

Implementation Stage Quality Assurance Report

Form Status: Approved

Overall Rating:	Needs Improvement
Decision:	Take remedial action: The project has issues that must be addressed or the project may be suspended. If the Social and Environmental Standards criterion is below satisfactory, the project may be suspended if the deficiencies are not addressed. All management actions must be addressed in a timely manner.
Portfolio/Project Number:	00110393
Portfolio/Project Title:	Support to Rural Livelihoods Mission in Uttarakhand
Portfolio/Project Date:	2018-01-01 / 2023-06-30

Strategic

Quality Rating: Exemplary

1. Is the project pro-actively identifying changes to the external environment and incorporating them into the project strategy?

- 3: *The project team has identified relevant changes in the external environment that may present new opportunities or threats to the project's ability to achieve its objectives and the assumptions have been tested to determine if the project's strategy is still valid. There is evidence that the project board has considered the implications, and documented any changes needed to the project in response. (all must be true)*
- 2: The project team has identified relevant changes in the external environment that may present new opportunities or threats to the project's ability to achieve its objectives. There is some evidence that the project board discussed this, but relevant changes may not have been fully integrated in the project. (both must be true)
- 1: The project team may have considered relevant changes in the external environment since implementation began, but there is no evidence that the project team has considered changes to the project as a result.

Evidence:

Yes, the project team has identified relevant changes in the external environment that present new opportunities to expand the project staff.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	USRLMAMD1_10045_201 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/USRLMAMD1_10045_201.pdf)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 10:54:00 AM
2	USRLMamd2_10045_201 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/USRLMamd2_10045_201.pdf)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 10:54:00 AM

2. Is the project aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan?

- 3: *The project responds at least one of the development settings³ as specified in the Strategic Plan (SP) and adopts at least one Signature Solution⁴ and the project's RRF includes at all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true)*
- 2: The project responds to one of the three areas of **development work**¹ as specified in the Strategic Plan. The project's RRF includes at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true)
- 1: While the project may respond to a partner's identified need, this need falls outside the UNDP Strategic Plan. Also select this option if none of the relevant SP indicators are included in the RRF.

Evidence:

Yes, Aligned to Outcome 1: By 2022, institutions are strengthened to progressively deliver universal access to basic services, employment, and sustainable livelihoods to the poor and excluded, in rural and urban areas.

This is being achieved by giving hand holding support to SHGs/federation to help them become resource institutions at community level.

This year additional 36 blocks have been added to the project This increased penetration would further facilitate UNDP in supporting USRLM in achieving the goal of creating linkages with livelihood opportunities and market credit.

The project responds to the development setting of (1) eradicate poverty in all forms and the signature solution of (6) strengthening gender equality and empowering women and girls.

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No documents available.			

3. Are the project’s targeted groups being systematically engaged, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized, to ensure the project remains relevant for them?

- 3: *Systematic and structured feedback has been collected over the past two years from a representative sample of beneficiaries, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized, as part of the project’s monitoring system. Representatives from the targeted groups are active members of the project’s governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) and there is credible evidence that their feedback informs project decision making. (all must be true)*
- 2: Targeted groups have been engaged in implementation and monitoring, with a priority focus on the discriminated and marginalized. Beneficiary feedback, which may be anecdotal, has been collected over the past year to ensure the project is addressing local priorities. This information has been used to inform project decision making. (all must be true)
- 1: Some beneficiary feedback may have been collected over the past year, but this information has not been used to inform project decision making. This option is also selected if no beneficiary feedback has been collected.
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

The USRLM Project targets women from households as identified by the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC). Regular and structured feedback has been received from the beneficiaries on various aspects of the project and its implementation. Primary beneficiaries have been poor and the excluded in rural and urban areas. The team of livelihood professionals set up by UNDP at district and block level ensures mobilization and sensitization of rural households into self-managed institutions such as Self Help Groups (SHGs). Since the members are usually from similar social and financial background, they try to find solutions to each other’s problems. SHGs enable women to build their skills and confidence, and in increasing their incomes.

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No documents available.			

4. Is the project generating knowledge and lessons learned (i.e., what has worked and what has not) and has this knowledge informed management decisions to ensure the continued relevance of the project towards its stated objectives, the quality of its outputs and the management of risk?

- 3: Knowledge and lessons learned from internal or external sources (gained, for example, from Peer Assists, After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, corporate policies/strategies, analysis and monitoring have been discussed in project board meetings and reflected in the minutes. There is clear evidence that changes were made to the project to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true)
- 2: Knowledge and lessons learned backed by relatively limited evidence, drawn mainly from within the project, have been considered by the project team. There is some evidence that changes were made to the project as a result to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true)
- 1: There is limited or no evidence that knowledge and lessons learned have been collected by the project team. There is little or no evidence that this has informed project decision making.

Evidence:

- Documentation of Best Practices under USRLM for facilitating replication & scalability and showcasing USRLM work. The 'Best Practices Coffee Table Book' was launched on 18th August 2021, by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand.
- Development of 54 Livelihood training Modules (in Hindi and English) for both Farm and Non-Farm Livelihoods under USRLM.
- Two quarterly newsletters of USRLM have been launched.

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#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	bestpracticesUSRLM_10045_204 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/bestpracticesUSRLM_10045_204.pdf)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 11:05:00 AM

5. Is the project sufficiently at scale, or is there potential to scale up in the future, to meaningfully contribute to development change?

- 3: There is credible evidence that the project is reaching a sufficient number of beneficiaries (either directly through significant coverage of target groups, or indirectly, through policy change) to meaningfully contribute to development change.
- 2: While the project is currently not at scale, there are explicit plans in place to scale up the project in the future (e.g. by extending its coverage or using project results to advocate for policy change).
- 1: The project is not at scale, and there are no plans currently to scale up the project in the future.

Evidence:

USRLM project has been successful at covering 95 blocks of all the districts in the State of Uttarakhand. It is a flagship development program of the State Government and the rollout has been more than satisfactory. Thus, the scale of the project has been sufficient. Since its inception, over 2,47,000 households have been mobilized into over 30,000 Self- Help Groups.

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No documents available.			

Principled

Quality Rating: Needs Improvement

6. Are the project's measures (through outputs, activities, indicators) to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant and producing the intended effect? If not, evidence-based adjustments and changes have been made.

- 3: *The project team has systematically gathered data and evidence through project monitoring on the relevance of the measures to address gender inequalities and empower women. Analysis of data and evidence were used to inform adjustments and changes, as appropriate. (both must be true)*
- 2: The project team has some data and evidence on the relevance of the measures to address gender inequalities and empower women. There is evidence that at least some adjustments were made, as appropriate. (both must be true)
- 1: The project team has limited or no evidence on the relevance of measures to address gender inequalities and empowering women. No evidence of adjustments and/or changes made. This option should also be selected if the project has no measures to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant to the project results and activities.

Evidence:

There has been communication at policy level for continued relevance of the project.
Further for this, investment in variety of knowledge and communication products/services has been planned for this year and has been thus incorporated in the MoA.
Gender concerns have been integrated in the project actions.
There has been an increase in women participation. Training of women self help groups on non farm livelihoods has been successfully completed. Future interventions have been planned for facilitating livelihood training to women SHGs. Further, SRLM endeavors to support the pilot projects that have potential to lead to gender sensitization.

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7. Are social and environmental impacts and risks being successfully managed and monitored?

- 3: Social and environmental risks are tracked in the risk log. Appropriate assessments conducted where required (i.e., Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Substantial and High risk projects and some level of social and environmental assessment for Moderate risk projects as identified through SESP). Relevant management plan(s) developed for identified risks through consultative process and implemented, resourced, and monitored. Risks effectively managed or mitigated. If there has been a substantive change to the project or change in context that affects risk levels, the SESP is updated to reflect these changes. (all must be true)
- 2: Social and environmental risks are tracked in the risk log. Appropriate assessments conducted where required (i.e., Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for Substantial and High risk projects and some level of social and environmental assessment for Moderate risk projects as identified through SESP). Relevant management plan(s) developed, implemented and monitored for identified risks. OR project is categorized as Low risk through the SESP.
- 1: *Social and environmental risks have not been tracked in the risk log. For projects categorized as High, Substantial, and Moderate Risk there is no evidence that social and environmental assessments have been completed and/or management plans or measures development, implemented or monitored. There have been substantive changes to the project or changes in the context but SESP has not been updated. (any may be true)*

Evidence:

NA
The focus of the project is sustainable livelihood & employment.
Social and environmental impacts and risks under the project are being undertaken by the government as per the NRLM scheme.

SESP not required

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8. Are grievance mechanisms available to project-affected people and are grievances (if any) addressed to ensure any perceived harm is effectively mitigated?

- 3: Project-affected people have been actively informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism (SRM/SECU) and how to access it. If the project is categorized as High, Substantial, or Moderate Risk through the SESP, a project-level grievance mechanism is in place and project affected people informed. If grievances have been received, they are effectively addressed in accordance with SRM Guidance. (all must be true)
- 2: Project-affected people have been informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism and how to access it. If the project is categorized as Substantial or High Risk through the SESP, a project-level grievance mechanism is in place and project affected people informed. If grievances have been received they are responded to but face challenges in arriving at a resolution.
- 1: *Project-affected people not informed of UNDP's Corporate Accountability Mechanism. If grievances have been received they are not responded to. (any may be true)*

Evidence:

NA

Since USRLM is a State Government Project, the onus of grievance redressal lies on the government machinery and project staff appointed by the government. Grievance redressal follows the government rules and process.

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No documents available.			

9. Is the project’s M&E Plan sufficient and adequately implemented?

- 3: *The project has a comprehensive and costed M&E plan. Baselines, targets and milestones are fully populated. Progress data against indicators in the project’s RRF is being reported regularly using credible data sources and collected according to the frequency stated in the Plan, including sex disaggregated data as relevant. Any evaluations conducted, if relevant, fully meet decentralized evaluation standards, including gender UNEG standards. Lessons learned, including during evaluations and/or After Action Reviews, are used to take corrective actions when necessary. (all must be true)*
- 2: The project has a costed M&E Plan, and most baselines and targets are populated. Progress data against indicators in the project’s RRF is collected on a regular basis, although there may be some slippage in following the frequency stated in the Plan and data sources are not always reliable. Any evaluations conducted, if relevant, meet most decentralized evaluation standards. Lessons learned have been captured but may not have been used to take corrective actions yet. (all must be true)
- 1: The project has an M&E Plan, but costs are not clearly planned and budgeted for, or are unrealistic. Progress data is not being regularly collected against the indicators in the project’s RRF. Evaluations may not meet decentralized evaluation standards. Lessons learned are rarely captured and used. Select this option also if the project does not have an M&E plan.

Evidence:

The Department of Rural Development has been responsible for day-to-day monitoring of project activities through field visits, interactions with district and block level project officials, and desk reviews. Periodic progress reports showing results achieved against the predefined annual targets has been submitted to PSC. Data collected and submitted from field visits and other reports are helping in identifying risks and relevant results being captured. Further, KPIs KRAs for performance evaluation of PMU has been discussed. Impact assessment of SRLM implementation of MPI in 5 blocks of the state is being carried out.

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No documents available.			

10. Is project’s governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) functioning as intended?

- 3: The project's governance mechanism is operating well, and is a model for other projects. It has met in the agreed frequency stated in the project document and the minutes of the meetings are on file. There is regular (at least annual) progress reporting to the project board or equivalent on results, risks and opportunities. It is clear that the project board explicitly reviews and uses evidence, including progress data, knowledge, lessons and evaluations, as the basis for informing management decisions (e.g., change in strategy, approach, work plan.) (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: The project's governance mechanism has met in the agreed frequency and the minutes of the meeting are on file. A project progress report has been submitted to the project board or equivalent at least once in the past year, covering results, risks and opportunities. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: The project's governance mechanism has not met in the frequency stated in the project document over the past year and/or the project board or equivalent is not functioning as a decision-making body for the project as intended.

Evidence:

The PSC has met once as defined in the project document. Discussion on finalization of next steps for capacity building and technical support to be provided by UNDP for strengthening of PMU-USRLM were discussed.

List of Uploaded Documents			
#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	USRLMUNDPPSCMeeting_10045_210 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/USRLMUNDPPSCMeeting_10045_210.docx)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 11:17:00 AM

11. Are risks to the project adequately monitored and managed?

- 3: The project has actively monitored risks every quarter including consulting with key stakeholders, including security advisors, to identify continuing and emerging risks and to assess if the main assumptions remain valid. There is clear evidence that relevant management plans and mitigating measures are being fully implemented to address each key project risk, and have been updated to reflect the latest risk assessment. (all must be true)
- 2: The project has monitored risks every year, as evidenced by an updated risk log. Some updates have been made to management plans and mitigation measures.
- 1: *The risk log has not been updated as required. There may be some evidence that the project has monitored risks (including security risks or incidents) that may affect the project's achievement of results, but there is no explicit evidence that management actions have been taken to mitigate risks. In the case of a deteriorating security environment, no consultation has occurred with the UNDP Security Office on appropriate measures.*

Evidence:

The risk log has not been updated. However, the COVID Pandemic has posed two main risks in the conduction of activities:

1. Capacity Building workshops and training programs of SHG women could not be conducted in-person, due to social distancing norms and travel restrictions.
2. Recruitment process was slightly hampered as the candidates were not able to attend interviews in-person.

Management Response:

Responding to the mentioned challenges, UNDP Uttarakhand took the following measures:

1. Conducted capacity building workshops online
2. Conducted online interviews of candidates for various posts

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No documents available.

Efficient

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

12. Adequate resources have been mobilized to achieve intended results. If not, management decisions were taken to adjust expected results in the project's results framework.

- Yes
- No

Evidence:

Adequate resources have been mobilized for the smooth conduction of the project. Moreover, additional staff was procured for establishing a strong PMU at the block, district and state level.

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No documents available.

13. Are project inputs procured and delivered on time to efficiently contribute to results?

- 3: The project has an updated procurement plan. Implementation of the plan is on or ahead of schedule. The project quarterly reviews operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addresses them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true)
- 2: The project has an updated procurement plan. The project annually reviews operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addresses them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true)
- 1: The project does not have an updated procurement plan. The project may or may not have reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner, however management actions have not been taken to address them.

Evidence:

The Project has an updated procurement plan as attached in the AWP file below. The procurement plan has been on track. Quick management actions have been ensured in the past to make certain that a strong PMU functions at districts and block level. Additional procurement activities requested by the government too have been undertaken in efficiently.

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	UK_AWP_USRLM_March16-Copy_10045_213 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/UK_AWP_USRLM_March16-Copy_10045_213.xlsx)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 11:33:00 AM

14. Is there regular monitoring and recording of cost efficiencies taking into account the expected quality of results?

- 3: There is evidence that the project regularly reviews costs against relevant comparators (e.g., other projects or country offices) or industry benchmarks to ensure the project maximizes results that can be delivered with given resources. The project actively coordinates with other relevant ongoing projects and initiatives (UNDP or other) to ensure complementarity and seek efficiencies wherever possible (e.g. joint activities.) (both must be true)
- 2: *The project monitors its own costs and gives anecdotal examples of cost efficiencies (e.g., spending less to get the same result,) but there is no systematic analysis of costs and no link to the expected quality of results delivered. The project coordinates activities with other projects to achieve cost efficiency gains.*
- 1: There is little or no evidence that the project monitors its own costs and is considering ways to save money beyond following standard procurement rules.

Evidence:

Yes, there is evidence that the project regularly monitors its own costs and gives anecdotal examples of cost-effectiveness. Please refer to the attached files of AWP and QTR for USRLM. The QTR suggests where the costs have been lower than expected/ targeted (in comparison with the AWP).

List of Uploaded Documents

#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	QTR1_USRLM002_10045_214 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/QTR1_USRLM002_10045_214.docx)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 11:46:00 AM
2	UK_AWP_USRLM_March16-Copy_10045_214 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/UK_AWP_USRLM_March16-Copy_10045_214.xlsx)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 11:47:00 AM

Effective

Quality Rating: **Exemplary**

15. Is the project is on track to deliver its expected outputs?

- Yes
 No

Evidence:

Yes, the project is on track to deliver its outputs. Please refer to the attached latest QTR. It suggests the progress as well as the targeted and actual expenditure for each component of the project.

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#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	QTR1_USRLM002_10045_215 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/QTR1_USRLM002_10045_215.docx)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 11:44:00 AM

16. Have there been regular reviews of the work plan to ensure that the project is on track to achieve the desired results, and to inform course corrections if needed?

- 3: Quarterly progress data has informed regular reviews of the project work plan to ensure that the activities implemented are most likely to achieve the desired results. There is evidence that data and lessons learned (including from evaluations and/or After Action Reviews) have been used to inform course corrections, as needed. Any necessary budget revisions have been made. (both must be true)
- 2: There has been at least one review of the work plan per year to assess if project activities are on track to achieving the desired development results (i.e., outputs.) There may or may not be evidence that data or lessons learned has been used to inform the review(s). Any necessary budget revisions have been made.
- 1: While the project team may have reviewed the work plan at least once over the past year to ensure outputs are delivered on time, no link has been made to the delivery of desired development results. Select this option also if no review of the work plan by management has taken place over the past year.

Evidence:

Yes, there have been regular reviews of the project work plan. Please refer to the Annual Work Plan, Quarterly Progress Reports etc. for the same.

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#	File Name	Modified By	Modified On
1	UK_AWP_USRLM_March16-Copy_10045_216 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/UK_AWP_USRLM_March16-Copy_10045_216.xlsx)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 11:45:00 AM
2	QTR1_USRLM002_10045_216 (https://intranet.undp.org/apps/ProjectQA/QAFormDocuments/QTR1_USRLM002_10045_216.docx)	ashish.vikram@undp.org	10/20/2021 11:45:00 AM

17. Are targeted groups being systematically identified and engaged, prioritizing the marginalized and excluded, to ensure results are achieved as expected?

- 3: The project is targeting specific groups and/or geographic areas, identified by using credible data sources on their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There is clear evidence that the targeted groups are being reached as intended. The project has engaged regularly with targeted groups over the past year to assess whether they are benefiting as expected and adjustments were made if necessary to refine targeting. (all must be true)
- 2: The project is targeting specific groups and/or geographic areas, based on some evidence of their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. Some evidence is provided to confirm that project beneficiaries are members of the targeted groups. There has been some engagement with beneficiaries in the past year to assess whether they are benefiting as expected. (all must be true)
- 1: The project does not report on specific targeted groups. There is no evidence to confirm that project beneficiaries are deprived and/or excluded from development opportunities relevant to the project area of work. There may have been some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they are benefiting as expected, but it has been limited or has not occurred in the past year.
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

The project systematically targets women of poor households across the State, as identified by the Socio-Economic and Caste Survey.

Efforts include building and improving the coverage of institutions of the poor women at various capacities -SHG federations, producer collectives.

The PMU is being trained and communicated on regular basis to ensure that they are able to achieve the objective of reaching the target group.

Capacity building initiatives have been taken in the past and more informative sessions are being planned for the training of community cadres and ensuring cooperation with other stakeholders who may help in reaching the excluded.

Knowledge materials are being prepared based on their understanding of these targeted groups.

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No documents available.

Sustainability & National Ownership

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

18. Are stakeholders and national partners fully engaged in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the project?

- 3: Only national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) are used to fully implement and monitor the project. All relevant stakeholders and partners are fully and actively engaged in the process, playing a lead role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true)
- 2: National systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) are used to implement and monitor the project, but other support (such as country office support or project systems) may also be used if necessary. All relevant stakeholders and partners are fully and actively engaged in the process, playing an active role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true)
- 1: There is relatively limited or no engagement with national stakeholders and partners in the decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring of the project.
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

Yes, project is being implemented properly with continuous support from stakeholders and national partners.

Communication at regular intervals between the partners has been ensured and the government is regularly updated. The Dept of Rural Development has been very active and has been regularly giving feedback to the UNDP team.

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No documents available.

19. There is regular monitoring of changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems relevant to the project, as needed. The [implementation arrangements](#)⁵ have been adjusted according to changes in partner capacities.

- 3: In the past two years, changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems have been comprehensively assessed/monitored using clear indicators, rigorous methods of data collection and credible data sources including relevant HACT assurance activities. Implementation arrangements have been formally reviewed and adjusted, if needed, in agreement with partners according to changes in partner capacities. (both must be true)
- 2: *In the past two years, aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems have been monitored by the project using indicators and reasonably credible data sources including relevant HACT assurance activities. Some adjustment has been made to implementation arrangements if needed to reflect changes in partner capacities. (both must be true)*
- 1: Some aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems may have been monitored by the project, however changes to implementation arrangements have not been considered. Also select this option if changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems have not been monitored by the project.
- Not Applicable

Evidence:

At the behest of the government, an internal mid-term review has been conducted, based on which corrective measures and actions have been taken.

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No documents available.			

20. The transition and phase-out arrangements are reviewed regularly and adjusted according to progress (including financial commitments and capacity).

- 3: *The project's governance mechanism has reviewed the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project is on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan has been adjusted according to progress as needed. (both must be true)*
- 2: There has been a review of the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project is on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan.
- 1: The project may have a sustainability plan, but there has not been a review of this strategy since it was developed. Also select this option if the project does not have a sustainability strategy.

Evidence:

USRM is a flagship development scheme of the State Government. UNDP has already submitted a two-year extension proposal. For the coming two years, the government might hand over the project to UNDP to other Project Implementing Agencies.

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No documents available.			

QA Summary/Project Board Comments