



UNDP/UNV RIVERSEE Programme

Regional Integration through Volunteer Exchanges for Reconciliation of SEE
Funded by UNV Special Volunteer Fund with seed funding from UNDP COs in the region.

Terms of Reference

UNDP/UNV RIVERSEE Programme Final Evaluation Mission

Number of experts foreseen: One (one international consultant)

Duty Station: Sarajevo, BiH

Duration of contract: 17 working days

Starting date: September 2007 – to be confirmed

1. Background

Background to the RIVERSEE Programme

The United Nations Volunteer programme promotes global volunteer contributions and mobilises volunteers in support of UN operations and activities of UN agencies, governments and NGOs in development, peacekeeping, emergency or other situations where these contributions could make a difference. Typically, UN Volunteers bring dedication, commitment and engagement combined with skills and experience to bear on the situations wherein they are deployed. In any given year, there are about 7,000 individuals from around 140 countries who serve in around 160 countries.

UNV mission statement:

Volunteering brings benefits to both society at large and the individual volunteer. It makes important contributions, economically as well as socially. It contributes to a more cohesive society by building trust and reciprocity among citizens. The United Nations Volunteers is the UN organization that supports sustainable human development globally through the promotion of volunteerism and the mobilisation of volunteers. It serves the causes of peace and development through enhancing opportunities for participation by all peoples. It is universal, inclusive and embraces volunteer action in all its diversity. It values free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity, which are the foundations of volunteerism.

Background to the project to be evaluated

The RIVER SEE Programme is a UNV/UNDP pilot programme seeking to develop regional confidence and facilitate valuable linkages between the populations and governments in the Balkan region. Its overall objective is to contribute to regional integration, social cohesion and poverty reduction in the Balkans by:

- strengthening networks through East-to-East volunteer exchanges;
- promoting volunteerism and proactive citizenship;

- building the capacity of civil society to support local development and contribute to regional cooperation through civic engagement.
- establishing regional cooperation between civil initiatives.

The RIVERSEE Programme, implemented by UNV, aims to strengthen NGOs and individuals to contribute to promotion of volunteerism on the regional level by bringing together NGOs and volunteers from seven countries in the region¹. The Programme works in all seven SEE countries to establish and strengthen regional voluntary exchange scheme and to provide training, ICT and financial support to NGOs.

The Programme also supports community-based development and poverty alleviation efforts by focusing on volunteer placements that have social inclusion and regional integration focus, especially in the second and third round of volunteer exchanges.

The Programme represented a unique UNV/UNDP regional collaboration co-implemented with partners such as European Union/European Voluntary Service (EU/EVS), Voluntary Service Organization United Kingdom (VSO UK), South East European Youth Network (SEEYN), OneWorld South East Europe (OneWorld SEE) and 10 Implementing Partners Organizations - Balkans Youth Link/Mjaft (ALBANIA); Youth Communication Centre and Youth Centre Livno (BiH); Volunteer's Centre Zagreb (CROATIA); Association for Democratic Initiatives Macedonia and Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (FYROM); Kosovo Youth Network (KOSOVO); Timok Club (SERBIA); Association for Democratic Prosperity and SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence (MONTENEGRO) - from seven countries/areas in the Balkans.

As part of the pilot Programme, IPOs have been trained in volunteer selection and management and are currently responsible for relations with volunteers, other CSO/ViOs, and for the implementation of voluntary management activities at the country/area level and through the RIVER SEE Regional Board at the regional level. RIVERSEE website with extensive database has been developed to serve as an advocacy tool and a valuable resource for IPOs. Database includes more than 1100 registered volunteers and over 100 organizations from the region willing to host a volunteer and promote the work of volunteerism in the region.

By building the development capacity of IPOs and local CSO/ViOs with MDGs-related agendas, UNV/UNDP established solid and sustainable local ownership of development initiatives. RIVER SEE 'Vs' participate in cross-border exchange programs in which they cultivate partnerships and resources connected with MDGs, civil society building, sustainability and transfer of knowledge.

UNV/UNDP has successfully completed the pilot project and in the line with its focus to secure national ownership as a crucial component of sustainability, UNV/UNDP announced a Call for Interest to place the coordinating role of the Programme into the hands of a national organization. Against this background, a long-standing partner of the Programme and a regional Board member, SEEYN, was selected on a competitive basis as a new coordinating agency in April 2007. The hand-over is currently planned to be finalized at the end of September 2007.

The project is managed at the regional level through a Project Implementation Unit, which has two full-time staff on UNV contracts (a manager and a coordinator) and a UNV intern (a communications assistant). Currently 9 Implementing Partner Organizations, former NUNVs, coordinate implementation of the regional exchanges, two IPOs in BiH, Macedonia, and Montenegro and one IPO in Serbia, Albania, Kosovo, and Croatia. The project works with many hosting and sending NGOs in all seven programme countries.

¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Serbia.

The RIVERSEE project revision took place in 2006. Revision highlighted major achievements and challenges and lead to changes in the Project Document regarding the project duration, focus and coverage, programme management, fundraising and exit strategy, and reporting on key outputs towards social inclusion and regional integration (the revised project document attached).

The project is running for three years, 2004 – 2007, financed mainly by the funds from UNV Special Volunteer Fund with seed money contributed towards specific exchanges from four UNDP Country Offices in the programme countries (UNDP BiH, UNDP Croatia, UNDP Serbia, and UNDP Kosovo). Financial commitments have been discussed with other UNDP Cos for upcoming years, mainly Macedonia and Montenegro.

Intended outcome:

To enhance social inclusion and regional integration through volunteers exchanges for reconciliation of South East Europe by contributing to community-based development and poverty alleviation through volunteerism at the local level.

Specific Project Outputs

- To set up a volunteer scheme for the Balkan region
- Develop the capacity of CSO/ViOs in volunteer management
- Strengthen the capacity of community groups and voluntary exchanges to:
 - Directly participate in local development programs
 - Develop leadership skills among young people
 - Promote volunteerism among general population
- Enhance partnerships with governments, UNDP, EU/EVS, and CSOs.

2. Justification

The final evaluation of projects is a UNDP/UNV requirement. It will also provide vital information on project progress and results for the main national partners and future coordinating body, SEEYN. The timing of the evaluation - at the end of the pilot phase when the implementation activities are being handed to IPOs and the coordination of the programme is being transferred to SEEYN - is crucial to the future of the project. It will provide much needed qualitative and quantitative data on achievements, strengths, weaknesses of the existing project and recommendations for future directions of the programme.

3. Objectives of the Evaluation

Primary objective:

To evaluate the project's relevance, performance (effectiveness and efficiency), and success (impact and sustainability) of the project (see following section for more detailed definitions), draw lessons learned and make recommendations for future of this and other similar projects.

Secondary objectives:

- To evaluate the pilot phase of the Programme and make recommendations for priorities and directions during the Programme hand-over to national counterpart;
- To generate knowledge about good practices in the area of voluntary exchanges and CSOs volunteer management and capacity building;
- To improve the design and performance of the programme;
- To identify ways how to maximise existing positive impacts in the transfer and expansion of the project to IPOs and the new Coordinating Agency.

The scope of the evaluation is the programme's pilot phase under the administration of UNV COT Sarajevo from 2004 – 2007.

4. Key areas of focus: questions to be answered

Given the pilot nature of this project, the main question is:

- Did the project deliver on its intended outputs and was the approach effective in contributing to the issue of reconciliation in the region?

The consultancy will review specific aspects of the project's implementation and management arrangements against intended results focusing on the effectiveness of the following structures:

- Project Implementation Unit (PIU - in Sarajevo)
- IPOs – Implementing Partners Organizations, their capacity and contributions
- Hosting Organizations providing placements and hosting volunteers
- Trainers - training provided to IPOs and the effective use of the training
- Volunteers trained, supported and financed by the project
- Links and partnership built with other UN agencies, international and local NGOs and other key partners.

- Key components of the project include:
 - Volunteer placements in social inclusion and regional integration projects, developing skills and new leaders
 - Volunteer placements beyond the regular NGO field, offering placements in governmental offices, UNDP projects and local institution structures
 - Training in voluntary management for IPOs by key RIVER SEE partners; includes advice and financial support
 - Multi-lingual regional database operating in 6 languages serving as a matching and mobilizing tool
 - Broad volunteer management and mentorship component – thru RIVER SEE scheme, IPOs provide guidance and skills to local volunteer involving organisations (VIOs) in effective management of volunteers
 - The public policy and legislative components – researching case studies on voluntary involving organization; involving youth, community leaders, local and central authorities in discussion and development of public policy to address necessary changes towards volunteerism, e.g. Law on Volunteering.

Key performance criteria to be applied in evaluation of all aspects of the project:

1. Relevance:

1. External coherence: The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.
2. Internal coherence: Relevancy to UNV strategic goals and priorities, to the country programme, and to regional strategy.

Questions to be asked:

- *To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?*
- *Was the project developed to address the locally defined stakeholders' needs and priorities, was it suited to UNV strategic goals and did it implement the right activities to address these?*
- *Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?*

- *Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impact and effects?*
- *Which are the constraints under which the pilot initiative functions?*

2. Performance

1. **Effectiveness:** An aggregate measure of (or judgment about) the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently.

Questions to be examined:

- *To what extent were the objectives achieved, or are still likely to be achieved?*
- *What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?*

2. **Efficiency:** To measure how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results.

Questions to be examined:

- *Were the activities cost efficient?*
- *Were the objectives achieved on time?*
- *Was the programme implemented the most efficient way compared to alternatives?*

3. Success

1. **Effects and Impact:** Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and the development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

Questions to be examined:

- *What has happened as a result of the programme?*
- *What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?*
- *How many people have been affected?*

2. **Sustainability:** Measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Factors (political, institutional, economic, technological, socio-cultural and environmental) affecting sustainability should also be considered.

Questions to be examined:

- *To what extent did the benefits of a programme continue after donor funding ceased?*
- *What were the major factors which influences the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme?*
- *Was there a clearly defined exist strategy and to what extent did it contribute to sustainability?*

4. Partnership and coordination

To analyze the institutional relationships developed throughout the programme and the extent to which they have contributed to the achievement of results.

Questions to be examined:

- *Who were the partners involved in the design and implementation of the project (UN, government international NGOs, local organizations, etc.)*
- *What value did the different partners add?*
- *How coherent was the programme with the development agendas of the different institutions involved and how did this affect the programme (positively and negatively)*
- *What were the key factors contributing to building good partnerships?*

Volunteerism

UNV recognises that volunteering means different things to different people and that there is a wide range of motivations for becoming a volunteer. Within this context, the evaluation should cover two aspects of volunteering:

- What is the added value of UNV volunteers/volunteerism in the outcomes of the programme?
- How did UNV and UNV Volunteers in the programme contributed to stimulating local volunteerism?
- What were the helping and hindering factors to the stimulation of volunteerism in the programme?

It is recommended to consult the manual "A participatory methodology for assessing the contribution of volunteerism to development" for further details (see Annex).

Gender

Assess whether and to what extent the project took the gender dimension into account and if the project promoted a gender sensitive approach to formulation and implementation.

Human Rights

Assess whether and to what extent the human rights dimension was taken into account, and if the project promoted a rights-based approach to formulation and implementation.

As part of UNV strategy, UNV programmes should be gender aware, participatory, and promote a learning approach. The consultants should ensure that the assessment covers these elements in the report through the following questions:

- Did the project consider a rights-based approach?
- Did the programme follow a gender sensitive approach?
- Was the stakeholder involvement appropriate, and did it promote a capacity development approach?

5. Process of the Evaluation

Timetable of steps (more detailed programme will later be provided):

- **Desk review, planning and initial evaluation at PIU: 3 days**
- **Field evaluation: 8 days** (including travel to 4 out of 7 countries where project was implemented).
- **Writing draft report, de-briefing and initial feedback (in PIU): 3 days**
- **Finalising report, based on comments received: 2 days**
- **Presentation of evaluation to UNV: 1 day**

TOTAL: 17 days

Methodology:

- **Desk review** to include project document and progress report, existing project research on the views and situation of youth (including results before and after project implementation) and other relevant literature, sent in advance to the evaluator);
- **Planning meeting** to discuss and agree on the process and focus of the evaluation at the outset, on arrival in Sarajevo, together with PIU staff
- **Interviews** (in person and over the phone) with key stakeholders, representatives of partners, and volunteers in the field; phone interviews might be a necessary substitute for in-person interviews, due to the geographical spread of the Programme over 7 countries
- **Questionnaires** distributed to participants of focus groups and other key stakeholder, to ensure better triangulation of results and a set of written responses yielding both quantitatively and qualitative data;
- **Final meeting with staff** to present the preliminary findings/recommendations to UNV staff at the end of the mission's work.

6. Evaluation team roles and responsibilities

The international consultant will:

- lead the evaluation process;
- arrive adequately prepared, following thorough desk review and background research;
- be responsible for successful conduct of the evaluation;
- explain to stakeholders the aims and methods of the evaluation;
- carry out initial data processing and grouping of responses before translation, if required;
- carry out initial analysis of questionnaire results;
- compile and submit the evaluation report, by September 30th (the date to be confirmed)

The interpreter will be hired only if the international consultant is not a confident B/C/S speaker, and only for those days when needed to interpret for the consultant during interviews and focus groups. In this case s/he will:

- interpret for the international consultant in interviews and focus groups;
- keep and translate accurate records of all interviews and focus groups;
- translate questionnaire forms and other documents when necessary;

7. Participation of different stakeholders

Key stakeholders and main stakeholder groups to be included or represented in the evaluation:

- UNDP FP and UNV COTs;
- Donor representatives – UNV HQ, UNDP CO FPs.
- Other international partners sitting on the RIVER SEE Regional Board;
- Programme Implementation Unit staff (PIU);
- Implementing Partner Organizations (IPOs)
- Trainers for IPOs (VSO, SEEYN)
- RIVER SEE volunteers
- Local partners: SOs, HOs and affiliated VIOs;

Those who contributed to the evaluation, including the beneficiaries in local communities, should be offered feedback on the outcome of the evaluation, not necessarily the results in detail, but on their input and its usefulness. A summary evaluation report for representatives of main beneficiaries and key stakeholders in all seven participating

countries should be produced to recognise their input, to show how their input helped inform the evaluation and to maximise learning.

8. Outputs

The following outputs are expected:

- Evaluation matrix with key questions, indicators and means of verification
- Evaluation workplan
- Draft and final evaluation report to fit the following requirements:
 - o Length: absolute maximum 30 pages.
 - o Executive Summary: 3 / 4 pages, of sufficient quality to stand on its own in capturing all the major findings and recommendations of the evaluation.
 - o Language – English (national consultant will produce summary version in B/S/C)
 - o Report headings to include (see standard UNV format annexed)
 - o With the following requirements:
 - Background and methodology
 - Assessment of performance
 - Description of best practices
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations
- Recommendation matrix

It is expected that electronic and hard copies of the final report in English will be submitted to the UNV CO within a week of completion of the assignment.

9. Management of the Evaluation

The overall responsibility for managing the evaluation will be with the geographical section concerned, in close collaboration with the Evaluation Unit and other key stakeholders at HQ and the UNV country team. The continuous involvement of major stakeholders at the country level (including IPOs, UNV COTs, a new RIVER SEE coordinating agency, and others) should be ensured and maintained throughout the entire review or evaluation process.

10. Requirements

The main responsibilities in this assignment will be contracted to an international expert with experience and knowledge in the substantive areas: NGO capacity building and promotion of volunteerism. In addition, the expert should have:

- University degree at the post-graduate level in the social sciences, management or other relevant field of study
- 8 - 10 years work experience, of which at least five in developing countries, and at least five in the substantive areas.
- Proven track record in evaluation in the substantive areas.
- Knowledge and experience of volunteerism with its diverse manifestations and cultural settings.
- Competence in sample survey techniques and computerised data processing
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills
- Good people and communication skills
- Fluency in English (essential), good B/C/S (desirable).

List of Abbreviations

B/C/S	Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian
BIH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
COT	Country Office Team
CSO/VIO	Civil Society Organization/Voluntary Involving Organization
EU	European Union
EVS	European Volunteer Service
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
HO	Hosting Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Training
IPO	Implementing Partner Organization
MGDs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NUNV	National United Nation Volunteer
PIU	Programme Implementation Unit
RIVER SEE	Regional Integration through Volunteer Exchanges for Reconciliation of South East Europe
SEE	South East Europe
SEEYN	South East Europe Youth Network
SO	Sending Organization
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP FP	United Nations Development Programme Focal Point
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
V	Volunteer
VSO UK	Volunteer Services Overseas United Kingdom