

**Terms of Reference**

**Mid Term Evaluation of UNDP Regional Programme for Supporting the Upscaling of the YouthConnekt model in Africa**

1. **Background and Context**

The UNDP Regional programme for supporting the upscaling of the YouthConnekt model in Africa is a 4-year multi-country and regional initiative. The project is anchored in UNDP’s Regional Programme that contributes towards the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Advancing poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions;

Output 1.1.2: Marginalised groups, particularly the poor, women, people with disabilities and displaced are empowered to gain universal access to basic services and financial and non-financial assts to build productive capacities and benefits from sustainable livelihoods and jobs

Outcome 2: Regional growth is inclusive, sustainable, with reduced economic inequalities, and characterized by structural transformation

Output 2.4: The AUC, the African Volunteer Corps, and YouthConnekt Africa initiative have enhanced operational and technical capacities to increase youth participation in political and economic development initiatives

Due to the complexity and diversity of the African youth context, UNDP Africa has recognized the need for collaborative, adaptive and innovative approaches, particularly in mutually reinforcing ways, at the continental, regional and country levels and with the support of a host different partners committed to the development of young people. Thus, the UNDP Africa strategy for youth empowerment and employment has been informed by the current and prospective contextual analysis of opportunities but also issues and challenges the continent is facing regarding the youth bulge and efforts to reap the demographic dividend. UNDP Africa has endeavored to adopt and scale up the YouthConnekt initiative as one of its strategies for youth empowerment.

YouthConnekt is a multi-dimensional programme that fills the gap between youth and opportunities by building a patriotic and empowering environment. The programme serves to connect young people to economic opportunities, productive resources, peers and role models, and avenues through which youth can participate in leadership and decision-making processes.

The programme facilitates inclusive growth and social cohesion in Africa by ensuring greater access to capital and markets, skills development, sustained investment in training, apprenticeship and education (in particular STEM and more dynamic TVET schemes) for industrialization of Africa. YouthConnekt coordinates and nurtures collaboration between existing youth empowerment initiatives, hubs, stakeholders and partners, with the aim of building strategic alliances that create the conditions for shared innovative solutions to youth empowerment to emerge.

The total financial resources required for full implementation of the initiative is USD 57 million. UNDP to date has contributed about USD 6.5 million with other partners financially supporting select activities. However, the project registers a significant funding gap to be sourced. YouthConnekt is effectively coordinated by the UNDP Regional Service Center and the newly established YouthConnekt Africa Hub, situated in Rwanda, with the aim of providing technical support towards continuous effective implementation across the continent. National level coordination is done through the respective government and its ministry of youth affairs with strong support from the UNDP Country Office.

Despite some delays in implementation, the project has recorded some remarkable results. For instance, YouthConnekt is currently implemented in 18 African countries with more working towards the same. The programme continues to receive global and continental recognition and has convened high level policy influencers, political leaders, private and development sector institutions, and many other stakeholders through the annual YouthConnekt Africa Summit. Within the context of the UNDP Regional YouthConnekt programme, UNDP signed an MOU with the Tony Elumelu Foundation, Africa’s largest philanthropic entrepreneurship organization, in 2017 to cooperate on promoting entrepreneurship development in Africa with focus on startups and existing SMEs.

**Project Objectives**

The project is informed by specific objectives include the following:

1. To support stakeholders at national and regional levels to strengthen a conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation. This primarily focuses on supporting policy formulation and implementation, as well as linking existing programmes and partnerships to ensure positive and widespread impact. UNDP recognizes that the multidimensional nature of youth in Africa and the challenges they face can not be addressed through a single intervention and should not lead to disjointed policies and fragmentation in programming. Under this objective, it seeks to provide assistance to stakeholders in conducting a systematic analysis of the full spectrum of policies, laws, labour markets, programmes and projects to asses their gaps, level of impact and strategic focus areas for future interventions.
2. To enhance youth social and economic participation and leadership in Africa by ensuring youth inclusion in decision making processes and civic responsibility.The project creates a dedicated space for youth to discuss issues with high level government officials and assess progress made in implementation of programmes of concern to them. Furthermore, the project ensure youth inclusion in national initiatives such as environmental conservation and management, infrastructure, sports and culture, gender sensitivity, peace and reconciliation, etc.
3. To develop African youth businesses, managerial skills and entrepreneurship in order to improve youth competitiveness and job creation. Youth are herein empowered with critical skills to begin showcasing the transformation that the project seeks to catalyse. UNDP has hereby collaborated with partners such as the Tony Elumelu Foundation to support entrepreneurship skills development.
4. To increase the number of youth that are gainfully employed. The project serves to promote youth access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, financing, and improve youth productivity and socio-economic contribution. The programme further works with national and regional stakeholders to improve youth access to new and innovative opportunities.

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

The main purpose of this mid-term evaluation is to provide the project partners i.e. UNDP and the YouthConnekt Africa Hub with an independent review of the status, relevance and performance of the project as compared to the project document, identify and assess the basic results as to their impact and sustainability. The consultant is expected to identify key lessons learnt through measurements of the changes in the set indicators, summarize the experiences gained, technically and managerially, and recommend approaches and methodologies to correct any gaps in project implementation. With consideration to perceived constraints in the implementation of the programme, it is relevant to evaluate the direction of the project, the way forward and the lessons learned in the period of 2018 to 2020. In addition, the evaluation would shed light on the possible impact of COVID 19 on the project and recommend ways and means to accelerate implementation of the remaining part of the phase and determine a possible second phase.

The evaluation will focus on project implementation during the period June 2018 – June 2020 focusing on how the results detailed in the RRF have been achieved or otherwise.

The scope of the evaluation will encompass the review of the opportunities and challenges experienced in project implementation, impact of the project at national and regional level, and recommendations to ensure effective, and efficient scaling up of the initiative within the second phase.

To achieve the above objectives the Mid-Term evaluation is to address the following:

* Assessment of the project progress towards attaining its objectives and recommend measures (if any).
* Assessment of the relevance of these objectives to the UNDP Regional Programme Document for Africa.
* Review of the appropriateness and clarity of the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and the level of coordination between them as well as capacities available and required.
* Review of the project concept and design with respect to the clarity of the addressed problems by the project and soundness of the approaches adopted by the project to solve these problems.
* Assessment of the performance of the project in terms of timeliness, quality, quantity and cost effectiveness of the activities undertaken including project procurement: both experts and equipment, training programs, etc.
* Review of the logical framework matrix and the indicators to assess their appropriateness for monitoring the project performance and to what extent they are being used by the project management.
* Assess the prospects of the sustainability of the project outcomes and benefits and recommend measures for its further improvement.
* Identify and describe the main lessons learned from the project performance in terms of awareness raising, strengthening of technical and financial capacity, efforts to secure sustainability and approaches and methodologies used.

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

The mid-term evaluation seeks to answer the following questions, focused around the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability:

***Relevance:***

* To what extent was the project in line with the regional development priorities, the Regional 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 regional programme outcome?
* To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the project’s design?
* 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, considered during the project design processes?
* To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
* To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the region? Are the intended outputs and outcomes aligned with the key development strategies of the member states? Are they consistent with human development needs of the region and the intended beneficiaries? Do the outputs and outcome address the specific development challenges of the member states and the intended beneficiaries? Were there any unintended consequences (positive or negative) that have implications to the development goals of the countries?
* To what extent has project selected method of delivery been appropriate to the development context?

***Effectiveness***

* 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 projects 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?
* To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

***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? Are project approaches, resources, models, conceptual framework relevant to achieve the planned outcome? Are they sufficiently sensitive to the political and development constraints of the pilot countries (political instability, post crisis situations, etc)?
* Has project’s strategy and execution been efficient and cost effective?
* Are the monitoring and evaluation systems that project has in place helping to ensure that programmes are managed efficiently and effectively for proper accountability of results?
* To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
* To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

***Sustainability***

* What is the likelihood that project interventions are sustainable?
* 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?
* 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?
* How should the AU treaties project portfolio be enhanced to support central authorities, and partners in improving service delivery over the long term?
* What changes should be made in the current set of project partnerships in order to promote long term sustainability?

Based on the above analysis, the consultant is expected to provide overarching conclusions on project results in this area of support, as well as recommendations on how the project could adjust its programming, partnership arrangements, resource mobilization strategies, and capacities to ensure that the project portfolio fully achieves current planned outcomes and is positioned for sustainable results in the future. The evaluation is additionally expected to offer lessons for project support in member states and elsewhere based on this analysis.

**4. Methodology of evaluation**

The project evaluation will be carried out by an external evaluator and will engage a wide array of stakeholders and beneficiaries, including regional bodies, donors, governments where programme is been implemented.

The project evaluation is expected to take a “theory of change’’ (TOC) approach to determining causal links between the interventions that UNDP RSCA has supported and observed progress at the regional, sub-regional and national levels. The evaluator will develop a logic model of how UNDP RSCA acceleration of ratification and implementation of treaties interventions are expected to lead to improved service delivery.

Evidence obtained and used to assess the results of UNDP RSCA support should be triangulated from a variety of sources, including verifiable data on indicator achievement, existing reports, and technical papers, stakeholder interviews, and other means as far as the current situation allows.

The steps in data collection are anticipated but not limited to the following:

***Desk reviews:*** The evaluation team will collect and review all relevant documentation, including the following:

1. Project document and budget (contribution agreement)
2. Regional programme document;
3. Project activity reports;
4. Result Oriented Analysis Report
5. Support services provided to country offices; vi) country office reports; vii) UNDP’s corporate strategies and reports; and viii) government, media, academic publications.
6. Theory of change and results framework
7. Programme and project quality assurance reports
8. Annual workplans
9. Activity designs
10. Consolidated quarterly and annual reports.
11. Results-oriented monitoring report.
12. Highlights of project board meetings.
13. Technical/financial monitoring reports.

***Stakeholder interviews:*** The evaluation team will conduct face-to-face if applicable and/or telephone interviews with relevant stakeholders, including: i) UNDP staff (managers and programme/project officers) at the Regional Service Center in Addis Ababa and Country Offices; and ii) policy makers, beneficiary groups, various relevant organs of AU and RECs and donors.

All interviews should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals.

A case study approach will be used to identify and highlight issues that can be further investigated across the programme.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, 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 evaluation team.

**5. Expected deliverables from the evaluation**

**Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages).** One week after contract signing, the evaluator will produce an inception report containing the proposed theory of change for UNDPs work on Acceleration and Ratification of treaties in the region. The inception report should include an evaluation matrix presenting the evaluation questions, data sources, data collection, analysis tools and methods to be used (See Annex 1). The evaluation will also propose a rating scale in order that Performance rating will be carried out for each evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The inception report should detail the specific timing for evaluation activities and deliverables and propose specific stakeholders to be interviewed. Interview or survey Protocols for different stakeholders should be developed. The inception report will be discussed and agreed with the Senior Management of RSCA before the evaluators proceed with site visits.

The inception report should be carried outfollowing and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP after the desk review and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution.

**Evaluation debriefings.** Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminarydebriefing and findings.

**Draft evaluation report (within an agreed length).[[1]](#footnote-1)** The programme unit and keystakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the evaluator within an agreed period of time, addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in these guidelines.

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

**Final evaluation report including lessons.**

**Presentations to stakeholders and/or the evaluation reference group through Zoom or Skype can be organized by project team**.

**Evaluation brief and other knowledge products** or participation in knowledge-sharing events,if relevant.

**6.** **Requirements of the consultant**

The mid-term evaluation will be undertaken by an external consultant with the following requirements:

* Minimum Master’s degree in economics, political science, public administration, regional development/planning, or other social science;
* Minimum 10-15 years of professional experience in public sector development, including in the areas of democratic governance, human rights, anti-corruption, regional development, gender equality and social services.
* At least 5 years of experience in conducting evaluations of government, policies and international aid organizations, preferably with direct experience with treaty process ratification;
* Strong working knowledge of the UN and its mandate in the region, and more specifically the work of UNDP in support of governance initiatives;
* Sound knowledge of results-based management systems, Gender dimensions and monitoring and evaluation methodologies; including experience in applying SMART (S Specific; M Measurable; A Achievable; R Relevant; T Time-bound) indicators;
* Excellent reporting and communication skills;
* Fluent in written and spoken English. Fluency in French will be an added advantage.

**7.** **Evaluation Ethics**

The evaluation must be carried out in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’ and sign the Ethical Code of Conduct for UNDP 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

Consultant must be free and clear of perceived conflicts of interest. To this end, interested consultants will not be considered if they were directly and substantively involved, as an employee or consultant, in the formulation of project strategies and programming relating to the outcome and programme under review. The code of conduct and an agreement form to be signed by consultant will be part of this ToR.

**8.** **Implementation Arrangements**

The UNDP RSCA will select the evaluator and will be responsible for the management of the evaluator. The RSCA Regional Programme Coordinator will designate a focal point for the evaluation that will work with the Evaluation Specialist and Project Manager to assist in facilitating the process (e.g., providing relevant documentation, arranging visits/interviews with key informants, etc.). The RSCA Management will take responsibility for the approval of the final evaluation report. The Project Manager will arrange introductory meetings within RSC and will establish initial contacts with partners and project implementation staff. The consultant will take responsibility for setting up meetings and conducting the evaluation, subject to advanced approval of the methodology submitted in the inception report. The Management of RSC/RBA will develop a management response to the evaluation within four weeks of report finalization.

The Project Task Manager of the Project will convene an Advisory Panel comprising of technical experts to enhance the quality of the evaluation. This Panel will review the inception report and the draft evaluation report to provide detail comments related to the quality of methodology, evidence collected, analysis and reporting. The Panel will also advise on the conformity of evaluation processes to the UNEG standards. The evaluation team is required to address all comments of the Panel completely and comprehensively. The Evaluation Team Leader will provide a detail rationale to the advisory panel for any comment that remain unaddressed.

It will be the responsibility of the evaluator to logistically and financially arrange their travel to and from relevant project sites (if the pandemic allows) and to arrange most interviews. Planned travels and associated costs will be included in the Inception Report and agreed with the RSC if required.

**9. Timeframe for the Evaluation Process**

The evaluation is expected to take 30 working days, over a period of six weeks starting 09 November 2020. A tentative date for the stakeholder workshop is 11 December 2020, and the final draft evaluation report is due on 18 December 2020. The following table provides an indicative breakdown of activities and delivery:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Deliverable** | **Work day allocation** |
| Review materials and develop work plan | Inception report and evaluation matrix  (9 -13 November) | 5 |
| Participate in an Inception Meeting with project staff and M&E of the RSCA and relevant partners |
| Draft inception report |
| Review Documents and stakeholder consultations | Draft evaluation report  Stakeholder workshop presentation  (07 -11 December) | 20 |
| Interview stakeholders |
| Conduct field visits |
| Analyse data |
| Develop draft evaluation & lesson Learned report to project |
| Present draft Evaluation and lesson learned Report at Validation Workshop | Final evaluation report  (18 December) | 5 |
| Finalize and submit evaluation and lessons learned report incorporating additions and comments provided by stakeholders |
|  | Totals 28 | 6 weeks |

**10. Application submission process and criteria for selection**

**Fees and payments**

Interested consultants should provide their requested fee rates when they submit their expressions of interest, in USD. Project will then negotiate and finalise contracts. Travel costs and daily allowances will be paid against invoice, and subject to the UN payment schedules for RSCA. Fee payments will be made upon acceptance and approval by the RSC of planned deliverables, based on the following payment schedule:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Inception report | 20% |
| Draft Evaluation Report and lessons learned report | 50% |
| Final Evaluation Report with annexed lesson learned report | 30% |

**ANNEX 1**

**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 standards | Methods for data analysis |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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1. A length of 40 to 60 pages including executive summary is suggested [↑](#footnote-ref-1)