**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Final Project Evaluation**

**Regional Electoral Support Project (MENA) Phase I**

**Introduction and Background**

The Middle East and North Africa region continues to witness new debates on electoral systems, electoral institutions and the practice of elections within the region’s evolving political context. Recent events in the region continue to demonstrate that political developments have regional repercussions and point to the need for greater regional knowledge and discourse on electoral reform, democratic norms and the strengthening of democratic champions.

Within the context of UNDP’s Strategic Plan 2014-2017, the Regional Electoral Support Project for Middle East and North Africa, supported by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), works to address regional needs by strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing regional knowledge and know-how on electoral issues, and promoting the greater and more effective role by women and youth in the electoral process. The Regional Electoral Support Project is the Arab States component of the Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) which works at the global, regional and national levels towards strengthening democratic governance systems. Under the overall framework of GPECS, the regional project works closely with national electoral assistance projects in designing and implementing regional initiatives as well as in identifying national initiatives that can be scaled up to benefit the region.

With the end of phase I and looking towards continued support for the region, UNDP is conducting a final evaluation of the Regional Electoral Support Project for Middle East and North Africa. The evaluation will cover the period of 1 January 2014 – July 31 2015 looking at project results and achievements, and providing recommendations towards the development of phase II of electoral support to the MENA region.

# Purpose of the evaluation

The final evaluation will be conducted by an independent, external consultant. It will assess progress (and challenges), with measurement of the achievements and gaps and how/to what extent these have affected outcome-level progress. It will consist of a desk review, country visit, interviews with regional and relevant country level electoral staff, and interviews with key stakeholders and beneficiaries. The evaluation is also expected to focus on emerging contextual issues and consequent considerations for the project moving forward.

# Objectives of the Evaluation

The objective and purpose of the evaluation is to assess the regional project’s results and achievements and to make recommendations for future action. The final evaluation will also review the project’s strategy and its risks to sustainability. It will aim to provide project management, donors and partners with increased knowledge and understanding of project achievements and challenges encountered. More specifically, the evaluation will review:

* Achievement of the expected results and performance of the entire project period.
* Relevance of the project’s strategies and design in the evolving context of changing socio-economic and political developments and realities in the Middle East.
* Effectiveness of the project in achieving the specific results.
* Assess relevance of the project’s management arrangements including its engagement and liaison with country offices; identify advantages, bottlenecks and lessons learn with regard to the management arrangements;
* Analyze underlying factors beyond UNDP control that affect the achievement of the project results;
* Recommend adjustments, if any, to project strategies and directions for the remainder of the project.
* Sustainability of the support

Deliverables will include a final evaluation report providing recommendations on partnership strategies and identification of policy/programming options for more effectively achieving project outcomes and outputs. Collectively these will serve to inform design of a Phase II regional electoral assistance project interventions and facilitate UNDP’s capacity building support at a regional level.

**Review Methodology**

The overall project evaluation framework should seek to evaluate the Regional Project’s alignment/implementation at the general level (against the 2012 Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Strengthening Electoral Systems and Processes recommendations) and more specifically at the project level (against the Regional Electoral Support Project MENA Phase I project document).

Institutionally UNDP in its electoral programming applies the electoral cycle approach as its policy context. The electoral cycle approach focuses on creating an inclusive and participatory electoral process and a professional electoral administration to enhance the credibility of the process and trust in electoral results. Taking a longer-term development view, the electoral cycle approach seeks to increase national ownership and build capacity of national institutions and processes.

Although it is the general responsibility of evaluation expert to decide on the concrete evaluation methodology applied, it is the expectation that the proposed methodology would apply an inclusive and participatory approach involving stakeholders, to the degree possible, in the analysis and consider the following elements for the gathering and analysis of data:

* Desk review of relevant documents
* Discussion with the project staff, partners and beneficiaries
* Interviews with and participation of partners and stakeholders

**Review Criteria**

In reviewing the performance of the project, the evaluation should take into consideration the following:

1. **Effectiveness** of the project: Identify the factors which facilitated or hindered progress in achieving outcomes, both in terms of the external environment and internal to the project including: weaknesses in design, management, human resources, and funding. Comment on whether the objectives were achievable, and whether the relationship between the objectives, outputs, activities and inputs was clear, logical, and commensurate, given the time and resources expected. Assess the quality and timeliness of the responsiveness of the project’s management to changes in the project/political/security environment. Determine the extent to which the project’s stated objective(s) were achieved or likelihood that they will be achieved.
2. **Sustainability** of the project: Extent to which benefits from the project will continue or are likely to continue after the current iteration of project support (i.e. follow up projects, visible and permanent results). As well as inform on possibilities and recommendations for further programming with suggestions for specific criteria related to any expansion, contraction or changes to future programming options.
3. **Relevance** of the project: Degree to which the project was justified and appropriate in relation to the need and situation at the national level.
4. **Efficiency** of the project: Analysis and evaluation of overall project performance - outputs in relation to inputs, financial management and the implementing timetable.
5. **Impact** of the project: Analysis and evaluation of the impact for project achievements and likelihood of achievements in the electoral environment in the future, measuring both the positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen changes to and direct project effects as well as any project catalytic effects.

**Senior Evaluator Qualifications**

As a minimum requirement the evaluator shall have demonstrated experience conducting independent evaluations and dem­onstrated proficiency in value for money analysis. The evaluator selected shall have the following tasks and meet the following minimum Qualifications and Experience:

*Evaluator*

*Tasks:*

* Design and detail the evaluation methodology;
* Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs, and partnership strategy;
* Data collection;
* Draft the review report and finalise the review report;
* Participate/facilitate an Evaluation Workshop
* Take overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of evaluation reports to UNDP.

*Qualifications:*

* Experience in participatory evaluations of electoral assistance required, with experience in the Arab States preferred;
* Project evaluation experience within the United Nations system considered an asset;
* Excellent analytical and organizational skills. Knowledge of result-based management evaluation methodologies. Demonstrated strong experience in project design, project management and implementation;
* Strong communication skills including the ability to write, review, edit reports as well as the conduct meetings with stakeholders;
* Ability to work efficiently and independently under pressure, handle multi-tasking situations with a strong delivery orientation;
* Fluency in English mandatory, Arabic language skills considered a strong asset;
* Demonstrate neutrality and impartiality in relation to the electoral environment.

**Deliverables**

The evaluation report should also clearly:

* Analyse challenges to the project’s implementation and achievements;
* Highlight the lessons learnt from the project related to results achieved, the process followed and strategy applied to provide recommendations;
* Include where relevant and available good practices, success stories, anecdotes;
* Analyse added value of project implementation and value for money of interventions.

The Final Evaluation Report should include the following structure in its structure:

* Executive Summary;
* Introduction (including context, scope, methodology);
* Key Findings and Conclusions. Where relevant and possible, specifically outline role, impact and issues of UNDP assistance, as well as an outline of other providers related specifically to project implementation;
* Recommendations (corrective actions for ongoing or future work);
* Summary review matrix/project RRF and achievement by objectives and outputs;
* Annexes (Mission reports, list of interviewees, list of documents reviewed, etc.)

The Project Lessons Learnt Report should include the following structure in its structure:

* Executive Summary;
* Key Findings and Conclusions: Main lessons learned from the review (policy based, programmatically, administratively, M&E etc.) and how they should inform future programming;
* Annexes (Mission reports, list of interviewees, list of documents reviewed, etc.)

**Indicative Work Schedule**

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| **Activity** | | |  | **# of Indicative days** |
| Desk review and development of review design and methodology for all components (Evaluation and Project Lessons Learnt) | | |  | 2 days |
| Finalisation of evaluation design, methods and inception report | | |  | 1 days |
| Stakeholder consultations, external and internal, including preparation of surveys etc. | | |  | 3 days |
| Quantitative/Qualitative analysis of evaluation inputs | | |  | 2 days |
| Analysis and preparation of draft project evaluation findings and project lessons learnt report | | |  | 5 days |
| Evaluation Workshop to present the first draft and debriefings | | |  | 1 day |
| Preparation of the report, including addressing comments from the first draft | | |  | 2 days |
| Revisions, finalisation and submission of the project evaluation report and the project lessons learnt report | | |  | 2 days |
| **Total** |  | **Not to exceed 20 working days total** | | |

It is expected that the evaluator may spend up to 1-2 weeks on in-country work, and that all remaining time will be allocated for the production of evaluation deli­verables (working “from home”). For all missions/field work related to the evaluation conducted, UNDP will provide coordination for interview requests, translation services (as needed) and logistical support to ensure the smooth conduct of the evaluation.