

Independent Review – Management Response

(Note: This form is to be included in the final report.)

Name of programme/office/unit:	United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT)		
Name of programme manager	Mihoko KUMAMOTO (OIC)		
Name of project undertaking	Strengthening Capacities in the Use of Geospatial Information for Improved Resilience in Asia-Pacific and Africa Project	ID	TARSA076
Name of evaluation	Midline Review of the Strengthening Capacities in the Use of Geospatial Information for Improved Resilience in Asia-Pacific and Africa Project		
Report issuance:	September 2023		

**SECTION I – Comments on Findings/
Conclusions**

Overall, we are delighted with the progress that is noticeable by the project management within the partner countries. This positive development is reflected in the midline evaluation and has received endorsement by the Independent Evaluator as well. We appreciate the innovative approach adopted for the midline review at UNITAR, which brought together representatives from eight countries for a productive midline workshop in Bangkok, hosted at the regional office of UNOSAT. The midline review captured the current situation of the project well and provided management with useful comments and recommendations.

We kindly thank the Evaluator for his time and for providing us valuable midline review to assess project progress.

SECTION II - RECOMMENDATIONS		Management Response and Planned Action				
Recommendation		Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Status one year (planned, under implementation, implemented)
1.	<p>On project sustainability: To ensure sustainability of the project, the project should prioritize the development of the knowledge platform and CoP to ensure that project participants have sufficient confidence to apply the project's GIT solution, in addition to continuing backstopping services. As an expanded backstopping programme would need additional resources, UNITAR should continue to mobilize further resources (recommendation 3). At the same time, the focal point organizations should ensure sufficient budget to maintain the position of the project's national GIS experts. The possibility of extension of technical backstopping services beyond 2024 must be clarified to focal point organizations, establishing the budget and staff requirements that UNOSAT would need for that purpose. Training of trainers may need to be advanced to take place before</p>	Partially Accepted	Host a series of webinars in the Knowledge Hub , run consultations with focal point organisations		Under implementation	Implemented
		<p>Comments:</p> <p>Management partially accepts this recommendation. We interpret the recommendation to contain three separate points of action; listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Earlier this year, a knowledge Hub was launched with the primary objective of fostering engagement among all its members through online participation, facilitating the exchange of best practices and promoting distance learning. Keeping the sustainability factor as the primary goal, a series of webinars are being planned to occur from December 2023 onwards. The Knowledge Hub will provide our participants to learn and gain insights from various resource materials, publications, and presentations. It commits to continue its efforts in creating engaging content such as webinars, e-learning courses, or interactive workshops to enhance awareness and knowledge, which will enable the project stakeholders to plan for future sustainability. 2. UNOSAT will extend its willingness to share resources and expertise in the areas such as capacity building, knowledge transfer or providing technical support, where-in it will facilitate the process into building a new phase for the project with new funding resources. Additionally, UNOSAT is committed to maintaining its efforts in keeping the operation of its knowledge Hub until two years from the project completion date. 3. Training of Trainers led by UNOSAT has been established as a project objective and is planned to take place in March 2024, to ensure proper transfer of knowledge and usage. The new trainers will reinforce and disseminate the knowledge, extending it to the entire country and their respective communities 				

Management Response – Midline Review of the Strengthening Capacities in the Use of Geospatial Information for Improved Resilience in Asia-Pacific and Africa

	the project’s final month to allow for trainers’ practice.					
Recommendation		Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Status one year (planned, under implementation, implemented)
2.	On project implementation: The project should make the web application solution finalization a priority in order to still allow for accompanied use of the app by August 2024. While the project is on track or has surpassed targets for other outputs, it is behind on release of the apps . As testing and user training takes time, it is recommended that the project concentrate on this work package, building on the user feedback received during the midline workshop.	Accepted	More capacity dedicated to finalising web app solutions.		Under implementation	Implemented
		<p>Comments: To ensure the finalisation of the planned web solutions, the dedicated team has been reinforced to make sure that the web solution apps will be finalised and effective ASAP. UNOSAT has indeed received a significantly higher number of requests in this area than initially planned and our team is confident to meet this increased demand by the end of the project completion date.</p>				
Recommendation		Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Status one year (planned, under implementation, implemented)
3.	On mobilizing funding: Considering the significant evidence of transformational change in matters as critical as disaster risk preparedness and response, UNOSAT and the focal point organization should, in consultation with the donor, design a strategy to mobilise funding for a subsequent phase and consolidate results, especially in those countries where the project implementation is delayed or extend support to further countries. A better	Partially Accepted	Mobilise funding: Internal discussion will take place to orient awareness-raising events to advocate for further funding.		Under implementation	Implemented
		<p>Comments: Project implementation in all our target countries has always been a high priority for UNOSAT. This approach is primarily grounded in our client-based principle, wherein we enable our partners to plan the course according to their specific needs. UNOSAT has initiated collaborations with various partners, leveraging its presence in the country to explore potential synergies and in many which ways it has gained its set purpose. UNOSAT through the UNDRR-CDRI project has built in synergies and has received request for training in GIS from the Government of Tonga. Similar relationship has been established in Bhutan and new collaborations has been extended with agencies like FAO and Nigeria Delta Development Commission (NDDC) in Lao-PDR and Nigeria, for further fundings and continuation of work.</p>				

Management Response – Midline Review of the Strengthening Capacities in the Use of Geospatial Information for Improved Resilience in Asia-Pacific and Africa

	<p>definition and orientation of "awareness-raising events" could be the conduit to communicate project results better to advocate for further funding.</p>	<p>Working in collaboration with our implementing partner, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the project in the three pacific countries (Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) has successfully developed 8 proposals on Climate Finance. These proposals are to the tune of approximately USD 87 million and are targeted towards various climate funding instruments.</p> <p>While the project objective includes showcasing the project to attract new donors and partners, it is essential to note that they are not the sole focus during awareness- raising events. This perspective has been communicated to the donor, and March 2024 is earmarked for discussing potential follow-ups including subsequent next phase for a new funding.</p> <p>Recognising that UNOSAT may not always have complete control over the events it participates in. The organisation strategically engages when there is a tangible benefit for the project, such as alignment with thematic goals or sharing experiences with new audiences. Additionally, awareness-raising events hold value for advocacy purposes. However, they may not necessarily result in immediate new funding.</p>
--	---	--

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Status one year (planned, under implementation, implemented)
<p>4. On administration and finance: The project should clearly communicate administrative procedures to national focal agencies and share project resource estimates by country to improve transparency and allow focal points to use the information for ministerial reporting.</p>	Partially Accepted	Management aims to share country-specific reports to update focal point ministries.		Under Implementation	Under Implementation
<p>Comments: UNITAR administrative procedures are based on broader policies of the United Nations (available in public domain) along with certain internal policies issued at the institutional level. These policies are issued as guiding principles setting procedures and instructions enabling swift functioning of the institute. In the context of the project, we have always shared clear instructions, provided assistance in all possible ways to our national focal agencies to ease administrative hurdles that they may have encountered in the execution of the activity.</p> <p>Further, UNOSAT acknowledges the recommendation on sharing information about the project resources country wise, we fear that this recommendation leads to questions by partner countries that contradicts the single audit principle of the United Nations. We will investigate the feasibility to provide an average estimate to those countries that haven't received this information, at appropriate platforms and avenues. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that relevant information about the value for money of project activities has already been shared with partner agencies, since its inception.</p>					

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Status one year (planned, under implementation, implemented)
<p>5. On communication and reporting: The project should put additional emphasis on regular communication products that can be shared with national focal points and should include impact stories, monitoring and evaluation results so that focal points can better report and present to their national authorities and other ministries.</p>	Accepted	Management commits to publish country-specific reports to update focal point ministries.		implemented	Implemented
<p>Comments: Thank you for highlighting the key elements of UNOSAT’s communication strategy. We appreciate the recognition of our In- Country officer’s role in disseminating critical information to focal point organisations. This aligns with our commitment to transparency and open channels of communication. We will ensure that our In-Country Project Officer will be provided with the Communication tool kit.</p> <p>The provision for Focal point organisations to request additional information from our In-Country officer reflects our dedication to responsiveness and collaboration. This two-way communication approach ensures that stakeholders have access to the information they need. We acknowledge the importance of sharing comprehensive report, including the inception report and Individual country reports, that is currently undergoing and will be soon shared. The objective of these country specific reports is to provide detailed insights into the projects progress, challenges, and impact within each country. These reports will also serve as basis for the consultations and design of potential way forward for our future expansion.</p> <p>The Communication and Outreach officer in our team further reinforces our commitment to enhancing external communication efforts by regular publishing of news articles of our effective technical training programmes, in all our partner countries. Our holistic communication strategy, detailed reports, reflect UNOSAT’s commitment towards our Stakeholders. UNOSAT has been continuously engaged in developing Impact stories in each beneficiary country, which has been demonstrated and disseminated. UNOSAT is dedicated to building strong relationships with stakeholders through transparent and results driven communication.</p>					

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Status one year (planned, under implementation, implemented)
----------------	--	----------------	---------------------------------	--	--

6.	<p>On gender equality and needs: Project Management should brainstorm jointly with national focal points and in-country experts regarding additional avenues to address women’s needs in GIS, aligning with national gender equality strategies and following up on the current engagement of female university students, to enable a more inclusive future professional pool. This could be done by hosting a dedicated session on gender equality and the empowerment of women and also be informed by data collected by the project, e.g., technical training objective knowledge assessments where data is disaggregated by sex and continuing practices such as gender-disaggregated indicators in the web indicators and involving women in activities.</p>	Accepted Partially	Project management commits itself to organise multiple brainstorming sessions to ameliorate the approach of project management in gender mainstreaming throughout the project.		Implemented	Implemented
		<p>Comments:</p> <p>UNOSAT is committed to the promotion of gender equality and has taken steps to further addressing the issue of women’s need in GIS. Such as collecting disaggregated training data according to gender, participate in awareness-raising events targeting women in GIS, engaging with universities to incentivize women’s participation in project activities.</p> <p>In instances where achieving gender balance is challenging due to low female government representation, UNOSAT extends invitations to young female graduates. This strategy not only provided training opportunities but also creates a platform for networking and showcasing their skills to technical officers, potentially opening doors to job opportunities. A notable success story from Vanuatu illustrates the impact of these efforts. Some female college graduates, after attending the trainings with UNOSAT, were subsequently hired by their respective country governments. UNOSAT has also planned to host a dedicated webinar through its knowledge Hub, on gender equality and empowerment of women in GIT to celebrate the International Women’s Day, 2024. The webinar aims to raise awareness and share strategies for women’s participation in the geospatial sector drawing on success stories from all project partner countries.</p> <p>Despite these successes, its acknowledged that cultural barriers sometimes hinder the recruitment of women, even when qualified. UNOSAT humbly acknowledges the progress made in nurturing gender balance, recognising that there is always more work to be done in creating an inclusive and equitable environment.</p> <p>UNOSAT aims to move towards a qualitative approach to properly address Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW), adjust the learning style, have a possible follow-up. Furthermore, a first brainstorming session will be held with project management to dive into new strategies of addressing GEEW needs.</p> <p>The Project team is already adding Gender disaggregated indicators in the various solution being developed.</p>				

Recommendation	Accepted, Partially Accepted, Rejected	Planned action	Budget allocated (if necessary)	Status 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)	Status one year (planned, under implementation, implemented)
7. On reporting unplanned outcomes resulting from backstopping requests: Project Management should align backstopping requests to project outcomes including unplanned outcomes and develop a monitoring survey that is sent to requesters to better understand the potential results obtained following the request completion.	Accepted	Development of a post-backstopping survey.		Implemented	Implemented
Comments: The colleague responsible for monitoring and evaluation will design a survey together with project management. This survey will be sent out after a successful completion of a backstopping request, to all involved parties. The aim will be to identify (un)intended outcomes realised by the backstopping request, and to develop a possible impact story.					

Name of Director/Programme Manager	Date	Signature
Mihoko Kumamoto (OIC)	January 2024	