

TERMS OF REFERENCE												
Position title:	Consultant for the Project Final Evaluation											
Position type:	Local Consultant, IC											
Office/Project:	UNDP project: "Promotion of employment and self-employment of the population in small and medium-sized towns in the Republic of Belarus" No. 00096107											
Conditions of work:	Home-based, Republic of Belarus, work in Minsk (UNDP Country Office and the Project office) with in-country field visits											
Duration of contract:	March 03, 2020 – May 15, 2020 (approximately 40 working days)											
Requirement for travel:	<p>Minsk, Belarus. 2 one-day field trips to each of the following cities: Vitebsk, Mogilev, Baran' and Glubokoe, Vitebsk region, Chausy, Gorki, Krichev and Mstislavl, Mogilev region.</p> <p>All travel expenses must be included in the financial proposal.</p> <p>In the event of unforeseeable travel, payments to cover travel expenses may be reimbursed to the individual contractor upon submission of a travel claim (F-10 form) and all necessary supporting documents.</p>											
Conditions of payment:	<p>The total payment for the assignment will be a lump sum fee paid in 2 installments as specified in the table below:</p> <table><tr><th>Installment No.</th><th>Deliverable No. (see Section 8 below) and timeframe</th><th>% of total contract amount</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1 (approximately 5 days)</td><td>40</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2 -5 (approximately 25 days)</td><td>60</td></tr></table> <p>Each of the installments shall be paid within 10 days after completion and approval of the reports as required in Section 8 - "Deliverables" below and in accordance with the table above. All travel expenses shall be included in the financial proposal.</p>			Installment No.	Deliverable No. (see Section 8 below) and timeframe	% of total contract amount	1	1 (approximately 5 days)	40	2	2 -5 (approximately 25 days)	60
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1	1 (approximately 5 days)	40										
2	2 -5 (approximately 25 days)	60										
Qualifications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University degree in the area of humanities, social or natural sciences.• Practical experience (within last three years) in mid-term or final performance evaluation of at least three international and/or regional projects.• Experience in performance evaluation of such projects in CEE or/and FSU countries confirmed by working experience.• Solid knowledge about best practices and international policies, project cycle, monitoring and evaluation applicable to entrepreneurship support and regional development demonstrated by at least 3 relevant publications and/or evidences in professional experience records (e.g., certifications, awards, inventions, membership of professional associations and ad-hoc											

	panels, lecturing, training, participation in exhibitions and professional events, presentations, etc.)
Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous experience of Evaluation of UNDP (or other UN agencies) projects • Proficiency in written and spoken English and Russian, confirmed by relevant diploma, certificates, studies/working abroad, etc.
Direct supervisor:	Throughout the assignment the Consultant will work in close collaboration with the UNDP Country Office in Minsk. S/he will report on his/her work to: Mr. Kiryl Stsezhkin <kiryl.stsezhkin@undp.org>, Programme Analyst, UNDP Country Office in Minsk, Ms. Marina Kalinouskaya <marina.kalinouskaya@undp.org>, UNDP Project Manager.

1. General background information on the context of the assignment

1.1. Project background information

Belarus is a country of small towns which account for over 80% of all settlements. Approximately one fifth of the population lives in these towns, which are the link between rural settlements, large cities and agglomerations.

Main development challenges of small and medium-sized towns are as follows: low living standards and lack of decent jobs due to low competitiveness of the local economy and high proportion of loss-making enterprises; increasing need to upgrade and reconstruct social and engineering infrastructure paired with the local budget deficit; challenged demographic situation, outflow of young and working age population to capital cities; disparity in male/female employment.

Low level of unemployment registered in the country (1% as of late 2015) cannot fully reflect the employment situation in the oblasts of the country, including small and medium-sized towns. In some regions, unemployment is much higher than the national average. Many signs of hidden unemployment, like low wages, shortened working week, or requests to take voluntary unpaid leaves are quite common in many enterprises in regional Belarus.

The industrial landscape of small and medium-sized towns, inherited from the Soviet period, has remained practically unchanged. The economy of the oblasts is based on a narrow group of town-forming enterprises (mainly state-owned enterprises (SOE)), which account for over 50% of the gross regional product (GRP). Over 40 towns are considered to be mono-industrial and their town-forming enterprises play the core role in the labor market and, thus, provide jobs for the vast majority of citizens (up to 70% of the economically active population in some towns), generate the town budget, and they often support social, housing and utilities infrastructure. A significant portion of the town-forming enterprises are low-return or loss-making, and they have an excessive number of employees.

The present slow-down in the economic growth in Belarus has promulgated the Government's position to adopt a range of structural reforms in the country, which will potentially lead to the increased exposure of the socially vulnerable population groups, including residents of small and medium-sized towns. Modernization of industrial enterprises and structural changes in the economy objectively require improvement of the enterprises' competitiveness, including through the labor force optimization. This stimulates the enterprises located in mono-industrial towns to lay off a significant number of personnel. Mass scale redundancies in small and medium-sized towns and transformation of hidden unemployment into its open form can cause significant economic and social consequences. In this situation, the population of small towns belongs to the category that has the highest risk of growing unemployment and social tension.

The development challenge aligned with the current structural transformation of Belarusian economy is twofold. On the one hand, enterprises have to be competitive and they shall contribute to improving the national wealth and the well-being of the population through added value, taxes, employment opportunities, inflow of foreign investments, etc. On the other hand, there is a need to minimize social costs that inevitably accompany dramatic changes in the structure of the economy, which affect not only the employees and employers, but virtually everyone who has anything to do with the enterprise.

Small business sector, which has the capabilities to create efficient jobs and to absorb the excessive number of employees of town-forming enterprises, is still underdeveloped in regional Belarus. The largest share of the products and service produced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) is consumed by the capital city and regional centers. Around one third of small companies and individual entrepreneurs in the country work in small-scale retailing, food services and automotive repair sector. Small businesses are hardly involved in manufacturing.

1.2. Project overview

Project/outcome information		
Project/outcome	Promotion of employment and self-employment of the population in small and medium-sized towns in the Republic of Belarus/	
Atlas ID	00096107	
Corporate outcome and output	<p>UNDAF Outcome: Outcome 2.1: By 2020, the economy's competitiveness will have been improved through structural reforms, accelerated development of the private sector and integration in the world economy.</p> <p>CPD Outputs: Output 2.1: National and subnational systems and institutions are able to achieve structural transformation of productive capacities that are sustainable and geared towards enhancement of employment and livelihoods. Output 2.2: Inclusive and sustainable socio-economic policies developed and implemented in selected sectors.</p>	
Country	Republic of Belarus	
Region	RBEC	
Date project document signed	11.07.2016	
Project dates	Start	Planned end
	08.02.2017	30.04.2020
Project budget	1,199,800 USD	
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	1,109,808.43 USD (as of 27.01.2020)	
Funding source	Trustfund Russia UNDP, Visa	
Implementing party	Ministry of Economy	

The project is aimed at promoting effective employment and self-employment of the population in small and medium-sized towns of Belarus through stimulating entrepreneurial initiative in the sphere of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as through the development of various forms of production cooperation and external economic integration within the framework of the EAEU.

Small business, which has the potential to create efficient jobs and absorb the excessive number of employees of town-forming enterprises, is not sufficiently developed in the regions. The larger part of manufacturing of products (works, services) in small business entities falls on the capital and regional cities. In addition, a limited number of small businesses are able to integrate into the value chains at the national and international levels.

To achieve the project goals, the following components are implemented:

1. information and training activities on entrepreneurship and the development of production cooperation to promote the development of small businesses in small and medium-sized towns in the Vitebsk and Mogilev regions;
2. a full cycle of development and implementation of plans for incubation and development of small enterprises carried out in six pilot towns in Vitebsk and Mogilev regions;
3. the National Subcontracting Center (NSC) established on the basis of the Belarusian Fund for the Financial Support to Entrepreneurs to facilitate partnerships between small and large businesses as well as cross-border cooperation with the countries of Eurasian Economic Union. This is implemented through organization of business matching sessions for small and large businesses and other activities.

In 2018 the project contributed to the accelerated development of the private sector in small and medium towns of Vitebsk and Mogilev regions due to the following key achievements:

- enhanced business support infrastructure: 4 new centers for entrepreneurship support in Gorki, Mstislavl, Glubokoe and Baran have been established and 2 centers for entrepreneurship support in Krichev and Chausy have expanded their services and premises;
- versatile and accessible business trainings for entrepreneurs: more than 1000 people participated in 30 project events, at least 8 new businesses and 27 new business projects launched.

In 2019 the project focused on providing support for the effective functioning of the 6 pilot business incubators: renovation and procurement have been provided at the request of the business incubators in Gorki, Mstislavl, Baran, Chausy, Krichev. More than 800 free consultations, 130 business trainings and 3 contests of business ideas were held in the six pilot business incubators in Glubokoe, Gorki, Mstislavl, Baran, Chausy, Krichev.

At least 18 individual entrepreneurs and 11 business organizations were registered, 29 self-employed (artisans, private farmers) began work and 5 new jobs were created due to the direct support provided in 2019 by the pilot business incubators.

During 2017-2019 the project has prepared and published 3 handbooks on business basics, franchising and regional clusters. More than 2400 people participated in 100 trainings organized by the project and pilot business incubators with the project support, 1100 free consultations were provided to entrepreneurs or those who want to start a business in the pilot towns.

The project has contributed to the development of business partnerships between Belarusian and Russian businesses – by holding business matching sessions for entrepreneurs from the pilot towns, organizing study tour to Krasnoyarsk, Russia for project partners and organizing visits for

81 Belarusian SMEs to business exhibitions in Moscow. All this resulted in 35 cooperation agreements after business matching sessions in 2017-2019 and at least 14 contracts concluded after the business exhibitions in 2019.

2. Objectives of the assignment

This Final Evaluation is initiated by UNDP Country Office in Belarus in order to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

Respective activity is included in the Project Evaluation Plan, Evaluation Title - Final project evaluation.

Target audience: key project stakeholders, including UNDP Belarus, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus, Vitebsk and Mogilev Regional Executive Committees, representatives of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus and Belarusian Fund for Financial Support to Entrepreneurs, other beneficiaries and project partners, such as business incubator managers, etc. and other relevant users of the report.

3. Scope of work

The evaluation shall cover the following project aspects:

Project Concept and Design: The Consultant will review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy, encompassing an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The executing modality and managerial arrangements should also be judged. The Consultant will assess the achievement of indicators and review the work plan of the project.

Project Implementation: The evaluation will assess the implementation of the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. In particular, the evaluation is to assess the Project team's use of adaptive management in project implementation.

Project outputs, outcomes and impact: The evaluation will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. This should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the immediate objectives and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The evaluation should also assess the extent to which the implementation of the project had been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it had been able to create collaboration between different partners. The evaluation will also examine if the project had significant unexpected effects, either of beneficial or detrimental character.

Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability
- Human rights
- Gender equality

The evaluation shall judge the following project implementation features. Specific evaluation questions will be formulated based on the features mentioned below as part of inception report.

Relevance:

- To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?

- To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome?
- To what extent were perspectives of those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during the project design processes?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?

Effectiveness

Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after (so far) the project intervention, e.g. by comparing current conditions for promoting effective employment and self-employment of the population in small and medium-sized towns of Belarus (legal and regulatory frameworks, etc.) to the baseline ones.

- To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan and national development priorities?
- To what extent were the project outputs achieved?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended country programme outputs and outcomes?
- To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?
- What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
- What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives?
- Are the project's objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame?
- To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
- To what extent are project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities?
- How and why outcomes (listed as outputs in the project document) and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results?
- Has the project been effectively undertaking adaptive management in order to respond to changing conditions?

Efficiency

- To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
- To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
- To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?

Sustainability

The sustainability assessment will give special attention to analysis of the risks that are likely to affect the persistence of project outcomes. In particular, the evaluation should focus on the sustainability of efforts to address promotion of effective employment and self-employment of

the population in small and medium-sized towns at the oblast level and whether or not resources will continue to be available for such investments after the end of the project. The sustainability assessment should also explain how other important contextual factors that are not outcomes of the project will affect sustainability.

- Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs?
- To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?
- What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
- To what extent do stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives?
- To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
- To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies?
- What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?

Human rights

- To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of the project?

Gender equality

- To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
- Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?

4. Rating

The range of aspects described above should be provided with the assessment based on rating of achievements. The applicable rating criteria are as follows:

HS: Highly Satisfactory: no shortcomings

S: Satisfactory: minor shortcomings

MS: Moderately Satisfactory: moderate shortcomings

MU: Moderately Unsatisfactory: significant shortcomings

U: Unsatisfactory: major problems

HU: Highly Unsatisfactory: severe problems

Ratings for sustainability assessment are as follows:

LS: Likely sustainable: negligible risks to sustainability

MLS: Moderately Likely sustainable: moderate risks

MUS: Moderately Unlikely sustainable: significant risks

US: Unlikely sustainable: severe risks.

Additional ratings may be also relevant:

N/A: Not Applicable

U/A: Unable to Assess

All ratings given should be properly substantiated.

5. Methodology for evaluation approach

The Consultant should seek guidance for his/her work in the following materials:

- [UNDP Evaluation Policy](#);
- [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](#)
- [UNDP Programme and Project management regulations](#)

It is recommended that the evaluation methodology include the following:

- (DR) Documentation review (desk study), to include Project Document, Donor Reports, Minutes of the Steering Committee meeting (for more details see **Annex 1**). The required documents will be provided by the Project Manager;
- (KII) Interviews with PIU and key project stakeholders, including UNDP Belarus, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Belarus, Vitebsk and Mogilev Regional Executive Committees, representatives of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus and Belarusian Fund for Financial Support to Entrepreneurs, other beneficiaries and project partners, such as business incubator managers, etc. Interviews should be taken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals;
- (DO) Direct observation during in-country visits of project pilot sites (Minsk and at least 2 of the following: Baran', Chausy, Gorki, Glubokoe, Krichev and Mstislavl).

The Consultant may suggest additional methodological approaches.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be easily understood by project partners. The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the evaluators.

6. Evaluation report

AS first deliverable of the Evaluation, the Consultant submitting inception report with the following tentative structure:

1. Title and opening pages with details of the project and of the evaluation team.
2. Project and evaluation Information details: project title, Atlas number, budgets and project dates and other key information.
3. Table of contents.
4. List of acronyms and abbreviations.
5. Introduction and overview.
6. Brief description of the intervention being evaluated.
7. Evaluation scope and objectives.
8. Evaluation approach and methods (included: updated scheduler, time-frame, sampling methodology, draft of evaluation instruments (KII), evaluation questions updated).
- 9 Annexes (including evaluation matrix and ToR)

Instruments, methodology and schedule, presented as part of Inception report and approved by UNDP will be used for data collection and final report development.

The core product of the Final Evaluation will be the Final Evaluation Report that will include:

1. Title and opening pages with details of the project and of the evaluation team.
2. Project and evaluation Information details: project title, Atlas number, budgets and project dates and other key information.
3. Table of contents.
4. List of acronyms and abbreviations.
5. Executive summary.
6. Introduction and overview.
7. Brief description of the intervention being evaluated.
8. Evaluation scope and objectives.
9. Evaluation approach and methods.
10. Data analysis.
11. Findings and conclusions.
12. Recommendations.
13. Lessons learned.
14. Annexes.

The draft and final report will be written in the format aligned with the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines and should include evaluation matrix (Annex 2). The expected length of the report is around 30 pages in total, not including annexes. The first draft of the report and a final report are expected to be submitted to the UNDP Belarus within deadlines stipulated in Section 8 below. The first draft shall include the results of the mission and subsequently circulated to the key project stakeholders for comments. Any discrepancies between the interpretations and findings of the Consultant and the key project stakeholders shall be explained in an annex to the final report.

The reports shall be submitted both electronically and in printed version, in Russian language. Draft versions of the reports, submitted for UNDP review may include parts/sections in English version (sections based on ToR, ProDoc and other official project documents available in English only). The consultant shall review the English translation (will be paid additionally by the project).

7. Duties and responsibilities

The Consultant performs duties and responsibilities according to p.3-6 of this TOR.

The Consultant shall work in close coordination with PIU members who are to assist him/her in collecting necessary information requested by the Consultant and in communicating with all stakeholders. The Consultant must not have restrictions for off-hour work and should not have participated in preparation and/or implementation of this very project and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

8. Deliverables

Reports are to be submitted to the PIU for review before the deadlines specified below. PIU will distribute the report for comments between the stakeholders and will collect the feedback and provide the consultant with this feedback and comments. Approval of these reports by the UNDP Country Office will govern payment under the contract for this assignment.

Prior to approval of the final report, a draft version shall be circulated for comments to the PIU, UNDP CO and stakeholders. The PIU, UNDP CO and the stakeholders will submit comments and suggestions within 10 working days after receiving the draft. All comments and suggestions (if any) shall be addressed and the report will be considered as the final deliverable as soon it is accepted by UNDP CO.

The final version of the evaluation report should be submitted in electronic format (MS Word) to UNDP CO (kiryl.stsezhkin@undp.org), PIU (marina.kalinouskaya@undp.org) no later than **April 27, 2020**.

<i>No</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>	<i>Report type and size</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
1	Inception report, proposed evaluation methodology, schedule of the evaluation compiled, and desk review completed,	Report of 20 pgs.	March 16, 2020
2	Work conducted, including briefings by PIU and UNDP CO, in-country field visits, all necessary interviews, data collection, and de-briefings for UNDP CO	Presentation for de-briefing for UNDP CO	April 15, 2020
3	Drafting of the evaluation report completed, and the draft sent for comments to the project manager	Report of 30 pgs.	April 16, 2020
4	Circulation and other types of feedback mechanisms for reviewing and commenting on the draft completed, and comments received	Report review in track-changes/review mode	Apr 21, 2020
5	Finalization of the evaluation report (incorporating comments received on the draft report) and provision of the report to the project manager	Final Report of 30 pgs.	Apr 27, 2020, not later than 4 days from the date of UNDP feedback submission to the Consultant.

9. Evaluator ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG '[Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations](#)'. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

Supervisor

Supervisee

ANNEX 1. LIST OF DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED BY THE EVALUATORS

General documentation

- UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
- UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results
- UNDP Evaluation Guidelines
- UNDP Evaluation Policy
- A Practitioner's Guide to Area-Based Development Programming
- UNDP Strategic Plan
- CPD

Project documentation

- UNDP approved project document
- Annual work plans
- Donor Reports 1, 2 and 3
- Project Steering Committee minutes
- Risk log

ANNEX 2 SAMPLE EVALUATION MATRIX

Relevant evaluation criteria				
Key questions	Specific sub questions	Indicators / success standard	Methods for data analysis	Data collection methods/tools and sources