TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job title: National Consultant on Project Evaluation

**Project title:**  **Integrated Rural Tourism Development**

Contract modality: Individual Contract (IC)

Duration: 28 October -29 November 2019 (20 working days)

Duty station: Yerevan, Armenia

**Background:**

**Project budget:** USD 3,000,000

The project offers an intervention strategy for the development of rural tourism in Armenia with the objective of creating sustainable income-generating opportunities as supplemental income source to reduce the level of rural poverty, contribute to equal territorial development and shape conducive environment for rural development. The project has three main components:

1. Planning of sustainable integrated rural tourism- The tourism assets of the community will be identified, assessed and prioritized for the further development by preliminary expert assessment and participatory planning mechanism, which will outline the vision and strategy for the rural tourism development in the community through wide consultation and participation of the local stakeholders.
2. Increasing income level through diversification of tourism products and services in the community- Developing human resources through sector-specific trainings (business management, food processing, sales, marketing, training local guides, etc.) will help to address the knowledge gaps and prepare the local communities to effectively manage the tourism enterprises. Meanwhile all the actors integrated in both production, service provision and management will be trained in sustainable utilization of tourism assets and adoption of mechanisms to bring down the environmental impact of their activities. In addition, the project will facilitate the access of the local tourism enterprises to seed financing through the loan mechanism of SME DNC.
3. Sustainable Destination Management- Establishing institutions to engage the local stakeholders and authorities into management and development of the community as a tourism destination. Meanwhile UNDP will build synergies between its upcoming projects planning to use big data and establish an up to date information center in Yerevan to promote the new tourism destinations. In addition, the project will help the new destinations to market the tourism services through ICT tools.

**Objective of Assignment:**

The final evaluation of the Project is designed to measure impact, if already available at this early stage, and to assess achievements and provide recommendations upon the completion of the project.

In particular, this external evaluation will focus on evaluating and learning from the project results and lessons throughout the project implementation. The findings and recommendations of the evaluation will inform the future initiatives by UNDP Armenia, the Government of Armenia and the main stakeholders.

In this context, the evaluation will assess how the project has contributed towards its expected outcome of ‘intervention strategy for the development of rural tourism in Armenia with the objective of creating sustainable income-generating opportunities as supplemental income source to bring down the level of rural poverty, contribute to equal territorial development and shape conducive environment for rural development’ and mainly towrads the support the Government’s efforts towards rural development through developing rural tourism by applying a holistic integrated approach.

The final evaluation will asses how the project achieved its goal of to use the endogenous tourism assets of the community as a supplemental income source, the support level to the communities to shape their identity as a tourism destination and to sustainably use and manage their assets through efficiently operating local networks, the involvment of 60 rural areas all over the country targeting the communities with the highest but yet underused tourism potential in all the regions of Armenia.

The results and recommendations will be used by UNDP broadly and by UNDP in Armenia in particular as a basis for developing future tourism development and interventions at the national and local levels, in view of the continued cooperation with the Government of Armenia and the main stakeholders.

The independent external evaluation will be conducted by an independent expert. The evaluation will assess the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the project and will provide recommendations regarding the impact of the project. As stipulated in the project document the main stakeholders and, partners of the project are Ministry of Territorail Administration and Infrustruicture (ex RA MTAD) and Senior Beneficiary is the Tourism Committee under the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Armenia.

**Scope of work**

In accordance with UNDP evaluation guidelines[[1]](#footnote-1), the evaluation will assess the project’s implementation in terms of its effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness, relevance, impact and sustainability. The specific objectives are:

1. To assess the achievement of stated project outcomes and outputs, considering the strengths and weakness of the project, and unexpected results.
2. To determine the overall efficiency in the utilization of resources in achieving results.
3. To assess the appropriateness of the design of the project and the implementation arrangements, including but not limited to the project modality, organizational structure, and coordination mechanisms set up to support the project.
4. To assess the extent to which the project has contributed to the creation of an enabling environment, and the extent to which this has helped shape effective government policies and programming on disaster management and risk reduction.
5. To assess the sustainability of results and provide recommendations for sustaining the benefits of the project and how to improve sustainability in future initiatives.
6. To assess the approach to capacity development and whether initiatives have contributed to sustainability.
7. To review the effectiveness of the gender mainstreaming strategy and partnership strategy.
8. To gain insights into the level of client satisfaction with the project. The clients include community and local government beneficiaries; national government partners and donors.
9. To identify best practices and lessons learned which can be replicated.

The core criteria to be considered in this evaluation are as follows:

* **Relevance:** the extent to which intended outputs and outcomes of the project are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries.
* **Appropriateness:** feasibility of the delivery method.
* **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the intended results have been achieved and whether opportunities created by the project were equally accessible for women and men.
* **Efficiency:** how economically resources or inputs (e.g., funds, expertise and time) were converted to results.
* **Sustainability:** the extent to which benefits of the project continue after external development assistance has withdrawn. This includes evaluating the extent to which relevant social, economic, political, institutional, and other conditions are present and, based on that assessment making projection about the national capacity to maintain, manage and ensure the development results in future.
* **Impact:** changes in human development and people’s wellbeing that are brought about by development initiatives, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

In accordance with UNDP evaluation guidelines, specific questions related to each of criteria can include the following:

**Relevance:** evaluate the pertinence of project objectives and purposes in relation to the project expected results (impact), target groups, direct and indirect beneficiaries.

1. What is the present level of relevance of the project?
2. Are the project overall objectives consistent with, and supportive of Partner Government policies?
3. Does the project still respond to the needs of the key partners?
4. Are the project objectives and results clear and logical, and do they address clearly identified needs?
5. Are there suitable and informative targets, e.g. are they Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART)?
6. Are the activities planned appropriately to achieve output(s) and whether the output(s) lead to the expected project outcome?
7. Is the current design sufficiently supported by all stakeholders?
8. Have key stakeholders been involved in the design process?
9. Are coordination, management and financing arrangements clearly defined and do they support institutional strengthening and local ownership?
10. Are the objectives clearly understood by the project partners?
11. If applicable: How well has the project design been adapted to make it more relevant? Was it straightforward to do contractually?
12. Have the relevant cross-cutting issues (environment, gender, human rights and governance, donor coordination or others) been adequately mainstreamed in the project design?
13. Was the project aligned with government and UNDP priorities?
14. Was the project appropriate to the local context?

**Effectiveness:** evaluate project effectiveness and to what extent has the project produced its desired objectives.

1. How well is the project achieving its planned results?
2. Have the planned results to date been achieved?
3. Are the targets for the project appropriate and are they being reported against?
4. What is the quality of the results/services available?
5. Are there any factors which prevent target groups accessing the results/services?
6. To what extent has the project adapted or is able to adapt to changing external conditions (risks and assumptions) in order to ensure benefits for the target groups?
7. Are the risks and assumptions holding true? Are risk management arrangements in place?
8. To what extent are unplanned positive effects contributing to results produced/ services provided?

**Efficiency:** evaluate to what degree have resources been optimally used during project implementation, and has the project achieved satisfactory level of cost effectiveness.

1. How well are inputs/resources being managed?
2. To what degree are inputs provided/ available on time to implement activities from all parties involved?
3. To what degree are inputs provided/ available at planned cost (or lower than planned), from all parties involved?
4. Are project resources managed in a transparent and accountable manner?
5. Are all contractual procedures clearly understood and do they facilitate the implementation of the project?
6. How well is the implementation of activities managed?
7. Is an activity schedule (or work plan) and resource schedule available and used by the project management and other relevant parties?
8. To what extent are activities implemented as scheduled? If there are delays how can they be rectified?
9. Are funds committed and spent in line with the implementation timescale? If not, why not?
10. How well are activities monitored by the project and are corrective measures taken if required?
11. If appropriate, how flexible is the project in adapting to changing needs?
12. If appropriate how does the project co-ordinate with other similar interventions to encourage synergy and avoid overlaps?
13. How well are outputs achieved?
14. Have all planned outputs been delivered to date? And in a logical sequence?
15. What is the quality of outputs to date?
16. Are the outputs achieved likely to contribute to the intended results?
17. Are they correctly reflected through the targets?
18. Do the inter-institutional structures e.g. steering committees, technical team meeting and monitoring systems, allow efficient project implementation?
19. Have all partners been able to provide their financial and/or other contributions?

**Sustainability:** evaluate the contribution to sustainability of benefit streams (to what extent benefits will continue after the life of the project).

1. Is sustainability an integral part of the design i.e. is there a phase out/hand over strategy?
2. Is the sustainability strategy fully understood by the partners?
3. If the services/results have to be supported institutionally, are funds likely to be made available? If so, by whom?
4. Are the services/results affordable for the key partners at the completion of project?
5. What is the level of ownership of the project by key partners and will it continue after the end of external support?
6. How far the project is embedded in local structures?
7. To what extent are relevant key partners actively involved in decision-making concerning project orientation and implementation?
8. What is the likelihood that key partners will continue to make use of relevant results?
9. Do the key partners have any plans to continue delivering the stream of benefits and if so, are they likely to materialise?
10. What is the level of policy support provided and the degree of interaction between project and policy level?
11. What support has been provided from the relevant national, sectoral and budgetary policies?
12. Do changes in government policies and priorities affect the project and how well is it adapting in terms of long-term needs for support?
13. Are the material, services and equipment support likely to continue after the project has finished?
14. How well is the project contributing to institutional and management capacity?
15. What lessons can be drawn from the coordination efforts and working arrangements between the project team, its counterparts/beneficiaries, and partner organizations?

**Impact:** evaluate the project impact, if available at this early stage.

1. What are the direct impact prospects of the project at overall objective level?
2. What, if any impacts are already apparent?
3. What impacts appear likely?
4. Are the targets realistic and are they likely to be met?
5. Are any external factors likely to jeopardize the project’s direct impact?
6. To what extent does/will the project have any indirect positive and/or negative impacts? (e.g., social, cultural, gender, economic)
7. Have there been/will there be any unplanned positive impacts on the planned key partners or other non-targeted communities arising from the project? How did this affect the impact?
8. Did the project take timely measures for mitigating the unplanned negative impacts? What was the result?

**Recommendations, lessons learned and best practices.**

Provide key recommendations related to the project design; project implementation; project management and management of resource; programmatic response.

1. What lessons can be learned from the project implementation in order to improve performance, result and effectiveness in the future.

**EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation will be conducted through a qualitative assessment method. The evaluation phases shall include, but not be limited to:

* A desk review of relevant reports and data that will mainly address qualitative issues.
* Submission to and discussion of the proposed methodology with UNDP
* Field-research and visit to partners and beneficiaries, where more qualitative issues can be addressed.
* Preparation of the evaluation report, findings and recommendations.
* Review findings with stakeholders/partners and preparing a follow-up action plan to implement accepted recommendations

**Duties and responsibilities:**

Consistent with the above general scope, the Consultant will work closely with IRTD Project Manager and team and will perform the following duties:

* **Submission/discussion of Evaluation Methodology**

Evaluation methodology should be submitted and discussed with UNDP IRTD Project Manager and Programme Officer Socioeconomic Development, HIV and Health Analyst for review and approval.

* **Desk Review**

During the desk review, the written material that should be examined may include but may not be limited to:

* The original Project Document and any subsequent costed work-plans.
* The main project reports which will include key budgetary information.
* Minutes and conclusions of steering committee meetings, technical team meetings, strategic planning meeting.
* Progress reports.
* Summaries of the participatory processes, if any.
* Information on the activities of project implementation team
* Any other material that would be relevant.
* **Field Visit**
* Face-to-face discussions with the stakeholders, including members of the project implementation team. The evaluation team should provide, some days in advance of their visit, a note summarizing those issues that they would particularly look to explore further and a proposed schedule.
* Discussions with the key partners, target audience, and relevant stakeholders
* **Presentation of Results, Reporting and Final Submission**

The final output of the evaluation will be a comprehensive report in UNDP format outlining the methodology pursued and main findings of the evaluation, including lessons learned and recommendations. The findings of the evaluation will be presented by the evaluator to UNDP, RA Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, TF and Tourism Committee for their review and inputs. Inputs will be integrated final evaluation report will be submitted to UNDP on the date agreed.

**Required Qualifications:**

***Education:***

Advanced Education in relevant fields e.g., Economics, Tourism, Social Science and Development, MBA, etc.

***Experience:***

At least 7 years of proven experience in Adaptation Fund, TF project design and evaluation under UNDP, UNEP, WB and/or other international organizations in the area rural development, tourism development, community development;

Proven practical experience in information gathering and research methodology; experience in data analysis by using innovative approaches and goof writing of prompt recommendations.

***Languages:***

Proficiency in the English language is required. Knowledge of Russian is an advantage.

***Competencies:***

* *Demonstrated experience with project/programme assessments, evaluations;*
* *Proficiency in monitoring and evaluation techniques including in-depth interviews; focus group discussion and participatory information collection techniques;*
* *Strong analytical capacity;*
* *Advanced experience in working with government agencies (central and local), civil society organizations and international organizations;*
* *Understanding of country tourism context in Armenia is an asset;*
* *Advanced communication capacity;*
* *Ability to work efficiently and provide high quality outputs under time pressure;*
* *Advanced IT and Microsoft office operating capacities.*

**Terms and Conditions for provision of services:**

* The assignment will be a combination of in country missions and the desk study; At least one country visits to Armenia for 5 days is envisaged to conduct interviews, gather first-hand information, present project scope and overall strategy, and provide inputs into discussions around project log-frame and implementation strategy at the project design meeting;
* UNDP reserves a right to terminate the contract at any phase if the requirements as per the TOR are not met.

**Expected result:**

Submit the expected written outputs above in printed and soft versions; MS Word (.doc) format including power point presentation if necessary.

**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).

**Evaluation timeframe:**

The total duration of the evaluation will be *20* days according to the following plan:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | Timing | Completion Date |
| **Preparation** | *3* days | *01 November 2019* |
| **Evaluation Mission** | *5* days | *04-09 November 2019* |
| **Draft Evaluation Report** | *9* days | *20 November 2019* |
| **Final Report** | *3* days | *25 November 2019* |

Evaluation deliverables:

The evaluator 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 IRTD Project |
| **Presentation** | Initial Findings | End of evaluation mission | To UNDP IRTD project manager, UNDP SED Programme Officer |
| **Draft Final Report** | Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes | Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission | Sent to UNDP IRTD project manage and UNDP SED Programme Officer for revision |
| **Final Report\*** | Revised report | Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft | Sent to UNDP IRTD project manage and UNDP SED Programme Officer 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.

**Payment mode:**

Payment will be conducted in the following installments upon completion of the tasks:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *60%* | Following submission and approval of the 1st draft evaluation report |
| *40%* | Following submission and approval of the final evaluation report |

**Annex 1: The Report should include but not be limited to the following headings**

Title and opening pages

Table of contents; Introduction; Description of the intervention; Evaluation Scope and objectives; Evaluation approach and methodology; Data analysis; Findings and conclusion; Recommendations; Lessons learned; Annex(s)

1. For detailed information refer to the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (pages 168-170): <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook>.); [↑](#footnote-ref-1)