IC/2016/087

Dialogue Support Platform (Impact Evaluation Advisor)

Dialogue Support Programme

Findings and Recommendations for a Future Direction

9 July 2016

Final Report and Recommendations

1. Introduction
2. The rapid deterioration in political and human security within Ukraine in the course of 2013, the latter underlined by the outbreak of open warfare in the east of the country at the end of that year, was accompanied by an equally rapid geopolitical security deterioration between Russia and NATO members, both the EU and the US effectively becoming actors in the regional security drama, which, for the Ukrainian people had enormous direct, negative consequences.
3. Regionally, the rapidly deteriorating security situation was underlined with the shooting down (Dutch Safety Board, 13 October 2015) of flight MH 17 on 17 July 2014. In fact, however, Ukrainians had been living under increasing levels of insecurity since the outbreak of the conflict leading to the Euromaidan Revolution that overthrew the country’s government. Russian *de facto* occupation of the Crimean Peninsula[[1]](#footnote-1) in February 2014 and the peninsula’s subsequent annexation in March, following a brief (approximately one month) independence government, following a hastily organised referendum.
4. Violent opposition to post-Maidan Kyiv expanded quickly in the south and east of the country, igniting an armed conflict in the Donbas region that has left scores of civilian victims, refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), as well as a deteriorated social, political and economic situation in the country.
5. As part of the wider effort to identify a peace building response to the deepening crisis, mediatEUr, together with the International Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS) launched two fact-finding missions (Kyiv and Kharkiv) to refine methods and options for dialogue relevant to the crisis. The proposal, Building a Dialogue Support Platform in Ukraine, is the direct outcome.
6. This final assessment report builds on the preliminary report, submitted 30 June 2016, and incorporates information gathered in the course of the visit to Kyiv (5 – 8 July 2016) in the course of which the consultant met with the UNDP and *mediatEUr teams*, observed the Dialogue Support Platform meeting, 6 – 7 July 2016, and interviewed OSCE representatives, nine platform meeting participants and *mediatEUr*’s director. A wrap-up meeting with UNDP personnel, including the Country Director, was held on 8 July 2016
7. The opportunity presented through this interaction reinforced the preliminary conclusions, which were presented in the earlier report. This final report adds to those conclusions and elaborates further on recommendations for a way ahead that underlines UNDP’s value-added to a future programme and responds to needs identified but unmet in the course of the pilot, implemented in partnership with *mediatEUr*.
8. Design and Relevance
9. The European Forum for Mediation and Dialogue (mediatEUr) presented a project Concept Note (CN) for funding consideration by donor organisations, including UNDP, based on the joint fact-finding mission. The CN represents the sole document that sets out the interventions goal and expected outputs, as well as the activities through which these outputs are expected to be achieved. In the main, mediatEUr proposed to establish a Dialogue Support Platform that would map dialogue initiatives across Ukraine, connect dialogue facilitators to help assess their own capacities and knowledge, collate information in a comprehensive and accessible format, and connect facilitators with policy makers and the international community.[[2]](#footnote-2)
10. Tellingly, as in many peace building project proposals, there is no explicit statement of the reason for the mapping. This – mapping of dialogue and facilitators will contribute to reduced conflict levels – is an implicit but a “killer assumption”, i.e. if it is incorrect, then the rationale for the project falls at the first gate. Questions, re the underpinning assumptions (e.g. that online engagement would be an effective mechanism for experiential sharing and learning) are equally key to any assessment of the project’s conceptual framework. In reality, the online platform, based on a tool that proved highly unpopular, remains a shell and, as such, raises fundamental questions about the original design.
11. Neither does the CN propose any measures against which an evaluation, or even a limited assessment such as this, is able to measure progress towards outcomes and (presumed) goals. Notwithstanding this, the internal UNDP assessment concluded that while risks were significant, a pilot period (effectively the 12 months completed in June 2016) was worth the investment. The assessor largely agrees with this conclusion, albeit informed with the benefit of hindsight.
12. Notwithstanding this, the absence of any supporting project documentation (log frame, Results Framework, relevant UNDAF or UNDP CO strategy) is a major hindrance to clarification of relevance, while the first two are an important negative comment on the quality of its design. At a general level, supporting stakeholders to facilitate dialogue between conflictual parties is a positive, provided that it contributes to conflict mitigation, reduction, resolution and, eventual, peace building. The CN provides (i) no clear statement of the goal; (ii) no indicators against which progress can be measures; (iii) no indicators for the achievement of the envisaged activities; and (iv) is based upon three killer assumptions, which, if any one is incorrect results in the investment’s failure.
13. The assessment shares the general belief that engagement in a secure environment by conflicting parties is better than conflict expansion, or even freezing into a so-called ‘frozen conflict’ affecting much of the region. But, in any peacebuilding project, it is important to develop how the activity is not only measured but also contributes to the overall goal. The CN does neither.
14. Based upon this, and despite the fact that dialogue is highly relevant in any conflict situation, the assessment is of the view that the design is inadequate and needs revision and greater focus if a further phase is to be considered.
15. The assessment prepared an initial draft log frame (Annex 3) and utilized the indicators identified therein in its work.
16. Efficiency
17. The assessment was informed that the pilot phase investment was US $150 000. Given the absence of specific information related to the way in which these resources were used, it has no opinion as to the efficiency of financial resource utilisation. Having said this, the assessment notes that the outputs achieved appear minimal when measured against the amount invested.
18. The project has access to two persons based in Ukraine (one in Kyiv, the other in Lviv), a project manager in Brussels, and a project director (in Brussels). Information provided to the assessment in the course of Skype interviews suggested that the tri-location led to communication delays, which, in *mediatEUr*’s view were compounded by ‘different working cultures’.
19. Furthermore, according to the CN, IT expertise was available to develop the online platform. The assessment checked mediatEUr’s website on 21 June 2016; the online platform was still being developed at the conclusion of the pilot phase, not even a beta version being available. Despite UNDP informing the assessment that the proposed mapping tool (Debategraph) was unpopular and abandoned[[3]](#footnote-3), this represents an important demonstration of inefficiency.
20. In the course of the Skype interviews, the assessor was informed that the online platform was operational (<http://ukraine.dialoguesupport.org>). A brief review demonstrated potential; not only does it contain maps of conflict interventions but also information on the 17 platform members and brief descriptions of their activities. At the very least, therefore, if accessed, it provides an opportunity for other dialogue actors to access information about their counterparts in the country, at least that part under government control.
21. The assessment has no information of the investment required to develop the mapping tool to the level achieved. However, it is notable that participants underlined that the map was incomplete, while OSCE interlocutors emphasised that, while potententialy interesting, as it currently stood, it did not respond to their needs. [See also, effectiveness, below.]
22. Effectiveness
23. In the course of the pilot year, five DPSU meetings were held. Table 1 (Annex 4) provides an overview of their dates, participation, subject content and plans for the next meeting. Two meetings (40%) were held outside Kyiv and all took place in Government-controlled territory.
24. The first meeting recorded the participant organisations; 64.3% were Kyiv-based. This is understandable since it was a kick-off meeting and explained the proposed platform’s plans and purpose and was held in the capital. Subsequent meetings did not report organisational identity so it is not possible to judge independently whether this bias to Kyiv-based organisations continued. However, in the course of Skype interviews, the predominance of Kyiv-based organisations was confirmed, although the point was emphasised that most dialogue actors are in the capital.
25. However, the decision to hold the final two meetings outside Kyiv (in Lviv and Kramatorsk) suggested that a conscious effort was made to diversify away from an over representation of Kyiv-based organisations and individuals. This was confirmed in Skype interviews and in the course of face – to – face interviews in Kyiv.
26. Generally female participation was greater than that of men and appeared to increase through the life of the pilot relative to that of men. The number and sex of participants in the final meeting (16 May 2016) held in Kramarorsk were not reported. This was reflected in the platform meeting observed: 63.33% of participants were women.

Fig. 1: Participants by Meeting and Sex

Source: Meeting Reports

1. Fig. 1 records that female participants generally outnumbered male with a single exception (December 2015) when there were equal numbers of men and women participating. Similarly, there appeared to be a significant reduction in the number of male participants at the February 2016 meeting. No reason for either the larger number of women nor the reduction in the number of male participants was recorded.
2. Meetings discussed similar topics: for example, the meaning of dialogue was a repeated discussion subject. This suggests that this repetition arose from inability to develop a consensus around a particular subject or that participants changed at each meeting so that the same subject had to be returned to on each occasion. Skype interviews indicated that the reason lay in participants’ inability to arrive at a consensus reflecting reported tensions between representatives of different approaches to dialogue, as well as regional differences (between east and west), although the latter was considerably reduced by the end of the five meetings. In general, the interviews reported ongoing engagement of the original group, together with some growth in numbers of organisations’ represented (3). The level of continuity was underlined in the course of face – to face interviews as well as openness to introducing new members over the pilot phase.
3. It is notable that from the outset the desirability of conflict sensitivity and gender in conflict training was identified as a need. However, it was only possible to address this identified need by the fourth (Lviv) meeting. Face – to – face interviews emphasised the gains from the engendered conflict sensitivity training that was provided. Consideration should be given to building on this in any follow-up phase.
4. Two notable outreach efforts (both outside Kyiv) were made. Based on the reports of the World Café meetings, these proved successful both in terms of outreach (engaging more dialogue practitioners) and in widening the scope of the inputs on dialogue and means to address the challenges around it to the discussions. Skype interview responses in this regard were generally positive, although one respondent believed that more might have been achieved had they been better focused. Face – to – face interviews also endorsed the methodology, emphasising that the outreach was critical to dispel the lack of understanding of other groups’ circumstances that exists. This was evident from the reports, through which indications of tensions between different groups (business oriented and activists) is evident. Both Skype and face – to – face interviews emphasised that these tensions reduced through ongoing contact enabled through the meeting cycle. In this connection, the assessment was informed that *mediatEUr*, as an external organisation, was central to facilitating a space in which different Ukrainian actors could meet each other. The assessment was directly informed that without this facilitation, it was unlikely that such interaction would have taken place. This was unquestionably a positive development. In the course of the platform meeting, the assessor observed that groups from different political positions were able to engage in debate on a sensitive topic and conclude by agreeing to disagree. Again, this emphasised a positive contribution that the pilot has made to inter-group relations.
5. As noted, all meetings took place in Government-controlled territory. While entirely understandable, it meant that discussions were limited in content, possibly missing inputs from proponents and supporters of opposition to the Government. In other conflicts (Georgia – Abkhazia – South Ossetia; Moldova – Transnistru and post-conflict dialogues, including in Uganda – www.[letstalk.ug](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001b_u-wjYmZaVislN7TFYvP9uIVRKTwIKbwKovQcfmK_OmKq8o_cguEWYU66kD59EtvWMGkg66Hinu7B6L0E-o9HmFjbV2yWjVLi6vI4SY3MwDUPy9zuHSiDoAujver092_rL9ZE3Oe9tzZZ3TERYqngsjpgg09lSS&c=XUwY7QevUkqbaaBWMW2e48S5BaO6XsrPOWq6g0uOThqBzY7dVnJipg==&ch=V9Ni1gOObjLwcm-NfAxVsuxkAAeJtr3KQD7eQSIqHLIglA6NRRhRLA==)) dialogue across the line of conflict and within conflict-affected societies has been possible, utilizing a variety of means – televised Skype discussions, online (dedicated closed Facebook pages, and, where possible, direct engagement between people). Skype discussions revealed that such online engagement (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) is used in Ukraine but engagement with the limited known number of practitioners in dissident-controlled territory is limited; only one group, Donbas Dialogue, is reported to pursue this. This was confirmed in the course of the face – to – face interviews.
6. The platform meeting also provided space for participant presentations on their actions in support of conflict mitigation and peacebuilding. These presentations demonstrated that, whereas the platform focused almost wholly on dialogue in Government-controlled territory, it was possible to promote engagement across the ABLs: presentations were made concerning inclusive dialogues both in Odessa (involving both Ukrainian and Russian facilitators) and Luhansk. Furthermore, face – to – face interviews underlined that, while challenging, it was possible to engage with residents of both sides of (even hot) ABL lines. In this connection, security is an important consideration, as is flexibility to address these concerns: closed Facebook pages (many use and are familiar with Facebook and other Applications (e.g. WhatsApp)) for this purpose since users are already familiar with the platform.
7. The planned online platform (it was supposed to be launched in May 2016 but was reported still under construction on 21 June on the mediatEUr website). In fact, a separate website has been established (<http://ukraine.dialoguesupport.org>) which contains information relating to platform members, platform reports and brief descriptions of members’ main activities. As such, it provides, at the least, an information portal, which others can use to obtain information. The website also records the mapping undertaken in the pilot year, which was carried out by *mediatEUr*; most Ukrainian Skype respondents perceived little utility in the mapping component of the pilot, instead emphasising capacity building, which they felt had been limited. The lack of perceived utility was underlined in the course of face – to – face interviews and though observation of the platform meeting. Interlocutors emphasised that they saw no point in devoting what little time they had to something (inputting data and developing an understanding of the software) to which they perceived would add no value to their organisation and day – to – day work. Clearly, despite the evidence, both written and observed (*mediatEUr* presented and discussed the mapping on four occasions in the course of a two-day workshop, part of the purpose of which was to develop plans for the future) of a **hard sell** in this respect, the potential benefit of the mapping is not appreciated by Ukrainian actors. In this regard, *mediatEUr* staff (at least one) acknowledges that in the course of the pilot period they have failed to promote an understanding of the map’s potential for Ukrainian actors. The assessor observed *mediatEUr*’s increasingly aggressive marketing of the mapping over the two day workshop, underlining the evidence in the reporting that this tool is central to the organisation’s conceptualization of the pilot and any follow-up. The fact that mediatEUr did not accept the almost universal (based on observation, every time mapping was mentioned, participants devoted their attention to their phones, laptops, emails, Facebook pages, etc.) rejection of the tool is underlined by the practical absence of participation – both directly saying that it would be a waste of time or through placing responsibility for it on *mediatEUr* in the current, as well as any future, phase.
8. The assessor was informed that the Debategraph tool proved unpopular[[4]](#footnote-4); certainly, there are constant references in the reports to making it more user-friendly, which had not been achieved in the course of the pilot phase. Notwithstanding this, the website contains maps of conflicts and interventions surrounding them. However, the level of technical expertise required has meant that the tool’s utility is questionable, at least for the non-technically inclined.
9. The repeated emphasis on the tool throughout the five meetings (and the workshop) in the face of the participants’ evident lack of interest may indicate that the project implementers experienced important challenges surrounding their ability to hear and understand the message being conveyed. Equally, it suggests that they were unable to communicate the benefits that they perceived the mapping and the tool to possess, to Ukrainian participants. This often occurs when the technologically savvy find the advantages of a tool so self-evident as not to need explanation; the repeated emphasis on improving its user-friendliness suggests this was the case.
10. Technological tools are usually most successful when users are already familiar with it – e.g. Georgia’s Rose Revolution was organised and promoted by text messaging; Egypt’s Tahir Square demonstration through Twitter, Iranian protests against the 2009 elections results through Facebook and Twitter, and so on - and often this is basic technology. In other words, the proposed technological tool possibly was a step too far.
11. Of greater concern, however, is the possibility that the focus on the tool was at the expense of other means of promoting communication across the lines of conflict. If this proves to be the case, then what may have developed into a useful means of identifying and understanding conflict in its different ramifications, became a hindrance to enhancing communication around conflicts in the country.
12. As noted, Ukrainian Skype respondents (and face – to – face interlocutors) perceived little, if any, utility in the mapping component of the pilot, instead emphasising capacity building, which they felt had been limited. There was a broad consensus amongst these respondents that the pilot lacked focus; the assessor’s view is that rather than lacking focus, the focus was misdirected in that it failed to respond to the capacity building expectations of Ukrainian respondents.
13. Notwithstanding these reservations, the assessment still does not undervalue the benefits of providing a ‘safe’ space where individuals, and, by extension, the organisations from which they originate, can express themselves, their challenges and experiences. At the very least, this basic level of inter-personal communication has a conflict mitigating effect; but it also serves as a means of encouragement when people feel that events are overwhelming them. Even in this limited sense, the meetings served a useful purpose and can be judged effective.
14. Other key achievements of the pilot include the reinforcement of the value of networking in a neutral environment, providing space through which regional tensions could be worked out, and spreading an understanding and appreciation of the extent of dialogue interventions underway throughout the country. In the opinion of the assessor, this was a significant contribution to such effectiveness as was achieved.
15. Impact
16. Such impact as has been achieved has been limited, although it should not be undervalued as a base on which to build for the future.
17. In the main, this relates to the pilot successfully bringing together dialogue practitioners in meetings, which, however tense, provided an arena to meet and discuss topics, even if consensus could not be achieved. Furthermore, the meetings contributed to improved east – west actors understanding of different challenges they faced, which, in turn, contributed to a reduction in intra-group tension.
18. Sustainability
19. Given that this was a pilot, and only implemented for a year, sustainability is not present.
20. But the pilot’s experience, if followed up, suggests that some key achievements (e.g. the platform meetings, recognition of the value of exchanges, as well as reinforcing an existing perception of the value of networking) of the period have the potential to become sustainable over time if adapted to the lessons learned and outlined in this assessment.
21. Questions to which the assessment has at best only a partial response
22. Are they all the right people? Depending on who one asks, no – no clear focus, no rules for membership, diverse motivations for participation.
23. If yes, what is their motivation? Money is clearly important (the need for payment was stipulated on at least four occasions in plenary sessions) but is there anything else? Opportunities to engage with each other – tensions between groups have reduced but are still present.
24. If not, why are they involved? People/groups wanted to see what it was all about and whether there was any benefit. Are there others? Yes – but anecdotal evidence is that they are not known.
25. Mapping has been oversold – people remain unconvinced of its utility to them/their organisation. It cannot remain a *raison d’etre* for the future; at most, it could be a part. The same needs/rationale that existed in 2013/4 (space to interact, share experiences, learn from each other) still exist today; no progress in addressing these has been made.
26. Why not pass the platform to OSCE? PCU’s presentation clearly sees potential advantage in the web-based map’s information.
27. Conclusions
28. *MediatEUr* adopted a supply-driven approach, adjusting whatever was said to their desired outcome: this is particularly the case iro online mapping [
29. DPSU duplicates other networks (at least three networks are represented) – whether any is sufficiently inclusive to be viable is another question. The assessor was specifically informed that without *MediatEUr*, it was unlikely that this group would have (i) got together and ((ii) continued meeting. Not a small achievement!
30. There is still a need for (i) a venue in which dialogue actors can interact; (ii) capacity development (experiential learning) and (iii) access to resources for specific tasks
31. It is possible to work across ABL, even in ‘hot’ conflict situations (presentations in the course of the meeting) – can promote this through encouraging partnerships (but need incentives for this purpose) – security risks are known by participants but should not be a reason for there not to be a dialogue (people have relatives on both sides of the ABL): have to invite people to engage w/o it, then will be too late – but need to present a choice for participants whether they attend a meeting or do it online.
32. Map practitioners, what and where doing it – do this as part of project development and needs assessment
33. Establish a project, donor-funded but UNDP implemented (because of impartiality) that has (a) funding window (open, competitive bids) and (b) CB linked to funding opportunities (strengthening ability to access resources in order to promote learning by doing); experiential learning sharing opportunities for fund recipients; results-based learning.
34. Regular opportunities to share experiences – grant beneficiaries
35. Recommendations to add value

9.i Introduction: Overall Framework

There is a strong consensus amongst Ukrainian interlocutors to date that the pilot has not met expectations, particularly in respect of developing the capacity of active dialogue facilitators and mediators, which had been their primary understanding of the intended outcome. Furthermore, they expressed the view that part of this arose from the implementer not fully appreciating the context in which dialogue takes place in the country.

For this group of interlocutors, notwithstanding the limited achievements of the mapping, their principle need at this point in time is a strong *cadre* of capacitated dialogue actors and facilitators who are able to network, share learning and experience, and intervene to mitigate conflict situations, in particular at local levels. While acknowledging that gains have been achieved through the platform, they believe significant changes are necessary in order to respond to their needs.

This suggests a twofold response. In the first instance, given the individual, organisational and regional differences, a complete assessment of what needs there are and the most appropriate responses to meet these is a prerequisite. Such a Training Needs Analysis (TNA), which should be accompanied by a less than overt mapping exercise which would provide information on what activities are underway and where, would inform one component of any future response and could address areas such as different methodological approaches relevant to differing conflict situations. Such capacity development should be through a combination of experiential learning, learning from each other, and access to information (in Ukrainian and Russian) on international best practice.

Second, it appears desirable that increased access to resources is provided. Based on the information available to the assessment, the main international actors have significantly differing approaches to addressing conflict, in particular at a local level. However, both approaches are characterised by an absence of resources to address local conflicts, which merely serves to leave them to fester and, possibly, grow into more dangerous manifestations.

A pool of resources, accessed through a competitive process, to address such issues would assist both the emerging developing capacity of civil society-based dialogue actors and facilitators, while addressing issues that emerge, for example, in the course of OSCE-organised local meetings. For this to be successful, however, international and regional experience argues for support to potential applicants throughout the application and implementation process. This improves the quality of project identification, monitoring and reporting, building longer-term organisational stability and supporting sustainability and strengthening civil society in the process.

9.ii Specific Proposal

UNDP, regionally, has a wealth of regional confidence building experience, including within the Country Office, which is the purpose of dialogue. In the first instance, UNDP would be advised to learn from this internal expertise in developing further the ideas below.

First, the current ‘membership’ is diverse and its competition resembles that of 19th century capitalist development, i.e. it is characterised by the survival of the fittest. While there is much to recommend this, it also means that those organisations, which may be characterised as **activist** are disadvantaged by more **business-oriented** groups, the latter possibly being better placed to access resources and certainly more oriented towards their need for financial rewards. But, international experience is that the former group are frequently both more effective and cost efficient in confidence building activities.

Because of this, a competitive Call for Proposals should be written in such a way as to direct resources to this group. Furthermore, they should be supported through training and support in developing bankable project proposals that respond to UNDP confidence building aims. This would contribute to a greater focus (Calls, for example, could be around specific themes, e.g. gender-based violence, IDP – host communities, etc.) and closer targeting on a resource-deprived group.

Second, an emphasis on capacity building (training, peer – to – peer learning, access to international best practice in Ukrainian and Russian) should be encouraged through the CfPs. Partnering with other Ukrainian CSOs active in confidence building or with local authorities for eligibility could be required. Similarly, partnerships from different regions and across the ABLs could add value to proposals.

Third, to further promote peer – to – peer learning, grantees should be brought together at regular intervals in the course of the grant period (e.g. twice in the course of a 12 month grant, annually in the course of a three-year grant) to share learning from grant implementation – both what worked and what did not (as grant manager, UNDP must emphasise that negative lessons are as important learning experiences as positive ones).

Fourth, access to international best practice in confidence building is important. In the first instance, this should be promoted through a website (use of which can be promoted through the CfPs, e.g. a requirement to demonstrate evidence in project proposals that international best practice lessons have been absorbed). Ultimately, regional experience sharing (Georgia, Abkhazia, Moldova, possibly South Ossettia) in this respect might be promoted.

Lastly, the proposal talks of confidence building. This is because that ‘dialogue’ is meaningless unless it is for a purpose. Confidence building serves as a purpose and, as UNDP Ukraine CO experience demonstrates, can have a multitude of manifestations. But, it emphasizes an activist approach and the assessment believes that this is the group, which should be targeted in any follow up that UNDP supports.

9.iii Funding

Given the politico-security environment, the above proposal is a high risk strategic investment. It is worth drawing on experience from similar stages in other paerts of the region, in particular Georgia. A strategic political alliance between the EU ambassador and the UNDP Resident Representative saw the EU (through EPNI and other cooperation funds) financially support UNDP’s implementation of COBERM 1 (2009 - 12) in respect of both the Abkhaz and South Ossettian ABLs. A similar partnership was achieved in relation to confidence building across the Moldova – Transnistru ABL. There appears little reason why UNDP should not utilise the UN’s impartiality in respect of both the Crimean and Eastern Ukraine disputes in the medium-term.

Exploring wider financial support, however, must be premised on both initial and sustained UNDP investment. The political and economic climate post-migrant emergency and Brexit [sic] is very different to that of 2006/7, when Georgia’s investment was explored and the political relationships are (very possibly) different in Kyiv – Brussels – New York. In this respect, much depends on personal links and the RR’s relationship to the EU ambassador, as well as his/her US counterpart.

Notwithstanding this, the assessor believes that the effort to secure substantial additional external support is desirable and would add substantial added value to the proposed intervention.

Seamus Cleary

8 July 2016

Annex 1: Terms of Reverence

**Project name**: UNDP CO

**Post title:** Consultancy to support assessment of UNDP programme interventions – Dialogue Support Platform (**Impact** **Evaluation Advisor**)

**Country / Duty Station**: Home-based with travel to Ukraine

**Expected places of travel (if applicable)**: Kyiv, Ukraine (one trip of 5 working days to be included to the price proposal)

**Starting date of assignment**: 13 June 2016

**Duration of assignment**: 14 working days (13 June 2016 – 10 July 2016)

**Supervisor’s name and functional post**: UNDP Deputy Country Director/ Programme

**Payment arrangements**: Fee will be released base of submitted deliverables

**Administrative arrangements:** The contractor will have to arrange his/her workplace, logistics and equipment.

**Evaluation method**: Desk review (validation interview could be conducted during

 Evaluation of the proposals received)

1. **BACKGROUND**

The consequences of the conflict in Ukraine are vast, and reach far beyond its borders. The European Union, the United States, NATO and Russia have returned to a level of tension unseen in the XXI Century, with recurring accusations from both sides for the instability in Ukraine. Within Ukraine, the profound divisions feeding the conflict remain unresolved, while indigenous and international initiatives for peace and dialogue struggle to counter the growing violence and war rhetoric. At the same time, an ambitious but difficult reform agenda and dire socio-economic situation within Ukraine have placed additional stress on society, which is becoming increasingly polarized over a number of issues. While numerous initiatives within Ukraine seek to address and mitigate the various causes of conflict through dialogue, these are for the most part isolated and ad hoc in nature. There is a clear need for a nation-wide dialogue process, but the current environment is not conducive to large-scale peacebuilding efforts while the crisis is ongoing.

The Dialogue Support Platform Ukraine (DSPU) project was launched to prepare a critical foundation for nation-wide dialogue by identifying the main issues affecting the population at a local, regional and national level, and creating a network of peacebuilding practitioners. The project aimed to allow for a horizontal and vertical communication at all levels of society, beginning at a local community level and reaching to the policy-making level. Such a platform would contribute to the creation of a sustainable peace in Ukraine by:

• Developing a comprehensive mapping of dialogue initiatives and facilitators across Ukraine;

• Helping local dialogue facilitators to connect with one another to assess their own capacities, exchange information and coordinate respective initiatives and efforts. At the same time, this will also help dialogue facilitators to connect with the regional and central government actors, as well as the international community, with a view to informing policy for greater impact;

• Capturing the information from different dialogue initiatives in a comprehensive but accessible format so that national and international actors can hear the voices of Ukrainian stakeholders from all regions; and

• Supporting structured thinking about future scenarios to ensure informed, inclusive and conflict

The goal of the project is to generate positive thinking to help transform the conflict that has affected Ukraine since 2013, utilising modern technologies and dialogue expertise. The project connects Ukrainian dialogue experts with people at all levels of society, allowing for horizontal dialogue, and fostering exchange with the policy level and the international community. Ultimately, the platform helps define options for regional engagement, reform, and a way forward. The project has been called the ‘facilitator of facilitators’ for its role in exploring a common understanding of dialogue and fostering cooperation, and has been acknowledged by Ukrainian dialogue practitioners as a useful tool for the development of their practice. The broader view of the project relates to how dialogue can help deal with the consequences of the armed conflict in the East and the many internal challenges facing Ukrainian authorities and civil society.

UNDP Ukraine is intend to conduct an external (an independent) review to evaluate what project’s achievements and impact to identify the entry points for continuation, if recommended. Scope of work of this impact evaluation depends on targets set in the project documents of DSPU and methodology to be used to capture the intended impact. Broadly it should cover following key areas of post-result:

• To measure the impact of DPSU on the lives of people in the targeted regions, on the communication at all levels of society

• To assess intended and unintended results of the project both at beneficiary level and beyond;

• To assess which approaches, interventions and activities have proven to be most effective and why;

• To assess the extent to which the project has achieved value for money

• Make recommendations of if/how the DSP could be further integrated into UNDP Ukraine programme

The consultant will work under the direct supervision of UNDP Deputy Country Director/Programme and in close collaboration with the programme and projects.

1. **MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The purpose of this Impact evaluation is to assess whether and to what extent the planned results have been or are being achieved. Specifically, the project evaluation will assist UNDP in gaining a better understanding of the following aspects of its interventions:

1. Estimate the increase in availability of updated database of conflict issues and actors and efforts
2. Estimate the impact of horizontal exchanges between Ukrainian dialogue facilitators, between dialogue facilitators and policy-makers, and between Ukrainians and international peacebuilding experts on promoting and strengthening the culture of dialogue in Ukraine
3. Estimate the impact on the ability of Ukrainian dialogue actors to connect with each other and with national actors and the international community as a result of the DSP.
4. Identify complementarities arising from the work of the DSP and broader UNDP Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme objectives, and if or how these could be better utilized to better support UNDP’s programmatic outcomes
5. Develop recommendations for future Programme, including identifying possible entry points, approaches, partners - based on the tested approaches and techniques

Annex 2: Skype Interviews (Juba Time)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 08 – 09.00 | 10 – 11.00 | 11 – 12.00 | 14 – 15.00 | 15 – 16.00 | 16 – 17.00 |
| 29 June | Alex Azarov,Oleksa Stasevych, in-country project assistant | Vladyslava Kanevska [National Assosciation of Mediators in Ukraine] | Miguel Varela [Mediateur] | Roman Koval, Institute for Peace and Common Ground | Stan Veitsman, Terese Svensson (UNDP) | Olena Kashkarova [Dialogue Facilitation] |

Annex 3: Reconstructed Logframe

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Project Narrative | Objectively Verifiable Indicators | Means of Verification | Assumptions[[5]](#footnote-5) |
| Goal | Ukrainian dialogue actors connect with each other, with national actors and the international community utilising interactive, modern dialogue technologies. | Increased engagement between actors within the regions and between regions and international actors | Platform used for dialogue and debate; number of in-country meetings held and total number of participants | Networking between dialogue activists improves prospect for conflict-reducing engagement through fostering a dialogue culture and understanding of conflicts |
| Purpose | Enable Ukrainian dialogue actors to better understand their needs and capacities | Dialogue between regions increases; needs and issues identified | Platform mapping and debate | Access to increased capacity will improve quality and effectiveness of engagement |
| Outputs | * A group of Ukrainian dialogue facilitators from all regions in Ukraine convened.
* An online platform to host different innovative methodologies for dialogue (including a mapping utilising Debategraph methodology) offering Ukrainian facilitators a real and virtual space for sharing, mapping, commentary, education and discussion.
* Results from the Dialogue Analysis and Coordination (DAC) Meetings captured in written and visual formats, keeping an updated database of conflict issues and actors and peace efforts, and extending it with analysis and commentary.
* The platform acts as a reference point and tool for a dialogue process to support the thinking process
 | Group convened and meets in person and onlinePlatform exists and is usedDAC meetingsPlatform content informs dialogue | Platform debatePlatform contentDAC meetings’ content; database utilised; Quality of analysis (e.g. utilisation in policy and academic analysis)Dialogue/discussions content | Online engagement contributes to peace building and conflict mitigation |
| Activities | Platform establishedUkrainian facilitators trained in the platform methodology.* Horizontal exchange between Ukrainian facilitators and stakeholders, between facilitators and policy-makers, and between Ukrainians and internationals generated.
* Regular Dialogue Analysis and Coordination (DAC) Meetings with the group of facilitators at the donor’s headquarters, to engage in a conflict and dialogue effort analysis.
 | Platform exists and is usedTraining; Platform used Platform used for exchangesDAC meetings | Platform exists and is usedTraining content, Platform use improves over timeContent and use of platformContent of meetings |  |

Annex 4: DPSU Meetings

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Location | Participants (M/F) | Organisations | Discussion content | Next Mtg Agenda | Platform status reported |
| 14-5/7/15 | Kyiv | 10 men; 12 women | 14 (9 Kyiv) | 1. Mapping of initiatives for dialogue; 2. Meaning of dialogue; 3. Conflict issues being addressed; 4. Challenges of dialogue; 5. Potential for the platform; 6. UNDP's role; 7. Next steps | Preparation for end-September official launch | Testing |
| 28-9/9/15 | Kyiv | 10 men; 13 women | 1. Meaning of dialogue; 2. Maximising resources and ddressing participation; 3. Conflict triggers and dialogue themes; 4. Next steps and conclusions - taking dialogue forward | Promoting communication exchange and cooperation between facilitatirs; Exploring the meaning of dialogue to establish common principles and aims; Discussion to evaluate effects of dialogue on conflict in Ukraine; Conflict sensitive approach in dialogue and the political agenda; Relationship in detail between safety and trust building; Experience exchange and approach to dialogue preparation and organisation | Map web page reported |
| 8/12/15 | Kyiv | 14 men; 14 women | 1. Practitioners reflect on work; 2. Exploration of current issues and chance for dialogue in Ukraine; 3. Working Groups within platform to pursuer specific issues and challenges identified to date | Promoting and providing capacity building (conflict sensitive workshop by UNDP); Developing a dialogue culture - bottom up (World café discussions); Dialogue mapping (Upgrade mapping tool; Redesign of data entry systems and online interaction) and online engagement | Maps web page reported |
| 2-4/02/2016 | Lviv | 7 men; 15 women | 1. Conflict (and gender) sensitivity workshop; 2. Reaffirm DPSU and working methods; 3. Specific ways DPSU platform can contribute to mapping and gather feedback on the programme; 4. Facilitate professional exchange between DPSU practitioners and Lviv dialogue actors (World Cafe); 5. Identify key areas of cooperation and exchange between facilitation actors; 6. Identify key thematic issue areas important to dialogue actors | Continued DPSU team participation in dialogue vents and processes across Ukraine to populate the geographic and thematic mapping - first meetings in Kharkiv and Mykoliav; 3. Collection and analysis of first results from Kharkiv and Mykoliav; 4. Continue discussion of terminology - possibly first task of Methodology Working Group; 5. Thematic mapping based on World Cafe (Lviv) event and results collected from dialogue events to initiate discussion with Conflict Sensitivity and Organisational Working Groups; 6. Collect information on upcoming dialogue events for sharing (initially) on dedicated Facebook page and subsequently on DPSU website;  | Launch new iteration of revised platform scheduled for March 2016 |
| 4-6/05/2016 | Kramatorsk, Donbas | No information | 1. Assessed state of dialogue in government-controlled areas of Donbas; 2. Identify the main issues affecting conflict in Eastern Ukraine and the contribution DPSU can make to resolving them; 3. Continue facilitating professional exchanges between dialogue facilitators; 4. Highlight the dialogue work being carried out in Eastern Ukraine (World Cafe); 6. Explore the main areas of work to be carried out through an enhanced Dialogue Support platform | 1. Further develop he mapping mechanism with a dedicated mapping drawn, in part, from the existing network of dialogue initiatives; 2. Identify avenues of interaction with other dialogue actors on the coordination of dialogue efforts and on capacity building in Ukraine; 3. conduct a July meeting with donors and dialogue actors for a final assessment of achievements and strategic planning for a next phase; 4. Commission an evaluation (i.e. this assessment) and build a proposal for a continuation in the next phase. | Despite the proposed May 2016 launch, no mention made of this; nor on 21 June was the platform active; the message stating that it was under construction |

1. Russian troops were already in the peninsula, Sevastapol being the headquarters of the Russian Black Sea fleet. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Pps. 7-8, mediatEUr concept note, June 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This decision is not reflected in any of the five reports, all of which continue to tout the tool’s value. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This may be understating the position. The assessor was informed during Skype interviews that Ukrainian participants in platform discussions found the regular presentations of the mapping a source of frustration since they did not perceive its utility and it diversified focus from their capacity building priority. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The three assumptions are ‘killer assumptions’ in that if incorrect, they destroy the rationale for the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)