

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) conducts “Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs)”, previously known as “Assessments 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 the IEO is two-fold: (a) provide the Executive Board with valid and credible information from evaluations for corporate accountability, decision-making and improvement; and (b) 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.

UNDP Maldives has been selected for an ICPE since its country programme will end in 2020. The ICPE will be conducted in 2018–19 to feed into the development of the new country programme. The ICPE will be conducted in close collaboration with the Maldives Government, UNDP Maldives country office, and UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Maldives is made up of 1,190 small islands clustered in 26 ring-like atolls spread over 90,000 square kilometres, making one of the world’s most geographically dispersed countries. Its population is approximately 427,000 and includes over 59,000 migrant workers.

With high-end tourism² and fishing as the main drivers, the country is a development ‘success story.’ Maldives has achieved enormous improvements in per-capita gross national income over the last two decades. This increased from under \$2000 in 1998, to \$9,560 in 2016,³ a trend that will see Maldives graduate to high income status within five years if it continues.⁴ Reflecting these gains, the human

¹ See UNDP Evaluation Policy: www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf. The ICPE will also be conducted in adherence to the Norms and the Standards and the ethical Code of Conduct established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (www.uneval.org).

² Maldives economy is highly dependent on tourism. In 2017, travel and tourism share 76.6 percent of the country’s GDP, and contributed to 37.4 percent of total employment. World Travel and Tourism Council, ‘Travel & Tourism. Economic Impact 2018. Maldives,’ <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2018/maldives2018.pdf>

³ GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)

⁴ After an economic slowdown in 2015, Maldives’ GDP rebounded to a growth rate of 6.2 percent in 2016. This economic growth is projected to continue, reaching 6.7 percent in 2018, and 6.8 percent in 2019. Asian Development Bank, ‘Maldives: Economy.’ <https://www.adb.org/countries/maldives/economy>

development index ranking of Maldives has increased steadily. In 2016 it was ranked 105 out of the 188 countries on the list. This is at the bottom of the 'high human development' category and above the average for South Asia. Maldives achieved five of the Millennium Development Goals before 2015 and graduated from being a least developed country in 2011.

Notwithstanding these positive improvements, Maldives exhibits many of the vulnerabilities typically associated with small island developing states.

As the most lowest lying country in the world,⁵ Maldives is acutely vulnerable to projected sea level rises arising from climate change. Around 80 per cent of Maldives land area is less than one meter above sea level and over half of its settlements, and two thirds of its critical infrastructure located within 100 meters of its shoreline. The ADB has estimated that the Maldives may face up to a 2.3 per cent loss of its annual gross domestic product by 2050 due to costs related to adverse climate change effects and adaptation.⁶

As an island state Maldives also faces big challenges in the high cost of delivering services to people in highly dispersed and remote locations. According to its 2014 census Maldives population is spread across 188 inhabited islands, 109 resorts and 128 industrial and other islands. Outside of Malé', where 38 per cent of the population live, there is only one island that has more than 10,000 people. Most of the islands have less than 2000 people living on them.

Maldives size, creates labour market and capacity constraints, and also a constrained tax base from which to cover the costs of government.

Maldives systems of democratic governance are in their formative stages. The constitution it established in 2008 reflected democratic norms such as the separation of powers, multi-party elections and independent institutions including a human rights commission, anti-corruption commission and a prosecutor general. The fragility of these systems is underlined by the extended political crisis which has existed since this time. The country's third elections third general elections. scheduled for September 2018 set to provide a litmus test of the health of the country's fledgling democratic systems.⁷

Located in the Indian Ocean south-west of India, the Maldives is a site of strategic interest for regional powers including China, India, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. As a Muslim nation, Maldives linkages with Saudi Arabia are important and growing. These links have been implicated by many external commentators as important factors in a trend towards increasing religious conservatism. As evidence of this conservatism, Maldives is estimated to be one of the world's highest per capita contributors of foreign fighters to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. While it has so far had no effect, the threat of terrorism and growth religious extremism could ultimately undermine the country's tourism industry, which would be disastrous for the economy.

⁵ Maldives Human Development report.

⁶ Assessing Cost of Climate and Adaptation in South Asia (Asian Development Bank), June 2014.

⁷ This state of crisis escalated in 2015, when nine opposition party members (including former President Mohamed Nasheed) were the arrested and incarcerated on various charges, including terrorism, weapons smuggling, attempted assassination of the President, bribery, theft and money laundering. In early 2018 the Maldives Supreme Court quashed these convictions, ruling that their trials had violated the constitution and international law and ordered the release of the prisoners. President Yameen responded to this ruling by imposing a state of emergency, a decree that suspended several constitutional protections, banned public assemblies, and granted security forces sweeping powers to arrest and detain. Supreme Court Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed and Justice Ali Hameed were arrested the next day. The remaining three Supreme Court justices then reversed the ruling on the opposition leaders.

The trend towards greater religious conservatism has important implications for gender equality. Gender equality in basic well-being in Maldives is reasonably healthy, reflecting its high human development. However, there is a risk that the trend of growing social and religious conservatism in the private sphere, may reverse these gains. As the World Bank has observed: ‘public support for gender equality and women’s rights on various aspects of life appears to be declining, particularly as regards work and family interactions.’⁸

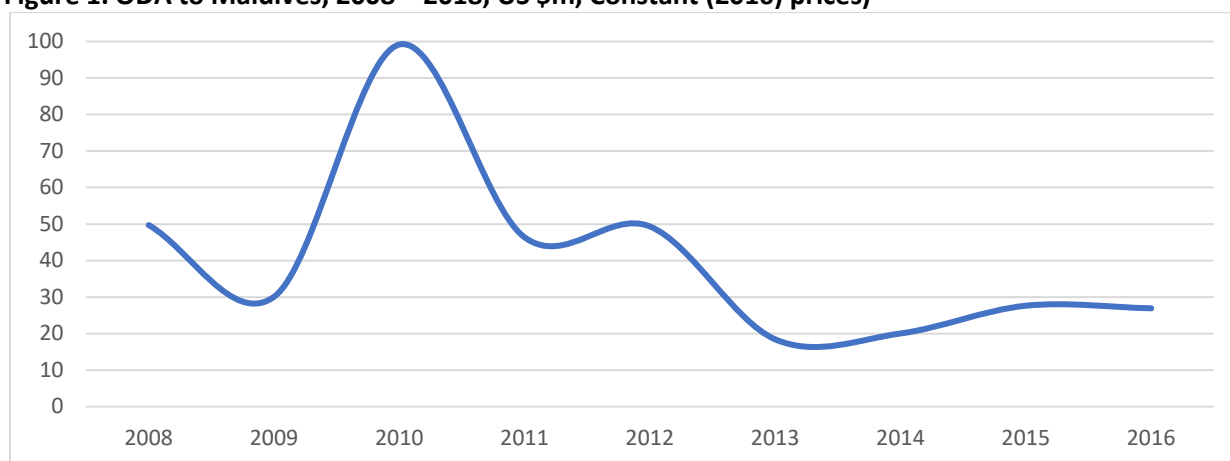
3. UNDP PROGRAMME STRATEGY IN MALDIVES

Relative to the size of Maldives economy UNDP’s contribution is small, representing less than half of one percent of general government expenditure.⁹ This means that UNDP’s ability to generate benefits directly is limited by the small scale on which its interventions operate, or by its ability to use resources to generate larger impacts by prompting deep, systemic and sustainable impacts in their areas.

Reflecting the importance of managing the impacts of climate change in both countries, and availability of funds, UNDP’s portfolio is mostly comprised of energy, environment and climate projects. Governance is a focus for the Maldives CPD, but represents less than 25 per cent of the spending over the CPD period. Programme spending in recent years has been around \$5.5 million per annum.

TRAC resources are very limited, which means there is little scope for programming outside of the environment area. Limitations on TRAC resources reduce scope to mobilize resources from other donors, which in any case have become scarce, at least when it comes to traditional donors. ODA from OECD countries to the Maldives has fallen from a high of \$100m in 2010 to between \$20 and \$30 million annually in recent years (Figure 1). The recent adoption by the European Union of a framework for targeted sanctions against Maldives on grounds of ‘breaches of principles of democratic rule and separation of powers’¹⁰, in combination with the Maldives upper middle-income status and growth trajectory, this situation is unlikely to reverse.

Figure 1. ODA to Maldives, 2008 – 2018, US \$m, Constant (2016) prices)



⁸ El-Horr, Jana, and Rohini Prabha Pande. 2016. Understanding Gender in Maldives: Toward Inclusive Development. Directions in Development. Washington, DC: World Bank. doi: 10.1596/978-1-4648-0868-5. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

⁹ Based on estimated general government expenditure of around [US 1.4 billion for 2015](#).

¹⁰ The framework enables the imposition of travel bans or asset freezes on relevant individuals and entities regarded to be ‘responsible for undermining the rule of law or obstructing an inclusive political solution in the Maldives as well as persons and entities responsible for serious human rights violations.’

However, the OECD data does not capture an important trend in external financing in the form of large increases in ODA or ODA like flows from China and Saudi Arabia, both of whom are large donors in the Maldives. Data compiled by US based think tank AidData suggests Chinese ODA-like flows to the Maldives may be as high or higher than \$12m annually.¹¹ There is no country level data on ODA on other investment in the Maldives by Saudi Arabia, but it is also large. As an indication of this, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced in early 2018, a \$160m grant to the Maldives for development projects including the airport development and fisheries sector of the Maldives. To date, UAE reported ODA to Maldives has been small, but the 2018 announcement suggests that this is no longer the case.¹²

Given these trends, UNDP has been trying to diversify its financing sources to build its program, focussing in particular on the private sector and government cost-sharing.

Table 1: Country Programme outcomes and indicative resources (2016-2020)			
Country Programme Outcome		Indicative resources (US\$ million)	Expenditures to date (US\$ million)
Outcome 12A	By 2020 citizen expectations for voice, sustainable development, the rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance.	Regular: 1.15 Other: 6.05	1.69
Outcome 13A	By 2020, growth and development are inclusive, sustainable, increase resilience to climate change and disasters, and contribute to enhanced food, energy and water security and natural resource management	Regular: 0.6	6.59
Total		7.8	8.28

Source: UNDP Maldives Country Programme Document 2016-2020 (DP/DCP/MDV/3)

4. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

ICPEs are conducted in the penultimate year of the ongoing UNDP country programme to feed into the development of new country programmes. The results of the ICPE will also feed into a thematic evaluation being conducted by the IEO of UNDP's assistance to vulnerable developing countries for disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience, and of UNDP's support for middle income countries.

The IEO previously conducted an evaluation of the Maldives country programme in 2010. The ICPE will consider the recommendations of this evaluation to the extent that they remain relevant given the length of time that has elapsed since it was completed.

ICPEs focus on the UNDP country programmes approved by the Executive Board. The country programmes are defined – depending on the programme cycle and the country – in the Country Programme Document

¹¹ This is the average level of Chinese ODA-like flows to the Maldives from 2012 to 2014.

¹² In addition, China is also making very large investments in the Maldives including an \$830m upgrade of the Male International airport. Research by Gateway House estimates the value of the three largest Chinese projects to be worth more than 40% of GDP, raising concerns about potential downstream debt distress. Maldives and China signed a free trade agreement in late 2017.

(CPD) and the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP). The scope of the ICPE includes the entirety of UNDP's activities in the country and therefore covers interventions funded by all sources, including core UNDP resources, donor funds, government funds. There will also be initiatives from the regional and global programmes that are included in the scope of the ICPE. It is important to note, however, that a UNDP county office may be involved in a number of activities that may not be included in a specific project. Some of these 'non-project' activities may be crucial for the political and social agenda of a country.

The scope of the evaluation (in particular the short time available for fieldwork), will not allow systematic collection of beneficiary views and unintended consequences of the project on non-target groups. Where this information is not available it will be identified as a limitation.

The extent to which the evaluation will be able to assess outcomes from different aspects of UNDP's work will also depend on the stage of completion of different components of the work. Where projects are in their early stages, the focus of the evaluation will be on whether there is evidence that their design reflects learning or builds on outcomes achieved from previous projects. The projects that are proposed as being in the scope of the evaluation are set out in Annex 2. These have been identified on the basis that:

- A) they are or have been active in the current CPD period, or they are precursors to currently active projects;
- B) they are evaluable, in the sense that they are doing work in their area that has been a focus for UNDP over a long enough period to be able to say something meaningful about their progress, likely or actual outcomes;
- C) they are large enough to warrant specific attention.

Given the small size of the Mauritius and Seychelles portfolios, it is proposed that all projects that meet these criteria are included in the scope of the evaluation.

5. METHODOLOGY

The ICPE will address the four 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, the sustainability of results?
4. What can UNDP learn from the evaluation about how it can best position itself to support small island states that are pushing towards graduation from ODA eligibility?

The ICPEs are conducted at the outcome level. To address question 1, a Theory of Change (ToC) approach will be used in consultation with stakeholders, as appropriate. 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. Where data gaps are apparent, a qualitative approach will be taken to fill those gaps to aid in the evaluation process. As part of this analysis, the CPD's progression over the review period will also be examined. In assessing the CPD's progression, UNDP's capacity to adapt to the changing context and respond to national development needs and

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.

priorities will also be looked at. The effectiveness of UNDP's country programme will be analysed under evaluation question 2. This will include an assessment of the achieved outcomes and the extent to which these outcomes have contributed to the intended CPD objectives. Both positive and negative, direct and indirect unintended outcomes will also be identified.

To better understand UNDP's performance, the specific factors that have influenced—both positively or negatively—UNDP's performance and eventually, the sustainability of results in the country will be examined under evaluation question 3. They will be examined in alignment with the engagement principles, drivers of development and alignment parameters of the Strategic Plan, as well as the utilization of resources to deliver results and how managerial practices affected achievement of programme goals. Qualitative rating scales will be used to assess (i) the degree to which a factor was a significant constraint on effectiveness of program implementation and achievement of outcomes; and (ii) the degree to which the UNDP was successful in addressing/managing the constraint.

Finally, some consideration will be given to whether there are broader lessons for UNDP from the evaluation, about how it can best address the needs of small island states that are moving towards graduation from ODA eligibility.

Special attention will be given to integrate a gender equality approach to data collection methods. To assess gender across the portfolio, the evaluation will use the gender marker and the gender results effectiveness scale (GRES). The GRES, developed by the IEO, classifies gender results into five categories: gender negative, gender blind, gender targeted, gender responsive, gender transformative.

6. DATA COLLECTION

Assessment of data collection constraints and existing data. Beyond information collected in stakeholder interviews, the evaluation will not involve primary data collection. The rigour of the evaluation's outcome assessments will depend on the quality of the available documentation about the objectives and outcomes of UNDP's work, with interviews used to identify data sources and explore lines of inquiry. The evaluation will seek to tap into a diversity of data sources, including government data and documentation, project documentation reporting, media reporting and independent reviews and evaluations. The evaluation will assess whether there is valid and reliable information about the views of intended beneficiaries about UNDP projects and where this is available, will include this in reporting. A multi-stakeholder approach will be followed, and interviews will include government representatives, civil-society organizations, private-sector representatives, UN agencies, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, and beneficiaries of the programme. Effort will be made to tap into a diversity of views about UNDP's work, to develop a fuller understanding of the political context.

Data collection methods. Specific evaluation questions and the data collection method will be further detailed and outlined in the outcome analysis, following consultation with program staff. The IEO and the country offices will identify an initial list of background and programme-related documents which is posted on an ICPE SharePoint website. Document reviews will include: background documents on the national context, documents prepared by international partners and other UN agencies during the period under review; programmatic documents such as workplans and frameworks; progress reports; monitoring self-assessments such as the yearly UNDP Results Oriented Annual Reports (ROARs); and evaluations conducted by the country office and partners, including the quality assurance reports. All information and data collected from multiple sources will be triangulated to ensure its validity. The evaluation matrix will be used to guide how each of the questions will be addressed organize the available evidence by key

evaluation question. This will also facilitate the analysis process and will support the evaluation team in drawing well substantiated conclusions and recommendations.

Stakeholder involvement: a participatory and transparent process will be followed to engage with 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.

7. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP: The UNDP IEO will conduct the ICPE in consultation with the UNDP Maldives country office, the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific and the Maldives Government. 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 Maldives: The country office will support the evaluation team to liaise with key partners and other stakeholders, make available to the team all necessary information regarding UNDP's programmes, projects and activities in the country, and provide factual verifications of the draft report on a timely basis. The CO will provide support in kind (e.g. arranging meetings with project staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries; assistance for field site visits). To ensure the anonymity of interviewees, the country office staff will not participate in the stakeholder interviews. The CO and IEO will jointly organize the final stakeholder meeting, ensuring participation of key government counterparts, through a videoconference, where findings and results of the evaluation will be presented. Additionally, the CO will prepare a management response in consultation with RB and will support the use and dissemination of the final outputs of the ICPE process.

UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific: The UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific 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 seek to ensure gender balance in the team which will include the following members:

- **Lead Evaluator (LE):** IEO staff member with overall responsibility for developing the evaluation design and terms of reference; managing the conduct of the ICPE, preparing/ finalizing the final report; and organizing the stakeholder debriefing, as appropriate, with the country office.
- **Associate Lead Evaluator (ALE):** IEO staff member with the general responsibility to support the LE, including in the preparation of terms of reference, data collection and analysis and the final report. Together with the LE, he/she will help backstop the work of other team members.
- **Consultants:**
 - Depending on the country offices capacity to support the mission, a national consultant may be recruited to support the evaluation mission, and depending on skills and experience, to collect data and help assess the programme and/or the specific outcome areas.

- The mission may also include the participation of an international specialist working on the IEO’s thematic evaluation of UNDP’s support to vulnerable developing countries for disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience.
- **Research Assistant (RA):** A research assistant based in the IEO will provide background research and documentation.

The roles of the different members of the evaluation team can be summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Data collection responsibilities by outcome		
Outcome	Report	Data collection
Outcome 1	LE and AE	LE and AE
Outcome 2	LE and AE	LE and AE
Strategic positioning issues	LE	LE and AE
Operations and management issues	LE	LE and AE

8. EVALUATION PROCESS

The ICPE will be conducted according to the approved IEO process¹⁴. The following represents a summary of the four key phases of the process, which constitute framework for conducting the evaluation.

Phase 1: Preparatory work. The IEO prepares the TOR and evaluation design and recruits evaluation team members. The IEO collects data first internally and then fill data gaps with help from the country offices, and external resources in various ways. Further data will be collected through interviews (via phone, Skype etc.) with key stakeholders, including country office staff. The evaluation team will conduct desk reviews of reference material, prepare a summary of context and other evaluative evidence, and identify the outcome theory of change, specific evaluation questions, gaps and issues that will require validation during the field-based phase of data collection.

Phase 2: Field data collection. During this phase, the evaluation team will undertake a one to two-week missions to Maldives. Data will be collected according to the approach outlined in Section 5 with responsibilities outlined in Section 6. The evaluation team will liaise with CO staff and management, key government stakeholders, other partners and beneficiaries. At the end of each mission, the evaluation team will hold a debrief presentation of the key preliminary findings at the country office.

Phase 3: 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 first draft (“zero draft”) of the ICPE will be subject to peer review by IEO and the International Evaluation Advisory Panel (IEAP). It will then be circulated to the country offices and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa for factual corrections. The second draft, which incorporates any factual corrections, will be shared with national stakeholders for further comments. Any necessary additional corrections will be made and the UNDP Maldives country office will prepare a management response, under the oversight of the regional bureau. The report will then be shared at final debriefings where the results of the evaluation are presented to key national stakeholders. Ways forward will be discussed with a view to creating greater ownership by national stakeholders in taking forward the recommendations and strengthening national accountability of UNDP. Taking into account the discussion at the stakeholder event, the final evaluation report will be published.

¹⁴ The evaluation will be conducted according to the [ICPE Process Manual](#) and the [ICPE Methodology Manual](#)

Phase 4: Publication and dissemination. The ICPE report and the evaluation brief will be widely distributed in hard and electronic versions. The evaluation report will be made available to UNDP Executive Board at the time of its approval of the new Country Programme Document. It will be 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 Maldives country office and the Government of Maldives will disseminate the report to stakeholders in the country. The report and the management response will be published on the UNDP website¹⁵ as well as in the Evaluation Resource Centre. The regional bureau will be responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of follow-up actions in the Evaluation Resource Centre.¹⁶

9. TIMEFRAME FOR THE ICPE

The timeframe and responsibilities for the evaluation process are tentatively¹⁷ as follows:

Table 3: Timeframe for the ICPE process		
Activity	Responsible party	Proposed timeframe
Phase 1: Preparatory work		
TOR – approval by the Independent Evaluation Office	LE	August 2018
Selection of other evaluation team members	LE	September 2018
Preliminary analysis of available data and context analysis	Evaluation team	Sept-October 2018
Phase 2: Data Collection		
Data collection and preliminary findings	Evaluation team	Nov/Dec 2018
- Mission to Maldives	Evaluation team	Male 10 – 14 Dec 2018 Atoll tbc 17 – 20 Dec
Phase 3: Analysis, report writing, quality review and debrief		
Analysis and Synthesis	LE	January 2019
Zero draft ICPE for clearance by IEO	LE	February 2019
First draft ICPE for CO/RB review	CO/RB	February 2019
Second draft ICPE shared with GOV	CO/GOV	March 2019
Draft management response	CO/RB	March 2019
Final debriefing with national stakeholders	CO/LE	April-May 2019
Phase 4: Production and Follow-up		
Editing and formatting	IEO	April-May 2019
Final report and Evaluation Brief	IEO	April-May 2019

¹⁵ web.undp.org/evaluation

¹⁶ erc.undp.org

¹⁷ The timeframe, indicative of process and deadlines, does not imply full-time engagement of evaluation team during the period.