

Annex 1. 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 Bahrain has been selected for an ICPE since its country programme will end in 2020. This is the first ICPE of UNDP Bahrain and will be conducted in 2019 to feed into the development of the new country programme. The ICPE will be conducted in close collaboration with the Government of Bahrain, UNDP Bahrain country office, and UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Kingdom of Bahrain is an island states located in the Arabian Gulf between the Qatar peninsula and the north eastern coasts of Saudi Arabia. It is the smallest country of the middle eastern region both in terms of population (1.49 million in 2017) and size (771 km²).² As a net oil exporter country, Bahrain is a high-income country with a GDP per Capita of \$22,600 (2017).³ It ranks among the countries with a very high human development index, ranking 43rd out of 189 countries and territories in the index.⁴ All but one goal (i.e. ensuring environmental sustainability) of the eight Millennium Development Goals were reported as achieved in 2015⁵.

Bahrain pioneered oil production in the region and was the first State from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to discover oil in the 1930s. Revenues from the oil industry enabled to modernise the economy which had relied mostly on traditional industries such as pearl diving and fishing. With the smallest oil reserves among its GCC neighbours, Bahrain engaged in early efforts to diversify its economy and reduce its reliance on the oil industry. Between the 1970-1980s, Bahrain positioned and established itself as a key regional financial center, and as a pioneer for Islamic finance in the region and globally. In 2017, Bahrain ranked second, just after Malaysia, on the ICD-Thomson Reuters Islamic Finance Development Indicator 2017⁶; with the financial sector estimated to contribute to about 17 per cent of the country’s GDP in 2017,

the second largest sector of the economy.⁷ The industrial sector has emerged as the second largest non-oil sector of the economy, accounting for about 14.5% of GDP in 2017, led by heavy industries in the area of petroleum processing and refining, aluminium smelting, iron palettization, fertilizers and ship repairing. The country has positioned itself as a commercial and investment gateway to the regions' markets, attracting foreign direct investment and a large expatriate workforce, which accounts for about half of the country's population today. Finally, the country has developed as an important regional tourism destination, receiving 11.4 million visitors in 2017, and accounting for about 5% of GDP in 2016⁸. Overall, the share of hydrocarbons in the GDP dropped from about 44% in 2000 to about 18% in 2017.

Despite these progress in diversifying the economy, the oil industry still constitutes about half of exports, and has constituted 80% of government revenues which continues to expose the country to the volatility of international prices⁹. The decline in global oil prices since 2014 has put pressure on the state's redistribution model of hydrocarbon revenues by a large public sector, and increased the countries' fiscal vulnerabilities, with a deterioration of reserves, the current account balance, and increased public debt estimated at 89% of GDP by the IMF for 2017¹⁰. In response, the country has been engaged in fiscal consolidation, by introducing higher taxation regime on tobacco and alcohol, government services fees, and the introduction of VAT in 2019; while pursuing its economic diversification agenda towards a knowledge-based economy.

In part due to its geographical situation, the Kingdom of Bahrain is exposed to periodic natural hazards such as droughts and dust storms. 92% of the country is desert and only about 2% of its lands are arable. Bahrain's freshwater sources are limited and have been affected by over utilization by agricultural and domestic sectors. The only natural source of water, the Dammam aquifer is threatened by overuse and salinization. As a result, approximately 90% of the country's potable water depends on desalination. Other environmental issues include desertification due to the degradation of the limited arable land and coastal degradation caused by activities from the oil sectors, as well as land reclamation activities which have posed serious threats to the country's rich biodiversity. The environmental sustainability of Bahrain has also been exacerbated by the rapid industrial and demographic growth recorded between 2000-2010, during which the total population of the country doubled, putting additional pressure on the country's limited natural resources.

In 2002, Bahrain transitioned from an emirate to a kingdom, establishing itself as constitutional monarchy with an elected legislative assembly. In 2008, the King launched the 2030 Economic Vision¹¹ to solidify a socio-economic pathway for the country based on three principles: competitiveness, fairness and sustainability. This overarching vision provides a blue print for the country's national development policies and strategies with the overall ambition of doubling the disposable income of Bahrainis by pursuing economic transformation and by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services and social assistance programs targeting the less privileged members of society, such as the women, the elderly, youth, and disabled people. Between 2011 and 2014, Bahrain experienced some political and social unrest following the waves of protests that spread throughout the middle eastern and North African region in 2011. Following reports of human rights violations, the king commissioned Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate such reports and established a national commission in 2012 to follow up on the recommendation of the commission with a view to reform the justice, human rights, law enforcement, security services, and media sectors and bring them in line with international practices. The concluding observations of the Human rights Committee pursuant to the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights noted that some of the key recommendations have not been implemented¹².

Officially, women in Bahrain obtained equal political, social, cultural, and economic rights within the context of Islamic Sharia law in 2002 through the constitutional amendments introduced by the National Action Charter the year before. The same year the country ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Since then, the country has taken active steps in reducing gender gaps in all dimensions, with the most notable progress achieved in terms of access to health and education. For instance, the percentage of Bahraini women having obtained high school diploma and higher increased by 11% between 2001-2010 and achieving parity in primary and secondary school enrolment during the academic year of 2012-2013. In 2012-13, there were 20% more female graduates (3,195 women graduate) from government universities and institutes than male graduates (2,087 male graduates).¹³ However, and despite significant advances, gaps remain in terms of economic and political participation of Women. The labour force participation rate for women aged 15 and above is 44% compared to 87% for men. The last parliamentary elections in November 2018 saw the number of women elected to the lower house doubling with 6 women legislators out of 40 elected (15 percent), the highest women representation in Bahrainis parliament. Despite significant advances, there remains some discriminatory laws preventing equal rights between men and women, such as the transmission of nationality to their children, equal rights to divorce, and protection against domestic violence. While in 2017 Bahrain was among top performing countries in the MENA region improving its standing by 5 places, the country ranked 126 out of 144 countries on the 2017 global gender gap index (0.632)¹⁴.

3. UNDP PROGRAMME STRATEGY IN BAHRAIN

The first cooperation agreement between the Government of Bahrain and UNDP was signed in 1978. UNDP, is among 8 other UN agencies currently present in the country with a country programme of cooperation¹⁵. Based on its high economic and human development performance, the Kingdom of Bahrain is classified as a Net Contributing Countries (NCC), the main implication being that funding for the implementation of the country programme is fully funded by the host country, and thus demand-driven.

UNDP's partnership with the government of Bahrain is formalized through its Country programme document¹⁶, and Country programme Action Plan, which are formulated within the framework of the Government national development plans and the country's "economic vision 2030". The implementation of the country program is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and overseen by a Coordination Committee comprising of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Office of the First Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs, and UNDP, responsible for strategic decisions on the country programme, and alignment with national priorities.

Over the last decade, UNDP and the government of Bahrain have formalized partnerships through 3 country programme documents for a total budget of US\$ 28.3 million. In line with priorities set by the national development plan, the last two UNDP country programmes (2008-2012 and 2012-2016) have supported policy development and institutional capacity building in the areas of economic diversification, participative governance, sustainable energy and natural resource management, government efficiency and effectiveness, inclusive and sustainable growth with a particular emphasis on women, youth, the elderly and disabled people.

Under the current country programme (2017-2020), UNDP policy development and institutional capacity building support has been pursued around two planned outcomes with the aim of supporting the

development of capacities and policies that promote (i) sustainable and inclusive economic diversification and delivery of social services through harnessing of Bahrain’s preferential trade market access, the development of policies and services that target Bahrain’s less privileged citizens, the mainstreaming of gender in policies and strategies, and the integration of environmental consideration in national policies and strategies; and (ii) the accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of Bahrainis institutions in line with international standards and practices through evidence-based policy-making, innovation, and the reengineering of government processes . According to the country programme document 2017-2020, the indicative budget for the implementation of the programme was estimated at US\$ 16.2 million. Total expenditure so far, as of December 2018, was US\$ 3.02 million.

Table 1: Country Programme outcomes and indicative resources (2017-2020)				
Country Programme Outcomes by CPD period		Outputs	Budget (US\$ million)	Expenditures (US\$ million)
2017-2020	Economic diversification and efficient social services are sustainable and leave no one behind	Capacity of key institutions developed to conduct research, coordinate and implement policies that strengthen Bahrain’s competitiveness, innovation, and harness the preferential market access benefits	12.6	1.85
		Capacity of relevant ministries developed to identify, formulate and implement policies, and deliver efficient and innovative social services that target Bahrain’s less privileged citizens		
		Capacity of institutions developed to integrate and implement gender considerations in a number of policies and strategies		
		Ministries have the capacity to integrate and implement renewable energy and energy efficiency policies, environmental standards, climate change considerations and natural resource management into national strategies and policies		
	Bahraini institutions and programmes are effective, responsive and accountable in line with international standards and practices	Capacity of public administration developed on policy making, government performance, managing change, innovation and using international practice	3.62	1.17
		Capacity of selected partners from youth organizations strengthened to support and advocate for national development		
		Selected ministries and stakeholders have the capacity to develop evidence-based plans and policies, which integrate the SDGs and national statistics, and align them to the Government Programme of Action		
		Capacity of relevant institutions that promote rule of law and accountability developed in line with international practices		
	Key institutions have improved capacity to represent Bahraini citizens			
Total			16.2	3.02

Source: Estimated budget data are from the Country Programme Document 2017-2020 of Bahrain (DP/DCP/BHR/3) Expenditures are based on UNDP Corporate Planning System, as of December 2018

4. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

In line with the IEO charter, the ICPE primarily seeks to cover the current country programme (2017-2020) during its penultimate year to feed into the elaboration of the next country programme document (2021-2024). It will assess UNDP's contributions to national development through its current country programme of cooperation, with consideration to the previous country programme (2012 – 2016). The ICPE will cover the entirety of UNDP's activities in the country and includes all interventions and activities implemented by the Country Office, as well as potential regional and global programmes, from all funding sources during the evaluation period. The ICPE will also consider UNDP's performance and contribution within the broader framework of United Nations engagement in the country and assess UNDP's role as a catalyst and convener working in partnership with other development partners, civil society, and the private sector.

5. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology will adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards.¹⁷ The ICPE will address the following three key evaluation questions¹⁸:

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?

The evaluation will take into account the specific country context of Bahrain, as a high income and net contributor country, and implications for the country program's positioning and performance. In this regard, the evaluation will seek to clarify UNDP's added value in such context from the perspective of the country's national objectives and the perspective of the organization's mandate as defined in UNDP's strategic plans 2014-2017 and 2018-2021.

The ICPE is 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. As part of this analysis, the evolution of the country programme before and during 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 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. In this process, 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 Plan¹⁹, as well as the utilization of resources to deliver results and how managerial practices impacted achievement of programmatic goals.

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 marker²⁰ and the gender results effectiveness scale (GRES). The GRES, developed as part of the corporate evaluation on UNDP's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment, 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. A rapid assessment was carried out to identify available evaluative evidence data as well as potential data collection constraints and opportunities. The assessment outlined a low level of evaluative evidence from UNDP's evaluation resource center (ERC), with only four evaluations available covering different areas of work of the country programme over the period of the last two CPDs (2008-2016). Likewise, there are 2 audit reports of UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations conducted during the last two CPDs, with the last audit conducted in 2014. The low availability of oversight reports available at this stage from UNDP's corporate function constitute a limitation for the evaluation. UNDP Results Oriented Annual Report (ROAR) and the corporate planning system associated with it also provide baselines, indicators, targets, as well as partial annual data on the status of the indicators. To the extent possible, the ICPE will seek to build on these data to better understand the intention of the UNDP programme and to measure or assess progress towards outcomes defined in the CPD. In addition, the evaluation will be able to draw from the statistics and various studies produced by Bahrain's national agencies and from official statistical data of the country regularly published office.

Data collection methods. The evaluation will use data from primary and secondary sources, including desk review of documentation, surveys and information and interviews with key stakeholders. A multi-stakeholder consultation approach will be followed, and interviewees will include government representatives responsible for the implementation, management and oversight of the country programme, project management staff, civil-society organizations, private-sector representatives, UN agencies and other multilateral organizations, and think tanks as appropriate. Specific evaluation questions and the data collection method will be further detailed and outlined in the outcome analysis. Focus groups will be used to consult some groups of stakeholders as appropriate.

The evaluation will cover all the projects of the current country programme, as well as relevant ones for the previous programme, including those that were predecessors to ongoing projects.

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.

All information and data collected from multiple sources will be triangulated to ensure the validity of findings. An 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 multiple 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 Bahrain country office, the Regional Bureau for Arab States, and the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain. 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 Bahrain: 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 debriefing, 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 Arab States: The UNDP Regional Bureau for 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 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 workshop, as appropriate, with the country office. He/She may be supported by another IEO staff member.
- **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.
- **Research Assistant (RA):** A research assistant based in the IEO will provide background research and documentation.

8. EVALUATION PROCESS

The ICPE will be conducted according to the approved IEO process²¹, and outlined in details in the IEO charter²². The following represents a summary of the five 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, comprising international and/or national development professionals. The IEO collects data first internally and then fill data gaps with help from the country office, and external resources in various ways. The evaluation questions are finalized in an evaluation matrix containing detailed questions and means of data collection and verification to guide data collection based on an overall evaluation matrix for the ICPE.

Phase 2: Desk analysis. Further in-depth data collection is conducted, which may include a pre-mission questionnaire and interviews (via phone, Skype etc.) with key stakeholders, including country office staff. Evaluation team members 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 3: Field data collection. During this phase, the evaluation team undertakes a mission to the country to engage in data collection activities. The estimated duration of the mission will be of 1 week. Data will be collected according to the approach outlined in Section 6 with responsibilities outlined in Section 7. The evaluation team will liaise with CO staff and management, key government stakeholders, other partners and beneficiaries. At the end of the mission, the evaluation team holds a debrief presentation of the key preliminary findings at the country office.

Phase 4: 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 report will be subject to peer review by IEO and the Evaluation Advisory Panel (EAP). It will then be circulated to the country office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States for factual corrections. The second draft, which takes into account any factual corrections, will be shared with national stakeholders for further comments. Any necessary additional corrections will be made and the UNDP Bahrain country office will prepare the management response to the ICPE, under the overall oversight of the regional bureau. The report will then be shared at a final debriefing 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.

Phase 5: Publication and dissemination. The ICPE report and brief summary 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 a new Country Programme Document in 2020. 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 Bahrain country office and the Government of Bahrain will disseminate the report to stakeholders in the country. The report and the management response will be published on the UNDP website²³ 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.²⁴

9. TIMEFRAME FOR THE ICPE PROCESS

The timeframe and responsibilities for the evaluation process are tentatively²⁵ as follows:

Table 3: Timeframe for the ICPE process going to the Board in 2020

Activity	Responsible party	Proposed timeframe
Phase 1: Preparatory work		
TOR – approval by the Independent Evaluation Office	LE	December 2018
Phase 2: Desk analysis		
Preliminary analysis of available data and context analysis	Evaluation team	December 2018
Phase 3: Data Collection		
Data collection and preliminary findings	Evaluation team	10-17 February 2019
Phase 4: Analysis, report writing, quality review and debrief		
Analysis and Synthesis	LE	March-April 2019
Zero draft ICPE for clearance by IEO and EAP	LE	May 2019
First draft ICPE for CO/RB review	CO/RB	June 2019
Second draft ICPE shared with GOV	CO/GOV	July 2019
Draft management response	CO/RB	August 2019
Final debriefing with national stakeholders	CO/LE	September 2019
Phase 5: Production and Follow-up		
Editing and formatting	IEO	September-October 2019
Final report and Evaluation Brief	IEO	October 2019
Dissemination of the final report	IEO/CO	October 2019