This report was compiled in collaboration with Mahbub Alam (Regional M&E Advisor: Eastern Europe and Central Asia) and Richard Columbia (Regional M&E Advisor: Asia Pacific) as part of a training discussion on Evaluation Quality Assessment with the Evaluation Branch, Division of Oversight Services. This report is an agreed synthesis of the views of all participants.

Title of Evaluation Report: Assessment of development results supported by UNFPA CP4 for Lao PDR: Report and recommendations

Overall Assessment: The report’s structure is clear, however it includes an unconventional sequence of conclusions following recommendations. The clear executive summary is followed by a brief methodology section that states methodological activities rather than why these were selected. Data sources used are, in the main, reliable but not consistently referenced. The lack of a conclusions stage following on from findings results in too many recommendations and limits the scope of the evaluators to effectively communicate their judgment of interventions, and results in a lack of strategic recommendations for the CO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assessment criteria</th>
<th>Assessment Levels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Structure and Clarity of Reporting</strong>&lt;br&gt;To ensure report is user-friendly, comprehensive, logically structured and drafted in accordance with international standards.&lt;br&gt;Checklist of minimum content and sequence required for structure:&lt;br&gt; - i) Acronyms; ii) Exec Summary; iii) Introduction; iv) Methodology including Approach and Limitations; v) Context; vi) Findings/Analysis; vii) Conclusions; viii) Recommendations; ix) Transferable Lessons Learned (where applicable)&lt;br&gt;• Minimum requirements for Annexes: ToRs; Bibliography List of interviewees; Methodological instruments used.</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong>&lt;br&gt;The report structure is comprehensive and includes all main components. The report sequence does not follow standard reporting convention, instead opting to group findings and recommendations together in a single chapter which is very lengthy. Conclusions are located after recommendations, which is not a logical sequence as conclusions should inform recommendations. The information provided in annexes is somewhat unbalanced as an annex has been provided on 'gaps of the PD component of CP4' which details data, planning and capacity issues for this one mandate area only, whereas the information should be in the main section of the report or a similar annex provided for all mandate areas.</td>
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### 2. Executive Summary

**To provide an overview of the evaluation, written as a stand-alone section and presenting main results of the evaluation.**

Structure (paragraph equates to half page max):
- i) Purpose, including intended audience(s); ii) Objectives and Brief description of intervention (1 para); iii) Methodology (1 para); iv) Main Conclusions (1 para); v) Recommendations (1 para). Maximum length 3-4 page

**Good**

The Executive Summary is brief (4 pages) and includes a clear overview of the main results of the evaluation. Shortcomings of this section include a lack of detail about methodology. The reader would benefit from clearer identification of sections e.g using sub-headings but otherwise this functions well as a stand-alone section.

### 3. Design and Methodology

**To provide a clear explanation of the following elements/tools**

Minimum content and sequence:
- Explanation of methodological choice, including constraints and limitations;
- Techniques and Tools for data collection provided in a detailed manner;
- Triangulation systematically applied throughout the evaluation;
- Details of participatory stakeholders' consultation process are provided.
- Whenever relevant, specific attention to cross-cutting issues (vulnerable groups, youth, gender equality) in the design of the evaluation

**Poor**

The methodology is briefly described including a list of methods used (interviews with stakeholders, field visits and document review). Methodological choice is not explained and justified (e.g 'interviews with stakeholders...for gathering information relating to the achievements and constraints'). Gender does not have its own programme and is a cross-cutting issue in both PD and RH programmes, which the evaluators state they tried to address. However the evaluation team did not include a gender specialist which, while acknowledged as a limitation, this omission is not explained and justified.

### 4. Reliability of Data

**To clarify data collection processes and data quality**

- Sources of qualitative and quantitative data have been identified;
- Credibility of primary (e.g. interviews and focus groups) and secondary (e.g. reports) data established and limitations made explicit;

**Poor**

Some sources of qualitative and quantitative data have been identified, but there is no discussion of attempts to identify alternative data sources (e.g reports from other agencies) to increase amount of credible data available. There is also inconsistent use of references which undermines the reliability of data.

### 5. Findings and Analysis

**To ensure sound analysis and credible findings**

Findings

**Poor**

An effort was made by the evaluators to analyse data and information collected; however a significant proportion of
- Findings stem from rigorous data analysis;
- Findings are substantiated by evidence;
- Findings are presented in a clear manner

**Analysis**
- Interpretations are based on carefully described assumptions;
- Contextual factors are identified.
- Cause and effect links between an intervention and its end results (including unintended results) are explained.

**6. Conclusions**
To assess the validity of conclusions
- Conclusions are based on credible findings;
- Conclusions are organized in priority order;
- Conclusions must convey evaluators' unbiased judgment of the intervention.

**Unsatisfactory**
In this report the ‘conclusions’ are the final section, following after the recommendations, which is not a logical flow. The content of this section is a short list of key achievements and remaining challenges which seem isolated from the rest of the report.
The Conclusions section should be a clustered set of concluding comments which clearly link to corresponding findings, and should be presented in priority order.

**7. Recommendations**
To assess the usefulness and clarity of recommendations
- Recommendations flow logically from conclusions;
- Recommendations must be strategic, targeted and operationally-feasible;
- Recommendations must take into account stakeholders’

**Poor**
There are no conclusions to connect findings and recommendations, and recommendations are located jointly in sub-sections after findings. Due to the lack of this logical flow from findings to conclusions to recommendations, recommendations often respond to
consultations whilst remaining impartial;
- Recommendations should be presented in priority order

| specific grass-roots findings (e.g. review continued use of picture cards in behavior change communication) or can be too broad (e.g. 'develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan on population and development'). Severe issues with M&E, which are mentioned several times in the findings section have not been followed up with useful recommendations due to the lack of corresponding conclusions. This has also resulted in a large number of recommendations (56). Attempts at prioritization also fail because of this structure. |

8. Meeting Needs
To ensure that Evaluation Report responds to requirements (scope & evaluation questions/issues/DAC criteria) stated in the ToR (ToR must be annexed to the report).

*Good*

The evaluators have responded to the ToRs. However consideration of programme management is beyond the scope of the evaluation and is a limitation that the evaluators have not raised. Inclusion of this issue has adversely influenced the focus of the recommendations and seems like a superfluous ‘add-on’ that does not fit well with the rest of the report.

In the event that the ToR do not conform with commonly agreed quality standards, assess if evaluators have highlighted the deficiencies with the ToR.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality assessment criteria (and Multiplying factor *)</th>
<th>Assessment Levels (*)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Findings and analysis (50)</td>
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<td>6. Conclusions (12)</td>
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<td>7. Recommendations (12)</td>
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<td>8. Meeting needs (12)</td>
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<td>3. Design and methodology (5)</td>
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<td>4. Reliability of data (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Structure and clarity of reporting (2)</td>
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<td>2. Executive summary (2)</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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OVERALL QUALITY OF REPORT: Poor