# Annex A: Terms of Reference

**Project Mid-Term Evaluation**

**Terms of Reference**

1. **Background and Context**

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| **PROJECT INFORMATION** | | |
| **Project Title** | Fostering Regional and Local Development in Georgia Phase 2 | |
| **Atlas ID** | 00095157 (00099175) | |
| **Corporate Outcome and Output** | UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Outcome: Advance poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions/ Output 1.2.1 Capacities at national and sub-national levels strengthened to promote inclusive local economic development and deliver basic services including HIV and related services | |
| **Country** | Georgia | |
| **Region** | Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) | |
| **Project Dates** | **Start** | **Planned end** |
| 15 December 2017 | 30 November 2021 |
| **Project Budget** | USD 5,486,145 | |
| **Funding Source** | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)  Austrian Development Agency  Government of Georgia | |
| **Implementing Party** | The Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia | |

Georgia has made significant progress in terms of political, economic and social development since independence, but important challenges remain, including poverty, unemployment, inequality and social exclusion. Establishing robust local self-governance (LSG) institutions is seen as key to finding solutions to these challenges and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Local governance needs to be accountable to the people it serves; transparent and efficient in its use of resources; and participatory in the approach taken to addressing local needs and ensuring that “no one is left behind.”

To help Georgia translate this vision of local governance into reality, UNDP with the financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) launched the Fostering Regional and Local Development in Georgia (RLD) project in 2012. This project focused on establishing an appropriate policy framework for local self-governance and decentralization, energizing regional and local processes for bottom-up strategic development planning and strengthening the professional capacities of local officials to better fulfil their duties.

Despite the volatile policy context, the project recorded tangible achievements and built a solid foundation for a more advanced and targeted intervention. Phase 2 of Fostering Regional and Local Development in Georgia (FRLD 2) project, which was designed and launched by UNDP in 2017 with continued support from the Austrian and Swiss Governments, drew on the lessons learned from the previous phase as well as the knowledge and experience of partner agencies and other projects.

The overarching goal of FRLD 2 is to build strong LSG institutions with greater competencies and capacities to act as catalysts for stimulating regional/local economies, engage citizens in local policy-making and design and implement people-centred initiatives benefiting women and men including youth, ethnic minorities, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and other population groups. The project operates in four regions of Georgia (Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Guria, and Kvemo Kartli), with a total population of 900,186, including 462,340 women, 176,187 youth (15-29 years), 210,610 ethnic minorities, 85,156 residents of mountain areas, and 60,090 IDPs. The implementation timeline is 15 December 2017-30 November 2021 and the budget is USD 5,486,145.

FRLD 2 focuses on Local Economic Development (LED), taking a participatory, bottom-up approach which emphasizes the catalytic role of the public sector and ultimately aims at creating sustainable economic development. Project activities are planned to support LED in complementary and mutually reinforcing ways that contribute to the three project outcomes: (1) National institutions define and implement policy and institutional frameworks to foster decentralization and enable LED; (2) Municipalities and Community Centres are strengthened to deliver relevant services and incentives for the business environment and local economic actors; and (3) Civil society organizations and local businesses are empowered to participate in inclusive LED planning and decision-making.

The project seeks to engage the full range of stakeholders: central government, municipalities, local business, civil society organizations (CSOs) and local communities and foster regional and local development through joint efforts. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, social inclusion and equity, environmental sustainability and climate change are mainstreamed throughout the project activities as important pillars of LED. In the end, the programme is set to contribute to attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including: (1) no poverty, (5) gender equality, (8) decent work and economic growth, (10) reduced inequality, (11) sustainable cities and communities, (12) responsible production and consumption and (16) peace, justice and strong institutions.

The project intervention is in line with the objectives of the fundamental decentralization reform officially declared by the Parliament and the Government of Georgia (GoG) in 2018. During 2018-2019, the project implementation has been affected by the country policy context, as the ongoing LSG reform has taken longer and required more complex preparations than originally envisaged.

1. **Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Objectives**

The Evaluation Plan contained in the Project Document agreed among UNDP, the project donors, and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI) as the key implementing partner stipulates that an independent external mid-term evaluation is to be completed by December 2019. The evaluation will review and assess the project implementation to date, with a focus on the key achievements and challenges, taking full account of the political context. Where relevant, it will also recommend how implementation strategies might be adjusted to better achieve the project goals.

Specific objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

* Assess the project implementation and results against the contractual Logframe (vis-à-vis the indicator targets) and budget as of October 2019, taking full account of the implementation context;
* Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project implementation.

Among other areas, the evaluation shall review:

* performance of the project management team and factors affecting the project implementation in light of the existing political context, exploring the extent to which the current management arrangements support the project objectives;
* the quality and effectiveness of project coordination with the GoG and the FRLD2 donors, as well as with other ongoing relevant projects and programs, including UNDP’s Danish Government-funded Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level (DGG) project; and
* knowledge management, encompassing project-related knowledge generation (notably LED-related), its use for policy work and implementation, and its dissemination within the project, within UNDP and other relevant UN Agencies, development partners, other donors and the broader public.
* Based on the evaluation results, provide actionable recommendations, both operational and strategic, on how to reinforce the current achievements and address potential challenges in view of the existing political context, within the overall logic and strategic orientation of the program.

1. **Evaluation Criteria and Key Guiding Questions**

The evaluation shall focus on criteria established by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC):

* **Relevance** - to what extent the project has been responding and continues to respond to the national context
* **Timeliness** - to what degree the activities were carried out in a responsive and timely manner
* **Effectiveness** - to what extent the project is on track to achieving the project outputs and outcomes
* **Efficiency** - how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) were converted to results
* **Sustainability** - national ownership and the prospects for further sustaining and expanding the project outcomes

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| **Key Evaluation Questions**  **Relevance**   * To what extent was the project in line with the SDGs, national development priorities and policy, the UNDP country programme’s outputs and outcomes and the UNDP Strategic Plan? * To what extent has the project responded appropriately to political, legal, institutional, and other important changes in the country?   **Effectiveness**   * To what extent were the project outputs achieved? * 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 objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe? * 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? * To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality and the empowerment of women?   **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? * To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective? * To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner? * To what extent do the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?   **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 likelihood that the level of stakeholders’ ownership will be sufficient to ensure that the project benefits will be sustained? * To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality and empowerment of women? * 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?   **Cross-Cutting Issues:**  **Gender Equality**   * To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? * To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?   **Human Rights and Social Inclusion**   * To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the project activities, especially LED initiatives? * To what extent has the project taken account of social inclusion/equality, e.g. participation of marginalized/vulnerable groups in decision-making processes? |

The evaluation questions shall be further refined by the consultant in agreement with UNDP and the key evaluation stakeholders.

1. **Methodology**

The evaluation will be undertaken in close cooperation with UNDP. The final evaluation methodology and methods for data collection, as well as a detailed and time-bound plan of consultancy shall be developed by the evaluator to ensure that the evaluation purpose and objectives are met, and the evaluation questions answered, given the limitations of budget, time and data.

The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach. 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 agreed with UNDP and the donors.

The methodological approach shall entail a combination of the following methods and instruments:

* **Document review of all relevant documentation** (the list of the key project documents to be reviewed is provided in the ToR Annexes)
* **Semi-structured interviews** with key stakeholders including the key Government counterparts (central and local), donor community members, and representatives of key CSOs. All interviews should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals.
* **Field visits** and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions.
* **Other methods** as appropriate to meet the evaluation objectives and answer the evaluation questions
* **Data review and analysis** of monitoring and other data sources and methods. To ensure maximum validity and reliability of data (quality), the evaluation will ensure triangulation of the various data sources.

1. **Evaluation Products (deliverables)**

* **Inception** **Report** (10-15 pages). The inception report should be developed following and based on the preliminary discussions with UNDP after the desk review and should be produced prior to any formal evaluation interviews and field/country visit. The inception report shall include a detailed methodology for data collection, showing how each evaluation question will be answered, proposing the methods to be applied with respective data sources and data collection procedures, defining a detailed work plan and a timeline. The draft inception report shall be discussed with UNDP and FRLD 2 donors and finalized based on their feedback (see suggested outline in Section 4 of UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2019), <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-4.shtml>).

**Evaluation Matrix** (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report). The evaluation matrix serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with key stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

**Table 1. Sample Evaluation Matrix**

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| **Relevant evaluation criteria** | **Key questions** | **Specific sub questions** | **Data sources** | **Data-collection methods/tools** | **Indicators/ success standard** | **Methods for data analysis** |
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* **Evaluation debriefings.** Immediately following the evaluation, the evaluator shall organize a preliminary debriefing on the main findings. As a minimum, the consultant will have inception meeting with the project team and debriefing meeting with the UNDP Resident Representative (RR) in Georgia, Deputy Resident Representative (DRR), Democratic Governance (DG) Team Leader, FRLD 2 Project Manager, SCO, ADA and MRDI leadership.
* **Draft Evaluation Report** (40 to 60 pages including the executive summary). The draft evaluation report shall incorporate a detailed description of the methodology and methods applied during the planning phase, field work, data collection and analysis; challenges faced in the process of conducting the assignment and recommendations for improved planning of relevant missions in the future; preliminary findings focusing on the major achievements, emerging/potential issues and recommendations per project outcome, as well as budget expenditures, management and staffing; summary conclusions for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the intervention; lessons learned and recommendations on how to address the potential challenges due to the political context, within the overall logic and strategic orientation of the program, including proposed changes to the project Annual Work Plan (AWP) and Logframe, if required. The draft evaluation report will be discussed and finalized in agreement with UNDP, project donors, and other relevant stakeholders (see suggested format in Section 4, Annex 3 of UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2019), <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-4.shtml>).

**Evaluation Report audit trail.** Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained to show how they have been addressed.

* **Final Evaluation Report.** The final report shall be developed based on the feedback received from UNDP and the project donors on the draft report. The final report shall fully address the evaluation objectives set forth in the ToR, providing clear and concise answers to the evaluation questions. Summary of the evaluation findings (in PowerPoint presentation format) will also be submitted along with the final report.

The project materials and other relevant information will be made available by UNDP to the consultant upon signing the contract agreement as well as upon request. UNDP reserves the right to request additional information under each deliverable in relation to the evaluation objectives.

1. **Evaluation Team Composition and Required Competencies**

The evaluation will be conducted by an individual international consultant. The specific skills, competencies and characteristics required of the evaluator are as follows:

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| **Education** | * Advanced University degree or equivalent in Public policy, Public Administration, Governance, Development or a related discipline **(minimum requirement)**, preferably with a concentration on local governance, local and regional development and decentralization **(asset)** |
| **Experience** | * Minimum 5 years of professional experience in managing and/or evaluating large-scale, multidimensional projects, preferably in an international organization setting **(minimum requirement)** * Minimum 8 years of experience of working on the issues of local governance, democracy, local and regional development, decentralization or related **(minimum requirement)** * Experience of working with public sector at central and/or local levels or donor organizations **(minimum requirement)** * Familiarity with the development context of Georgia. Previous working experience in the country and good understanding of current development dynamics in decentralization and regional development of Georgia are assets **(asset)** |
| **Technical competencies** | * Strong research and analytical skills **(minimum requirement)** * Excellent verbal and written communication skills **(minimum requirement)** |
| **Language skills** | * Fluency in spoken and written English **(minimum requirement)** |

1. **Evaluation Ethics**

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’, UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2019) and other key relevant guidance documents (see annexes). 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, unless with the express authorization of UNDP and its partners.

1. **Implementation Arrangements**

The evaluator will work under the guidance and direct supervision of FRLD 2 Project Manager and overall guidance of UNDP Georgia DG Team Leader and UNDP M&E Specialist.

UNDP Georgia will provide the Evaluator with a list of key stakeholders and a draft schedule of the meetings and facilitate communication of the consultant with SCO, ADA, MRDI and other stakeholders. UNDP Georgia will be responsible for liaising with partners and supporting the consultant in acquiring relevant documentation, data and evidence. UNDP will also support the consultant logistically (transport, hotel reservations, organization of workshops, arrangement of meetings, etc.).

It is required that evaluators are independent from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising on any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation. For this reason, UNDP staff members and representatives of the project donors will not be part of the evaluation team and will not attend any of the interviews arranged as part of the assignment.

1. **Time Frame for the Evaluation Process**

The tentative timeframe for the Consultancy is 20 working days during the period of January – March 2020 including a 10-day mission to Tbilisi and four project target regions (estimated 6 days in the regions).

Expected deliverables/outputs with respective timeframe is captured in the proposed schedule below. A detailed timeframe with specific dates corresponding to the timing indicated in the table below will be developed by the evaluator upon signing the contract agreement.