

Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children in Vietnam Program 2021-2025

Joint DFAT and UN Agencies Management Response to the Mid-term Review

In mid-2024, UNFPA coordinated a quasi-independent light touch mid-term review of the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children (EVAWC) in Vietnam joint program. The purpose of this mid-term review was to assess progress against program outputs and outcomes, take stock of lessons learned, and consider and respond to the evolving context. The primary objective was to provide evidence and analysis from the program to inform Viet Nam's priorities over the coming five to ten years to eliminate Violence Against Women (VAW) and Violence Against Children (VAC) with a focus on the intersections of VAW and VAC. The secondary objective was to advise UN Agencies, DFAT and the Government of Viet Nam on essential adjustments to the program in its final year.

The mid-term review found that the EVAWC program is fully relevant and aligned to the commitments, strategies, legal and policy frameworks of Viet Nam in prevention and responses to VAW and VAC. The program started during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and encountered several administrative challenges. However, the program partners accomplished significant achievements. The mid-term review found that the funding of the program was allocated to the most needed areas, focusing on enhancing provision of services (response) for survivors of violence and awareness raising and behaviour change communication (prevention). This mid-term review process identified lessons to inform adjustments to the current program prior to completion and to inform future phases of the program. A summary of specific recommendations, with allocation of responsibility, priority and timelines from the mid-term review are set out below, alongside DFAT's and UN Agencies' responses. Full recommendations are contained in the mid-term review at pages 56-59.

Since the mid-term review was completed, DFAT and the UN agencies agreed an 18-month extension of the EVAWC program, with additional funding. The program will conclude mid-2026.

Recommendations from MTR

Recommendations for adjustments before current program completion

- 1. Revise the target indicators.** Revise the target indicators to (i) ensure outcome indicators can be assessed within the data sources available by the program completion; and (ii) increase the target for key outputs indicators, especially those on capacity development of stakeholders and behaviour change communications to fully utilize the program budget.

Responsibility: UN agencies and DFAT. **Priority:** High. **Time:** September 2024.

Partially agree. (Status: Actioned)

Joint DFAT and UN Agencies Response: In regard to (i), DFAT and UN agencies have agreed some modifications to indicators and additional data sources to better measure contribution towards program outcomes.

In regard to (ii), DFAT and UN agencies jointly agreed not to increase the target for key output indicators as budget expenditure has increased since the mid-term review (MTR) and is now on-track.

2. **Consolidate and share knowledge products.** Consolidate the stock of existing knowledge products generated by the program to date. Once consolidated, share the lessons learned to other stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Responsibility: UNFPA with input from UN agencies. **Priority:** Medium. **Time:** By December 2024.

Agree. (Status: In progress).

Joint DFAT and UN Agencies Response: DFAT and UN agencies will ensure the consolidation and continued sharing of the knowledge products throughout 2025. Selected reviews have been included in the workplan for the EVAWC 2025-2026.

3. **Plan the End of Program (EoP) with an endline survey component.** Design the concept note for EoP to ensure that sufficient data will be available to inform the program outcomes and impacts. Both quantitative (in the form of a survey) and qualitative approaches should be used. A strong survey component needs to be planned to inform the outcomes of the program.

Responsibility: UN agencies and DFAT. **Priority:** Medium. **Time:** September 2024.

Partially Agree. (Status: In progress).

Joint DFAT and UN Agencies Response: DFAT and UN agencies note that while the MTR was intended to be 'light-touch', it was ultimately robust and reasonably detailed. DFAT and UN will consider further the most useful structure of a final evaluation of the program. Relevant review pieces, including a proposed review of EVAWC supported pilots/models, are included in the 2025-2026 workplan.

4. **Project scenario of budget utilization by the program completion.** Assess the realistic utilization of 52.2 percent of the program budget in 2024. Based on the assessment results, (i) explore proposal to extend the program by 12 months; (ii) experiment/explore innovative approaches to deepen capacity development and behaviour change communication; and (iii) focus the effort to unpack interventions to address intersection between VAW and VAC.

Responsibility: UN agencies and DFAT. **Priority:** Extremely High. **Time:** September 2024.

Agree. (Status: Actioned)

Joint DFAT and UN Agencies Response: Budget expenditure has been assessed and has almost reached full utilization since the MTR was conducted. DFAT and UN agencies have extended the program for 18 months until June 2026.

Recommendations for the future program

Responsibility: DFAT, Government of Viet Nam, UN. **Priority:** High. **Time:** June 2026.

5. **Continue to cooperate in another phase of the program.** Continuing another phase of EVAWC will allow DFAT, the UN, and the national partner to complete the agenda started in the current program cycle.

Partially agree. (Status: In progress).

Joint DFAT and UN Agencies Response: DFAT is currently undertaking a Strategic Review to assess its Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) portfolio, including EVAWC. The review will consult with UN agencies and other stakeholders and make recommendations on future programming for the portfolio as a whole.

6. **Keep the current focus with additional priorities.** Keep the existing focuses of the EVAWC in the four outcomes as priorities of the GoV in prevention and response to VAW and VAC.

Partially agree. (Status: In progress).

Joint DFAT and UN Agencies Response: DFAT's GEDSI Strategic Review will assess its full GEDSI portfolio, including EVAWC. This review will take into account the existing priorities of EVAWC, UN Agencies and the recommendations of this MTR.

Recommendations for adapting to the ODA regulatory framework.

Responsibility: UN agencies and DFAT. **Priority:** High. **Time:** June 2026.

7. **Have one ProDoc with multiple projects.** Develop a ProDoc for the next programming as a portfolio of different projects, implemented through NIM with the national implementing partners.
8. **Allow 18-month Inception Phase.** Allow an 18-month Inception Phase to allow time to fulfil ODA regulatory framework; set up program governance and other preparatory work.
9. **Invest in coordination.** Invest in a neutral and empowered coordination team.
10. **Strengthen the strategic partnership role of DFAT.** Define the role of DFAT to be a strategic partner (different to an implementing partner).

Joint DFAT and UN Agencies Response: N/A. The Government of Vietnam has undergone significant restructuring since the MTR as well as significant discussions about reforms to the ODA regulatory framework. DFAT will consider the best form of approvals, implementation and coordination, as well as the appropriate role for DFAT, in any future programming as part of the GEDSI Strategic Review. The UN and DFAT will continue engagement with the Government of Vietnam on the ODA regulatory framework to assist with effective implementation of ODA projects.

Recommendations to make Joint Program work harder and better.

Responsibility: UN agencies and DFAT. **Priority:** High. **Time:** June 2026.

11. **Unpack coordination requirements.** Coordinating agency to define what kind of information is required and how this information should be made available to meet the requirement of the coordinating UN agencies and report to the donor.
12. **Agree and operationalize coordination ways of working based on a clear division of labour.** Agree on the role of the coordinating agency, the requirements for coordination, "coordination" ways of working, and division of labour.
13. **Ensure synergy by joint activities, joint advocacy, joint learning.** Ensure joint activities and joint advocacy agendas in AWP of the next program.

Partially agree (Status: Actioned)

Since the MTR, the UN has further clarified joint working modalities and enhanced collaboration and coordination across agencies. The UN coordinating agency (UNFPA) will continue to review information requirements and update DFAT through the usual reporting mechanisms. The UN coordinating agency will also review and amend the Terms of Reference for the International Programme Manager and Technical Advisor role that will take place from 1 July 2025 until the completion of the project.

These collaborative and coordinated efforts will be actively implemented during the remainder of the current programme cycle, to support more coherent and joint advocacy, programming, and learning.