# Annex I. Evaluation Terms of Reference (extracts)

**Objectives, Scope and Audience**

The scope of the evaluation is the UN-REDD Mongolia National Programme. The evaluation will be based on data available at the time of evaluation and discuss outputs delivered by the Programme from the time of inception, January 2016, until the time of closure in 31 November 2018. It will also assess the likelihood of future outcomes and impact that may not have been achieved yet by October 2018.

The evaluation of the UN-REDD Mongolia National Programme is undertaken to assess (i) programme performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness (outputs and outcomes) and efficiency, (ii) sustainability and up-scaling of results, and (iii) actual and potential impact stemming from the programme. The evaluation has the following objectives:

* To provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements;
* To assess the status of REDD+ readiness in Mongolia, gaps and challenges that need to be addressed to achieve REDD+ readiness and the UN-REDD Programme’s possible role in the future REDD+ process in the country;
* To promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the participating UN Organizations and other partners. The evaluation will identify lessons of operational and technical relevance for future programme formulation and implementation in the country, especially future UN-REDD Programmes, and/or for the UN-REDD Programme as a whole.

The primary audience for the evaluation will be the Government of Mongolia, the three participating UN Organizations of the UN-REDD Programme and the programme resource partners. The secondary audience for the evaluation will be the UN-REDD Policy Board and national REDD+ stakeholders. The evaluation will also be made available to the public through the UN-REDD Programme website ([www.un-redd.org](http://www.un-redd.org)).

**Evaluation Criteria**

To achieve the evaluation objectives, by defining the standards against which the initiative will be assessed, the following five evaluation criteria will be applied:

* **Relevance**, concerns the extent to which the National Programme and its intended outcomes or outputs are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of the intended beneficiaries. Relevance also considers the extent to which the initiative is aligned with the UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015[[1]](#footnote-1) and the corporate plans of the three participating UN Organizations. Relevance vis-a-vis other REDD+ or REDD+-related programmes implemented in the country should also be examined, in terms of synergies, complementarities and absence of duplication of efforts.
* **Effectiveness**, measures the extent to which the National Programme’s intended results (outputs and outcomes) have been achieved or the extent to which progress towards outputs and outcomes has been achieved. The consultants will also attempt to explain why certain outputs and outcomes have been achieved better or more than others.
* **Efficiency**, measures how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to achieving stipulated outcomes and outputs.
* **Sustainability**, analyse the likelihood of sustainable outcomes at programme termination, with attention to sustainability of financial resources, the socio-political environment, catalytic or replication effects of the project, institutional and governance factors, and environmental risks.
* **Impact**, measures to what extent the National Programme has contributed to, or is likely to contribute to intermediate states towards impact, such as changes in the governance systems and stakeholder behaviour, and to impact on people’s lives and the environment. The evaluation will assess the likelihood of impact by critically reviewing the programmes intervention strategy (Theory of Change) and the presence of the required drivers and assumptions for outcomes to lead to intermediate states and impact.

**Factors and processes affecting the attainment of National Programme results** – which looks at examination of preparation and readiness of the National Programme, country ownership, stakeholder involvement, financial planning, performance of national and local implementing agencies and designated supervision agency, coordination mechanism with other relevant donors projects/programmes, and reasons for any bottlenecks and delays in delivery of project outputs, outcomes and the attainment of sustainability.

**Evaluation Methodology**

The UN-REDD National Programme final evaluation will adhere to the UNEG Norms & Standards[[2]](#footnote-2). It will be conducted by two independent consultants under the overall responsibility and management of the three participating UN Organizations’ Evaluation Departments through their participation in the Evaluation Management Group, in consultation with relevant headquarter, regional and country staff of the participating UN Organizations.

Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned[[3]](#footnote-3). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out. The limitations of the methodological framework should also be spelled out in the evaluation reports.

The evaluation will rate the different evaluation criteria using the table for rating performance.

In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the programme, the evaluators should consider the difference between what has happened with and what would have happened without the programme. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended programme outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

As this is a final evaluation, particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at the front of the consultants’ minds throughout the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the programme performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance turned out the way it did, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of programme results. This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the programme. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultant to explain “why things happened” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere assessment of “where things stand” today. The consultant could also provide recommendations for the way forward.

**Evaluation tools**

The Mongolia UN-REDD National Programme final evaluation will make use of the following tools:

1. A desk review of project documents including, but not limited to:
* Relevant background documentation, including the UN-REDD Programme Framework Document[[4]](#footnote-4);
* Relevant reports, such as National Programme Annual, Semi-Annual and quarterly Reports, publications, external evaluations by donors, partners etc.;
* Project design documents, such as the National Programme Document, annual work plans and budgets, revisions to the logical framework and Programme financing;
* Documentation related to National Programme outputs and relevant materials published on the Programme website, reports from workshops or consultations etc.;
* The final report of the Strategic Review of the Mongolia UN-REDD National Programme;
* Other relevant documents, such as possible new national policy documents, sector plans and available evaluations bearing relevance for the UN-REDD Programme.
1. Semi-structured interviews[[5]](#footnote-5) with key informants, stakeholders and participants, including:
* Government counterparts;
* Government stakeholders including all ministries participating from coordinating bodies or steering committees;
* Civil Society Organizations;
* Country, regional and headquarter personnel from the three UN-Agencies involved in the National Programme, e.g. the Programme Management Unit, Resident Coordination and Regional Technical Advisers;
* Representatives from other bi-lateral or multi-lateral initiatives co-financing the NP if applicable.
1. The Theory of Change and subsequent application of the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach on progress towards impact[[6]](#footnote-6).

**Consultation process**

While fully independent in its judgements, the Evaluation Team will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders. Throughout the process the evaluation team will maintain close liaison with a key evaluation focus group of stakeholders (Consisting of representatives of the evaluation departments of the three participating UN Organizations and the UN-REDD Secretariat), the REDD+ Coordination Unit, UN headquarters, regional, sub-regional and country level staff members, and other key stakeholders. Although the team is free to discuss with the authorities concerned anything relevant to its assignment, it is not authorized to make any commitments on behalf of the Government, the donor or the participating UN Organizations.

The draft evaluation report will be circulated among the three participating UN Organizations, including the key evaluation focus group and other key stakeholders, including civil society, for comment before finalization; suggestions will be incorporated as deemed appropriate by the evaluation team.

1. The UN-REDD Programme Strategy 2011-2015 is available on:

<http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4598&Itemid=53> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UNEG Norms & Standards: <http://uneval.org/normsandstandards> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Individuals should not be mentioned by name if anonymity needs to be preserved. In such cases sources can be expressed in generic term (Government, NGO, donor etc.). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The UN-REDD Programme Framework Document is available on: <http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=4&Itemid=53> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Face-to-face or through any other appropriate means of communications [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. GEF Evaluation Office, (OPS4) Progress towards Impacts: The ROtl Handbook: Towards enhancing the impacts of environmental projects – Methodological paper 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)