including cultural, social, economic, and political factors that may impact the success of this project. Other factors used for project design are good practices in project management and lessons learned from past digital transformation initiatives in Turkmenistan.

- 6. Does UNDP have a clear advantage to engage in the role envisioned by the project vis-à-vis national/regional/global partners and other actors?
  - 3: An analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area where the project intends

5 3 Evidence to work, and credible evidence supports the proposed engagement of UNDP and partners through the project, including identification of potential funding partners. It is clear how results achieved by partners will complement the project's intended results and a communication strategy is in place to communicate results and raise visibility visà-vis key partners. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation have been considered, as appropriate. (all must be true)

- <u>2:</u> Some analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area where the project intends to work, and relatively limited evidence supports the proposed engagement of and division of labour between UNDP and partners through the project, with unclear funding and communications strategies or plans.
- 1: No clear analysis has been conducted on the role of other partners in the area that the project intends to work. There is risk that the project overlaps and/or does not coordinate with partners' interventions in this area. Options for south-south and triangular cooperation have not been considered, despite its potential relevance.

\*Note: Management Action or strong management justification must be given for a score of 1

Yes.

UNDP certainly has a clear advantage to engage in the role of EDI project development, comparing to other local development partners.

UNDP has a significant technical expertise globally, in a range of areas related to EDI, including data management, software development, and digital infrastructure. This expertise can be leveraged to support the development of effective and sustainable EDI systems.

UNDP Experience working with Turkmenistan governments is outstanding and can provide valuable insights into how to engage with government stakeholders and support them in implementing EDI initiatives.

UNDP Turkmenistan CO has experience in access to funding from the government, as well as multilateral organizations. This funding can be used to support the development and implementation of EDI projects.

Network of partners: UNDP has a broad network of partners, including other UN agencies and other NGO, as well as hi-tech private sector. This network can be leveraged to support the development of partnerships and collaborations that are critical to the success of EDI initiatives.

#### **PRINCIPLED**

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

- 3: The project is guided by human rights and incorporates the principles of accountability, meaningful participation, and non-discrimination in the project's strategy. The project upholds the relevant international and national laws and standards. Any potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were rigorously identified and assessed as relevant, with appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into project design and budget. (all must be true)
- <u>2:</u> The project is guided by human rights by prioritizing accountability, meaningful participation and non-discrimination. Potential adverse impacts

3

2 Evidence

The project is one of the principal projects of UNDP in Turkmenistan aimed at increasing digital transformation in the country taking into account human rights and rule of law dimension. Project will improve access to information and data, and enable greater transparency and accountability in government and public institutions, which is a key element of human rights.

EDI and E-Governance can help to promote non-discrimination and equality, by ensuring that information and services are accessible to all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics.

on enjoyment of human rights were identified and assessed as relevant, and appropriate mitigation and management measures incorporated into the project design and budget. (both must be true)

 1: No evidence that the project is guided by human rights. Limited or no evidence that potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were considered.

\*Note: Management action or strong management justification must be given for a score of

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

- 3: A participatory gender analysis has been conducted and results from this gender analysis inform the development challenge, strategy and expected results sections of the project document. Outputs and indicators of the results framework include explicit references to gender equality, and specific indicators measure and monitor results to ensure women are fully benefitting from the project. (all must be true)
- 2: A basic gender analysis has been carried out and results from this analysis are scattered (i.e., fragmented and not consistent) across the development challenge and strategy sections of the project document. The results framework may include some gender sensitive outputs and/or activities but gender inequalities are not consistently integrated across each output. (all must be true)
- 1: The project design may or may not mention information and/or data on the differential impact of the project's development situation on gender relations, women and men, but the gender inequalities have not been clearly identified and reflected in the project document.

\*Note: Management Action or strong management justification must be given for a score of 1

### Evidence

The project is one of the principal projects of UNDP in Turkmenistan aimed at increasing digital transformation in the country considering gender issues. Project will be improving access to information and data and enabling greater transparency and accountability in government and public institutions for all categories of population including woman and girls.

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

- 3: Credible evidence that the project addresses sustainability and resilience dimensions of development challenges, which are integrated in the project strategy and design. The project reflects the interconnections between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Relevant shocks, hazards and adverse social and environmental impacts have been identified and rigorously assessed with appropriate management and mitigation measures incorporated into project design and budget. (all must be true).
- 2: The project design integrates sustainability and resilience dimensions of development challenges.

3

#### Evidence

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) can play an important role in supporting the resilience and sustainability of societies and ecosystems by enabling the efficient exchange of data and information between stakeholders. Through the use of EDI, data on environmental and social issues can be collected, analyzed, and shared, helping to inform evidence-based decision-making and support the implementation of sustainable development policies and interventions. Additionally, EDI can facilitate the monitoring of environmental data, promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and reducing environmental degradation. This, in turn, can help to build more resilient and sustainable societies and ecosystems, by strengthening their capacity to address complex social and environmental challenges.

Relevant shocks, hazards and adverse social and environmental impacts have been identified and assessed, and relevant management and mitigation measures incorporated into project design and budget. (both must be true)

 1: Sustainability and resilience dimensions and impacts were not adequately considered.

\*Note: Management action or strong management justification must be given for a score of 1

10. Has the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) been conducted to identify potential social and environmental impacts and risks? The SESP is not required for projects in which UNDP is Administrative Agent only and/or projects comprised solely of reports, coordination of events, trainings, workshops, meetings, conferences and/or communication materials and information dissemination. [if yes, upload the completed checklist. If SESP is not required, provide the reason for the exemption in the evidence section.]

Yes

SESP has been conducted as a part of project design. No potential social and environmental negative impacts had been identified.

SESP is attached (Annex I to PRODOC) conducted

#### **MANAGEMENT & MONITORING**

#### 11. Does the project have a strong results framework?

- 3: The project's selection of outputs and activities are at an appropriate level. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure the key expected development changes, each with credible data sources and populated baselines and targets, including gender sensitive, target group focused, sex-disaggregated indicators where appropriate. (all must be true)
- <u>2:</u> The project's selection of outputs and activities are at an appropriate level. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators, but baselines, targets and data sources may not yet be fully specified. Some use of target group focused, sex-disaggregated indicators, as appropriate. (all must be true)
- 1: The project's selection of outputs and activities are not at an appropriate level; outputs are not accompanied by SMART, results-oriented indicators that measure the expected change and have not been populated with baselines and targets; data sources are not specified, and/or no gender sensitive, sex-disaggregation of indicators. (if any is true)

\*Note: Management Action or strong management justification must be given for a score of 1

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

2

#### Evidence

Yes,

The project's selection of outputs and activities are indicators are on appropriate level project has a strong result framework indicated in the project document, Section V.

Outputs and activities on are at the appropriate level. Outputs are accompanied by SMART, result – oriented indicators but baselines, targets and data sources may not yet be fully specified.

5

3

- 3: The project's governance mechanism is fully defined. Individuals have been specified for each position in the governance mechanism (especially all members of the project board.) Project Board members have agreed on their roles and responsibilities as specified in the terms of reference. The ToR of the project board has been attached to the project document. (all must be true).
- 2: The project's governance mechanism is defined; specific institutions are noted as holding key governance roles, but individuals may not have been specified yet. The project document lists the most important responsibilities of the project board, project director/manager and quality assurance roles. (all must be true)
- 1: The project's governance mechanism is loosely defined in the project document, only mentioning key roles that will need to be filled at a later date. No information on the responsibilities of key positions in the governance mechanism is provided.

\*Note: Management Action or strong management justification must be given for a score of 1

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

- 3: Project risks related to the achievement of results are fully described in the project risk log, based on comprehensive analysis drawing on the programme's theory of change, Social and Environmental Standards and screening, situation analysis, capacity assessments and other analysis such as funding potential and reputational risk. Risks have been identified through a consultative process with key internal and external stakeholders. Clear and complete plan in place to manage and mitigate each risk, reflected in project budgeting and monitoring plans. (both must be true)
- <u>2:</u> Project risks related to the achievement of results are identified in the initial project risk log based on a minimum level of analysis and consultation, with mitigation measures identified for each risk.
- <u>1:</u> Some risks may be identified in the initial project risk log, but no evidence of consultation or analysis and no clear risk mitigation measures identified. This option is also selected if risks are not clearly identified and/or no initial risk log is included with the project document.

\*Note: Management Action must be taken for a score of 1

#### Evidence

The project governance mechanism is in place and fully defined in the organigram of the project document, chapter VIII Governance and Management Mechanism. TOR of the project board is attached with roles and responsibilities with project board members on their roles, and responsibilities.

#### 2 Evidence

Based on the theory of change, risks have been identified with clear description and outcomes of the phase I project. Risk log of the Project is attached.

Risk of the project will be clarified after activity 1.1.1 Preparation of terms of reference for deployment of the EDI system based on the X-Road solution, since some risk may not be visible at this stage.

#### **EFFICIENT**

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

(Note: Evidence of at least one measure must be provided to answer yes for this question)

Yes

- i) using the theory of change analysis to explore different options of achieving the maximum results with the resources available;
- v) using innovative approaches and technologies to reduce the cost of service delivery or other types of interventions.

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

- 3: The project's budget is at the activity level with funding sources, and is specified for the duration of the project period in a multi-year budget. Realistic resource mobilisation plans are in place to fill unfunded components. Costs are supported with valid estimates using benchmarks from similar projects or activities. Cost implications from inflation and foreign exchange exposure have been estimated and incorporated in the budget. Adequate costs for monitoring, evaluation, communications and security have been incorporated.
- <u>2:</u> The project's budget is at the activity level with funding sources, when possible, and is specified for the duration of the project in a multi-year budget, but no funding plan is in place. Costs are supported with valid estimates based on prevailing rates.
- 1: The project's budget is not specified at the activity level, and/or may not be captured in a multiyear budget.

4

#### **Evidence**

The project budget is identified at the activity level for the duration of the project in a multi-year budget. The cost estimates are based on the market research and data from other projects, as well as international experts. Project is fully funded by the Government.

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

 3: The budget fully covers all project costs that are attributable to the project, including programme management and development effectiveness services related to strategic country programme planning, quality assurance, pipeline development, policy advocacy services, finance, procurement, human resources, administration, issuance of contracts, security, travel, assets, general services, information and communications based on full 5

3 Evidence

The project is covered from the contribution of the Government of Turkmenistan. Not UNDP funds are used.

costing in accordance with prevailing UNDP policies (i.e., UPL, LPL.) 2: The budget covers significant project costs that are attributable to the project based on prevailing UNDP policies (i.e., UPL, LPL) as relevant. 1: The budget does not adequately cover project costs that are attributable to the project, and UNDP is cross-subsidizing the project. \*Note: Management Action must be given for a score of 1. The budget must be revised to fully reflect the costs of implementation before the project commences. **EFFECTIVE** 17. Have targeted groups been engaged in the design of the project? 3 3: Credible evidence that all targeted groups, **Evidence** Target groups (government employees, representatives from national prioritising discriminated and marginalized populations that will be involved in or affected by partners – "Turkmenaragatnasyk" agency) were fully engaged during the project, have been actively engaged in the the design stage. design of the project. The project has an explicit Design of the system will be clarified during 1.1.1 Preparation of terms strategy to identify, engage and ensure the of reference for deployment of the EDI system based on the X-Road meaningful participation of target groups as solution. stakeholders throughout the project, including through monitoring and decision-making (e.g., representation on the project board, inclusion in samples for evaluations, etc.) 2: Some evidence that key targeted groups have been consulted in the design of the project. 1: No evidence of engagement with targeted groups during project design. 18. Does the project plan for adaptation and course correction if regular monitoring activities, evaluation, Yes No and lesson learned demonstrate there are better (3) (1) approaches to achieve the intended results and/or circumstances change during implementation? 19. The gender marker for all project outputs are scored at No GEN2 or GEN3, indicating that gender has been fully GEN1 is a gender marker for this project. (1) mainstreamed into all project outputs at a minimum. **Evidence** \*Note: Management Action or strong management justification must be given for a score of "no" Sustainability & National Ownership 20. Have national/regional/global partners led, or 3 proactively engaged in, the design of the project? **Evidence** 3: National partners (or regional/global partners for regional and global projects) have full ownership of National partners were fully engaged during the design stage as the the project and led the process of the development design stage of the project included the phase I of this project. of the project jointly with UNDP. 2: The project has been developed by UNDP in close "Turkmenaragatnasyk" agency team was fully engaged in every stage of consultation with national/regional/global partners. design, review and approving the final version. 1: The project has been developed by UNDP with limited or no engagement with national partners. Project team proactively collaborated with global and regional partners in project design.

<ul> <li>21. Are key institutions and systems identified, and is there a strategy for strengthening specific/ comprehensive capacities based on capacity assessments conducted?</li> <li>3: The project has a strategy for strengthening specific capacities of national institutions and/or actors based on a completed capacity assessment. This strategy includes an approach to regularly monitor national capacities using clear indicators and rigorous methods of data collection, and adjust the strategy to strengthen national capacities accordingly.</li> <li>2: A capacity assessment has been completed. There are plans to develop a strategy to strengthen specific capacities of national institutions and/or actors based on the results of the capacity assessment.</li> </ul>	2 Evidence  The capacity of the National partner was considered at the design stage. Moreover, it is expected to conduct UNDP Digital Readiness Assessment during the initial stages of the project.		
<ul> <li>1: Capacity assessments have not been carried out.</li> <li>22. Is there is a clear strategy embedded in the project specifying how the project will use national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluations, etc.,) to the extent possible?</li> </ul>	Yes (3)	No (1)	
23. Is there a clear transition arrangement/ phase-out plan developed with key stakeholders in order to sustain or scale up results (including resource mobilization and communications strategy)?	Yes (4)  It is a first project with this National partner and first this type of project. Phasing out and scaling up interventions are already discussed for more comprehensive development of the digital public services.	No (1)	

Signature:

Prepared

Farhad Artykov

Docusigned by:
Farhad Utykon
DDCF432F5E494CE...

Approver

Tomica Pavovic

-DocuSigned by:

8200F74A4EEA4B7...