REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Mid-Term Review of the Third National Development Plan (NDPIII) 2020/21-2024/25

Programme Approach and Institutional Framework

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Vision **2040**

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Mid-Term Review of the Third National Development Plan (NDPIII) 2020/21-2024/25

Programme Approach and Institutional Framework

with Support from

NPA
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BFP	Budget Framework Paper
BoU	Bank of Uganda
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDP	District Development Plan
EAC	East African Community
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Centre
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GAPR	Government Annual Performance Report
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoU	Government of Uganda
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IGG	Inspectorate of Government
JBSF	Joint Budget Support Framework
LDPG	Local Development Partners Group
LGDP	Local Government Development Plan
LGFC	Local Government Finance Commission
MDA	Ministry / Department / Agency
MoAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoEACA	Ministry of East African Community Affairs
MoEMD	Ministry of Energy and Minerals Development
MoES	Ministry of Education & Science
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MoGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoICT	Ministry of Information and Communications Technology
MoJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MoLHUD	Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development
MoTIC	Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce
MoTWH	Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage
MoWE	Ministry of Water and Environment

MoWT	Ministry of Works and Transport
MPS	Ministerial Policy Statement
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTR	Mid Term Review
NDP	National Development Plan
NDR	National Development Report
NPA	National Planning Authority
OBT	Output Based Tool
OoP	Office of the President
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PIP	Public Investment Plan
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PSFU	Private Sector Foundation of Uganda
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SIP	Sector Investment Plan
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
STA	Science and Technology Agency
SWG	Sector Working Group
ToR	Terms of Reference
UAAU	Urban Authorities Association of Uganda
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
URA	Uganda Revenue Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mid-term review (MTR) of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2020/21 to 2024/25 was commissioned by the National Planning Authority (NPA) to assess the extent of progress made towards achievement of its objectives and priorities. The MTR was also aimed at identifying challenges to the implementation, including emerging issues, and obtaining independent recommendations from stakeholders for improving implementation and overall performance. The recommendations and lessons learnt are also particularly aimed at informing the implementation for the remaining period of the Plan and the preparation of NDPIV.

This report is one of the six (6) thematic reports of the NDPIII MTR. The report is entitled: "Programme Design and Institutional Framework". The report is intended to review the extent to which the programme approach to planning, budgeting and implementation has been adopted. Like for other thematic reports of the MTR, the report is also expected to provide challenges encountered during operationalization of the programme approach, including providing recommendations and lessons learnt to improve implementation and inform the next NDPIV processes.

Overall, the report highlights the progress made towards operationalization of the programme approach by the time of the MTR. The report therefore provides findings that comprise achievements, opportunities that have supported operationalization of the programme approach and challenges that impeded the reform. The findings range from the design/planning stage to budgeting, budget execution/implementation and monitoring/reporting levels, including the related institutional reform attempts and its challenges. The report also provides key emerging issues that have been realised during programme implementation and pause a challenge to the programme reform across government. Effort has also been made to provide possible solutions and recommendations to the challenges at all stages, including for the emerging ones.

An overview of some of the key issues and the proposed recommendations is presented in the sections below.

I. Progress towards adaption of the programme approach

The adoption of programme approach to planning has gone a long way to create awareness among Ministries and Departments (MDA) and other key stakeholders about the need to increase coordination to more effectively and efficiently achieve delivery of common results. The programme approach has also further entrenched the planning processes to the budget as PIAPs are now providing a basis for budgeting. Budgeting systems have also been adjusted to adopt the programme approach to planning and budgeting.

The programme approach is aimed at enhancing synergies and reducing "silo" approach to planning, budgeting and implementation across government. By reducing the silo approach, the programme approach aims to reduce duplication and wastage of resources. A cross section of stakeholders consulted appreciated programme approach to planning but expressed the need for further deepening of understanding and appreciation. There is need for more sensitization towards mindset change for smoother implementation of the programme approach, for both the political and technical cadre levels. In view of the advantages of the programme approach, it is a significant achievement for Government, through NPA and MFPED, to have made a firm decision to embark on the reform.

II. NDPIII Programme Design

On the face of it, the current design of programmes appears sufficient in providing a framework for the required collaboration and teamwork for achievement of common results. Indeed, it has provided a framework for production of Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs) that were the basis for budgeting towards achievement of identified results in line with joint results frameworks. The design also enabled testing of the coordination frameworks such as Programme Working Groups (PWGs) and their secretariats, which has enabled the MTR to identify the actual challenges and opportunities.

Otherwise, to a reasonable extent most program composition reflects grouping together of institutions that contributed related interventions broadly aimed at similar results, through a value chain procedure. The design of the NDPIII Programmes was informed by the Theory of Change, where a Programme comprises of institutions that deliver on common results. As a result, result-coherence was the major driver in the definition of a Programme and its composition. This would address the key long-standing silo approach and mentality highlighted in the previous NDP Evaluations (NDPI & NDPII MTR).

III. Coordination of NDPIII Programmes

On paper, the programme approach was set to address the development challenges better than the previous approach through PWGs-convened meetings for stakeholders, identification of development challenges, collectively set priorities for implementation, identifying key policy and project requirements, and sequencing the projects for implementation. The 20 NDP Programmes were operational albeit at different levels of effectiveness and efficiency. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) has the primary coordination and implementation role for the NDPIII but the institution has been limited in this regard against a landscape of weak capacities, un-streamlined institutional arrangements and long-time absence of a substantive permanent secretary. At present, the coordination department at OPM is understaffed and is yet to recruit the program coordinators that are expected to coordinate the NDP programmes. In addition, the OPM's existing staff capacities need to be strengthened to undertake the various responsibilities associated with the programme coordination roles. To a great extent, due to many other demands the OPM has not played its NDP coordination role effectively and this has become a major handicap to the NDP implementation process.

However, the MTR established that OPM was eager to work on the various challenges to NDPIII programme coordination, including recruiting the Coordinators. The MTR noted that at MDA and Program levels, the planning units which work as secretariats for Lead Ministries lack the required clout and authority to convene other Ministries; and in addition, lack staff, tools and funds to perform the coordination roles. To this end the MTR recommends that the planning units at lead ministries should be strengthened by availing them with the requisite resources.

IV. Development Planning

Development planning has been fully entrenched at all levels of government right from sectors, MDAs and local governments and NPA has been instrumental in facilitating this process. That notwithstanding, the MTR noted that NPA has been overwhelmed by capacity building needs and demands from MDAs and LGs towards preparation of PIAPs and aligning work plans and budget framework papers to the programmes. Moreover, NPA has not fully consolidated its role as an 'authority' to enforce sufficient guidance to MDAs and districts in the alignment of plans and budget framework papers (BFPs) to the NDP. The situation was further aggravated by the absence of LLG, LG, MDA, Regional, Sub-Programme and Programme development plans to inform the programme approach. As a result, MDA and Programme level PIAPs were developed with NPA playing the leading role due to the absence of programme-based strategic planning processes.

In view of the above, the MTR has recommended sequenced production of plans in line with the bottom-up and top-down process adopted by Cabinet as part of the CNDPF in 2007. The review therefore proposed the Planning Calendar given below.

	Type of Development Plan	Responsible Agency/ Person	Starting Date	End Date
1.	Parish Priority Lists	Parish Chief/ Parish Development Committee	January 2023	March 2023
2.	Sub-County /Town Council Development Plan	Sub-County Chief/ Development Committee/ Town Clerk	March 2023	June 2023
3.	Municipality Development Plan	Clerk to Municipality/ Municipal Council	March 2023	June 2023
4,	District Development Plan	District Planner/District Council	July 2023	September 2023
5.	Regional Development Plan	National Planning Authority	October 2023	March 2024

6.	MDA Strategic Plans	MDAs	July 2023	September 2023
7.	Sub-Programme/ Sector Strategic Plan	Sub-Programme/ Sector Secretariat	July 2023	December 2023
8.	Programme Strategic Plan (& PIAPS, Work-Plans, BFPs)	PWGs, NPA & OPM	January 2024	June 2024
9.	National Development Plan (Plus Coded & costed Interventions, PIP, Results Frameworks, Strategies-M&E, Implementation)	National Planning Authority	January 2024	March 2025

The MTR established overwhelming demand for preparation of regional plans that are supported by spatial planning approaches. This is attributed to challenges encountered in block farming, bulking for international marketing and development of economic physical infrastructure. The review therefore recommends that NPA spearheads production of regional plans in line with the regional divisions below. The Authority should also consider establishing regional offices to support routine implementation planning.

i)   Central-Northern Uganda Sub-Regional Development Plan

ii)   West Nile Sub-Regional Development Plan

iii)   Karamoja Sub-Regional Development Plan

iv)   Bunyoro Sub-Regional Development Plan

v)   Central Buganda Sub-Regional Development Plan

vi)   Greater Masaka- Kalangala Sub-Regional Development Plan

vii)   Busoga Sub-Regional Development Plan

viii)   Bukedi-Mbale Sub-Regional Development Plan

ix)   Sebei Sub-Regional Development Plan

x)   Teso Sub-Regional Development Plan

xi)   Ankole Sub-Regional Development Plan

xii)   Greater Kigezi Sub-Regional Development Plan

xiii)   Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area Development Plan

V.   Aligning the Budget to NDPIII

Effort was made by both NPA and MFPED to align the national budget to NDPIII by providing processes and guidelines aimed at linking the budget to the Plan through PIAPS. The MTR noted that Progress has been registered in aligning MDA and LG plans to budget. Compliance level over the last four years has averaged 60.3 percent, the many underfunded priorities notwithstanding. It also noted that the NDPIII contains more projects than what can be financed by the national budget as a strategy to seek external funding for them. However, it will be necessary to put planning and budgeting in Uganda on a fiscally realistic path and to adapt an MTEF that is aligned to the NDP programmes.

The MTR established that the creation of PIAPs was expected to be a cure to the absence of programme-based institutional strategic plans and respective results indicators at the various levels. The MDA and LG results frameworks are required to inform the programme-based system. However, the strategy proved problematic due to lack of programme planning capacity in both MDAs and LGs. By the time of the MTR, LGs were yet to produce programme-based BFPs, despite being allowed to undertake budget expenditure. Moreover, the PIAP results frameworks are not directly linked to the actual expenditure system, IFMIS/Chart of Accounts. The MTR established that whereas attributes like Programme/Sub-Programme and approved NDPIII projects are integrated into the IFMIS/Chart of Accounts, the interventions which are the key unique identifiers of the NDPIII are not part of the budget execution system.

In order to improve the alignment of the budget to NDPIII the MTR recommended the following:

i)   That all NDPIII interventions ought to be paraphrased, given unique digits (coded) and integrated into the IFMIS, with or without funds allocated to them. This will provide a perfect alignment between the Budget Expenditure and the NDPIII.

ii)   The IFMIS/Chart of Accounts should separate Programme and Sub-Programme slots and codes and not to use the two terms alternately. This will enhance compliance to programme approach.

iii)   The IFMIS/Chart of Accounts ought to adopt the same meaning to the use of the term 'Output' as the PBS. Under IFMIS, the term output is used to refer to the equivalent of

Vote Function in PBS or Directorate in administration. In other words, IFMIS should adopt the term Vote Function instead of Output to facilitate consistence with the programme approach and the NDP.

iv) The number of Votes should be reduced to minimize fragmentation, in line with the programme approach, using the proposed criteria given below.

    a. Must be either a Programme or a Sub-Programme of the NDP

    b. Must be a Government Ministry

    c. Must be an autonomous Agency or Authority or Commission established by an Act of Parliament

The MTR recommends that current Votes which do not conform to the above criteria should be done away with. The analysis indicated that creation of Votes without a proper criteria disrupt implementation of the programme approach and the call to do away with those Votes that do not follow the proposed criteria is critical.

v) The MTR recommends introduction of a new budgeting process involving allocation of ceilings at programme, including indicative allocations to sub-programmes, to enhance operationalization of the programme approach. This process will also provide lessons for implementation of the zero-based budgeting.

vi) It is recommended that Parliamentary budget appropriations should be at programme level.

VI. Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

The MTR highlights the need for amendment of the PFMA Act, 2015, to ensure it recognises the programme approach. It will also be necessary to make adjustments in the composition of only four (4) of the Sessional Committees of Parliament. These are: (i) the Physical Infrastructure Committee; (ii) the Defense and Security Committee; (iii) the Tourism, Trade and Industry Committee; and (iv) the Public Service and local government Committee. The review did not identify a need for any constitutional amendment, unless advised by legal experts. On the other hand, the MTR has considered it unnecessary to cause amendments to

the NPA Act, 2002, out of the small issue regarding the change from using the word sector to sub-programme.

 Overall oversight and implementation of the NDP was intended to be under the leadership of H.E the President. A mechanism was established by NDPIII under the Apex Platform to facilitate production of a national oversight report to be presented to H.E the President. The report is expected to highlight the key progress made and bring to the attention of Cabinet the major challenges and emerging issues that require high level direction or policy attention. The MTR recommends adoption of definite timetable for the annual APEX activities should be tabled for approval by Cabinet.

In conclusion, the MTR assessment shows that with hard work and commitment from NPA, OPM and MoFPED the programme approach can be fully operationalized to enable reaping of the various advantages associated with it. Further refinements such as allocating resources at programme level and promoting change management will enhance the effectiveness in adopting the programme approach.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1. This report is part of the wider study examining the performance of the third National Development Plan (NDP3) at mid-term. The report presents findings from a sub-study that examined the programme design and the effectiveness of the institutional framework set out for the NDP3 cycle (design, implementation, monitoring and review). In 2020, Uganda launched her third five-year (2020/21-2024/25) National Development Plan (NDP3). The overall goal of the third National Development Plan is to increase household incomes and improved quality of life of Ugandans. The NDP 3 builds on the achievements and lessons during the implementation of NDP2. In order to fast track realization of results, a programmatic approach to planning was adopted. The NDPIII aims at increasing household incomes and improving the quality of life of Ugandans through sustainable industrialization for inclusive growth, employment and sustainable wealth creation. As such, the NDPIII is centred on five strategic objectives:

   i)   Enhance value addition in key growth opportunities;

   ii)   Strengthen the private sector capacity to drive growth and create jobs;

   iii) Consolidate and increase the stock and quality of productive infrastructure;

   iv)   Enhance the productivity and social well-being of the population; and

   v)   Strengthen the role of the state in guiding and facilitating development

2. In February 2022, a mid-term review (MTR) of the NDP3 was commissioned with the aim of determining the extent to which progress has been made towards implementation of the NDP3 including progress on NDP 3 related projects and programmes. The review of the NDP3 was structured into six thematic areas namely (i) Economic Management; (ii) Results Framework; (iii) Policy and Strategic Direction; (iv) Political Economy; (v) Development Partnerships (vi) Program Design and Institutional Framework. Each of these thematic areas has thus constituted a sub-study with a separate report.

1.2 Objectives of the MTR

3. The overall objective of the MTR of the NDPIII is to determine the extent of progress made towards achievement of it's objectives, key milestones and overall results

framework, in relation to various relevant dimensions within the economy half way through the implementation of the plan. The specific objectives of the assignment are to assess the efficiency gains realized through implementation of the Programme approach to planning, budgeting, reporting and coordination within Government and with the private sector, development partners, the civil society and other non-state actors in line with its cherished advantages.

1.3   Scope of MTR

4.   The key issues that the mid-term review assessed under Programme Design and Institutional framework include:

i)   The extent to which the programme approach enhanced linkage of resources to results;

ii)   The extent to which the programme approach has: increased coordination along the project cycle; reduced duplication, redundancy, and wastage; reduced 'silo' approach; increased sequencing;

iii)   Assess the Capacity (Human and institutional) to implement programme approach;

iv)   Identify what has worked, not worked and why

v)   Functionality of the Programme Working Groups and coordination frameworks

vi)   Public Finance Management systems and other key systems used to implement the Programme approach (PBS; IPPS; COA; HCM; M&E System).

vii)   Determine the effect of the change of Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework (CNDPF) following the introduction of the Programme Approach (from sector to programmes) and Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs).

viii)   Determine the effectiveness and efficiency of government structures in public service delivery;

ix)   Assess the APEX institutional reform;

x)   Determine the extent of integration of MDAs, Local Governments, Civil Society, Private Sector and local development actors in the implementation of the NDPIII.

1.4 Approach

5.   The overall approach to the mid-term review included:

i)   A one week inception period to hold introductory meetings, to collect and review background documentation, to refine and agree the review questions, to prepare situation analysis and to populate review matrices showing how evidence would be collected and analysed;

ii)   Discussion forums with representatives of 20 programmes, the private sector, civil society organisations (CSOs) and development partners;

iii)   A series of key informant meetings in each program, focused on the review questions;

iv)   Supplementary analysis of data and collation of documented evidence;

v)   Assessment of the national development planning experiences in the three countries adopted program approaches;

vi)   Visits to 52 districts / municipalities to obtain data and opinion on NDP program implementation at local government level. Three district will be selected from each of the 4 regions of Uganda

vii)   Two meetings with a Thematic Committee to present and get feedback on progress;

viii)   Thematic Committee meetings to peer review the quality and robustness of analysis and interpretation;

ix)   Preparation of the zero draft report;

x)   Presentation of draft thematic findings and recommendations to the extended management team of the NPA;

xi)   Conduct of meetings with the Thematic team to obtain and incorporate comments into the draft report;

xii)   Presentation of updated drafts reports to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), the Extended NPA Board and the committee of Permanent Secretaries chaired by the Cabinet Secretary;

xiii)   Incorporation of comments on the updated draft report.

xiv) Submission of final report

1.5 Limitations of the Review

6. Availability of key stakeholders/respondents was not always assured. The MTR team had to reschedule the interviews/consultations.

1.6 Structure of the Report

7. The report is structured as follows: the *first part* has provided a situation analysis that will cover a quick overview of the background and rationale of the program design and institutional framework for the implementation of NDP 3; the *second* part deals with the implementation of the plan under program approach, highlighting achievements, challenges and weaknesses; the *third* part of the report examines the institutional arrangements in the plan under programme approach and program reforms that were introduced for effective delivery of NDP III, and the extent to which these reforms have influenced NDP delivery at mid-term; the *fourth part* examines the progress made in integrating programme approach into Public Finance Management system and how it has impacted on service delivery; and the *final* part discusses the lessons learnt and makes recommendations for both the remainder of the NDPIII period and for subsequent NDPs.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Introduction

8. The chapter consists of five sections, namely: Background to NDPIII Programme Approach; Design of the Programme Approach; Institutional frameworks for the Programme Approach; Status of implementation of Programme Approach; Overview of the expected key reforms under the programme approach; and Status of the Rationalization of Government Agencies.

2.2 Background to NDP Programme Approach

9. Since the introduction of the National Development Plan (NDP) as a framework for budgeting and implementation in 2010, the country has been grappling with the challenge of ensuring that plans and budgets are aligned to the National Development Plans and are results-oriented. The Institutional Framework for Coordination of Policy and Program Implementation in Government (IFCPPI) approved by Cabinet in 2003 under the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) was adapted with some adjustments for continuity and smooth implementation of the NDP frameworks. The IFCPPI was established under the Office of the Prime Minister to set up an effective national coordination institutional framework with the following structures:

- The Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) - a Cabinet committee chaired by the Prime Minister and responsible for policy coordination and monitoring progress on the implementation of government programs.
- The Implementation Coordination Steering Committee (ICSC) - consisting of Permanent Secretaries and chaired by Head of Public Service and Secretary to Cabinet, to direct on implementation of activities.
- The multi-sectoral Technical Implementation Coordination Committee (TICC) - chaired by the Permanent Secretary (Office of the Prime Minister), to coordinate and monitor program implementation across ministries and sectors.

10. The IFCPPI was to be supported by 16 joint Sector Working Groups responsible for implementation of the PEAP and service delivery at sector level. In addition, a number of thematic and ad hoc coordination groups were in place at the lower levels. Later, the arrangements would include operationalizing the Cabinet Committee approval system.

11. However, the effectiveness of the IFCPPI declined during the period of the NDPs due to reduced basket funding by donors in favor of increased off-budget support. Over time, the accountability issues that hit the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in 2013/4 and subsequent management disruptions created gaps in TICC work and submission of business to the ICSC and PCC. The minutes of PCC show that the NDP implementation was never put on its agenda over the years. Meanwhile, the TICC has evolved into Permanent Secretaries' policy and management update meetings held once every two months chaired by the Head of Public Service.

12. The failures to operationalize the IFCPPI during NDPI and NDPII led to increased fragmentation of effort and resources and reduced collective work-planning, budgeting and achievement of common results. The failures also led to the establishment of separate implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks by the OPM, NPA and Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. For example, while the NDP introduced separate M&E and Implementation Strategies as part of the NDPs, the OPM introduced a Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation Policy with different guidelines that were not in synch with the NDPI and NDPII Strategies. In addition, while the NDPIII introduced a Development Plan Implementation (DPI) programme chaired by the Ministry of Finance, the OPM used its constitutional coordination mandate and the M&E Policy for the overall technical leadership. And on the other hand, the Ministry of Finance introduced and strengthened its national budget monitoring function using the main advantage of being the data source for all financial information. Being both Chair and Secretariat to the Development Committee further enhanced the Ministry of Finance's opportunity to create the national repository of wealth of knowledge and data on the NDP programmes and projects that are critical for reporting. The fragmented implementation coordination and monitoring led to significant duplication, wastage, management inefficiencies, delays and frequent failure to achieve common results. This was among the key factors behind the urge to switch to programme-based development planning and budgeting.

13. Overall, the SWAP is judged to have failed both to focus attention sufficiently on the government's development priorities, and to counter the tendency for entities to single-handedly pursue their own specific mandates rather than cooperate in the interests of the agenda of the government as a whole. This tendency resulted in wastage of the limited resources and hindered the rationalization of capacities, competences and

optimization of synergies thereby hindering the effectiveness and efficiency with which
Government would deliver on pledges and policies.

2.3   Design of the Programme Approach

14.   The Programme-Based Approach to planning and budgeting was fully adopted by
Cabinet as part of the Strategic Direction to guide preparation of the NDPIII in 2019.
The reasons for adopting the programme approach are:

i)   Increase coordination by focusing MDA efforts and funding to delivery of
common results;

ii)   Improve implementation and performance by reducing duplication, wastage and
fragmentation of effort and resources;

iii)   Improve alignment of the budgets to the NDPs;

iv)   Enhance synergies by reducing "silo" approach to implementation across
stakeholders and programmes;

v)   Improve sequencing of implementation of policies and interventions   for
judicious use of resources; and

vi)   Provide a harmonized framework for monitoring implementation and the NDPs.

15.   The design of the NDPIII Programmes was informed by the Theory of Change, where a
Programme comprises of institutions that deliver on common results. As a result, result-
coherence was the major driver in the definition of a Programme and its composition.
This would address the key long-standing silo approach and mentality highlighted in
the previous NDP Evaluations (NDPI & NDPII MTR). The development of the
programmes followed a conceptual process starting from the NDPIII Goal, Objectives
and Interventions (figure 1). The NDP goal of "*Increasing household incomes and
improving the quality of lives*" was in itself arrived at basing on the need to address the
core problem of low household incomes and quality of lives of Ugandans. The
programmes (along with the strategies) were functionally developed along the five
objectives of the Plan as a means of achieving the targets set along respective
objectives. This led to the development of 14 programmes as listed below.

Table 1: NDPIII Programmes

NDPIII Objective	Interventions	Programmes
Increase value addition in key growth opportunities	• Promote agro-industrialization • Increase local manufacturing activity • Promote mineral-based industrialization • Harness the tourism potential • Promote export-oriented growth	1. Agro-Industrialization 2. Mineral and oil-based industrialization 3. Water, Climate Change, Land and ENR Management 4. Tourism Development 5. Technology Transfer & Development
Increase the stock and quality of productive infrastructure	• Institutionalize infrastructure maintenance • Develop intermodal transport infrastructure • Increase access to reliable & affordable energy • Leverage urbanization for socio-economic transformation	6. Sustainable Energy and ICT Interconnectivity 7. Sustainable Urbanization & Housing 8. Integrated Transport Infrastructure and Services
Strengthen the private sector to drive growth	• Provide a suitable fiscal, monetary and regulatory environment for the private sector to invest • Increase local content participation	9. Private Sector Development
Increasing productivity, inclusiveness and wellbeing of the population	• Improve access and quality of social services • Institutionalize HR planning • Enhance skills and vocational Development • Increase access to social protection Promote STEI • Promote dev't. oriented mind-set	10. Human Capital Development 11. Community Mobilization & Mindset Change
Strengthen the role of the State in development	• Increase govt. participation in strategic sectors • Enhance partnerships with non-state actors for effective service delivery • Re-engineer Public service to promote invest. • Increase Resource Mobilization	12. Governance and Security 13. Public Sector Transformation 14. Development Plan Implementation

16.   However, six programmes were generated due to factors beyond the technical specification for the design to Programmes. For example, in a bid to create independence of the ICT function, the Digital Transformation Programme was created out of Science, Technology and Innovation Programme, even when the two Programmes contribute to the same results. Additionally, the Sustainable Energy Development Programme was disintegrated to create an independent programme for petroleum, even when the two programmes contribute to the same results. The mineral development programme was curved out of the Natural Resources Programme, where it contributes to overall results. Further, Administration of Justice and Legislature were also curved out of the Governance and Security Programme, just like manufacturing from Agro-industrialization and Private Sector Development Programme.

17.   The programmes are categorized based on high-level outcomes that the Government aims to achieve as part of its medium- and long-term development strategies. The membership of an NDPIII Programme comprises sub-programmes with common objectives/outcomes and the attendant ministries, departments and agencies which deliver the respective outcomes. The underlying departure of the Programme approach from the SWAP is the principle of comprehensive grouping of institutions for

achievement of the same final outcomes, above the level of outputs and intermediate outcomes.

2.4   Institutional Framework for the Programme Approach

2.4.1 Overall Institutional Frameworks

18.   The NDPIII asserts that its implementation would be undertaken within the existing institutional framework of Government. Based on this institutional framework, the overall implementation of the NDPIII programmes was placed under the leadership of the Prime Minister. As coordinator of implementation and leader of Government business, the NDPIII envisaged that the Prime Minister would steer policy engagements with all Ministries on implementation of the NDPIII programmes. For purposes of coordination, however, the NDPIII provides for a light institutional framework for the programme approach comprising: the Policy and Political leadership committee chaired by the Prime Minister; the Steering Technical Committee consisting of Permanent Secretaries and chaired by the Permanent Secretary Office of the Prime Minister; and the Technical Programme Working Groups (PWGs) chaired by the lead Ministries - comprising Permanent Secretaries and their technical officers, development partners and non-state actors under the respective programmes. From the lessons learnt in NDPI and NDPII, the NDPIII aimed to bolognaise all the institutions and build capacity for a much more effective implementation of the third 5-year NDP.

19.   The NDPIII kept institutional arrangements similar to the SWAP for the development partners and the rest of the non-state actors, the civil society and private sector. However, in the effort to provide a forum for strengthening the private sector, the NDPIII introduced a specific programme, the Private Sector Development Programme, coordinated by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The Plan, on the other hand, assumed automatic alignment of the civil society to the relevant programmes, which led to the observed obscurity and ad hoc participation of the third estate in the NDPIII programmes implementation.

2.4.2 Policy and Political Leadership Level

20.   The programme approach was approved by Cabinet as one of the key reforms to improve implementation and achievement of results as part of the NDPIII Strategic Direction (2019) and during the final approval processes of the Plan. The MTR

established that the political leadership is not on board in all Programmes. The political leadership of PWGs which is headed by the Minister in charge of a Lead Ministry is supposed to provide leadership in implementing the programme that brings together several state and non-state actors. Whereas meetings were held by some programmes, meetings were not attended by heads of technical institutions. The major reason given by respondents for failure to operationalize the political leadership of PWGs is lack of sensitization of leaders about the programme approach. Stakeholders pointed out that the program approach was rushed and poorly promoted among MDAs. "We were told to adopt the programme approach but without adequate induction and we have had limited opportunities to interact with those who know how the approach works" one Ministry staff in a Planning Unit remarked.

21. Also, the NPA and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development neither presented a Cabinet Memorandum on the matter nor sought a Cabinet retreat/meeting to ensure that the ultimate policy organ of Government understood the programme reform for its effective implementation. This gap in communication may be attributed to the partial lock-down of the public sector activities due to COVID 19. As a result, sentiments of uncertainty on the programme approach are still rife among individual members of Cabinet. There is therefore urgent need for capacity strengthening of Cabinet on the programme approach. As well there was a need to formulate a change management strategy for the entire government architecture.

2.4.3 Steering Committee Chaired by the Permanent Secretary OPM

22. The NDPIII reform to Programme Approach was presented to the bi-monthly meeting of Permanent Secretaries together with the Plan's Strategic Direction in 2019. However, the Permanent Secretaries who are the technical heads appear to have left the task of aligning MDA Budget Framework Papers and Ministerial Policy Statements to their Planning Departments and Units since the switch to the programme approach appeared to have no effect on appropriation and allocation of resources. The Permanent Secretaries/Accounting Officers of MDAs continued defending their budgets as individual votes (Ministries and Departments) and the alignment to Programmes looked like an issue of MDAs merely associating without any technical, budgetary, resource allocation and implementation implications. The PS/OPM did not convene any meeting of Accounting Officers/PS' to discuss progress in adopting the NDPIII Programme Approach over the two years under review.

23. OPM expressed enthusiasm in coordinating Permanent Secretaries towards achievement of objectives of the programme approach. However, OPM pledged to strengthen capacity for effective coordination of implementation and monitoring of the NDPIII programmes. It was also pointed out that there was oversight regarding capacities of local governments and MDAs, except for Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and NPA, to handle programme based planning and budgeting, which require a lot of technical capacity and expertise.

2.4.4 Programme Working Groups

24. According to the NDPIII, the coordination of NDP III and operationalization of the programme approach hinges on Programme Working Groups. The OPM is responsible for the overall coordination function for NDP implementation. However, each programme is coordinated by the convening Ministry which ensures participatory preparation of harmonized PIAPs and work-plans, which are then directly submitted to Ministry of Finance. This arrangement has left gaps on the linkage between the programme members and the overall coordinating organ, the OPM. In addition, the Ministry of Finance also directly coordinates preparation of BFPs and submission of PIAPs results indicators for the Programme Based System (PBS), where OPM would play a key role to provide the necessary checks and harmonization before final transmission of the information to Ministry of Finance and the Accountant General.

2.4.5 Programme Approach at the Sub-National Level

25. At the Sub-National level, the extent of adoption of the programme approach to planning and budgeting was unnoticeable until when it became mandatory during preparation of the NDPIII third year budget for FY2022/23, where costed Local Government programme-based results indicators and targets (LG PIAPs) are an automated system requirement for acceptance of LG BFPs. The Second Edition of the Local Government Development Guidelines (September, 2020) provide an illustration of the PIAP matrixes that replaced the Sector Strategic Plans and would act as a link between the MDA and LG Development Strategic Plans (LG Guidelines page 12) for implementation of the programme approach. Also, the Ministry of Finance Budget Call Circulars for FYs 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 highlighted the need for local Governments, like other institutions of Government, to adopt the new programme-based budgeting approach. The annual regional Budget sensitization workshops also

included time allocated to training on programme-based planning and budgeting by NPA and MFPED. In addition, in 2021, NPA supported by GIZ, conducted a two days retreat for local government planners with a focus on the new programme approach. However, the aforementioned effort notwithstanding, LG Development Plans submitted to NPA for approval are largely non-compliant to programme-based planning and Districts were still unable to prepare programme-based BFPs.

26. In view of the above situation, a number of actions are required to institutionalize the programme approach at LG level. In the first place, it is evident that the removal of Sector Strategic Plans (Sub-Programme Plans) has created a gap for strategic thematic/sector guidance to local governments on sector specific planning, standards and budgeting issues, including on utilization of unconditional grants. Without Strategic Sub-Programme/Sector Plans to work as 5-year reference for local Governments the PIAPs and MDA Strategic Plans remain detached from the conceptual reality of local government planning and budgeting. Secondly, it will be necessary to prepare LG-specific programme-based results frameworks to inform the Higher LG, District and LLG PIAPs. In order to facilitate faster adoption of the programme approach at LG, it may further be necessary to operationalize zonal planning centres which will offer opportunity for faster capacity building and joint economic and physical planning for common results.

2.5   Status on the adoption of the Programme Approach

27. To a great extent, the transition to programme-based approach has been very slow. The implementation of the programme-based budget approach started in 2015/16 with 'programmes' that were presumed to be within sectors. These were, however, standardized to the programme-based planning best practice where programmes are the ultimate top most arrangements for planning comprising numerous sectors. The reconstitution of programmes by the NDPIII ensured achievement of the objectives for introducing the programme approach to planning and budgeting.

28. Due to time constraint to inform the 2020/21 budgeting process and the lack of clarity on whether to continue with preparation of sector level (sub-programme) strategic plans to inform the overarching programme strategic plans, the multi-purpose programme level Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs), focused on providing costed results indicators frameworks, were introduced. The PIAPs provided a direct link between the NDPIII and the budget. The PIAPs results indicators frameworks have

been locked into the Programme-Based System (PBS) as the basis for the 2022/23 budget allocations and reporting. By the time of this MTR, only eight Sub-Programmes had developed Strategic Plans. It may be worthwhile to note that finalization of PIAPs results indicators was reported to have been very slow involving back and forth processes due to conceptual challenges regarding joint programme planning, budgeting and implementation, as well as low capacity issues among MDAs. The absence of programme and sub-programme strategic plans continues to exhibit a gap regarding the need to provide space for strategic thinking and division of labor processes for the programme approach.

29. At the sub-programme level, the coordination arrangements amongst the development partners, the private sector and the civil society groups were sluggish over the first half of the NDPIII mainly due to the twenty-month national Covid19 lock-down during the period 2020 – 2021.

30. Overall, only four (4) out of the twenty (20) programmes were reported to be functional during the two-year period of NDPIII. These are: 1. Water and Environment; 2. Integrated Transport & Infrastructure; 3. Public Sector Transformation; and 4. Development Plan Implementation. The rest apart from holding meetings have not effectively performed their roles. It is worth noting that the PWG meetings were only largely attended by the PS' of the convening Ministries with the rest being lower cadre officers, which lowered the level of the technical discussions.

31. **Joint programme work Plan and Budgeting.** The recent reprioritization is one of the steps towards joint programme work plan and budgeting where all 20 programmes were involved during the MTR process. However, the practice of preparing joint programme work plan and budget has not been realized by the Mid-term of the implementation of NDP III. MDAs have continued to prepare their budgets and work plans and submit to MFPED without approval by either the programmes secretariates or OPM. The common practice is that Secretariats of various programmes were only consolidating PIAPs but without authority to make adjustments for harmonization purposes. It had been intended that OPM would review the PIAPs, program and LGs budget framework papers to ensure alignment to the NDP. However, such systems are not working. In the absence of joint planning, most MDAs have not participated in the last programme reviews process except for those in the 4 functional PWGs for the financial year 2021/22. The reality is that sectors are still operational and even hold individual sector

reviews separately. Examples of sectors that are still operational include the education sector and the health sector which, albeit the silos approach, belong to the human capital development programme.

2.6   Overview of the expected reforms under the programme approach

32.   Following the implementation of NDPII, gaps and implementation challenges were identified and reforms were identified to ensure effective implementation of NDPIII with a view to mainstream the programme approach. Key reforms were proposed to enable effective implementation of the NDPIII programmes. These include: i) Alignment of the Public Finance Management Systems to the NDPIII; ii) Restructuring of Ministries and rationalization of Agencies to reduce duplication and overlap of roles, functions and mandates; iii) Development of service delivery standards to facilitate effective service delivery and monitoring, and (iv) operationalization of the APEX Platform. Several other programme-specific reforms were also proposed, which also called for streamlining of institutional implementation frameworks, among others. Whereas the NDP III underpins streamlining government architecture for efficient and effective service delivery in line with the new program planning, budgeting and implementation arrangements most of the reforms are yet to be implemented. The progress on the implementation of the proposed key reforms and those within specific programmes are reviewed in the sections below.

I)   Apex Platform

33.   The APEX Platform is a reform convened by Office of the President as a high-level Oversight Forum for uptake, learning and executive decision making to foster transparency, accountability, and the promotion of good governance practices in the delivery of services to the citizens. The core institutions that facilitate uptake, learning and executive decision making include: (i) Office of the President the convener and secretariat of the Forum; (ii) OPM responsible for the implementation coordination and monitoring of Government Programmes; (iii) MoFPED responsible for fiscal and economic policy management; and, (iv) NPA responsible for national development plans. The platform is designed to facilitate oversight implementation of NDP III and subsequent NDPs, the ruling party manifesto and the presidential directives. Some progress has been registered since its inception in 2020 and the activities undertaken include: the development and launch of the Apex guidelines in 2020 by the President; the establishment of the APEX secretariat in the Office of the President; one pre-APEX

meeting took place; and the Apex Platform was officially launched by H.E the President of Uganda in July 2022.

34. However, the MTR established that full operationalization of APEX reform has not yet been realized. There is no demonstrated effort for the four core institutions to realize the intended goals of the Forum as intended under the DPI program (NDP Par 499). The core functions of convening the four core members to meet the president for policy and strategic decisions raised in the recommendations to improve service delivery has not happened. As well, the secretariat is focussing more on evaluations why government programmes have failed rather than focussing on increasing efficiency and effectiveness of NDPIII programmes (NPDIII Par 484). The efficiency and effectiveness of NDPIII could be informed by the issues already identified in the NDR, GAPR and implementation of manifesto.

II)   Alignment of Public Finance Management systems to NDPIII Prorammes

35. Smooth implementation of the programme approach is greatly hinged on the extent of integration of the programme architecture, attributes and systems into the financing mechanisms of the national budget. It is therefore imperative that the detailed design of the NDPIII programmes ought to be configured to be in sync with the various public finance management systems. The country's current public finance management systems include: i) the national Chart of Accounts (CoA); (ii) the Integrated Finance Management Information System (IFMIS); (iii) the Programme Budget System (PBS); and (iv) the Human Capital Management System (HCM). The Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development reported to have completed the update of the alignment of the Chart of Accounts (CoA) to the NDPIII results chain. The task of aligning the IFMIS and PBS was also reported to be nearly complete but was at the time of the MTR facing challenges of continued adjustments of the programme results indicators due to lack of consensus on them and capacity among programme actors. It should be noted that the three main public finance management systems (CoA, IFMIS and PBS) are essentially only improvements of the old systems which have been adopted to programmes by incorporating aggregation levels at programme, Sub-programme and Outcome levels. The previous systems were structured along sectors, as the highest institutional level and outputs, without compulsory attachment to achievement of NDP results.

36.

III)   Restructuring of Ministries and Rationalization of the Government Agencies

37.   In 2018, Government of Uganda adopted a reform to rationalize performance and public expenditure of the 147 Government agencies, commissions and authorities through mergers and re-integration of institutions into Ministries. The purpose of the reform was to eliminate structural ambiguities, functional duplications, overlaps, wasteful expenditures and realize short term and long-term savings on Government expenditure on Agencies.

38.   As part of the process to operationalize the rationalization of the Agencies, Cabinet approved a roadmap for the implementation process over a period of three (3) years and a Cabinet Sub-Committee to provide political oversight and guidance during the implementation was constituted. In addition to fast tracking the mergers and mainstreaming functions of Agencies, the Ministry of Public Service as the implementing entity was directed by Cabinet to halt the creation of new agencies, commissions and authorities and to provide guidance on the management of transition arrangements for Boards and Staff whose contracts would expire in due course of the rationalization. Cabinet also agreed to validate credentials of employees from the affected Agencies and absorb them into the mainstream Public Service and compensate employees to be laid off as a result of the restructuring.

39.   The intended rationalization process of Government Agencies has, however, not been without skepticism and resistance at political and technical levels, which has led to significant back and forth movements and consequent implementation delays. The challenges of implementing the rationalization were exacerbated by the issues below.

  i) The rationalization set out to merge, mainstream or scrap agencies with duplicative and redundant roles, especially if they do not generate revenue, with limited regard to efficiency considerations. The situation was made worse by the absence of regular official institutional effectiveness and efficiency performance reports. The failure to analyze the gains from improved efficiency and service delivery effectiveness continues to crowd the debate on the rationalization directive;

  ii) The encumbrances arising from legal provisions that created some agencies and multi-lateral commitments and obligations have made it difficult to have hurried implementation of some of the rationalization recommendations; and

iii) The absence of a specific budget to take care of the resulting personnel lay-offs and any urgent overheads has aggravated the slow movement towards rationalization actions.

40. However, a re-assessment of the rationalization of key agencies by the NDPII MTR in 2018 recommended a stay of a number of Agencies from the merger and reconsolidation into mother Ministries. Nonetheless, the MTR recommendation also coincided with the appointment of a Cabinet Sub-Committee chaired by the Head of Public Service/Secretary to Cabinet to further assess the rationalization with specific guidelines from Cabinet. The report was presented and approved by Cabinet in July 2022 but by the time of preparing this MTR report it had been referred to the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs for legal advice on the implications of the Cabinet recommendations.

IV) Development of Service and Service Delivery Standards by all Sub-Programmes

41. The need to develop service delivery standards is a key gap at the advent of the CNDPF and the aspiration to achieve Vision 2040. It was realized that the absence of standards was a limiting factor for determining the cost of set targets which require definition of the particular standard of the service and infrastructure. Standards are also required in setting milestones that may be achievable based on available resource inputs. The absence of standards complicates monitoring of progress of implementation. Moreover, achievement of the country's middle-income status also has significant bearing on the level of service and service delivery standards across sectors/sub-progrmmes.

42. The urgent need for establishment of standards across Government sectors was highlighted in both NDPII and NDPIII. The standards would act as benchmarks for planning and implementation towards achievement of the middle income status. To-date, all MDAs, sectors/sub-programmes and programmes are yet to develop standards to guide their implementation, except for a few that depend on already set and compulsory global standards such as air transport and clinical services. The activity was not prioritized by any of the institutions responsible for regulation and implementation during the first half of the NDPIII implementation. It should, however, be noted that a few Ministries earlier made initial attempts to develop the service and service delivery standards with support from the UNDP. These include: Health, Education, Lands and Physical Planning, Water and Environment and Housing. The absence of Service and

Service Delivery Standards will continue to hinder efficiency and effectiveness of budgets and overall Programmes.

CHAPTER THREE

**ANALYSIS OF ISSUES REGARDING PROGRAMME DESIGN,
IMPLEMENTATION AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS**

3.1   Introduction

43.   This chapter provides detailed analysis of issues regarding the NDPIII Programme design, implementation and related institutional frameworks. It gives the underlying factors for the successes and challenges of the Programme Approach. The section also makes an assessment of the opportunities and possible answers to realizing the overall objectives of the Programme Approach. The analysis considers all aspects from design stage to implementation, including institutional encumbrances and opportunities in facilitating adoption of the programme approach across Government.

3.2   NDPIII Programme Design

44.   Following the introduction of NDPIII in 2020/21, twenty (20) programmes were created comprising objectives and interventions for achieving the NDP goal of "Increased Household Incomes and Improved Quality of Life for Ugandans". The twenty programmes for NDPIII were arrived at based on value-chain analyses of the programmes from input to intermediate and final output and outcome levels. The analyses also included matching the inputs to responsibility centres (MDAs) along the value chains. Each program followed a logical flow that connected program objectives to the NDP goal. The programme therefore was conceived in terms of the problem/issue it sought to address (e.g., the Agro-Industrialization Prog. Aimed to address the issues of a high % of the population dependent on subsistence agriculture due to Low agric. production and productivity, etc). The plan objectives summary of programme logic is as illustrated below:

Figure 1: Summary of NDPIII programme logic
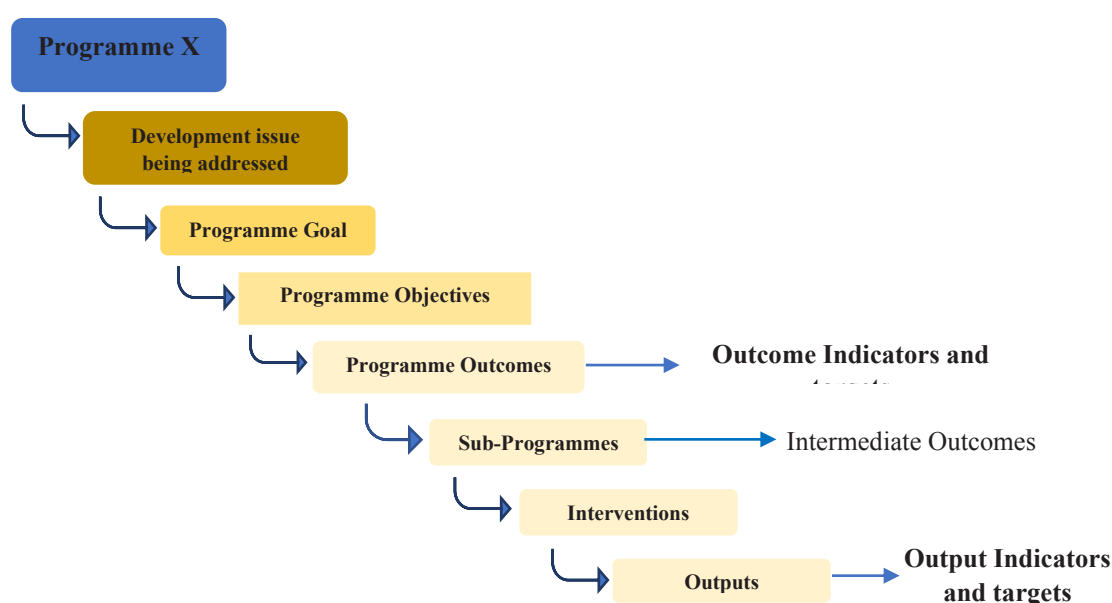
45. Determining what can constitute a programme was mainly based on assessing the hierarchy of the NDPIII thematic areas in terms of contribution to growth, employment and importance towards the overall Government transformation agenda. In addition, consideration was made on the need to take care of separation of powers based on the constitutional provisions for the three arms of Government, namely; the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature.

Table 2: The Approved NDPIII Programmes are given in the table below.

	Programme		Programme
1.	Agro-Industrialization	11.	Sustainable Urbanization and Housing
2.	Minerals Development	12.	Human Capital Development
3.	Sustainable Development of Petroleum Resources	13.	Innovation, Technology Development and Transfer
4.	Tourism Development	14.	Community Mobilization and Mind-set Change
5.	Natural Resources, Environment, Climate Change, Land and Water Management	15.	Governance and Security Programme
6.	Private Sector Development	16.	Public Sector Transformation
7.	Manufacturing	17.	Regional Development
8.	Integrated Transport Infrastructure and Services	18.	Administration of Justice
9.	Sustainable Energy Development	19.	Legislature, Oversight and Representation
10.	Digital Transformation	20	Development Plan Implementation

46.   These programmes are outcome-based and are, in principle, independent of institutional arrangements/structures. The membership to programmes therefore comprises MDAs which contribute to a particular outcome. However, like for SWAP groupings, institutions (MDAs), may belong to more than one of the programmes1.

3.3   Design Challenges of the NDPIII Programmes

47.   The process involved value-chain analysis and hierarchical contribution to growth and employment. The current programme design however exhibited a number of challenges. These include:

i)   **Non/partial adherence to the value-chain criteria for determining the formation and composition of programmes**. The criteria was not, for instance, fully followed in the case of the Administration of Justice Programme where DPP, Police and Prisons were left out of this programme which complicates achievement of results for this programme.

ii)   **The intended considerations on separation of powers highlighted in introduction above notwithstanding, due regard to Constitutional Independence (separation of powers) was not fully followed in some cases**. For example, the Office of the Auditor General was included in the Governance and Security Programmes which would compromise the independence of that Office in executing its mandate. Also, the Legislature and the Judiciary was included under the Governance and Security programme, which undermines the Constitutional principle of separation of powers.

iii)   **There are a number of programme areas which are complementary, share Objectives/Outcomes and would not require separate programmes.** These include the two programme areas of: Digital Transformation and Innovation, Technology Development and Transfer. However, digital transformation (ICT) is the enabler and medium for today's technological development and transfer, which negates the creation of the two separate programmes.

iv)   **Programme areas with same mandates/functions would not require to have separate programmes.** In Uganda's context both the Private Sector Development and Manufacturing Programmes have same function/mandate, to

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[1] The Ministry of Water and Environment, for example, is also part of the Human Capital Development Programme.

achieve industrialization. These were however separated, which would lead to unnecessary fragmentation of efforts, achievement of partial results and further duplication.

v) **The design did not apparently also pay attention to maximising synergies and benefits of sequencing key projects among programmes.** For example, sustainable harnessing of petroleum is mainly geared at providing energy and petroleum exploration may also involve tapping into natural gas reserves for energy generation. In Uganda's context, petroleum exploration is aimed at import replacement of the country's energy needs and enhancing the export earnings. This requires analysis of the global energy mix projections visa a' vis petroleum development. It would therefore be beneficial technically and practically to merge both the Sustainable Energy Development and the Sustainable Petroleum programmes into one programme to harness synergies from concurrent analysis and development of petroleum and other energy sources as drivers of growth.

vi) **Another problem identified by the MTR is the failure to fully adhere to the principal of ensuring that MDAs and thematic areas have shared and coherent policies, mission and vision during programme design.** The case in point is that whereas all the public sector, private sector and civil society management and administration sub-programmes and MDAs share similar client charter policy objectives, missions and visions of ensuring improved public service delivery, Defence and Security is unique and different and is only involved in service delivery arrangements during emergencies and disasters. It is therefore logical to separate Defence and Security, whose primary mandate is to defend and protect the country from any external aggression, from civilian Governance arrangements which routinely aim at effective public service delivery.

48. Overall, the MTR analysis indicates that the future design of the programmes should consider the following criteria:

i) Shared objectives/outcomes

ii) Common value chain / service delivery system

iii) Promotion of Constitutional Independence (separation of powers)

iv) Shared policy, mission and vision coherence

v) Strengthening synergies for efficient service delivery.

vi) Promoting implementation sequencing

vii) Accelerating the achievement of results

viii) Relevancy of mandate to shared programme objectives

3.4 Operational challenges to NDPIII Programme implementation

49. Besides the programme design challenges outlined above, numerous operational and implementation huddles have also been experienced during the two years of NDPIII. These include:

i) **Absence of Programme level and Sub-Programme level Strategic Plans** to provide detailed implementation strategies and lower level results frameworks that feed into the NDPIII objectives and results. The absence of the Strategic Plans among most Sub-Programmes and Programmes hindered timely prioritisation and formulation of PIAP results indicators to inform the BFPs. The NPA led the process to produce the PIAP and results indicators for programmes with mixed participation of the respective MDAs and no involvement of local governments.

ii) **Weak capacity within MDAs and Districts hindered fast adoption of programme-based planning and budgeting**. It was pointed out by some Permanent Secretaries and technical heads of agencies that apart from NPA and MFPED, most of the MDAs did not fully understand the programme approach and had difficulty in preparing common programme objectives and PIAP results indicators. The situation was worse at the district level as the majority of the districts failed to produce programme based BFPs for FY2022/23 and the Budgeting for LGs largely remained under the SWAP. The NPA requires to timely design fresh strategies for training the MDAs and LGs in preparation for the next budgeting cycle, for FY2023/24. The strategies should specifically include strengthening capacity of the Planning Units across Government to become Trainer of Trainers (ToT) centres in order to continuously provide support to the rest of the departments and units within MDAs and LGs.

iii) **NDPIII is non-committal on programme approach and its institutional framework and this exhibits major weaknesses. This is attributed to the**

delayed technical and political commitment to the reform during preparation of the Plan. The institutional framework for the Plan implementation comprises the Political leadership level chaired by the Prime Minister, the Steering Committee comprising the Permanent Secretaries and chaired by the Permanent Secretary of Office of the Prime Minister, and the Technical Working Groups chaired by the Permanent Secretaries of the lead Ministries. The institutional arrangements also provide for Secretariats for the programmes to be hosted by the lead Ministries. The specific challenges of the institutional arrangements include:

a. **There is absence of a specific committee of Cabinet** charged with the responsibility   of implementing the NDPIII that the Prime Minister is assigned to chair.

b. Based on the lessons learnt from NDPI and NDPII, **it may be difficult for the Permanent Secretary of the Office Prime Minister to oblige other Permanent Secretaries to attend Implementation Steering Committee meetings** since they are at the same level. The Steering Committee should only be chaired by the Head of Public Service/Secretary to Cabinet who is the supervisor of PSs;

c. **Some programme secretariats established like DPI and PSD by lead Ministries** are duplicating work of Planning Units and require additional overhead costs from the concerned Ministries as many of them have been established outside the Ministries' Planning Units.

d. The institutional arrangements also provide for Coordination Desks at the OPM for Programmes, the institution that is constitutionally responsible for coordination of implementation of public policies and programmes. This would require operationalizing Programme coordinators as provided for in the NDPIII.

e. The NDPIII does not provide clear guidance on the new role for Sectors and Sector Working Groups of the out-going sector-wide approach. **The Plan uses the terminology sector throughout the Plan without providing guidance on the context in which it is applied.** It would have been more prudent for the NDPIII to adopt use of the terminology sector to mean sub-

programmes and to clarify this in the Plan. Sectors/Sub-Programmes are a critical planning level that ought to be maintained as the principal thematic level for strategic planning and coordination. **The Sub-Programme/Sector Secretariats should be maintained to continue preparing the Strategic Plans, results frameworks, work-plans and BFPs**. The results frameworks, work-plans and BFPs should then be consolidated by the programme secretariats.

iv) **Convening Technical Working Groups is operationally problematic for some Programmes due to the large number of participants.** A case in point is the Human Capital Development Programme, where the minimum number of participants at a TWG Meeting is over 50 senior officers representing Agencies, Departments and specialized Units from the heath, educations and skills development thematic areas. The large numbers coupled with the wide scope and varying thematic objectives and missions constrain achievement of timely consensus on common objectives, results and strategies for implementation. There is therefore need to encourage planning at a subprogramme level.

v) **Secretariats are not funded and there is no clear mechanism in place to fund secretariats**. Resources for running programme secretariates should be distinguished from resources of policy and planning departments for the ministries. At one time the guidelines were requiring a lead Ministry to provide funding for the secretariat. Some of these ministries later shifted the responsibility of running the secretariats to their Planning Units which stretched the Units beyond their capacities. Adequate facilitation and capacity of staff are major factors behind the success of PWGs. Lessons learnt from sector based approach identified the following success factors for SWGs. These include: the level of external financing, and donor involvement, in the sector was an important determinant of whether the SWG functioned properly; SWGs were most successful in sectors where there was *policy coherence* – in the sense of shared policy objectives – between the MDAs that comprised the sector; SWGs worked best when they had a single major Ministry as the core agency; Institutional fragmentation tended to prevent SWGs from working properly.

vi) **Functional PWGs and secretariats are those which were working previously under the sector based approach** such as the Secretariat for DPI and PSD which

are inherited from Accountability sector. It meant that leading Ministries continued to host the PWGs and the secretariat. In this case MOFPED is the lead ministry and provide not only the secretariat but is also funding the running of the secretariat. It meant that leading ministries continued to host the PWGs and the Secretariat. Lead ministries which were not hosting Secretariats under the sector wide based approach are limping or have not taken off completely.

vii)   It was also reported that **some ministries are split between PWGs because they belong to multiple programmes, causing fragmentation, meeting fatigue and sometimes wastage of resources**. This was particularly manifested in programme leadership where a single ministry provides programme leadership to more than one programme. Moreover, in some cases, the basis for leading several programmes is not justified. The preferred basis for the selection of an institution to lead a programme would be that it undertakes a majority of the interventions under the programme.

viii)   **There is a challenge to Programme implementation arising from the operational architecture of the current public finance systems.** The IFMS and the Chart of Accounts have taken care of Programme/Sub-Programmes of the NDPIII and it is possible to list all payments made by the system by Programme or Sub-Programme. However, the compliance to NDPIII is complicated by the pegging of all public expenditures to the Vote as the principle unique identifier on the system's data entry interface. The system interface attributes are: Fund Type, Fund Source, Programme/Sub-Programme, Vote/Cost Center, Project name, Budget Outputs (Vote Function), Geographical location and Account Number. See figure below.

Figure 2: IFMIS Computer Interface
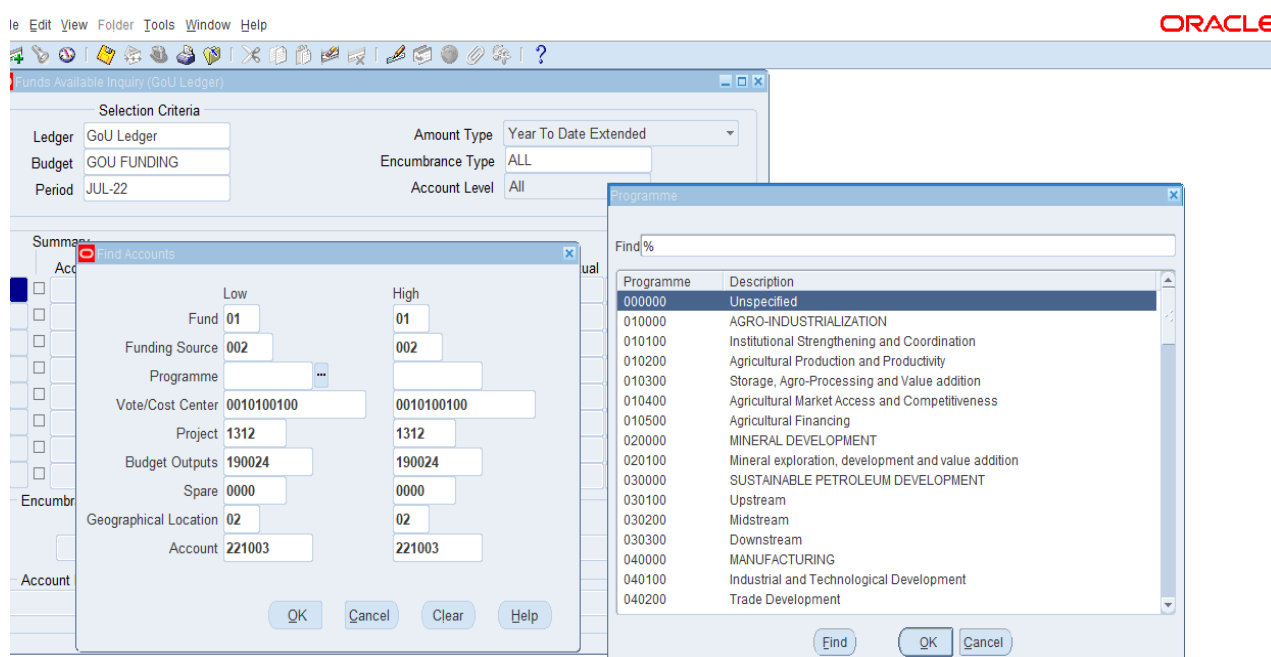
50. The main issues regarding the alignment of the NDPIII implementation with the IFMIS/Chart of Accounts are:

i) **The IFMIS/Chart of Accounts payment system does not take care of the Intervention and yet most important feature of the NDPIII**. It is the cost centre (unique identifier) for the programme approach. Each Intervention in the NDPIII would require to be given a unique code and included in the Chart of Accounts/IFMIS in order to achieve a perfect match between the NDPIII and the PFM Systems. Each Intervention will require to be attached to a space that provides for the funds to be entered. All NDPIII interventions would be included in the system with or without having allocations of funds. No payment should proceed without entering the Intervention and the correct corresponding code. The intervention area on the interface should provide for (a) General intervention or (b) Project or (c) Project Idea, which are all coded as interventions. It is understood that projects are only included in the Chart of Accounts/IFMIS after approval and assignment of codes. In addition to improving alignment of NDPs to the Budget execution, the adjustment would also reduce projectization of public expenditure, reduce mischarges and enhance transparency in public expenditure.

ii) **There is need to harmonize the definition of terminologies used in the IFMIS/Chart of Accounts System with those of the Programme Budgeting**

System (PBS). For instance, under IFMIS the term Output refers to Agencies and Vote Functions, whereas Outputs in the PBS are partial results from budget execution. Relatedly, the IFMIS does not accordingly provide for entry of expected budget outputs and outcomes (results) which are considered to be unnecessary from the budget execution side of things. It will also be important to separate slots for Programmes and Sub-Programmes on the IFMIS computer interface to facilitate compatibility with the NDP separation of the two. Nevertheless, all payments made by the IFMIS are archived into a database that is accessible by the Budget side of MFPED for activities such as Budget Monitoring.

iii) **The lack of automatic full-time linkage between the PBS and the IFMIS limits the convergence of the two systems on detailed budgeting (PBS) attributes provided through the PIAPS.** Whereas the PBS is the medium for preparation of Budget Framework Papers (BFPs) used during appropriation and mandatory quarterly reporting by Programmes and Votes (MDAs), the system interface with IFMIS is limited and unable to provide real time feedback on public expenditures made against NDPIII PIAP performance outputs and outcomes as included in the PBS.

iv) The current Votes which are also the cost centres within programmes do not have a definite criteria for their creation, which creates disorderliness within the Programme approach. For example, some Votes are Sub-Programmes (Sectors) while others are either administrative units, projects, etc. It will be important to consolidate most of the current Votes under Sub-Programmes in order to ensure reduction in fragmentation of effort and achievement of common results with limited duplication and wastage of budget resources. Some of the Votes created administratively in, say, an attempt to enable faster and direct transfer of funds to Agencies/Departments and Foreign Missions without passing through the bureaucratic layer of Permanent Secretaries of Ministries may pose a risk of unplanned expenditure and loss of funds without knowledge of the responsible Ministries.

51. A criteria could also be set for creation of Votes which may include that the institution may qualify to be a Vote upon fulfillment of any one of the following:

- It is either a Programme or a Sub-Programme of the NDP
- It is a Ministry of Government

- It is an autonomous Agency or Authority or Commission established by an Act of Parliament

Current Votes which do not conform to the above criteria should be done away with.

3.5 Other Specific Development Planning Challenges

3.5.1 Promotion of Program Approach to Planning

52. The MTR established that the transition from sector wide approach to Program approach required a change management strategy. The approach lacked a systematic promotion strategy in form of elaborate guidelines and capacity building, to popularise and operationalize it and clear avenues of addressing challenges encountered in the course of its implementation. Consequently, Program approach has created a lacuna among MDAs and local Governments because of lack of understanding and how it better be adopted.

53. NPA should have popularised and trained the programme approach to MDAs and Local Government before implementation through smaller groups at the district level, including provision of user-friendly guidelines, which was not done.

3.5.2 Programme Implementation Action Plan (PIAPs)

54. The MTR established that Programme Implementation Action Plans were developed for all programs through a process which was not participatory enough to include local governments and have never been officially submitted to OPM for approval. The National Planning Authority led the process to develop the PIAPs. The MOFPED was concerned on the quality of PIAPs especially with regard to output indicators especially at program level which require to be improved.

55. The dominating role played by NPA in preparing PIAPs created a sense of lack of ownership from MDAs and OPM whose participation was minimal in the preparation of PIAPs. As coordinator of the NDP Implementation OPM needed to play a key role in preparation of the PIAPs. In addition, the PIAPs should have been based on programme strategic plans.

3.5.3 Amending the legal frameworks

56. **Key stakeholders such as the Parliament asserted that programme approach to planning cannot be implemented without amending the legal framework.**

Parliament particularly highlighted a need to amend the constitution and PFMA in respect to the following:

i)   Harmonization of the sector, vote and programmes under the new programme based budgeting framework with the PFMA appropriation requirements

ii)   Structural review/realignment of the Parliamentary Committees system from a sectoral-based approach to meet the requirements of the programme based approach for proper budget scrutiny, appropriation and committee oversight.

3.5.4 Alignment of MDAs and LG Plans to NDP

57.   **Alignment of MDAs and LG Plans to NDPIII has persistently not been satisfactory**, which requires critical systemic analysis of both the architecture of both the NDP and the public finance systems. The review of the NDP structure indicated that the plans lack consistence which calls for costly five-year reforms in the public finance systems to achieve perfect alignment. As such, consensus is needed on the NDP the PFM system designs for achievement of the alignment.

3.5.5 Delays by NPA to review District Development Plans

58.   The MTR was also informed that **reviewing of District Development Plans by NPA take unnecessarily long time.** NPA remained defensive on the matter although it was observed that the Authority's capacity in the Departments of Local Government and Strategic Planning had experienced highest turn-over of senior staff and during the MTR together comprised only four senior experienced staff.

3.5.6 Alignment of the NDPIII to the budget

59.   The MTR noted that progress has been slow in aligning plans to the budget. Compliance level over the last four years has averaged 60.3 percent with many priority growth sectors underfunded. It also noted that the NDP contains more projects than what can be financed by the national budget. Linking budget to programme and programme results has been constrained by poor revenue performance and frequent supplementary budgets. It may be worthwhile that NPA undertakes compliance assessment of the BFP for oncoming budgets. This would require amendment of the PFM act.

3.5.7   Aligning MDA and Local Government Plans to NDP

60.   Although, it may not be entirely attributed to Program Approach, some MDAs have developed strategic plans and work plans aligned to NDPIII. However, over 50% of MDAs do not have strategic plans and attendant work plans that are aligned with NDP III. The NDP was based on a number of submissions from MDAs, but these submissions did not always reflect the respective MDAs strategic plans. Further, at the time of design of the NDP, some MDAs strategic plans were not in place. In many cases MDAs were guided by strategic plans rather than their initial submissions to the NDP. Similarly, when the NDP was developed, districts were asked to align their District Development Plans to the NDP with the expectation that the NDP was to have emanated from district and sub-county plans themselves. This made the NDP appear as a top-down centralised planning regime against which all MDAs and LGDPs were to plan and align. In some instances, this has worked well. It had been intended that NPA would review programme and LG plans to ensure alignment to the NDP and to create incentives and sanctions for MDAs to align. However, this has not been delivered on time basically because staff challenges at NPA and lack of technical capacity at LG levels.

3.6   Review of the key NDPIII reforms

3.6.1 Reforms regarding coordination of implementation of programmes

Role of the Office of the Prime Minister

61.   Following up from recommendations of the NDPII MTR, there was no evidence to show deliberate strengthening of coordination of implementation for NDP. The MTR established that the restructuring of OPM to fully undertake the NDPIII programme coordination was yet to be realized due to lack of resources. Based on the MTR assessment, the OPM requires to designate/recruit Programme Coordinators with requisite qualification and significant public sector experience (at Assistant Commissioner level) to work as programme coordinators. The Coordinators would over time require to have Assistants. The roles of the Programme Coordinators at OPM could be reviewed from those given in the NDPIII Programme Guidelines to those given in the table below.

Table 3: Roles of Program Coordinator

- Liaise with the lead Ministry to coordinate technical meetings of programme working groups
- Liaise with lead Ministry to coordinate production of harmonized PIAPs to avoid duplication;
- Liaise with the lead Ministry to coordinate production of annual and quarterly work-plans of the Programmes;
- Participate in activities of Sub-Programme Working Groups;
- Quality assure BFPs of Sub-Programmes and submit to MFPED;
- Liaise with NPA and MFPED in coordinating production of costed NDP Interventions;
- Maintain database of data on the implementation of the programme;
- Generate regular reports on implementation of the programmes;
- Prepare independent annual reports on performance of Programmes
- Coordinate programme expenditure reviews.

Staff of the OPM delivery unit and SDG Coordination Unit with requisite public sector experience should be seconded in the interim to support the coordination of the NDP programmes at OPM.

Introduction of Programme Working Groups

62. Stakeholders expressed the need to build on existing structures for improved coordination. To this end, the PWGs are required to undertake production of the integrated Programme Strategic Plans that are based on the Sub-Programme Strategic Plans. The Sub-Programme Strategic Plans are in-turn based on the institutional Strategic Plans. It should be noted that the various strategic plans provide the requisite forums for strategic thinking for identification of project ideas, research and innovation. The consolidation of Sub-Programme Strategic Plans into Programme Strategic Plans provides a forum for coming up with common objectives and results. PWGs therefore ought to develop the Programme Results Frameworks, the annual and quarterly Programme Work-Plans, the annual PIAPs, the Programme Budgets and quarterly and annual reports. The PWGs are also required to undertake annual performance reviews to assess the extent of the delivery of programme results.

63. On the other hand, functional Programme Secretariats reported a number of challenges affecting their effectiveness. These include:

  i.   Delays in submitting information to Program Secretariats by MDAs which undermine timely reporting;

ii.   Coordination of big programs proved difficult for secretariats due to lack of resources to support secretariat activities;

iii. The practice is that Secretariats of various programmes are just consolidating plans but with no authority to veto the different plans for purposes of harmonization;

iv.   Inadequate guidelines on operations of key players especially at MDA level;

v.   Frequent changes in personnel to handle issues at programme as well as at institutional level;

vi.   The current coordination framework foresaw setting up of many committees whose operationalization has been difficult due to time and financial resources constraints;

vii. There is a big challenge in attracting accounting officers of the participating agencies to attend PWG meetings in person;

viii. There is over delegation and at times inconsistency in delegation - some instances, junior officers are delegated to represent Accounting officers.

3.6.2 Develop and enforce service and service delivery standards across the public sector

64. The reform to base implementation, planning, budgeting and monitoring on established service and service delivery standards is also an outstanding reform carried forward from NDPII. The reforms aims to put in place agreed national standards for a middle income Uganda. Based on Vision 2040, the standards ought to be the target for all infrastructure and other services.

65. Development of the standards within Programmes is expected to be led by MoPS. As stated in the situation analysis, draft standards were produced by six sectors coordinated by NPA and supported by UNDP and no further progress was made due to non-prioritization of the activity by MDAs. The reform will facilitate the following:

i.   Better accountability and value for money for infrastructure projects;

ii.   Provision of a framework to guide planning and budgeting;

iii. Provision of monitoring yardstick during implementation;

iv.   Comprehensive development of sectors across Government; and

v.   Easy comparison with goods and service globally

3.6.3   Operationalize the Parish Development Model

66.   The Parish Development Model (PDM) is a cross-cutting NDPIII intervention whose implementation by Government started in FY2021/22, one year after commencement of the NDPIII. The PDM is designed along the following Pillars, namely: (i) Production, Processing and Marketing (value chain Development); (ii) Production infrastructure and services (extension services, Business Development Services for mind-set change, energy, roads, market structures and water for production); (iii) Financial inclusion (cooperatives, SACCOs and Revolving Fund); (iv) Social services (Health, Education, Water and Social Development); (v) Community Data (Community Information System); and (vi) Governance and Administration.

67.   At the time of the MTR, the NDPIII programmes where the PDM is designed to be implemented include: (i) Agro-Industrialization; (ii) Public Sector Transformation; (iii) Community Mobilization and Mind-set Change, (iv) Regional Development; and (v) Development Plan Implementation. It is worth noting that fragmentation of PDM interventions may be partly attributed to poor design of the NDPIII programmes and the institutional architecture of the PDM itself. The MTR's assessment indicates that PDM is majorly an administrative public service delivery intervention to be implemented through direct cash transfer and enhancement of social and extension services at the Parish level. The intervention aims at leaving the production decisions to the communities and households.

68.   The new approach therefore calls for consolidation of PDM activities under a public services administration programme. The institutional framework of the PDM also requires to be streamlined under the direct leadership and implementation of the Ministry of Local Government which ought to be restructured to take on the new assignment as well as the regional affirmative programmes currently under OPM.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 PROGRAMME AND INSTITUTIONAL EMERGING ISSUES

4.1   Development Planning

69.   The MTR identified some gaps in development planning which affected the comprehensiveness, coherence, integration, ownership and harmonized bottom-up design of the NDPIII Programmes. Various stakeholders also reported major challenges encountered in designing budget and monitoring tools that are consistent with the NDPIII, reportedly due to limited participatory contribution to the Plan. The key emerging issues on development Planning programmes are outlined in the sections below.

4.1.1 Weak development Planning capacities within MDAs and LGs

70.   The MTR identified that NPA and MFPED who were the main champions of the programme approach assumed that the rest of the MDAs and LGs had over the years built capacity in development planning similar to the two institutions and so Planners across Government could easily undertake the reform to programmes. This, however, proved not to be true when all LGs and most programmes and sub-programmes could not timely prepare PIAPs and corresponding strategic plans that were in line with the programme approach. Going forward, this calls for intensive training of MDAs and LGs by NPA and MFPED for successful adoption of the programme based planning and budgeting across Government.

71.   Strengthening development planning will also call for elevation of the status of development planning within the institutional frameworks of MDAs and LGs in order to provide a necessary incentive for retention of experienced cadre of planners. To this end, the Cabinet decision taken at the time of carrying out the MTR (July 2022) that reduces the MDA Planning Departments to Units under the office of the Undersecretary requires reconsideration for smooth adoption of the programme approach.

72.   Reconsideration of the decision is critical as MDA and LG Planners are the centre around which all MDA and LG technical work of all departments and Government as a whole revolves. In particular, Planning Departments are in charge of coordinating the institutional strategic plans, harmonising the departmental annual budgets and BFPs,

preparing the institutional annual and quarterly work-plans and corresponding monitoring reports, taking lead on carrying out project feasibility studies and presenting them to the development committee for approval, etc. Also, Planning departments are the custodians of the Government-wide technical policy frameworks and provide both the direction for implementation to happen and the dashboard for the institutions to know where they are. Across Government, Planning Departments are the heart of institutions because they are custodians of the technical detail and their non-functionality or marginalization is an indicator of overall institutional weakness. Planning should therefore be at department level within MDAs and LGs whose head should report directly to the institution's technical head/Permanent Secretary or Chief Administrative Officer.

4.1.2 Integration of spatial/physical Planning into NDPs

73. The existing weak overall development planning notwithstanding, there will be a requirement to build capacity for spatial planning among planners as an emerging need, as illustrated in chapter three above. The integration of spatial/physical planning into regional development plans and the NDPs will enhance comprehensiveness of plans by providing physical location of interventions. The approach will enable mapping of activities of identified priorities, targeting of beneficiaries and estimation of zonal production. Also, special planning will enhance equitable development and assessment of comparative advantages of areas to inform establishment of Industrial Parks in the medium term. The results frameworks of spatial plans are critical to leverage against the planned PDM capturing of data using digital technologies.

74. There are, however, significant capacity gaps of experienced spatial planners and the country needs to invest in spatial planning capacity building.

4.1.3 Strategic Plans to inform the NDPs

75. According to the NPA Act, 2002, the NDPs are required to be produced in a comprehensive, integrated and harmonized process. The Planning Guidelines, 2018, outline the planning process to involve harmonization of decentralized Plans in a bottom-up process guided by a top-down strategic direction. However, the absence of decentralized Plans produced in a sequenced informative manner affected the process of preparing the NDPIII as there were no Strategic Plans prepared under the programmatic approach by Local Governments (LLG, Districts and HLGs, MDAs,

Sub-Programmes (Sectors) and Programmes to inform the NDPIII. It is important to note that preparation of Strategic Plans is critical in the development planning process as it provides the critical thinking phase for creation/confirmation of ideas and design of strategies and implementation mechanisms.

76. Going forward, it will be necessary to ensure timely production of Strategic and Regional Plans at all levels of decentralised planning with a view to ensure production of comprehensive, integrated and harmonized Development Plans that are informed by a sequenced participatory process in line with the Development Planning Instrument and the NPA Act, 2002. To this end the MTR proposes the timelines for production of LG, Strategic Plans, Regional Plans and the NDPIV as outlined in the table below.

Table 4: Proposed planning cycle for NDPIV

	Type of Development Plan	Responsible Agency/ Person	Starting Date	End Date
1.	Parish Priority Lists	Parish Chief/ Parish Development Committee	January 2023	March 2023
2.	Sub-County /Town Council Development Plan	Sub-County Chief/ Development Committee/ Town Clerk	March 2023	June 2023
3.	Municipality Development Plan	Clerk to Municipality/ Municipal Council	March 2023	June 2023
4,	District Development Plan	District Planner/District Council	July 2023	September 2023
5.	Regional Development Plan	National Planning Authority	October 2023	March 2024
6.	MDA Strategic Plans	MDAs	July 2023	September 2023
7.	Sub-Programme/ Sector Strategic Plan	Sub-Programme/ Sector Secretariat	July 2023	December 2023
8.	Programme Strategic Plan (& PIAPS, Work-Plans, BFPs)	PWGs, NPA & OPM	January 2024	June 2024
9.	National Development Plan (Plus Coded & costed Interventions, PIP, Results Frameworks, Strategies-M&E, Implementation)	National Planning Authority	January 2024	March 2025

4.1.4 Regional Planning and Implementation

77. The need for regional plans to support implementation of NDPs emerged during the NDPII MTR. The need was identified arising from the desire by policy makers to

improve implementation of NDPs through decentralized systems for greater effectiveness and efficiency. During the NDPIII MTR, appeals for introduction of regional planning and implementation came from policy makers, technocrats, political leaders, civil society and development partners. It was observed that in the effort to take services nearer to the grassroots, districts had become smaller administrative units that shared much of the economic infrastructure. Many of the districts also share a lot of the geo-information regarding resource endowments which calls for joint spatial planning. In such cases, grouping of districts for joint planning and implementation offers a lot of advantages in terms of reduced planning, management and implementation overhead costs. It also offers opportunity for block farming and bulking of products for value addition and marketing.

78. The demand for regional planning by policy makers and implementers has become even more pronounced during the change to programme approach, as another consolidation measure for achievement of common results. The recent merger of physical planning and economic planning under the NPA by Cabinet will enable production of more spatially illustrated NDPs and enhanced implementation of the national plans.

79. Following review of sub-programme (Sector) specific plans and historical data and reports, the MTR proposes that the regional plans should be prepared as indicated below.

    i)   Central-Northern Uganda Sub-Regional Development Plan

    ii)   West Nile Sub-Regional Development Plan

    iii)   Karamoja Sub-Regional Development Plan

    iv)   Bunyoro Sub-Regional Development Plan

    v)   Central Buganda Sub-Regional Development Plan

    vi)   Greater Masaka- Kalangala Sub-Regional Development Plan

    vii)   Busoga Sub-Regional Development Plan

    viii)   Bukedi-Mbale Sub-Regional Development Plan

    ix)   Sebei Sub-Regional Development Plan

    x)   Teso Sub-Regional Development Plan

xi)   Ankole Sub-Regional Development Plan

xii)   Greater Kigezi Sub-Regional Development Plan

xiii)   Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area Development Plan

80. In addition to economic planning, the highlighted plans ought to be spatially illustrated in terms of planned infrastructure to enable projection of quantifiable production and providing visual impressions of the service thresholds. The regional planning should also be an incentive for establishment of shared regional service centres in such areas as road construction. The MTR noted that a number of sub-programmes such as Water and Environment, Lands, Energy, etc, have for a long time been implementing the regional/zonal approach. It is proposed that NPA should, in the medium term, champion the regional development planning and implementation approach by establishing regional development planning offices to support programme implementation-planning in the regions.

4.2   Call for change in Budgeting arrangements

4.2.1 Change to Programme-based budget allocations

81. As highlighted earlier in Chapter three, the two years of implementing the programme approach was characterised by PGWs' slow commencement of planning and budgeting meetings. This was attributed to the lack of incentives for the joint programme meetings. The MTR identified introduction of Programme ceilings whereby the members sit to agree on areas/interventions to be allocated budgetary funds as a worthwhile incentive for operationalizing the programme approach. The programme-based budget ceilings may be issued as part of the Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs) of the first Budget Call Circular which are later confirmed as part of the Final Budget Call Circular.

82. However, the programme-based budget allocation arrangements notwithstanding, appropriation by Parliament will remain at the new restructured Vote level. The assessment of programme and sub-programme performance against common results by Parliament during appropriation will be based on respective programme and sub-programme strategic plans and annual review reports. The expenditure reviews of programs to be done by OPM will also be the basis for allocating resources to programs.

4.2.2 Programme based budget arrangements

83. The MTR found that the current budgeting arrangements require to be adjusted to provide for coordination and quality assurance of the budget instruments (PIAPs, BFPs and Work-plans) by the programme coordinators at OPM. The budget cycle does not explicitly bring out the roles under the new dispensation of program approach. The MTR therefore recommends that these functions be tasked to the PWGs and OPM (for approval). Co-ordination of implementation instruments should be kept at the higher-level at OPM. The proposed roles of the various stakeholders are provided in figure 2.

4.2.3 Need to consider zero-based budgeting

84. In view of the emerging requirement to allocate resources at programme level and the introduction of a specific programme for public sector institutional development and service delivery systems that will separate recurrent from development expenditure, there will be a need to adopt zero-based budgeting in the allocation of resources to interventions/projects within a programme. Zero-based budgeting would enhance efficiency in spending and redirect resources from lower to higher priority interventions. This budgeting approach would as well prevent regular budget creeping behaviour that only emphasises inflationary adjustments. It would also facilitate identification and elimination of unproductive activities.

85. The zero-based budgeting approach was preferred by public finance managers at MFPED, OPM and Parliament, among others, as the system facilitates separation of the Wage Bill from funds for actual activities/outputs which would enhance realism in budget execution against political economy pressures. However, zero-based budgeting requires to have in place a Government-wide unit-cost framework. It may also work better with established service and service delivery standards in the medium to long term period.

Figure 2: PROGRAM-BASED BUDGET CYCLE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK
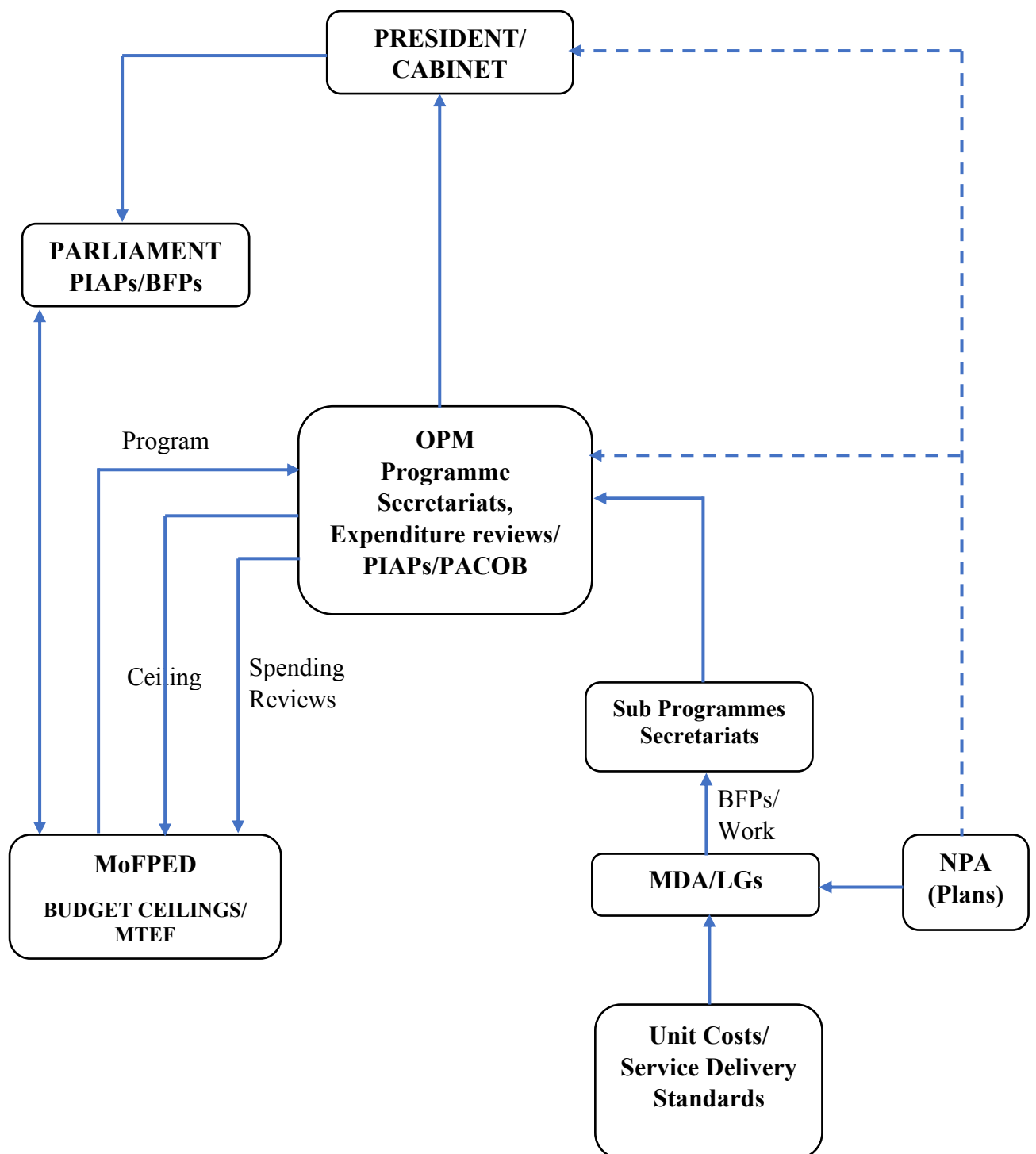
4.3   Coordination of implementation

4.4   Legal and regulatory implications of the programme approach

86.   The MTR established that there were concerns among stakeholders regarding possible requirement to amend laws and regulations in order to operationalize the programme approach to planning and budgeting.

87.   In particular, the following legal and regulatory frameworks may require changes:

i)   PFMA Act, 2015

88.   The PFMA Act, 2015, requires to recognize the programme approach to planning and budgeting in order to accommodate the budget allocation arrangements at programme level, referred to in 4.2 above.

ii)   Committees of Parliament

89.   Whereas there are no major changes on the composition of the Committees of Parliament some adjustments will be required as indicated below.

   a)   **Physical Infrastructure Committee:** Lands should be moved from this committee (**Physical Infrastructure Committee**) to **Environment and Natural Resources Committee**, in line with the NDPIII Programme approach

   b)   **Defence and Internal Affairs Committee:** Prisons and Police Services should be transferred from the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee to **the Legal and Parliamentary Affairs** to complete the value chain for the administration of justice.

   c)   **Tourism, Trade, and Industry:** Tourism should be transferred to Environment and Natural Resources in line with the NDPIII Programme Approach.

   d)   **Public Service and Local Government:** All the metropolitan affairs comprising Kampala and other Cities should be put under this Sessional Committee in line with the NDPIII Programme Approach

4.5   Resourcing the preparation of Strategic Plans at different levels

90.   The MTR established that following introduction of the programme approach there was lack of clarity on the need for Strategic Plans at different levels. The LG and Regional Plans are supposed to inform the MDA and Sub-Programme Plans, which in turn inform the Programme Strategic Plans and the NDPs, respectively. There is therefore

urgent need to resource the preparation of strategic plans at the various levels of government as outlined in the planning cycle.

4.6 Project Preparation Facility (PPF) under the National Planning Authority

91. In order to address the key Challenges of project preparation, Government should establish a Project Preparation Facility (PPF) under the National Planning Authority. Through the PPF, projects should be well studied to reduce major risks that affect project implementation. The PPF is intended to fast-track undertaking feasibility studies for core projects in the NDP. The existing Public Investment Management guidelines do not adequately provide for funding for feasibility studies of the core projects. In addition, the MTR found there are many clearing centres for loans and this delays their approval and subsequent implementation of projects. There is therefore need to centralise this process leveraging on the existence of the Development Committee in MoFPED where all the key stakeholders currently undertaking this clearance are represented.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

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5.1   Introduction

92.   The NDPIII MTR has identified a number of key findings comprising opportunities, weaknesses and major constraints to improved adoption and implementation of the programme approach. The findings range from design level to implementation and institutional levels. Overall, the analyses of the findings show that the change to programme approach is worthwhile in terms of technically reducing fragmentation, duplication, wastage of resources and achieving common results. The reform is also a significant development towards enforcing harnessing of synergies through joint planning, budgeting, budget execution, implementation, monitoring and alignment of the budgets to the NDPs. It is also hoped that with increased experience acquired during implementation of the programme approach, the approach will lead to improved institutional arrangements and architecture within Government.

93.   The sections that follow below provide highlights of the various findings and recommendations.

   A. Recommendations for NDPIII

5.2   Need to strengthen development planning within MDAs and LGs

94.   **The success of the NDPIII programme approach hinges on the strength of statistics, data and data systems, research and policy analysis, planning, budgeting, implementation planning, investment management, monitoring and evaluation, risk management and programme coordination functions across government, for realisation of intended results.** As such the planning role should be strategically positioned and elevated for Planning Departments to have the independence and capacity on this. Strengthening and ensuring independence of the Planning Departments reporting directly to the Permanent Secretary will be critical for the success of the NDPIII Programmatic Approach and the PFM Act (2015) reforms that require separation of the roles of planning, budgeting and budget execution.

95.   **The detailed issues regarding development planning capacity weaknesses of MDAs and LGs are as highlighted in section 4.1.** A lot of attention is required to be paid to the capacity of Ministries and Agencies to enable them carry out their roles under the

programme approach. Based on the analysis in Chapter Four, the MTR provides the recommendations given below.

Recommendation (1):

96. **Strategic Location, Elevation and Strengthening of the Planning Function across Government:** The emerging issue regarding locating the Planning Units under the Office of Under-Secretary should be reviewed by Cabinet for successful implementation of the NDPIII and the attendant programme approach. The Planning function should therefore be elevated to Department level within MDAs and LGs. The planning function across government should be streamlined to enable planners functionally report to NPA as a mechanism to strengthen demand driven interventions and promote integrated planning at all levels of Government. This is especially because the success of the programme approach is hinged on a strong Planning Department that undertakes various roles across the entire public service delivery process, ranging from research and policy analysis, data collection and management, planning and budgeting, among others. It is imperative to note that planning is a highly independent strategic and technical function that is not related to administrative operational/routine office management functions. Government should deliberately strengthen planning and coordination functions across MDAs and LGs, especially those leading in implementation of programmes by creating a standard structure for the planning function and recruitment depending on the size of the Ministry, the programme magnitude and number of programmes led by a given Ministry. Most importantly, Government should recruit and train the requisite Planners to match up the requirements for a successful implementation of the Programmatic approach to planning and budgeting.

Recommendation (2):

97. **Undertake Capacity Building for Programme Based Planning and Budgeting:** NPA and MoFPED should spearhead well-structured capacity building and training programmes across MDAs and Local Governments (LGs) for both technocrats and political leaders on the programme-based approach to planning, budgeting, implementation and Monitoring and evaluate. The training content ought to include: Guidelines on preparation of programme-based strategic plans; Preparation of Programme Implementation Action Plans (PIAPs) Programme costing; Programme

risk-based management; Programme results frameworks; Programme Projects; and Budget Framework Papers (BFPs), among others.

Recommendation (3):

98.   **Build Capacity for Programme Statistics, Data and Data Systems:** Government through, NPA, MoFPED, UBOS, & OPM should particularly focus on building statistics, data and data systems customised to the Programmatic Approach to Planning, Budgeting, Implementation and Monitoring and Evaluation. The success of the Programmatic Approach is based on the progress of the reported programme results. However, this depends on the type of indicators that are planned for during the planning cycle and the type of data collected thereafter. Therefore, the capacity for programme statistics, data and data systems should be built across MDAs and LGs, including recruitment of the requisite staff to undertake such, wherever deficiencies exist. Relatedly, the capacity of OPM to lead the overall coordination, monitoring & evaluation and reporting should on the NDPIII Programmatic Implementation and implied results should be built. Specifically, the NDP M&E System should be operationalized.

Recommendation (4)

Undertake a Change Management Process for the Programmatic Approach: Given that the Programme approach to planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring and evaluation is seemingly new whole-of-Government reform to a number of both Government and Non-Government stakeholders, change management efforts should be undertaken by NPA, MoFPED and OPM to sensitize and communicate to these stakeholders about the programmatic approach, and what is expected of them for the reform to succeed. Parliament, Civil society, Private sector, Development Partners and the General Public should be fully sensitized about the programmatic approach.

5.3   Operational/Institutional challenges to NDPIII Programme implementation

99.   A number of operational challenges to implementation of the programme approach were associated with the absence of Strategic Plans at various levels, in a bottom-up top-down process. This limited generic application of the theory of change thinking process, which in turn encumbered timely production of BFPs and PIAPs to inform the

budgeting and implementation processes. The MTR therefore gives some recommendations to solve the problem.

Recommendation (3):

100. A development planning cycle/timetable should be adopted to ensure timely production of LLG, District, HLG, Regional, MDA, Sub-Programme and Programme Strategic Plans to inform NDPIV, as indicated in Table ( ) below. The MTR proposes that planning process should begin at Parish level and culminate into Programme Strategic Plans and the NDPIV. The development planning cycle is proposed to start in January 2023.

Table 1: Strategic Planning Cycle

	Type of Development Plan	Responsible Agency/ Person	Starting Date	End Date
1.	Parish Priority Lists	Parish Chief/ Parish Development Committee	January 2023	March 2023
2.	Sub-County /Town Council Development Plan	Sub-County Chief/ Development Committee/ Town Clerk	March 2023	June 2023
3.	Municipality Development Plan	Clerk to Municipality/ Municipal Council	March 2023	June 2023
4,	District Development Plan	District Planner/District Council	July 2023	September 2023
5.	Regional Development Plan	National Planning Authority	October 2023	March 2024
6.	MDA Strategic Plans	MDAs	July 2023	September 2023
7.	Sub-Programme/ Sector Strategic Plan	Sub-Programme/ Sector Secretariat	July 2023	December 2023
8.	Programme Strategic Plan (& PIAPS, Work-Plans, BFPs)	PWGs, NPA & OPM	January 2024	June 2024
9.	National Development Plan (Plus Coded & costed Interventions, PIP, Results Frameworks, Strategies-M&E, Implementation)	National Planning Authority	January 2024	March 2025

5.4 Institutional challenges to programme implementation

101. Due to the identified weak institutional framework in place, at policy and implementation levels that impedes NDPIII and programme implementation, the MTR proposes the improvements below.

Recommendation (4):

102. In order to streamline and strengthen implementation of the Programme Approach and the NDPs, there will be need for the Office of the Prime Minister, NPA and MFPED to present to Cabinet, for approval, a new Institutional Framework for Coordination of Policy and Program Implementation (IFCPPI) across Government. The IFCPPI will cover coordination arrangements right from Cabinet level to Programme, Sub-

Programme (Sector) and LG levels. The IFCPPI should also include the need for the Head of Public Service/Secretary to Cabinet to chair NDP Implementation Steering Committee Meetings of Permanent Secretaries. It may also be important to consider integrating the operationalizing the Cabinet Committee system into the IFCPPI to ease implementation and decision making under the programme approach. The last IFCPPI was adopted in 2003 under PEAP and is currently outdated for the new programme approach.

Recommendation (5):

103. Program Working Groups are not functional and have not played their coordination roles basically due lack of human, financial and logistical resources. It is recommended that PWGs through lead ministries be provided with requisite resources (finance and Human) to be able to execute their mandates. This means that similar support should be extended to the programme level, where the Planning Units which provides secretariats for Lead Ministries lack staff, skills, tools and funds to perform their roles. OPM Programme Coordinators should be recruited to carry out their coordination roles. The duties of the OPM Coordinators are proposed in section 3.4.

Recommendation (6):

104. In view of the critical role that Sub-Programmes play in thematic level strategic planning and coordination the Sub-Programme Secretariats ought to be maintained to continue preparing the Strategic Plans, results frameworks, work-plans and BFPs. The Programme results frameworks, work-plans and BFPs should then be consolidated by the OPM Programme Coordinators.

5.5   Systemic public finance management challenges

105. Following significant familiarization with the Chart of Accounts/ IFMS and the PBS the MTR identified a number of systemic challenges regarding alignment of the PFM systems to the NDPIII, as indicated in section 3.3. The corresponding recommendations are outlined below.

Recommendation (7):

106. Going forward, all NDPIII interventions ought to be given unique numbers (Codes) and included in the system with or without necessarily having funds allocated to them. The intervention may be in form of: (a) a general intervention; (b) an approved project; and (c) a project idea (yet to be approved by the development committee). The system should be programmed such that no payment should proceed without entering the

correct intervention and corresponding code. In addition to improving alignment of NDPs to the Budget execution, the adjustment would also reduce projectization of public expenditure, reduce mischarges and enhance transparency in public expenditure.

Recommendation (8):

107. There is need to harmonize the IFMIS/Chart of Accounts System attributes with those of the Programme Budgeting System (PBS). Specifically, under IFMIS the term Output refers to Agencies and Vote Functions, whereas Outputs in the PBS are partial results from budget execution. The MTR recommends use of the term Vote Function instead of Output in the IFMIS/Chart of Accounts system.

Recommendation (9):

108. In order to reduce fragmentation of resources and effort towards achievement of common results, it will be necessary to consolidate some Votes under Sub-Programmes, in line with the NDP programme approach. The MTR proposes the criteria below for maintenance or creation of a Vote.

- Must be either a Programme or a Sub-Programme of the NDP
- Must be a Government Ministry
- Must be an autonomous Agency or Authority or Commission established by an Act of Parliament

109. The MTR recommends that current Votes which do not conform to the above criteria should be done away with.

Recommendation (10)

110. The MTR recommends introduction of a new budgeting process involving allocation of ceilings at programme, including indicative allocations to sub-programmes, to enhance operationalization of the programme approach. This process will also provide lessons for implementation of the zero-based budgeting.

5.6   Need to consider zero-based budgeting

111. As outlined in 4.2.3 above, public finance managers preferred the zero-based budgeting system to incremental ceilings for improved budget execution, accountability and transparency. However, implementation of zero-based budgeting requires putting in place Unit-Cost and service/service delivery standards frameworks.

Recommendation (11):

112. The MTR recommends that NPA should put in place a committee comprising MoPS, MFPED, OPM, the Chief Government Valuer, Accountant General, Auditor General and other key stakeholders, to establish Uganda's Unit-Cost framework. NPA should also fast-track establishment of the service and service delivery standards frameworks. Both unit costs and service and service delivery standards should be in place by FY2023/24 to inform possible piloting of zero-based budgeting in the final year of NDPIII, FY2024/25.

5.6 Apex Platform

113. The Apex Platform is one of the key reforms of the NDPIII aimed at facilitating preparation and presentation of high level Government-wide oversight annual report highlighting major successes and policy and implementation bottlenecks to achievement of set objectives. The MTR identified challenges that were outlined in chapter four of this report. The recommendations for improving the Apex Platform are given below.

Recommendation (12):

114. In order to improve the performance of APEX, the Secretariat should remain autonomous within the directorate of economic monitoring. A definite timetable for the annual APEX activities should be tabled and approved by Cabinet.

5.7 Need to enforce development of service and service delivery standards across the public sector

115. The MTR identified the need to base planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and accountability on established service and service delivery standards for achievement of Vision 2040.

Recommendation (13):

116. The MTR recommends that MoPS, NPA and OPM should coordinate development of the standards within Programmes. NPA should source for financing of the activity from Government and development partners for the activity.

5.8 Consolidation of the Parish Development Model

117. Under the NDPIII, the Parish Development Model (PDM) is designed to be implemented under five (5) programmes: (i) Agro-Industrialization; (ii) Public Sector

Transformation; (iii) Community Mobilization and Mind-set Change, (iv) Regional Development; and (v) Development Plan Implementation. The MTR's assessment however indicates that PDM is majorly an administrative public service delivery intervention to be implemented through direct cash transfers and enhancement of social and extension services at the Parish level.

Recommendation (15):

118. The MTR recommends that the PDM activities should be consolidated under the new **Decentralized, Metropolitan and Regional Development** programme, in line with the programme approach.

5.9 Legal and regulatory implications of the programme approach

119. The implications of the programme approach on legal and regulatory frameworks specifically relate to the PFMA Act, 2015, and the architecture of the Parliamentary Sessional Committees. In this regard, the MTR recommends as below.

Recommendation (16):

120. In order to ensure legal application of the programme processes that may include Programme Working Group (PWG) budget allocation processes, joint responsibility for results and programmatic oversight reporting, it is recommended that **the PFMA Act, 2015**, be as soon as possible amended by MFPED to recognise the programme approach and its key relevant attributes.

Recommendation (17):

121. Also, as part of the legal and regulatory requirements, the MTR recommends that the composition and structure of four of the **Parliamentary Sessional Committees** should be adjusted as indicated in section 4.5. The Committees are: (i) Physical Infrastructure Committee; (ii) Tourism, Trade, and Industry; (iii) Public Service and Local Government; and (iv) Defence and Internal Affairs Committee.

5.10 Project Preparation Facility

122. The Project Preparation Facility (PPFs) will serve as a means of developing bankable, investment-ready projects from which government and external funders can select projects to implement. The PPF will either provide technical assistance or dedicated financing to MDAs for undertaking feasibility studies for priority flag ship projects.

Recommendation (18):

123.   The PPF will have a Steering Committee chaired by the National Planning Authority (NPA) comprising of several MDAs. Initial membership of the PPF will include NPA and MoFPED, and other key stakeholder departments. Other MDAs will be co-opted depending on the project whose feasibility study is being undertaken. The projects to be prepared under the PPF will be flagship projects both under social and infrastructure categories) and will after appraisal by the Development Committee be sanctioned by Top Management of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Particularly, the Development Committee will advise on the strategic projects that cleared profile stage and require progression to feasibility level. To streamline the loan processing and approvals as well as strengthening the PIMs Reform, there is also need to centralise this process leveraging on the existence of the Development Committee in MoFPED where all the key stakeholders currently undertaking this clearance are represented.

B. Recommendations for NDPIV

5.10 NDPIII Programme Design

1.   The flaws identified regarding the design of the NDPIII Programmes was a lack of adherence to the criteria and logical flow on choice of programmes. This led to an increase of programmes from 14 to 20.

Recommendation (19):

2.   In view of the need to ensure achievement of the overarching objectives of the Programme Approach, the MTR recommends rationalization of programs in NDPIV considering the Criteria below.

   i.   Have shared objectives/outcomes

   ii.   Have Common value chain / service delivery system

   iii.   Be consistent with promotion of Constitutional Independence (separation of powers)

   iv.   Have shared policy, mission and vision coherence

   v.   Be aimed at strengthening synergies for efficient service delivery.

   vi.   Be promoting implementation sequencing

   vii.   Be accelerating the achievement of common results

   viii.   Have mandate that is relevant to shared programme objectives

5.11 Commencement of regional development planning

3. As reiterated in 4.1.2 above, the MTR was encountered with many appeals from technocrats, policy makers, political leaders, civil society and development partners for introduction of regional planning and implementation, as part of the programme approach reform. This demand for regional planning is largely attributed to the reduced size of districts which are often not feasible entities for implementation of physical and other economic infrastructure. Regional planning also promotes block farming and bulking for enhanced economies of scale.

Recommendation (20):

4. NPA and MFPED should champion adoption of regional planning within the context of spatial planning. The regional plans should be prepared in line with the proposed Planning Calendar. NPA requires to consider and make its regional offices operational in the first year of the NDPIV. The offices will mainly support implementation planning of regional projects and affirmative action programmes. The regional centres should also be promoted to act as regional infrastructure implementation centres as highlighted in Chapter Four.

Recommendation (21):

5. The MTR recommends that thirteen (13) spatially illustrated five-year regional development plans should be prepared in the Strategic Planning Calendar by NPA as indicated below.

   i) Central-Northern Uganda Sub-Regional Development Plan

   ii) West Nile Sub-Regional Development Plan

   iii) Karamoja Sub-Regional Development Plan

   iv) Bunyoro Sub-Regional Development Plan

   v) Central Buganda Sub-Regional Development Plan

   vi) Greater Masaka- Kalangala Sub-Regional Development Plan

   vii) Busoga Sub-Regional Development Plan

   viii) Bukedi-Mbale Sub-Regional Development Plan

   ix) Sebei Sub-Regional Development Plan

   x) Teso Sub-Regional Development Plan

   xi) Ankole Sub-Regional Development Plan

   xii) Greater Kigezi Sub-Regional Development Plan

   xiii) Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area Development Plan

5.12 Summary Conclusions

6.   The NDPIII MTR has been able to identify the major issues that have impeded effective adoption and implementation of the programme approach based on a comprehensive assessment of the systemic and structural institutional challenges over the two years of implementing the Plan. Based on the wide consultations and in-depth analysis of issues, the MTR has also been able to identify underlying and emerging issues which are either pausing a threat or already an impeding factor to the implementation of the NDPIII and its attendant programmes. The review has therefore been able to highlight most of the bottlenecks to operationalization and sustainability of the programme approach. From the review, the NDPIII has been implemented with the major success of having started the implementation of the programme approach albeit with a lot of challenges that are yet to be solved.

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