



# Evaluation Summary



International  
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Evaluation Unit

## *Gender equality and women's empowerment in Viet Nam - Final Joint Evaluation*

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** Vietnam

**Final Evaluation:** 03/2012

**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent

**ILO Administrative responsibility:** CO-Hanoi

**Technical Area:** Gender

**Evaluation Management:** MDG

*Achievement Fund*

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**Project Code:** VIE/09/52/UND

**Donor:** MDG-AF (US\$ 4,500,000.00)

UNFPA: 2,746,655.00

FAO: 90,000.00; ILO: 424,960.00;

IOM: 52,803.00; UNDP: 215,367.00;

UNESCO: 215,875.00; UNICEF: 2,995.00;

UNIDO: 127,311.00; UN Women: 242,681.00;

UNODC: 209,083.00

**Keywords:** Gender equality, women empowerment, national legislation on gender equality.

### Background & Context

The Joint Programme on Gender Equality in Viet Nam is one of 128 Joint Programmes funded by the MDG Achievement Fund worldwide. It is the first of three JPs that is financed by the MDG-F in Viet Nam. Over a period of three years twelve UN agencies and programmes, i.e. FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNWOMEN UNODC, and WHO; in partnership with the Government of Viet Nam have aimed to provide strategic, coordinated and multi-sectoral capacity building and technical assistance to foster the capacity of national and

provincial duty bearers. This support aimed to put them in a position to better implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Law on Gender Equality (GEL) and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (DVL) from 2009- 2011. With the 12 UN agencies forming a critical mass and aiming to speak with one voice, the JPGE strived for changes at the highest level towards gender equality in Vietnam.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The lack of sufficient and all-encompassing M&E results framework and quality assurance mechanisms shared by all agencies involved is a shortcoming in the JPGE Management. This refers mainly to the lack of a capacity building strategy and respective shared evaluation tools applied on training provision by all implementing partners. The continuation of the partnership between GoV and UNCT in working on GE, DV and GBV is secured under the One Plan 2012-2016 approved in February 2012. This means a good opportunity to sustain achievements of the JPGE. If also those outputs of the JPGE that have been completed just prior to or at the closing ceremony 16 March 2012 will be utilized and applied under One Plan there is a fair chance to sustain several of the achievements of the JPGE. Care has however to be taken of a truly joint implementation of the One Plan and the joint approach of UN agencies working towards the same outputs and outcomes.

### Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Before embarking on the implementation of One Plan to take stock and using the momentum gained with a joint approach in implementation of the JPGE. What has worked well, where are gaps left, or how can products only very recent or in draft made available (M&E frameworks, action plans) be sustained, which actions have not led to the expected results (outputs and contributions to outcomes)? Work proactively on closing these gaps or work on the sustainability, as inputs to the next five years of implementation on GE related subjects in the OP and beyond.

**Recommendation 2:** Address the question if and how existing coordination mechanism established under JPGE shall be set forth, with human resources allocated, and how some new ones shall be established. Discuss the role of UN Women in their strengthened role as agency in coordination of the gender related outputs of the OP. Also address

which can be the role of the gender expert in RCO within the OP.

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

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

**Recommendation 5:** Discuss how the clearly and repeatedly detected gap in accessible quality M&E expertise, as well as for the JPGE itself as also in the set up and operation of M&E systems for internal project management use as well as for macro systems at GoV side, for the monitoring of progress in implementation of laws. Indicators in One Plan need partly revision as well, as they are showing several weaknesses observed also in earlier documents. Consider to involve the M&E Expert and the UN M&E working group, or evaluation expertise at Regional Offices in Bangkok or HQ level.

**Recommendation 6:** Once the source(s) of M&E expertise are identified, give priority on the approval and operationalization of the M&E frameworks for MOLISA (GEL) and MOCST (DVL), thus to allow a sustainable and measurable implementation of the respective strategies and Action Plans within and beyond the period of One Plan. Base the work on the versions of the M&E

frameworks already composed under the JPGE and avoid inefficient duplication of efforts.

**Recommendation 7:** Organize a M&E training workshop to bring all GoV and UN agency staff involved on the same page about RBM, PCM and M&E, ideally also on special indicators of gender-monitoring. Draft M&E plans for GEL and DVL or the results framework of One Plan can be used as case studies to work on.

**Recommendation 8:** Compare existing training assessment methods, between the UNCT members and also between GoV agencies. Develop a joint training assessment tool that can be used by all UN agencies. In this way results encompass various inputs from various providers. Training quality starts already with the selection of participants. A small guideline with the major steps and templates should be compiled from the existing material.

**Recommendation 9:** In cooperation with Ministries involved in 2.4.3 and 2.4.4 capacity building activities under One Plan, work at a joint capacity building strategy and implementation plan with set targets and on joint set of training and human resources development assessment methods. JPGE partners shall be in the position to provide good practices and apply similar or same training assessment methods among all partners involved. Make a transparent training assessment a must for any training activity and to utilize it for a continuous improvement process. Do not provide any further capacity training under outputs 2.4.3. and 2.4.4 as long as no capacity building strategy and plan has been completed.

**Recommendation 10:** After a period of six to eight months to assess the impact of the capacity building and training provided under JPGE; apply lessons learned as well for new overall capacity building measures foreseen under One Plan. Capacities at central level have been created, but the impact of training and knowledge transfer should be also verified at provincial and district level, possibly combined with initiatives in the same regions or via electronic media where possible. Follow up is required to verify if the training provided was useful for the task the respective trainee has to perform.

**Recommendations 11:** Working towards a new corporate culture in line with One UN as future model, including required changes at HQ level. Although HPPMG have been introduced in Viet

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

**Recommendation 12:** GoV should use wherever possible existing staff for gender related aspects under the One Plan, as now GoV staff has been trained and with expected enhanced capacity being a sustainable elements in the structure who are knowledge carrier.

**Recommendations 13:** Appreciate the necessity to find suitable and, if required, highly qualified staff for potentially high value added work pieces, as well in policy advice work as for technical assistance. Should junior staff get involved s/he needs to be backed and supervised by an experience senior staff member.

**Recommendation 14:** Establish a consultant roaster used and fed jointly by all agencies member of the UNCT; consider putting search profiles at [www.unjobs.org](http://www.unjobs.org) or the [www.devex.com](http://www.devex.com) or on [www.un.org.vn/](http://www.un.org.vn/) @ jobs or tenders, respectively. The entry to the consultant roaster can be combined with some online test to secure a certain quality. Multi-agency activity planning shall anticipate potential bottlenecks in availability.

**Recommendation 15:** National and International consultants working under the same project shall be passing the same recruitment process; the selection process shall be performed by a committee composed by members of the respective governmental entities and representatives of the UNCT or the JP team.

**Recommendation 16:** “Heavy bureaucratic procedures” must be anticipated for future programme as an aspect to be duly taken into account in the risk management as part of the programme proposal.