Terminal Evaluation Terms of Reference

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Increasing representation of effectively managed marine ecosystems in the protected area system (Azerbaijan)(PIMS #4327.)

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

Project Summary Table

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project Title:  |  |
| GEF Project ID: | 00085349 |   | *at endorsement (Million US$)* | *at completion (Million US$)* |
| UNDP Project ID: | 00072166 | GEF financing:  | USD 1,291,500 | 1,291,500 |
| Country: | Azerbaijan | IA/EA own: |       |       |
| Region: | RBEC | Government: | In kind: 6,341,069 | In kind: 6,341,069 |
| Focal Area: | Neftchala. Masally and Lankaran | Other: | UNDP:150,000 | UNDP:150,000 |
| FA Objectives, (OP/SP): |       | Total co-financing: | 7,782,569 | 7,782,569 |
| Executing Agency: | UNDP | Total Project Cost: | 1,441,500 | 1,441,500 |
| Other Partners involved: | Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources | ProDoc Signature (date project began):  | June, 2014 |
| (Operational) Closing Date: | Proposed:March 2019 | Actual:March 2019 |

Objective and Scope

The Government of Azerbaijan has established a network of six protected areas (3 National Parks, 2 State Nature Reserves and 2 State Nature Sanctuaries) located within the coastal zone of the Caspian Sea, covering an area of 175,575ha. A lack of adequate investment in sustaining a professional staff complement; modernizing the planning and management systems; and developing and maintaining infrastructure and equipment in these coastal and marine protected areas is however compromising the Government’s capacity to effectively secure the conservation values of these protected areas. The largest of these marine and coastal protected areas - the Gizil-Agaj State Nature Reserve (88,360 ha) and adjacent Lesser Gizil-Agaj State Nature Sanctuary (10,700 ha) - is considered one of the most important wetlands for wintering and breeding waterbirds in the Western Palearctic and thus forms the spatial focus for project interventions.

The project **goal** is: To establish, and effectively manage, a system of protected areas to conserve representative samples of Azerbaijan’s globally unique biodiversity.

The project **objective** is: To improve the management effectiveness, including operational effectiveness and ecosystem representation, of Azerbaijan’s coastal and marine protected area system, with due consideration for its overall sustainability, including ecological, institutional and financial sustainability.

In order to achieve the project objective, and address the barriers the project’s intervention has been organised into two **components** (this is in line with the components presented at the PIF stage):

**Component 1:** Enhanced management effectiveness of the Gizil-Agaj reserve complex

**Component 2:** Improved collaborative governance of, and institutional expertise in, the management of marine and coastal protected areas

The project is expected to produce the following outcomes:

Outcome 1 - The outcome under the 1st component is focused on supporting an improvement in the management capacity (i.e. planning tools, knowledge management, staffing, infrastructure, equipment and funding) of Gizil-Agaj to address the external threats to, and pressures on, the conservation values of the reserve complex.

Outcome 2 - The outcome under the second component is focused on: Creating the enabling conditions for increasing, diversifying and stabilising the financial flows to coastal and marine protected areas; and developing and implementing a long term monitoring system to ensure that the integrity of ecosystems are not pushed over critical thresholds[[1]](#footnote-1) in the commercialisation of, and natural resource use in, coastal and marine protected areas.

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

Evaluation approach and method

An overall approach and method[[2]](#footnote-2) for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact,** as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR. The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence‐based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to Gizil Agaj Protected Area*,* including the following project sites *Absheron National Park, Shirvan National Park and Samur-Yalama National Park in case found necessary.* Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources.

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Annex B](#_TOR_Annex_B:) of this Terms of Reference.

Evaluation Criteria & Ratings

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see  [Annex A](#_TOR_Annex_A:)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.** Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in  [Annex D](#_TOR_Annex_D:).

|  |
| --- |
| **Evaluation Ratings:** |
| **1. Monitoring and Evaluation** | ***rating*** | **2. IA& EA Execution** | ***rating*** |
| M&E design at entry |       | Quality of UNDP Implementation |       |
| M&E Plan Implementation |       | Quality of Execution - Executing Agency  |       |
| Overall quality of M&E |       | Overall quality of Implementation / Execution |       |
| **3. Assessment of Outcomes**  | **rating** | **4. Sustainability** | **rating** |
| Relevance  |       | Financial resources: |       |
| Effectiveness |       | Socio-political: |       |
| Efficiency  |       | Institutional framework and governance: |       |
| Overall Project Outcome Rating |       | Environmental : |       |
|  |  | Overall likelihood of sustainability: |       |

Project finance / cofinance

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Co-financing(type/source) | UNDP own financing (mill. US$) | Government(mill. US$) | Partner Agency(mill. US$) | Total(mill. US$) |
| Planned | Actual  | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual | Actual | Actual |
| Grants  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Loans/Concessions  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * In-kind support
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Other
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Totals |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Mainstreaming

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

Impact

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Conclusions, recommendations & lessons

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions**, **recommendations** and **lessons**.

Implementation arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Azerbaijan*.* The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

Evaluation timeframe

The total duration of the evaluation will be 21 days according to the following plan:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | Timing | Completion Date |
| **Preparation of an inception report** | *01.11.2018 (*7days)  | *Date: 07.11.2018* |
| **Evaluation Mission** | 03.12.2018 (7 days)  | *Date: 07.12.2018* |
| **Draft Evaluation Report** | 17.12.2018 (5 days)  | *Date: 21.12.2018* |
| **Final Report** | 04.02.2019 (2 days)  | *Date: 05.02.2019* |

Evaluation deliverables

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Deliverable | Content  | Timing | Responsibilities |
| **Inception Report** | Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method  | No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.  | Evaluator submits to UNDP CO  |
| **Presentation** | Initial Findings  | End of evaluation mission | To project management, UNDP CO |
| **Draft Final Report**  | Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes | Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission | Sent to CO, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs |
| **Final Report\*** | Revised report  | Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft  | Sent to CO for uploading to UNDP ERC.  |

\*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

Team Composition

The evaluation team will be composed of *1 international evaluator.* The consultant shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The evaluator selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The Team member must present the following qualifications:

* Master’s degree in environmental management, or other closely related field
* Minimum 10 years of professional experience in conducting evaluations and reviews of environmental conservation and sustainable development projects
* Strong background in evaluating biodiversity conservation projects, including protected areas and sustainable use of biodiversity
* At least two years of experience in business and/or marketing strategy analysis and development
* In-depth knowledge of monitoring and evaluation policies of United Nations organizations, the Global Environment Facility of UNDP and GEF
* Previous working experience and field work in CIS countries, particularly Azerbaijan, is an asset

Evaluator Ethics

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines)

Payment modalities and specifications

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| % | Milestone |
| *30%* | Upon submission of the Inception Report |
| *50%* | Upon submission and approval of the initial draft version of the terminal evaluation report |
| *20%* | Upon submission and approval (UNDP-CO and UNDP RTA) of the final terminal evaluation report  |

Application process

Applicants are requested to apply online http://jobs.undp.org by 08.10.2018. Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. The application should contain a current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e‐mail and phone contact. Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit a price offer indicating the total cost of the assignment (including daily fee, per diem and travel costs).

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals. Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

Annex A: Project Logical Framework

1. The project is aligned with the goal of the GEF’s Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy, ‘*conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services’*. The impact of the project will be measured in terms of the *‘biodiversity conserved and habitat maintained in national protected area systems*’ using the indicator, ‘*extent of intact* *coastal zone habitat … in marine protected areas…*’.
2. The project is consistent with Objective 1 of the biodiversity focal area strategy, ‘*Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems*’. The project will contribute to the outcome targets of Outcome 1.1 of Objective 1, ‘*Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas*’ by increasing the baseline management effectiveness score of the Gizil-Agaj reserve complex.
3. The project will contribute to the achievement of GEF’s outcome indicators and core outputs under Objective 1 and Outcome 1.1 as follows:

|  |
| --- |
| **GEF-5 Biodiversity Results Framework** |
| **Objective** | **Expected Outcome** | **Expected Indicator (and project contribution to indicator)** | **Core Outputs (and project contribution to outputs)** |
| **Objective 1**Improve sustainability of Protected Area Systems | **Outcome 1.1**Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas | **Indicator 1.1**Protected area management effectiveness as recorded by Management Effectiveness Tracking ToolProject contribution to indicator:*METT scores for the Gizil-Agaj reserve complex will improve from a baseline of 25% to >45% by end of project***Indicator 1.2**Increased revenue for protected area systems to meet total expenditures required for managementProject contribution to indicator:*Financial sustainability scores for the protected area system will improve from a baseline of 15% to >35% by end of project* | **Output 1**New protected areas (number) and coverage (ha) of unprotected ecosystemsProject contribution to indicator:*At least 1,000ha of unprotected wetland and marine ecosystems included into a consolidated Gizil-Agaj National Park covering a total area of >100,000ha***Output 3**Sustainable financing plans (number)Project contribution to indicator:*1 Financing plan for the network of marine and coastal protected areas**2 Business plans for individual marine and coastal national parks* |

Annex B: List of Documents to be reviewed by the evaluators

*PIF*

*UNDP Initiation Plan*

*UNDP Project Document*

*UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results*

*Project Inception Report*

*All Project Implementation Reports (PIR’s)*

*Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams*

*Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools at CEO endorsement and midterm Tracking Tools for Biodiversity*

*Minutes of the Project Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)*

*Oversight mission reports*

*All monitoring reports prepared by the project*

*Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team*

*Reports of experts and contractors*

*Field visit and training reports*

*Final products delivered by the companies, digital data, maps, management plans*

 *CDRs, Financial documentations as indicated above*

Annex C: Evaluation Questions

*This is a generic list, to be further detailed with more specific questions by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based on the particulars of the project.*

| **Evaluative Criteria Questions** | **Indicators** | **Sources** | **Methodology** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved? |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards? |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results? |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?**  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Annex D: Rating Scales

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution*** | ***Sustainability ratings:***  | ***Relevance ratings*** |
| 6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS)3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings2. Unsatisfactory (U): major problems1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems | 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability | 2. Relevant (R) |
| 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks | 1.. Not relevant (NR) |
| 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks1. Unlikely (U): severe risks | ***Impact Ratings:***3. Significant (S)2. Minimal (M)1. Negligible (N) |
| *Additional ratings where relevant:*Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A |

Annex E: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

**Evaluators:**

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people’s right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people’s right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders’ dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

**Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[[4]](#footnote-4)**

**Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System**

**Name of Consultant:** \_\_     \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Consultancy Organization** (where relevant)**:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at *place* on *date*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Annex F: Evaluation Report Outline[[5]](#footnote-5)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **i.** | Opening page:* Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
* UNDP and GEF project ID#s.
* Evaluation time frame and date of evaluation report
* Region and countries included in the project
* GEF Operational Program/Strategic Program
* Implementing Partner and other project partners
* Evaluation team members
* Acknowledgements
 |
| **ii.** | Executive Summary* Project Summary Table
* Project Description (brief)
* Evaluation Rating Table
* Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons
 |
| **iii.** | Acronyms and Abbreviations(See: UNDP Editorial Manual[[6]](#footnote-6)) |
| **1.** | Introduction* Purpose of the evaluation
* Scope & Methodology
* Structure of the evaluation report
 |
| **2.** | Project description and development context* Project start and duration
* Problems that the project sought to address
* Immediate and development objectives of the project
* Baseline Indicators established
* Main stakeholders
* Expected Results
 |
| **3.** | Findings (In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (\*) must be rated[[7]](#footnote-7))  |
| **3.1** | Project Design / Formulation* Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)
* Assumptions and Risks
* Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design
* Planned stakeholder participation
* Replication approach
* UNDP comparative advantage
* Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
* Management arrangements
 |
| **3.2** | Project Implementation* Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)
* Partnership arrangements (with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region)
* Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management
* Project Finance:
* Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation (\*)
* UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation / execution (\*) coordination, and operational issues
 |
| **3.3** | Project Results* Overall results (attainment of objectives) (\*)
* Relevance(\*)
* Effectiveness & Efficiency (\*)
* Country ownership
* Mainstreaming
* Sustainability (\*)
* Impact
 |
| **4.**  | Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons* Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
* Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
* Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
* Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success
 |
| **5.**  | Annexes* ToR
* Itinerary
* List of persons interviewed
* Summary of field visits
* List of documents reviewed
* Evaluation Question Matrix
* Questionnaire used and summary of results
* Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form
 |

Annex G: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

*(to be completed by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and included in the final document)*

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by

UNDP Country Office

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

UNDP GEF RTA

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook), Chapter 7, pg. 163 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office:  [ROTI Handbook 2009](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/M2_ROtI%20Handbook.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Report length should not exceed *40* pages in total (not including annexes). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. UNDP Style Manual, Office of Communications, Partnerships Bureau, updated November 2008 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Using a six-point rating scale: 6: Highly Satisfactory, 5: Satisfactory, 4: Marginally Satisfactory, 3: Marginally Unsatisfactory, 2: Unsatisfactory and 1: Highly Unsatisfactory, see section 3.5, page 37 for ratings explanations. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)