

**External Project Evaluation**  
**Terms of Reference for Individual Contract**

**Description of the assignment:**

Under the supervision of the Director of the Regional Hub at the Regional Bureau for Arab States, the Consultant will conduct a mid-term evaluation of the regional project "Arab Knowledge Project".

<b>Post Title:</b>	Evaluation Consultant
<b>Starting Date:</b>	04 November 2019
<b>Duration:</b>	21 working days
<b>Location:</b>	Home-based. Part of the assignment would require travel to Amman and Dubai to be decided in consultation with UNDP.
<b>Project:</b>	Arab Knowledge Project (AKP)

## **1. BACKGROUND**

UNDP's regional project on Arab Knowledge (AKP) is part of the UNDP Regional Programme for the Arab States. The first phase of the project was launched in 2007 through a partnership with Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF), which was followed by phase II in (2016-2020).

AKP aims to promote knowledge societies and policies as transformational means to achieve sustainable development. The project contributes to driving active conversation and raise awareness on the importance of knowledge and knowledge-based policies for sustainable development. Hence, it encourages using knowledge production as advocacy tools, aiming to widely disseminate and embed in policy debates.

More specifically, AKP strives to achieve two key outputs:

- i) Arab Knowledge Index (AKI) and Knowledge4all digital portal to provide easily accessible data on knowledge accumulation, production and consumption within a development framework;
- ii) Participatory platforms to maximize outreach and dissemination of knowledge products developed, and building educational capacities (ministries, universities, regional research institutions, etc.) to improve the state of knowledge in Arab countries.

Over the course of phase II, AKP focused on designing, launching and enhancing new knowledge products, namely the Global Knowledge Index (GKI), Arab Knowledge Index (AKI) and digital portal [Knowledge4all], to provide easily accessible data on knowledge within a development framework. This includes measuring performance of countries in the Arab region on knowledge acquisition, dissemination and production.



Through its outputs and associated knowledge products and activities, the project has been visibly contributing to the objective of supporting and promoting “knowledge for human development” in the Arab region. The ultimate objective has been to support the region’s efforts towards establishing the aspired knowledge societies and economies. This is in line with the major objectives and expected outcomes of RBAS/Regional Programme Document (2018-2021) particularly in relation to accelerating structural transformation of productive capacities in a sustainable and inclusive manner (RPD outcome 1).

As the project has been extended to 2030, UNDP seeks the recruitment of an international consultant to conduct a mid-term project evaluation.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

### ***Objectives of the Evaluation***

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent consultant. It will assess the project’s progress (and challenges), taking the linkages to the broader initiative into consideration, at the outcome level, with measurement of the output level achievements and gaps and in particular, what changes were achieved as a result of the project towards fostering knowledge, and ultimately the promotion of knowledge societies and policies as transformational means to achieve sustainable development.

The purpose of the external evaluation is foremost to assess how the project impacted the progress towards the achievement of the objectives. Moreover, the contribution of the project in enabling a coherent development engagement and to identify the factors that have affected its implementation will be assessed.

The evaluation will consist of a desk review-based research, a mission to Amman and Dubai to meet with the project team and key stakeholders, and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and beneficiaries. It will document results achieved, the challenges faced, and how those challenges were addressed.

The evaluation is expected to identify success stories, good practices, challenges, constraints, and lessons learned, as well as to provide recommendations on substantive and process issues to inform the future direction, implementation, and the next steps of the project for the upcoming phase 2020-2030.

The external evaluation will cover the period from January 2016 till August 2019. It will be based on the activities financed by the Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Knowledge Foundation (MBRF).

The specific evaluation **objectives** are to:

1. Analyze the relevance of the project strategy and approaches;
2. Validate the project results in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the targeted results;
3. Assess the potential for sustainability of the results and the feasibility of ongoing, nationally-led efforts and commitment to help promote knowledge societies and policies as transformational means to achieve sustainable development;
4. Document key lessons learned, good practices, success stories and challenges to inform future work of various stakeholders in addressing the area of fostering knowledge; and
5. Document and analyze possible weaknesses in order to improve next steps of project interventions in the mentioned area.

## **3. SCOPE OF WORK**



In assessing the project, the evaluation will take into consideration the following criteria:

***Relevance and appropriateness***

1. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to *fostering knowledge for sustainable development* goals and challenges?
2. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the mandate, strategy, functions, roles, and responsibility of the key actors?
3. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the *UNDP development goals*?

***Effectiveness and efficiency***

4. Were the actions to achieve the outputs and outcomes effective and efficient?
5. Were there any lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities? What might have been done better or differently?
6. How did the project deal with issues and risks?
7. Were the outputs achieved in a timely manner?
8. Were the resources utilized in the best way possible?
9. Were the resources (time, funding, human resources) sufficient?

***Impact and sustainability***

10. Will the outputs/outcomes lead to benefits beyond the life of the existing project?
11. Were the actions and result owned by the partners and stakeholders?
12. Was the capacity (individuals, institution, and system) built through the actions of the project?
13. What is the level of contribution of the project management arrangements to national ownership of the set objectives, result and outputs?
14. Were the modes of deliveries of the outputs appropriate to promote regional / national ownership and sustainability of the result achieved?
15. Did the project address cross-cutting issues including gender?

***Project design***

16. To what extent did the design of the project help in achieving its own goals?
17. Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analyzed while designing the project?
18. Were there clear objectives and strategy?
19. Were there clear baseline indicators and/or benchmark for performance?
20. Was the process of project design sufficiently participatory? Was there any impact of the process?
21. Was there coherence and complementarity by the project to other entities in the field of fostering knowledge?
22. Was there coherence, coordination and complementarity by the project with other donor funded activities in the field of fostering knowledge?

***Project management***

23. Are the project management arrangements appropriate at the team level and project board level?
24. Was there appropriate visibility and acknowledgement of the project and donor?
25. The Final Evaluation should be aligned with the principles established in UNDP's [Evaluation Policy](#) and the UN Evaluation Group's [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#).

**4. METHODOLOGY**

Based on the UNDP guidelines for evaluations, the evaluation will be inclusive and participatory,



involving principal stakeholders into the analysis. During the evaluation, the consultant is expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis.

- **Desk review** of relevant documents, including progress reports and any records of the various opinion surveys conducted during the life of the project.
- **One field visit** (including to Amman and Dubai) to meet with the project team and stakeholders in the field (3 working days) to conduct key informative interviews.
- An **analytical report**, which should contain an executive summary (mandatory), be analytical in nature (both quantitative and qualitative), be structured around issues and related findings/lessons learned; and include conclusions and recommendations.

During the process, the consultant will report to the Director of the Regional Hub, who will provide overall guidance and ensure satisfactory completion of the deliverables. There will be close coordination with the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and project team who will assist in connecting the consultant with senior management, development partners, beneficiaries and key stakeholders. In addition, the CTA will provide key project documentation prior to fieldwork, and project staff will assist in developing a detailed programme to facilitate consultations as necessary.

## **5. EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES**

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report;
- A draft preliminary evaluation report, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with UNDP;
- Final report including a 2-3 pages' executive summary.

S/he will work with the AKP Chief Technical Advisor based in Dubai under the supervision of the Regional Hub Director based in Amman, based on the workplan enclosed as Annex 1.

## **6. DURATION OF THE WORK**

The length of the assignment is expected to be approximately one month and a half from the start of the contract. Actual number of days to be spent on the assignment is up to 21 working days: Desk review and inception (5 days); field work and preliminary report (11 days); final report (5 days). The work is expected to be completed by 20 December 2019.

## **7. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTOR**

The evaluator should be independent from any organization/s that have been involved in designing, executing or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation.

S/he should have the following **competencies**:

- Ability to work under pressure against strict deadlines
- Ability to think out of the box
- Ability to present complex issues persuasively and simply
- Ability to contextualize global trends in accordance with dynamics of the operating working environment
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Excellent writing skills and proven ability to produce quality and analytical reports within a

short period of time

#### Qualifications and Professional Experience

- A university degree at the post-graduate level in social sciences, management or related discipline
- A minimum of 7 years of experience in implementation / evaluation of projects/programmes on democratic governance / fostering knowledge; preferably some experience of these in the Arab countries
- Experience in cooperation with multilateral agencies would be an asset
- Strong background experience including familiarity with UNDP systems, requirements, procedures, and rules & regulations
- Solid understanding of international knowledge standards and experiences in programming on related issues
- Proven work experience in use of participatory evaluation methods for identifying measurable target indicators and in particular for identifying outcome / impact – positive change of behavior, policy or law made
- Demonstrated ability to assess complex situations in order to succinctly and clearly distil critical issues
- Previous experience with UN agencies an asset.

#### 8. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF THE BEST OFFER

For purposes of generating Offers whose contents are uniformly presented and to facilitate their comparative analysis, it is recommended to have in your offer the following contents and format, filling the following documents:

- a) **Personal CV or P11**, indicating all past experience from similar projects, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the Candidate
- b) **Proposal:** (i) Explaining why you are the most suitable for the work  
(ii) Providing a brief methodology on how you will approach and conduct the work
- c) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template provided. If an Offeror is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the Offeror must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

The selection process will be carried out following the combined Scoring method – where the qualifications and technical competence will be weighted a max. of 70%, and the price offer which will be weighted a max of 30%.

The offer will be evaluated against the qualifications and methodology in the following way:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Max. Point</b>
<u>Technical Competence</u>	70%	100



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CV review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A university degree at the post-graduate level in the social sciences, management or other relevant field of study;</li> <li>A minimum of 7 years of experience in implementation / evaluation of projects/programmes on democratic governance, in particular knowledge; preferably some experience of these in the Arab countries;</li> <li>Experience in cooperation with multilateral agencies would be an asset;</li> <li>Strong background experience including familiarity with UNDP systems, requirements, procedures, and rules &amp; regulations;</li> <li>Technical Skills: Experience in the usage of computers and office software packages (MS Word, excel, Power Point presentations, etc.);</li> <li>Solid understanding of international knowledge standards and experiences in programming on related issues;</li> <li>Proven work experience in use of participatory evaluation methods for identifying measurable target indicators and in particular for identifying outcome / impact – positive change of behavior, policy or law made;</li> <li>Strong writing skills including technical reports, general reports, proposals and preparation of budgets;</li> <li>Excellent analytical and report writing skills; Knowledge of English; Arabic or French is an asset.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		60
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of the proposed methodology and technical offer</li> </ul>		40
<i>Financial (Lower Offer/Offer*100)</i>	<i>30%</i>	100
<b><u>Total Score</u></b>	<b>Technical Score * 0.7 + Financial Score * 0.3</b>	

## 9. Evaluation Ethics

Evaluations in UNDP will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation”<sup>1</sup> and should describe critical issues evaluators must address in the design and implementation of the evaluation, including evaluation ethics and procedures to safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers.

## 10. Costs and Payment

Cost shall be inclusive of 21 Working Days, excluding travel costs (tickets, Daily Subsistence Allowance, and Terminal Expenses), which will be borne by UNDP according to applicable policies, rules and regulations. Payment will be effected in one installment, upon satisfactory completion of the deliverables required.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102>

## **11. Annexes**

- Proposed Evaluation Workplan
- Structure of Evaluation Report
- Code of conduct

## **12. Approval**

**This TOR is approved by:** [Khaled Abdelshafi, Director, Regional Hub for Arab States, RBAS]

Signature



Name and Designation

Date of Signing

### Annex 1: Proposed Evaluation Workplan

Deliverables/Outputs	Activity	Estimated Duration	Due Dates	Review and Approvals Required
<b>Evaluation inception report</b> (including evaluation workplan and timeframe, and using the Sample evaluation matrix- <i>Table A</i> below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of project document and progress reports</li> <li>• Other relevant literature review</li> <li>• Agreement on activities &amp; timeframes</li> <li>• Preparation of schedule of interviews</li> <li>• Development of assessment methodology</li> </ul>	6 days		Regional Hub Director
<b>Draft evaluation report</b> Draft evaluation findings. Documented records of interviews and observations with stakeholders. Presentation of findings to key stakeholders Draft report delivered to UNDP for consideration and comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with selected stakeholders</li> <li>• Field visit to Amman and Dubai</li> <li>• Incorporate feedback into findings</li> <li>• Draft the report</li> </ul> NB: See annex 2 for the report structure	10 days		Regional Hub Director
<b>Final evaluation report</b> A report of maximum 25 pages in word document format with tables/graphs where appropriate will be submitted after the completion of the mission, incorporating comments made on the draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address comments provided by UNDP</li> <li>• Submission of Final Report</li> </ul>	5 days	Within one week of receiving comments from UNDP	Regional Hub Director
<b>Time allocated to the assignment</b>	21 working days			



Table A. Sample evaluation matrix							
Relevant evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis	

## **Annex 2: Structure of Evaluation Report**

This **evaluation report template** is intended to serve as a guide for preparing meaningful, useful and credible evaluation reports that meet quality standards. It does not prescribe a definitive section-by-section format that all evaluation reports should follow. Rather, it suggests the content that should be included in a quality evaluation report. The descriptions that follow are derived from the 'UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System' and 'Ethical Standards for Evaluations'.

The evaluation report should be complete and logically organized. It should be written clearly and understandable to the intended audience. In a country context, the report should be translated into local languages whenever possible. The report should also include the following:

**Title and opening pages**—should provide the following basic information:

- Name of the evaluation intervention
- Time frame of the evaluation and date of the report
- Countries of the evaluation intervention
- Names and organizations of evaluators
- Name of the organization commissioning the evaluation
- Acknowledgements

**Table of contents**—should always include boxes, figures, tables and annexes with page references.

**List of acronyms and abbreviations**

**Executive summary**—a stand-alone section of two to three pages that should:

- Briefly describe the intervention (the project(s), programme(s), policies or other interventions) that was evaluated.
- Explain the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the audience for the evaluation and the intended uses.
- Describe key aspect of the evaluation approach and methods.
- Summarize principle findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

**Introduction**—should:

- Explain why the evaluation was conducted (the purpose), why the intervention is being evaluated at this point in time, and why it addressed the questions it did.
- Identify the primary audience or users of the evaluation, what they wanted to learn from the evaluation and why, and how they are expected to use the evaluation results.
- Identify the intervention (the project(s) programme(s), policies or other interventions) that was evaluated—see upcoming section on intervention.
- Acquaint the reader with the structure and contents of the report and how the information contained in the report will meet the purposes of the evaluation and satisfy the information needs of the report's intended users.

**Description of the intervention**— provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results. The description needs to provide sufficient detail for the report user to derive meaning from the evaluation. The description should:



- Describe **what is being evaluated**, **who seeks to benefit**, what kind of change was required and the **problem or issue** it seeks to address.
- Explain the **expected results map or results framework**, **implementation strategies**, and the key **assumptions** underlying the strategy.
- Link the intervention to **national priorities**, UNDAF priorities, corporate multi-year funding frameworks or strategic plan goals, or other **programme or country specific plans and goals**.
- Identify the **phase** in the implementation of the intervention and any **significant changes** (e.g., plans, strategies, logical frameworks) that have occurred over time, and explain the implications of those changes for the evaluation.
- Identify and describe the **key partners** involved in the implementation and their roles.
- Briefly summarize the **scale of the intervention**, such as the number of components (e.g., phases of a project) and the size of the target population for each component.
- Indicate the **total resources**, including human resources and budgets.
- Briefly summarize the context of the **social, political, economic and institutional factors**, and the **geographical landscape** within which the intervention operates and explain the effects (challenges and opportunities) those factors present for its implementation and outcomes.
- Point out **design weaknesses** (e.g., intervention logic) or other **implementation constraints** (e.g., resource limitations).

**Evaluation scope and objectives**— the report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation's scope, primary objectives and main questions.

- **Evaluation scope**—the report should define the parameters of the evaluation, for example, the time period, the segments of the target population included, the geographic area included, and which components, outputs or outcomes were and were not assessed.
- **Evaluation objectives**—the report should spell out the types of decisions evaluation users will make, the issues they will need to consider in making those decisions, and what the evaluation will need to achieve to contribute to those decisions.
- **Evaluation criteria**—the report should define the evaluation criteria or performance standards used. The report should explain the rationale for selecting the particular criteria used in the evaluation.
- **Evaluation questions**—Evaluation questions define the information that the evaluation will generate. The report should detail the main evaluation questions addressed by the evaluation and explain how the answers to these questions address the information needs of users.

**Evaluation approach and methods**—the evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis; the rationale for their selection; and how, within the constraints of time and money, the approaches and methods employed yielded data that helped answer the evaluation questions and achieved the evaluation purposes. The description should help the report users judge the merits of the methods used in the evaluation and the credibility of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The description on methodology should include discussion of each of the following:

- **Data sources**—the sources of information (documents reviewed and stakeholders), the rationale for their selection and how the information obtained addressed the evaluation questions.



- **Sample and sampling frame**—If a sample was used: the sample size and characteristics; the sample selection criteria (e.g., single women, under 45); the process for selecting the sample (e.g., random, purposive); if applicable, how comparison and treatment groups were assigned; and the extent to which the sample is representative of the entire target population, including discussion of the limitations of the sample for generalizing results.
- **Data collection procedures and instruments**—Methods or procedures used to collect data, including discussion of data collection instruments (e.g., interview protocols), their appropriateness for the data source and evidence of their reliability and validity.
- **Performance standards**—the standard or measure that will be used to evaluate performance relative to the evaluation questions (e.g., national or regional indicators, rating scales).
- **Stakeholder engagement**—Stakeholders' engagement in the evaluation and how the level of involvement contributed to the credibility of the evaluation and the results.
- **Ethical considerations**—The measures taken to protect the rights and confidentiality of informants (see UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators' for more information).<sup>70</sup>
- **Background information on evaluators**—The composition of the evaluation team, the background and skills of team members and the appropriateness of the technical skill mix, gender balance and geographical representation for the evaluation.
- **Major limitations of the methodology**—Major limitations of the methodology should be identified and openly discussed as to their implications for evaluation, as well as steps taken to mitigate those limitations.

**Data analysis**—the report should describe the procedures used to analyze the data collected to answer the evaluation questions. It should detail the various steps and stages of analysis that were carried out, including the steps to confirm the accuracy of data and the results. The report also should discuss the appropriateness of the analysis to the evaluation questions. Potential weaknesses in the data analysis and gaps or limitations of the data should be discussed, including their possible influence on the way findings may be interpreted and conclusions drawn.

**Findings and conclusions**—the report should present the evaluation findings based on the analysis and conclusions drawn from the findings.

- **Findings**—should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data. They should be structured around the evaluation criteria and questions so that report users can readily make the connection between what was asked and what was found. Variances between planned and actual results should be explained, as well as factors affecting the achievement of intended results. Assumptions or risks in the project or programme design that subsequently affected implementation should be discussed.
- **Conclusions**—should be comprehensive and balanced, and highlight the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of the intervention. They should be well substantiated by the evidence and logically connected to evaluation findings. They should respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the



identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to the decision making of intended users.

**Recommendations**—the report should provide practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation. They should address sustainability of the initiative and comment on the adequacy of the project exit strategy, if applicable.

**Lessons learned**—as appropriate, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation, that is, new knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (intervention, context outcomes, even about evaluation methods) that are applicable to a similar context. Lessons should be concise and based on specific evidence presented in the report.

**Report annexes**—suggested annexes should include the following to provide the report user with supplemental background and methodological details that enhance the credibility of the report:

- ToR for the evaluation
- Additional methodology-related documentation, such as the evaluation matrix and data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, observation protocols, etc.) as appropriate
- List of individuals or groups interviewed or consulted and sites visited
- List of supporting documents reviewed
- Project or programme results map or results framework
- Summary tables of findings, such as tables displaying progress towards outputs, targets, and goals relative to established indicators
- Short biographies of the evaluators and justification of team composition
- Code of conduct signed by evaluator