

Annex 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. Introduction

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs), previously called “Assessment of Development Results) (ADRs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP’s strategy in facilitating and leveraging national effort for achieving development results. The purpose of an ICPE is to:

- Support the development of the next UNDP Country Programme Document
- Strengthen accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders
- Strengthen accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board

ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.¹ The IEO is independent of UNDP management and is headed by a Director who reports to the UNDP Executive Board. The responsibility of IEO is two-fold: (i) provide the Executive Board with valid and credible information from evaluations for corporate accountability, decision-making and improvement; and (ii) enhance the independence, credibility and utility of the evaluation function and its coherence, harmonization and alignment in support of United Nations reform and national ownership. Based on the principle of national ownership, IEO seeks to conduct ICPEs in collaboration with the national authorities where the country programme is implemented.

This is the first ICPE for the Comoros and will be conducted in 2018 towards the end of the current UNDP programme cycle of 2015-2019, with a view to contributing to the preparation of UNDP’s new programme starting from 2020. The ICPE will be conducted in close collaboration with the Government of the Union of the Comoros, UNDP Comoros country office, and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.

II. National context

The Union of the Comoros is a small island developing state² with an estimated population of around 800,000 in 2016.³ Since independence in 1975, the country has experienced recurrent political crises and conflicts between the islands. With the constitutional reforms adopted in 2009, a system of rotating presidency between the three islands was instituted and the country regained political stability. Governance indicators remain low overall, even if some slow improvements were noted in the last few years. Comoros ranks 30th out of 54 countries in 2017 in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance⁴, far behind other African island states such as Mauritius, Cape Verde and Seychelles. The country has made some progress on Transparency International’s global Corruption Perception Index, from 143rd in 2011 to 136th in 2012, but however slipped back to 153rd (out of 176 countries) in 2016.⁵ Past crises in the country

¹ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/evaluation-policy.pdf>.

² The archipelago comprises of four islands. Three islands are under the leadership of the national government.

³ <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=comoros>

⁴ 2017 report available at <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/iag/downloads/>

⁵ <https://www.transparency.org/country/COM>

have also weakened the institutional capacity and public service delivery, which, together with political and social cohesion issues, are among key challenges for the governance of the country.

After economic growth picked up between 2011 and 2013, with an average growth rate of around 3%, the Comorian economy suffered from a serious electricity crisis in 2014, dragging the growth rate down to 0.6% in the same year.⁶ The country's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita has decreased following the crisis, with a GNI per capita of 770 USD in 2016, compared to 830 USD in 2014.⁷ Economic activities slightly recovered in 2016, and the forecast is that growth will continue to be steady in 2017- 2018, thanks to structural reforms by the new government in key sectors and planned investments in infrastructure. Key challenges for the Comoros's economic growth, similar to other small island states, include its narrow resource base, poor economic diversification (largely dependent on subsistence agriculture and a limited number of services), weak value addition, as well as vulnerability to external shocks⁸, including climate-change related impacts and natural disasters.

Since 2017 a slight improvement in the country's macro-economic situation has been noted due to progress in the electricity sector. According to forecasts by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the growth rate rose to 3% in 2017 against 2.2% in 2016 and 1% in 2015. Growth would have been even greater in 2017 if the planned investments had been made. Unfortunately, budget support to contribute, including from the World Bank and the African Development Bank, was not disbursed because of deep disagreements between the government and the IMF on the 2017 budget, including projected revenues that the IMF found unrealistic. Most of the investments were financed from government own funds.

Comoros's Human Development Index value for 2015 was 0.497, putting the country in the low human development category, and positioning it at 160th out of 188 countries and territories.⁹ Food insecurity and unemployment, especially among the youth and women remain major challenges. Women's participation in political decision-making remains limited.¹⁰ Data on poverty in the country are outdated, with the latest available data from 2004, when poverty incidence at the household level was estimated at 36.9%, and the share of the population with incomes below \$1.25 USD estimated at 48%.¹¹

To foster the country's socio-economic development, the Government of the Union of the Comoros prepared in December 2014 the Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (SCA2D) 2015-2019, with the strategic objective of laying "the foundations for the future emergence of the Comoros". The strategy includes the following main thrusts: (i) growth acceleration, diversification and sustainability; (ii) development of growth support infrastructure; (iii) strengthening of access to basic social services and the resilience of households; and (iv) strengthening of governance and institutional/human resilience capacities. The SCA2D has been revised in late 2017 to align the strategy with the SDGs and to take into consideration the new priorities of the elected government.

⁶ African Development Bank, Country Strategy Paper for Comoros, 2016-2020, page 2-3

⁷ World Development Indicators, World Bank (accessed in January 2017) <https://data.worldbank.org/country/comoros>

⁸ African Development Bank, Country Strategy Paper for Comoros, 2016-2020, page 3

⁹ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/COM.pdf

¹⁰ African Development Bank, Country Strategy Paper for Comoros, 2016-2020

¹¹ World Bank, Country Partnership Strategy for the Union of Comoros for the period FY14-FY17, page 3

III. UNDP Programme in the Comoros

The UNDP country programme in the Comoros for the period 2015-2019 is built around three main pillars that focus on the resilience of individuals, institutions and systems and are interrelated with the goal of reducing poverty. The programme has three expected outcomes, which are also the outcomes of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

UNDAF/UNDP programme outcomes, UNDP programme outputs and indicative resources are summarized in the following table:

Table 1: UNDAF/UNDP programme outcomes, UNDP programme outputs and indicative resources (2015-2019)			
UNDAF/UNDP programme outcomes and UNDP programme outputs		Indicative resources (US\$ millions)	
		Regular resources	Other resources
Outcome 1: The people, especially the most disadvantaged, carry out economic activities that are sustainable, innovative, inclusive, diversified, and income generating and create decent jobs.	Output 1: Poor and vulnerable people, especially women, in target areas can access financial and non-financial services adapted to their needs	0.7	0.5
	Output 2: Greater competitiveness of agricultural products: ylang, cloves, and vanilla	0.5	2
	Output 3: Country has national system of land and marine protected areas co-managed with local communities and develops economic activities that are compatible with the goals of conservation	1	6.5
Total Outcome 1		2.2	9
Outcome 2: State and non-State institutions show better political, administrative and economic governance in line with human rights practices and resilience	Output 4: Territorial authorities have institutional structures, operational staff and skills needed to promote resilience and local development	2.3	2.6
	Output 5: Country has mechanisms for managing electoral cycles and preventing and managing conflict at national, island and local levels that bear in mind gender equality	1.3	1.8
	Output 6: Country has a planning system, as well as a framework for administrative reform that spells out national priorities for sectoral and island actions	1.044	1
Total Outcome 2		4.644	5.4
Outcome 3: The most vulnerable people strengthen their resilience to climate change and crises	Output 7: Country has capacities, tools and adaptation technologies to reduce agricultural vulnerability to climate change	2.3	9.5
	Output 8: State and non-State institutions have mechanisms, tools and means to manage risks of natural disasters and strengthen resilience	0.5	9
	Output 9: Country has political, legal and regulatory framework for promoting development of renewable energies	0.5	2.5
Total Outcome 3		3.3	21
Grand total		45.544	

Source: UNDP Comoros Country Programme Document 2015-2019

IV. Scope of the evaluation

ICPEs are conducted in the penultimate year of the ongoing UNDP country programme in order to feed into the process of developing the new country programme. The ICPE will focus on the present programme cycle (2015-2019) while taking into account interventions which may have started in the previous programme cycle (2008-2014) but continued for a few more years into the current programme cycle.

As a country-level evaluation of UNDP, the ICPE will focus on the formal UNDP country programme approved by the Executive Board but will also consider any changes from the initial CPD during the period under review. The ICPE covers interventions funded by all sources of finance, including UNDP regular (“core”) resources, donor funds and government funds. It is important to note that a UNDP country office may be involved in a number of activities that are not included in a specific project. Some of these “non-project” activities may be crucial for advancing the political and social agenda of a country, and will therefore be considered, where relevant, by the evaluation.

Special efforts will be made to capture the role and contribution of UNV through undertaking joint work with UNDP. This information will be used for synthesis in order to provide corporate level evaluative evidence of performance of the associated programme.

V. Methodology

The evaluation methodology will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards.¹² The ICPE will address the following three evaluation questions.¹³ These questions will also guide the presentation of the evaluation findings in the report.

1. What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
2. To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
3. What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP’s performance and eventually, to the sustainability of results?

To address question 1, a Theory of Change (ToC) approach will be used in consultation with stakeholders, as appropriate, to better understand how and under what conditions UNDP’s interventions are expected to lead to good governance and sustainable development in the country. Discussions of the ToC will focus on mapping the assumptions behind the programme’s desired change(s) and the causal linkages between the intervention(s) and the intended country programme outcomes.

As part of this analysis, the progression of the programme over the review period will also be examined. In assessing the CPD’s progression, UNDP’s capacity to adapt to the changing context in the Comoros and respond to national development needs and priorities will also be looked at.

The effectiveness of UNDP’s country programme will be analysed in response to evaluation question 2. This will include an assessment of the achieved results and the extent to which these results have contributed to the intended CPD objectives. In this process, both positive and negative, direct and indirect as well as unintended results will be identified.

¹² <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21>

¹³ The ICPEs have adopted a streamlined methodology, which differs from the previous ADRs that were structured according to the four standard OECD DAC criteria.

To better understand UNDP's performance, the specific factors that influenced - positively or negatively - UNDP's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results in the country will be examined in response to evaluation question 3. In addition to country-specific factors that may explain UNDP's performance, the utilization of resources to deliver results (including managerial practices), the extent to which the CO fostered partnerships and synergies with other actors (including through south-south and triangular cooperation), and the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in design and implementation of the CPD are some of the aspects that will be assessed under this question.

VI. Data collection

Assessment of existing data and data collection constraints. An assessment was carried out for each outcome area to ascertain the available information, identify data constraints, to determine the data collection needs and methods. The assessment outlined the level of evaluable data that is available. The assessment indicated that there were only two decentralized evaluations, out of four planned for 2017, undertaken during the period from 2015 to present, which were project evaluations.

With respect to indicators, the CPD and CPAP list 14 indicators (plus 3 indicators of UNDP Strategic Plan) for the 3 outcome results, and 29 indicators to measure the 9 outputs, mostly with baseline and targets. To the extent possible, the ICPE will seek to use these indicators to better understand the intention of the UNDP programme and to measure or assess progress towards the outcomes. Several indicators for CPD results did not include sources of data, while others indicated national statistics and/or programme/project annual reports as data sources. The evaluation's ability to measure progress against these indicators will therefore depend in part on the country office's monitoring and on national statistical capacities. The National Institute for Statistics, Economic and Demographic studies (INSEED) produces analysis and reports, but its website publishes very little recent data. In addition, a general population and housing census was initially planned for 2013, then postponed to 2017, and its current status is unclear¹⁴. These observed national data deficiencies¹⁵ will be a challenge for the evaluation in measuring the progress achieved against the indicators.

It is also important to note that UNDP projects that contributed to different outcomes are at different stages of implementation, and therefore it may not always be possible to determine the projects' contribution to results. In cases where the projects/initiatives are still in their initial stages, the evaluation will document observable progress and seek to ascertain the possibility of achieving the outcome given the programme design and measures already put in place.

Initial discussions with the country office revealed no limitations to the evaluation team's ability to travel to project sites located in different parts of the country.

Data collection methods: The evaluation will use data from primary and secondary sources, including desk review of documentation and information and interviews with key informants, including beneficiaries, partners and managers. An advance questionnaire will be administered to the country office before the data collection mission in the country. A multi-stakeholder approach will be followed, and interviews will include government representatives, civil-society organizations, private-sector

¹⁴ <http://www.inseed.km/index.php/publications/rapport1/rapports-rgph-2017>

¹⁵ In addition to poverty data as mentioned in the context section.

representatives, UN agencies, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, and beneficiaries of the programme. Focus group discussions will be used to consult some groups of beneficiaries as appropriate.

The evaluation team will also undertake field visits to selected project sites to observe the projects first-hand. It is expected that regions where UNDP has a concentration of field projects (in more than one outcome area), as well as those where critical projects are being implemented will be considered. There should be a coverage of the three outcome areas. The coverage should include a sample, as relevant, of both successful projects and projects which may be reporting difficulties but where lessons can be learned, both larger and smaller pilot projects, as well as both completed and active projects.

The IEO and the country office have identified an initial list of background and programme-related documents which is posted on an ICPE SharePoint website. The following secondary data will be reviewed, among others: background documents on the national context, documents prepared by international partners during the period under review and documents prepared by UN system agencies; programme plans and frameworks; progress reports; monitoring self-assessments such as the yearly UNDP Results Oriented Annual Reports; and evaluations conducted by the country office and partners.

In line with UNDP's gender mainstreaming strategy, the ICPE will examine the level of gender mainstreaming across all of UNDP Comoros programmes and operations. Gender disaggregated data will be collected, where available, and assessed against its programme outcomes.

Validation. The evaluation will use triangulation of information collected from different sources and/or by different methods to ensure that the data is valid.

Stakeholder involvement: A participatory and transparent process will be followed to engage with multiple stakeholders at all stages of the evaluation process. During the initial phase a stakeholder analysis will be conducted to identify all relevant UNDP partners, including those that may have not worked with UNDP but play a key role in the outcomes to which UNDP contributes. This stakeholder analysis will serve to identify key informants for interviews during the main data collection phase of the evaluation, and to examine any potential partnerships that could further improve UNDP's contribution to the country.

VII. Management arrangements

Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP: The UNDP IEO will conduct the ICPE in consultation with the UNDP Comoros Country Office, the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Government of the Union of the Comoros. The IEO Lead Evaluator will lead the evaluation and coordinate the evaluation team. The IEO will meet all costs directly related to the conduct of the ICPE.

UNDP Country Office in the Comoros: The country office will support the evaluation team to liaise with key partners and other stakeholders and ensure that all necessary information regarding UNDP's programmes, projects and activities in the country is available to the team and provide factual verifications of the draft report on a timely basis. The country office will provide the evaluation team in-kind organizational support (e.g. arranging meetings with project staff, stakeholders, beneficiaries; assistance for project site visits). To ensure the independence of the views expressed, country office staff will not participate in interviews and meetings with stakeholders held for data collection purposes. The country office will jointly organize the final stakeholder meeting, ensuring participation of key government counterparts, through a video-conference with the IEO, where findings and results of the evaluation will

be presented. Additionally, the country office will support the use and dissemination of the final outputs of the ICPE process.

UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA): RBA will support the evaluation through information sharing and will also participate in discussions on emerging conclusions and recommendations.

Evaluation Team: The IEO will constitute an evaluation team to undertake the ICPE. The IEO will ensure gender balance in the team which will include the following members:

- **Lead Evaluator (LE):** IEO staff member with overall responsibility for managing the ICPE, including preparing for and designing the evaluation (i.e. the present ToR) as well as selecting the evaluation team and providing methodological guidance. The LE will be responsible for the synthesis process and the preparation of the draft and final evaluation reports. The LE will be backstopped by a senior evaluator also from the IEO.
- **Associate Evaluator (AE):** The AE will support the LE in the preparation and design of the evaluation, including background research and documentation, the selection of the evaluation team, and the synthesis process. The AE will review the draft report and support the LE in other aspects of the ICPE process as may be required.
- **Consultants:** 2 consultants will be recruited. Under the guidance of the LE, the consultants will conduct preliminary research and data collection activities, prepare outcome analysis and contribute to the preparation of the final ICPE report.

The roles of the different members of the evaluation team are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Data collection responsibilities by outcome areas		
Outcome	Report	Data collection
Governance	Consultant	Consultant
Sustainable development and resilience	Consultant	Consultant
General strategic and management issues	LE/AE	LE/AE/Consultant

VIII. Evaluation Process

The evaluation will be conducted according to the approved IEO process. The following represents a summary of the five key phases of the process, which constitute the framework for conducting the evaluation.

Phase 1: Preparatory work. The IEO prepares the ToR and the evaluation design, including an overall evaluation matrix. Once the TOR is approved, additional evaluation team members, comprising international and/or national development professionals will be recruited. The IEO starts collecting data and documentation internally first and then filling data gaps with help from the UNDP country office.

Additional evaluation team members, comprising development professionals, will be recruited once the ToR is complete.

Phase 2: Desk analysis. Evaluation team members will conduct desk review of reference material, and identify specific evaluation questions, and issues. Further in-depth data collection will be conducted, by administering an advance questionnaire and interviews (via phone, Skype, etc.) with key stakeholders, including country office staff. Based on this, detailed evaluation questions, gaps and issues that require validation during the field-based phase of the data collection will be identified.

Phase 3: Field-based data collection. During this phase, the evaluation team undertakes a mission to the country to engage in data collection activities. The estimated duration of the mission is around 3 weeks from 26 March – 13 April 2018. The evaluation team will liaise with CO staff and management, key government stakeholders and other partners and beneficiaries. At the end of the mission, the evaluation team will hold a debrief presentation of the key preliminary findings at the country office.

Phase 4: Analysis, report writing, quality review and debrief. Based on the analysis of data collected and triangulated, the LE will undertake a synthesis process to write the ICPE report. The draft will first be subject to peer review by IEO and the International Evaluation Advisory Panel. Once the draft is quality cleared, it will be circulated to the country office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa for factual corrections. The second draft, which considers any factual corrections, will be shared with national stakeholders for further comments. Any necessary additional corrections will be made, and the UNDP Comoros country office will prepare the management response to the ICPE, under the overall oversight of the regional bureau.

The report will then be shared at a final debriefing where the results of the evaluation are presented to key national stakeholders. The way forward will be discussed with a view to creating greater ownership by national stakeholders with respect to the recommendations as well as to strengthening accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders. Considering the discussion at the stakeholder event, the evaluation report will be finalized and published.

Phase 5: Publication and dissemination. The ICPE report will be written in English. It will follow the standard IEO publication guidelines. A French version of the report will be produced, as needed and requested by the CO. The ICPE report will be widely distributed in both hard and electronic versions. The evaluation report will be made available to UNDP Executive Board by the time of approving a new Country Programme Document. It will be widely distributed by the IEO within UNDP as well as to the evaluation units of other international organisations, evaluation societies/networks and research institutions in the region. The Comoros country office and the Government of the Union of the Comoros will disseminate to stakeholders in the country. The report and the management response will be published on the UNDP website¹⁶ as well as in the Evaluation Resource Centre. The Regional Bureau for Africa will be responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of follow-up actions in the Evaluation Resource Centre.¹⁷

¹⁶ web.undp.org/evaluation

¹⁷ erc.undp.org

IX. Timeframe for the ICPE Process

The timeframe and responsibilities for the evaluation process are tentatively¹⁸ as follows in Table 3:

Table 3: Tentative timeframe for the ICPE process going to the Board in June 2019		
Activity	Responsible party	Proposed timeframe
Phase 1: Preparatory work		
TOR completed and approved by IEO Director	LE	January 2018
Selection of consultant team members	LE	January – early February 2018
Phase 2: Desk analysis		
Preliminary desk review of reference material	Evaluation team	February – March 2018
Advance questionnaires to the CO	LE/AE/CO	February – March 2018
Phase 3: Field-based data collection		
Mission to Comoros	LE/AE/Consultants	26 March - 13 April 2018
Phase 4: Analysis, report writing, quality review and debrief		
Analysis of data and submission of background papers	Consultants	April - May 2018
Synthesis and report writing	LE/AE	June- July 218
Zero draft for internal IOE clearance/IEAP comments	LE	August 2018
First draft to CO/RBA for comments	LE/CO/RBA	September 2018
Second draft shared with the government and national stakeholders	LE/CO/GOV	October 2018
Draft management response	CO	October 2018
Stakeholder workshop via video-conference	IEO/CO/RBA	November 2018
Phase 5: Publication and dissemination		
Editing and formatting	IEO	November 2018
Final report and evaluation brief	IEO	November 2018
Dissemination of the final report	IEO	November 2018

¹⁸ The timeframe, indicative of process and deadlines, does not imply full-time engagement of evaluation team during the period.