

**Regional Programme for supporting the Upscaling of the
YouthConnekt Model in Africa**

Mid Term Evaluation

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Mid Term Evaluation Report

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Table of Contents

ACRONYMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
1 INTRODUCTION	16
2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH	19
3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	23
3.1. Programmatic Scope of the Assessment	24
3.2. Development of Assessment Tools	30
3.4. Data Collection	30
3.5. Data Analysis	31
3.6. Evaluation Limitations	32
4. EVALUATION FINDINGS	34
4.1. Relevance	34
4.2. Effectiveness	36
4.3. Efficiency..	44
4.4. Sustainability	48
4.5. Gender Equality and Vulnerable Groups	49
5. Lessons Learned	49
6. RECOMENNDATIONS	50
7. CONCLUSIONS	58

Annex

Annex A- List of Documents Reviewed

Annex B- Evaluation Question Matrix

Annex C- Questionnaire Based Survey

Annex D- Activity Plan

Annex E- TORs

ACRONYMS

AUC	African Union Commission
AWP	Annual Work Plans
AYS	Annual Youth Summit
CPD	Country Programme Document, UNDP
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
ILO	International Labour Organizations
KII	Key Informant Interviews
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OLC	Office of Legal Counsel
QBS	Questionnaire Based Survey
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RSCA	UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa
SBI	Small Businesses Incubator
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TEF	The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
YC Hub	YouthConnekt Hub

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNDP Regional programme for supporting the upscaling of the YouthConnekt model in Africa is a 4-year multi-country youth empowerment project. This mid-term report is based on the overall evaluation criteria of assessing the *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability* of the project in supporting development of young people in Africa. The report captures key lessons learned and recommendations for the way forward drawn from implementation of the project in the first phase. The project's results framework, AWP, annual reports, as well as consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries provided the foundation for the performance evaluation. Based on a comprehensive document assessment, Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS), Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and related observations, the following set of evaluation findings were consolidated. The overall review process was further underpinned by an assessment of the following 4 outcomes captured in the UNDP regional youth project document:

Outcome I Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened.

Outcome II Youth Social and Economic Participation and Leadership are enhanced.

Outcome III African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship are developed.

Outcome IV Increased Number of African Youth are Gainfully Employed.

A. Summary of Findings

Relevance: Overall Rating: Relevant and aligned with the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa (2018-2021), the United Nations Youth Strategy (2018), the UNDP Renewed Strategic Offer for Africa, the African Union Youth Charter, and other regional youth development frameworks. However, the review identified a need for a more focused, concise, and well-defined alignment with country level frameworks such as UNSDCF/CPDs which would result in sustained ownership, planning, budgeting, and improved results from UNDP country offices and national stakeholders. The project's overall orientation is indeed relevant to the broader youth development challenges but needs to be embedded in the UNDP country level frameworks and national development plans. The project has shown great potential for scale and widespread impact as it is primarily implemented by government (through relevant ministries in charge of youth affairs) and co-supported by a range of development partners, among which UNDP is a key player. The YouthConnekt Model as a whole appears to be more of a coordination framework that consolidates youth related programmes and activities among a wide range of partners. The challenge would therefore be experienced in aligning and integrating workplans, budget, and priorities among the partners.

A1- Relevance of the project to the UNDP Regional Programme framework at the time of its inception is one of its strongest attributes. This has enabled effective and consistent annual allocation of Regional Programme core resources to ensure continuity despite challenges experienced in resource mobilization both at regional and national levels. The overall budget estimate for the project is very ambitious at USD 57,799,660 and seems to have led to a discrepancy in actual resources mobilized. Despite the financial resource gap, the project has maintained consistent minimal operation and achieved remarkable results such as implementation of the model in 20 countries to varying degrees.

A2- Relevance with the Regional Strategic Plan for Africa 2018-21 -The project is fully aligned and relevant with the Regional Programme **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. Output 2.4 of the strategic plan fundamentally captures YouthConnekt implementation as a key output which further reinforces its relevance to UNDP in achieving widespread youth socio-economic development. It also suggests a need for strategic linkages with the African Union in youth programming across the continent. This too has seen varying degrees of success (in terms of linkages with the AU) as will be discussed in this report.

A3- Relevance with UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Although indirectly, the project objectives are aligned, relevant and contributed to the following outcomes and output of the UNDP's previous Strategic Plan: **Outcome 2:** Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development. **Outcome 1:** Advance Poverty Eradication in all its Forms and Dimensions. **Output 1.1.2: Marginalized** groups, particularly the poor, women, people with disabilities and displaced are empowered to gain universal access

to basic services¹ and financial and non-financial assets to build productive capacities and benefit from sustainable livelihoods and jobs.

A4- Relevance with the UNDP's Renewed Strategic Offer in Africa-Output 1: Sub-national, national, regional and continental youth platforms and programmes that facilitate active youth interaction, participation in SDG agenda, peacebuilding and leadership are developed. **Output 2:** YouthConnekt is scaled-up and established in every RBA country over the next two to five years. **Output 3:** Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Programme expanded. The new UNDP strategic framework that will inform UNDP's development orientation until 2025 further recognizes the need to upscale the YouthConnekt model to all 45 RBA countries which further raises ambition of the project in terms of resource requirements and scope. It is therefore critical for the project to evaluate the progress made on its YouthConnekt results framework and make key adjustments for realization of the renewed organization priorities.

Project Effectiveness: *Overall Rating: Moderately Satisfactory with considerable performance in outcomes 2 & 3 and Moderately Unsatisfactory in outcomes 1 & 4*

A5- Overall, the project has made considerable contribution to youth empowerment and employment in Africa. To date it has supported scaling up of the YouthConnekt model to a total of 20 African countries. However, the performance of the project varies from one outcome to the other as well as from one country to the other. The evaluation noted that the project has performed and maintained good momentum under the Outcome 2 (Youth Social and Economic Participation) and particularly Outcome 3 (Business and Entrepreneurship Development). However, despite registering some results under Outcome 4 (Youth employment), most of the key targets were not fully met. Similarly, it is also observed that very limited progress has been made under the Outcome 1 (Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened.) which seems to involve support to formulation of youth related policies and national frameworks. More importantly, since the core aim of the project is to upscale YouthConnekt across the continent, sustained implementation of activities in all 20 implementing countries were not consistently found, with the exception of countries such as Rwanda, Liberia, and Zimbabwe. For example, the implementation of YouthConnekt in other countries has not seen the same results and successes on a consistent basis as those experienced in the pioneering Rwanda model that was formed in 2012. The evaluation notes that different countries are at different stages of implementation (some being implemented very recently while others still in process of formulation) which would also influence the non-uniform results registered. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for structured implementation & monitoring mechanisms to track progress across the continent and support national YouthConnekt programmes that require additional resource mobilization and capacity. A large component of this will entail strong technical capacity building and mobilization of financial resources from national and regional stakeholders. The UNDP regional YouthConnekt project document implies an allocation of regional financial resources mobilized to national YouthConnekt programmes. This has however not been

¹ Basic services include social services (e.g. health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, social housing, vocational training), economic services (including finance), environmental and energy services (e.g. renewables, clean fuels and technology, use of natural resources), and other services (e.g. rule of law and justice).

forthcoming due to the significant resource gap and capacity. The limited progress in terms of each indicator in the UNDP YouthConnekt project document seems to be attributed to the overambitious and unclear results framework as well as limited resources (both financial and human resources) rather than the project's overall performance. **This observation is also in line with the point 2 & 3 of the recently issued UNDP RBA's audit report in December 2020.** It was highlighted in the report that there are overall weaknesses in project design with unclear indicators, baselines and targets as well as the lack of consistent implementation of activities during Covid-19 pandemic with a small risk management strategy. There is reference to an annual project risk log developed by the regional programme to help ensure delivery of allocated resources despite emerging risks, nevertheless a more comprehensive risk management framework in the project document (and as agreed upon by stakeholders) is a missing link of the project formulation. A large list of vague and overambitious targets and indicators (such as 10 million jobs by 2025, 25 million opportunities through training, etc.) has clearly impeded on some of the considerable progress made by the project, particularly in the area of youth participation and entrepreneurship. With the implementation of the project in 20 countries, it is likely that some of these ambitious results have been realized however there seems to be no effective monitoring mechanism to quantify the results that can inform subsequent activities and priorities. The project needs to be clear and concise in terms of what it will contribute to achievement of these ambitious targets as it cannot directly or singularly influence all of them. A more modest focus will be required in the second phase of the project and should effectively distinguish between its priorities (such as scaling up the model to 45 RBA countries and supporting development of robust national frameworks) and those at national level.

A6- The overall effectiveness of project interventions varies from one outcome/result area to another, whereby, some of the targets of outcomes have been achieved or partially achieved so far (primarily in outcome 2& 3), while some of the areas have either been underachieved or require more focus, coherence, with clear and visible targets and indicators (outcome 1 & 4). Summary of key findings include:

- **Outcome 1 :** Overall, the assessment of data gathered indicates that there has been some progress made under outcome 1, however these have been disrupted by the ongoing pandemic. A large component of this outcome (conducive and enabling environment for job-rich growth is strengthened) involves supporting youth policy formulation and implementation with government. This inherently creates a challenge as it does not account for the heavy political dynamics at play. For example the outputs in the project document states that “The project will support selected African governments to develop national policies, outline clear mechanisms and steps for economic and social reintegration of voluntary returnees from extremist groups and those who are returning from adverse migration experiences. Each country will receive up to USD50,000 to hold consultations and develop the required documentation”. Although very important, this activity is very broad and complex and slightly deviates from the core focus of scaling up the YouthConnekt model. Adding a financial component/ incentive to this (as has been done in other outputs) may not necessarily be the appropriate approach. It would be recommended for the project to operate within existing infrastructures for peace and narrow down to a more specific youth related focus in the area of peacebuilding. Achievement of the specific targets under outcome 1 (such as hosting 4

regional dialogue events/seminars on job-rich growth and transformation strategies and policies.) will be challenging to complete within the remaining time of the project (which ends in 2022) and taking into account the various resource constraints and risks caused by the pandemic. In summary, the indicators and targets set in the results framework for the outcome 1 were found to be difficult to implement considering the scope of the project, the resource constraints, and the political challenges. The evaluation therefore recommends narrowing down the focus, recognizing and working within existing infrastructures (such as those developed by African Union, RECs, and states) and defining the specific value addition of the project's intervention rather than spreading the available capacities and resources too thin. The evaluation re-emphasizes the importance of sticking to the core functions of supporting implementation of robust national YouthConnekt programmes, as implied by the overall project orientation, and ensuring that all necessary mechanisms are in place for their sustainability. Branching to policy formulation and peacebuilding could be done upon request by countries or based on a clear needs assessment (in areas such as the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes region) and can be embedded in context specific national programmes.

- **Outcome 2-** The project's contribution towards youth participation and leadership development is one of the stronger attributes. For example, YouthConnekt Africa Summit signature event was found to be an excellent forum whereby youth are exposed to a range of national and regional stakeholders and effectively engage with them towards addressing youth related challenges. The 2018 YouthConnekt Africa summit saw 2,800 delegates representing governments, UN agencies, private sector, youth leaders, NGOs and civil society, convene with the aim of developing partnership, programs and policies to empower youth for continental transformation. Similarly, the following year convened 10,000 delegates comprising of 30 Youth Ministers, 25 UNDP Resident Representatives, AU, high level UN officials and UN goodwill Ambassadors, development partners, corporations and global business leaders, CSOs, private sector venture capitalists, business angels, development partners, youth, accelerators and innovation labs, from over 90 countries to deliberate and develop solutions to the underlying youth socio-economic challenges. At a more localized level, the YouthConnekt national programmes comprise of components (such as YouthConnekt Dialogue and YouthConnekt Convention) that seek to facilitate effective and consistent youth leadership and participation in decision making processes. The evaluation identified from a sample group of national programmes that implement of YouthConnekt across all countries has a component related to national dialogue and youth inclusion in national decision-making processes. As recurrently evident, the YouthConnekt Rwanda programme has registered the best and most consistent results. This may be attributed to the strong political leadership and national ownership of the programme. Other countries reviewed such as Liberia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Cabo Verde, and Madagascar have shown some activities and varying degrees of success in these areas but did not provide detailed information during the evaluation process. The evaluation did register a concerning lack of uniform and consistent implementation of youth related civic engagement activities such as the national dialogues and conventions in YouthConnekt

implementing countries (although all seem to capture this within their initial framework). The replication of the blueprint developed by Rwanda seems to be irregular across existing programmes. It is therefore critical that the project does a clear assessment of the gaps and challenges experienced in other countries and develops appropriate responses to ensure that these programmes' implementation and sustainability frameworks are brought to par with that of the Rwanda model. This output in itself is quite intensive for the UNDP regional project (in terms of capacity and resources) and calls for concerted effort between the regional youth team and the YouthConnekt Africa Hub. **It is therefore critical that the project does not only focus on the number of implementing countries but monitors the effectiveness of each national programme and does a clear needs assessment to respond accordingly.** Each national YouthConnekt component needs to be well document and demonstrate regularity in activity and results.

Bringing it back to the regional project, the expected results framework again captures a series of ambitious, financial resource intensive, and difficult to quantify outputs and activities. For example, the 'expected results' section of the document outcome 2 states that "The project will host at least fifteen (15) national and sub-national youth conventions and dialogues in select African countries. Relevant national counterparts in 15 countries will be awarded up to USD50,000 each to roll out programmes where young people can connect with leaders, role models, peers, and resources aimed at enhancing 21st Century leadership skills, mindset changes, civic engagement and active youth participation capacities in both local and national governance". The document also states that "UNDP will award up to 19 community building institutions USD50,000 each to hold events and interventions in areas that are most vulnerable to conflict for innovative community engagement activities aimed at reducing the intra as well as irregular migration". These again deviates from the core objective of the project and spread resources and capacity too thin resulting in sporadic and elusive results. These activities proved challenging to implement with the financial resource gap. The evaluation recommends revising activities captured under this outcome with stronger focus on technical support required at country level. Reinforcement of the activities captured under components such as the YouthConnekt Dialogues and Conventions in national programmes to ensure their regular implementation may be a better measure of success. The project could also work within existing regional frameworks and processes such as those developed by the AU and RECs for consolidated and less capital-intensive results.

- **Outcome 3-** The evaluation recognizes that Outcome 3 of the project seemed to have registered the most direct and quantifiable contribution as captured within the results framework. It primarily focuses on supporting business and entrepreneurship development of youth and was found progressive, both from year to year as well as in geographical scope. Compared to other outcome areas, the benefits of this outcome are spread in a relatively uniform way. For achievement of these results the project leveraged its partnership with the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) to deliver a parallel entrepreneurship programme with high impact results. It is noted in the project document that achievement of this outcome and associated activities would be realized by collaborating with

existing partners such as TEF but did not necessarily imply that this would be specifically linked to YouthConnekt. The partnership with TEF has also been found as a strong point in delivering high impact results. UNDP has directly invested about USD 13.77 million with TEF to support youth entrepreneurship development under 4 iterations of the initiative within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that UNDP signed with TEF in October 2017 after the first annual YouthConnekt Africa Summit. UNDP initiated the collaboration in 2018, through the RSCA, supported 40 budding entrepreneurs through a 12- week targeted training and capacity programme preparing them to launch their startups. Following completion of the training modules and subsequent development of a business plan which was reviewed by Accenture, UNDP RSCA disbursed a total of USD 200,000 towards the 40 entrepreneurs (USD 5,000 startup capital each).

The programme overall directly seeks to addresses some of the most endemic challenges to African start-ups through a 4 step process:

1. An online toolkit- The programme provides access to TEF's proprietary online Start-up Toolkit training, which is a comprehensive, practical training that equips entrepreneurs with resources on financial planning, market analysis, product marketing, business management skills, and many more. Over the 12- week period, the entrepreneurs are assigned a module with assignments that are completed with dedicated mentors. A weekly webinar is held by TEF to facilitate deeper understanding of the principles covered and respond to questions. Interpretation in French is available for French-speaking entrepreneurs to attend the training programme as well.
2. Mentoring- The programme matches mentors selected from all over the world in a 1:2 ratio with entrepreneurs to coach and guide them through the 12- training programme. The mentorship leverages online tools such as the the TEConnect platform, emails, social media, etc. Mentor selection and matching is carefully conducted to ensure alignment with the entrepreneurs' goals and objectives.
3. Business plan preparation and review- The programme further supports entrepreneurs that have been through the 12- week training to develop a business plan using a simplified template provided. Subsequent to this, a business plan certification competitive process occurs to review, provide feedback and refine the document to ensure feasibility.
4. Seed capital investment- Upon certification of the business plan, the programme provides a non-refundable seed capital investment of up to USD 5,000 in a United Bank of Africa (UBA) corporate bank account in the business name of the entrepreneur. A due diligence exercise is conducted in which the entrepreneur is required to fulfill certain compliance criteria before eligible for the funding.

Based on key lessons derived from the first iteration, a second programme was initiated in 2019 after UNDP conducted a micro-assessment as part of the requirements under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Framework. The HACT framework represents a common operation outline for UN agencies' transfer of funds to government and non- governmental

implementing partners. The micro-assessment evaluates the implementing partners' control framework to determine a risk rating (low, moderate, significant, or high) and informs eligibility for appropriate cash transfer modality for an implementing partner.

The second initiative focused on supporting 755 entrepreneurs using the same TEF model and mobilized USD 3.77 Million from 28 UNDP country offices while the third mobilized USD 5 million from the Regional Programme to train and finance over 3,000 startups in 7 countries within the Sahel. In 2020 a follow up initiative was implemented by the Mali country office and TEF support about 2,200 entrepreneurs with training and 1,862 with financing.

Additionally, UNDP organized a series of regional youth fellowship training seminars in Uganda and Addis Ababa that sought to provide training modules on entrepreneurship, 21st Century leadership skills and volunteerism as well as connecting young entrepreneurs to opportunities and information in sectors such as Agribusiness, Blue Economy and ICT. The training seminars aimed to not only impart critical skills but also challenge the YouthConnekt Fellows to commit to transformative action in the 12 months that followed. Along these lines, the YouthConnekt Awards was launched to financially reward young entrepreneurs providing innovative solutions to big social problems.

Based on the feedback gathered during the evaluation process there are a few areas of consideration for the entrepreneurship development activities moving forward:

- ❖ The follow up mechanism after providing initial start-up support to monitor how the youth entrepreneurs are progressing needs to be strengthened.
- ❖ While providing bootcamp trainings, assisting young entrepreneurs in converting ideas into viable business plans are vital for the programme and should be captured as one of the eligibility criteria for the disbursements of funds, a separate stream of providing upscaling support to existing database of young entrepreneurs is also vital.
- ❖ There is a strong need/demand to create a regional digital platform to support a network of regional young entrepreneurs as well as mentors for continued support. The existing YouthConnekt website remains relatively static and should be redesigned into a more interactive portal. It is however noted that the Youth for Africa and SDGs (YAS) platform developed by the UNDP Regional Private Sector team has been integrated in the website but does not fully harness its capabilities due to financial recourse constraints for recruitment of a dedicated IT company to manage the website.
- ❖ Provision of digital access for disadvantaged youth, and the use of more offline approaches is also necessary for improved impact of the programme in areas where digital penetration is low. This has been particularly demonstrated as a challenge in implementing the UNDP/TEF entrepreneurship programme that is mainly online.
- ❖ There is need for a more targeted approach towards entrepreneurship development of young women as their participation remains relatively lower than their male counterparts.

- ❖ UNDP needs to develop a well-structured regional framework that clearly captures and caters to the country offices' needs in providing upscaling funding support to entrepreneurs. This can be done leveraging the TEF model as has been demonstrated in Mali, however additional partnerships and resource mobilization would be required.
- **Outcome 4-** Apart from the review of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes in Africa assignment that was commissioned by UNDP RSCA in 2018, no major activities related to the specific outcome in the results framework have been registered. The project launched a review of past and current generation of TVET programmes in Africa exercise that was conducted by 3 expert consultants who travelled gathering information in Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa. Following the review exercise in 9 countries across the continent, the consultants prepared a comprehensive 150-page report highlighting their findings, recommendations, and conclusion. However, no further significant follow up to convert the study findings into concrete policy/reforms could be found. Since youth employment is a core foundation of the project, it is worth considering the use of findings derived from the TVET report to address the underlying skills/ job mismatch in Africa. The project results framework also captured additional activities related to apprenticeship programmes and linking 500,000 entrepreneurs to employment opportunities. These had however not been translated into specific achievements in the first phase of the project and would require additional resources and capacity. As this is a critical area and overlaps with outcome 3, the evaluation recommends combining outcome 3 and 4 going forward as an entrepreneurship and employment collective.

Project Efficiency: Overall efficiency rating: Moderately satisfactory in the overall operational areas despite the resource constraints but **unsatisfactory** in others such as planned vs. actual allocation of funds, and implementation and M&E mechanism with the exception of Partnership Strategy. The project document captures the need for a robust team of about 7-8 technical experts including a Senior Youth Programme Coordinator (P5), a Programme Advisor (P4), a Programme Specialist (P3), two Programme Analyst (P2 and NOB), and International UNVs. Since inception, the programme has operated without the technical capacity requirements but under the general supervision of the RSCA Director and Regional Programme Coordinator and recruitment 3 IUNVs (a regional coordination support officer, a partnerships and resource mobilization specialist, and a programme analyst). Due to the resource gap the project has operated without a dedicated senior project coordinator but has managed to maintain its core functions leveraging capacities available in country offices and national and regional partners. Recently the YouthConnekt Africa Hub has recruited the Executive Director to oversee activities.

A8- Planned budget envisaged to fully implement 4 outcomes of the programme was too large at USD \$57,799,660 over the 5-year period. The actual budget allocated between the year 2018-2020 raised serious concerns about the overall resource mobilization strategy, funding mechanism and financial sustainability of the programme. The evaluation did not register progressive annual resource mobilization to meet the ambitious financial proposal but rather a steady allocation from UNDP core. It is exceedingly important that the project is able to mobilize resources from existing and new partners to ensure it remains sustainable beyond UNDP support.

A9- Implementation Arrangement & Programme Board: Overall Rating: Overall Rating: *Moderately satisfactory* with the overall coordination and programme board framework and *Unsatisfactory* at the technical level.

Although the overall YouthConnekt project coordination board is clear, relatively functional, and includes an annual steering committee meeting, the actual implementation arrangement and role of programme steering board when compared to what is envisaged in the project document was found to be missing various components. For instance, the project document defines a clear leading role for the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities but does not seem to engage with these and other relevant regional institutions on a consistent basis. The evaluation did however note that previous engagements with the AU had been made (including endorsement of YouthConnekt by the AU) but did not result in a sustained collaboration. A review of the steering committee minutes shows a predominantly government and UNDP led steering board with minimal inclusion of other key regional stakeholders. The overall programme implementation modality is primarily coordinated between RSCA and the YC Hub (under the support of the Government of Rwanda). The roles of both key stakeholders are very much distinct. RSCA is primarily responsible for providing technical support to the country offices which co- implements YC, while the Hub communicates and coordinates with national stakeholders (the Ministry of Youth etc.) Keeping in view that the core aim of the project is to upscale YouthConnekt through national processes, a robust and well-structured implementation support process for new national chapters was not found. For example, the evaluation did not find a comprehensive process that supported the national project design (including project document), partnership development and resource mobilization, and monitoring. This may pose a serious implementation and sustainability risk going forward. Additionally, the evaluation noted the lack of technical YouthConnekt focal persons at country level (for most chapters) that could be engaged with on a regular basis to attain information, reports, and updates on ongoing activities. This presents a gap in sharing of knowledge and best practices consistently before the steering committee convenes.

A10- Monitoring & Evaluation- Overall Rating: *Moderately unsatisfactory* Keeping in view the geographical and programmatic scope of the project that presently covers 20 countries and 4 broad outcomes, the M&E mechanism has been found to be a weak component of the project. The main source of reporting (annual progress report) is not based on RBM principles rather it mainly captures activities that took place during the year at regional levels with limited information provided at country level. Although the data availability and relevant M&E system is in principle stronger in YC Hub, there remains no clear structured, standardized, M&E system that can assist data collection and reporting at country

levels. This undermines the assessment of the programme's contributions in medium to long term. There is pressing need to have a centralized, structured and holistic M&E system that is fed by all targeted country offices and then consolidated in a joint regional results framework. This observation is also consistently validated through stakeholder consultations and document reviews done within the evaluation process.

A11- Programme Partnership Strategy *Overall Rating: Moderately Satisfactory with some key points to tackle as way forward*

The programme partnership strategy envisaged in the project document has multiple partners to work with under different components

i) UNDP-AUC – It was clearly observed that despite having a very important strategic and political role as a partner, the AUC 's role in the project has not been consistent. This may hinder ownership of YouthConnekt at national and regional levels by stakeholders as a credible framework for coordination youth interventions. The AUC had been a key strategic partner of the programme and officially endorsed YouthConnekt initially as a continental youth empowerment platform. They have also participated in previous YC Summits and committed to supporting the continental scale up. However, no specific evidence was found supporting the actual role the AUC played in the project achievements

ii) YouthConnekt Africa Hub: Being most vital entity in ensuring the sustainability of YouthConnekt, YC Hub continues to play an active role in keeping the momentum going. However, it is worth mentioning that YC Hub has a much bigger role to play as it was envisaged in the project document. The Hub is in principle there to provide direct support to the implementation of national YouthConnekt programmes; serve as a platform of exchange on tools and best practices of YouthConnekt chapters across Africa; serve as a repository and advocate for improved sharing of communication about African and global youth initiatives; support partnerships and resource mobilization; manage and coordinate a YouthConnekt Africa Empowerment Fund. Although there is data found on the role played by the YC Hub in direct implementation of national YouthConnekt chapters, the overall structured, uniform mechanisms and tools are missing. Similarly, to RSCA, the YC Hub experiences capacity and resource constraints that limit implementation of its full mandate. It is therefore crucial for it as an independent institution with a wide range of partners to effectively mobilize resources for its operation and sustainability.

iii) The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF): It was observed that UNDP's partnership with TEF turned out to be a very successful and high impact collaboration that provided direct and quality benefit to youth entrepreneurship development. However, a revised approach to include a follow up mechanism to monitor youth beneficiaries is required to assess the long-term impact of the partnership.

iv) Jack Ma Foundation and UNCTAD- No direct evidence on any sustained partnership and related impact could be found with Jack Ma Foundation and UNCTAD

A12- Sustainability: Overall Rating: Overall Rating: Moderately likely with the exceptions of few components and with implementation of a very strong partnership and resource mobilization strategy.

The evaluation noted that the project lacks a comprehensive sustainability/exit plan for completion of the project cycle. It however notes that the YC Hub was established to ensure continuity of YouthConnekt but could not assess the extent to which it was self-sustaining. The evaluation identifies the following findings as critical for sustainability of YouthConnekt:

- As some of the UNDP project targets and indicators have not been achieved in the first phase, it is highly unlikely that all outputs and related activities could be sustained, particularly under outcome 1 & 4. It is therefore critical that the project revises its scope to a more modest and targeted results framework dispensing of unclear or highly expensive activities.
- Although YouthConnekt as a whole has effectively mobilized support from partners for the annual Summits, the evaluation observed that there is no continuous regional and national programming of that intensity throughout the year, including consolidation of commitments made during the summits. The sustainability of YouthConnekt relies on aggressive and continuous engagement of all key partners.
- **The financial sustainability of the entire project at the current level of activities is also a great concern. This is mainly due to lack of an effective and well targeted partnerships and resource mobilization strategy.** The evaluation observed limited sustained engagement with bilateral and multilateral partners already working/interested in youth development. A robust resource mobilization strategy (as well as a targeted communications plan) for the next phase therefore remains a prerequisite.

A13- Gender Equality, Empowerment & Vulnerable Groups-- Overall Rating: Satisfactory

The project registered varying degrees of success in ensuring gender equality. As the project is underpinned by the UN principles of gender inclusion it has actively promoted gender parity in all activities. However, this has not been successful across the board, for example, with the Mali entrepreneurship programme registering 30 % of the total female beneficiaries or 34% female participants at the YouthConnekt Summits. There is therefore a lot to be done to ensure socio-economic inclusion of young women.

A14- Lessons Learned

- The involvement of all key stakeholders in the design and planning of the project (whether at national or regional levels) could result in more clear and well-coordinated targets also leveraging collaborative advantages. At national level, this has been primarily been done to some degree between the UNDP offices and government but could be expanded to other stakeholder that engage with the same institutions on youth development, thereby reducing duplication and overlap between initiatives.

- Since the core aim of the programme is to upscale YouthConnekt programme in up to 45 countries in Africa, a strong implementation framework between the YC Hub and RSCA along with a well-established monitoring and evaluation process would be crucial. The evaluation therefore recommends a harmonized workplan between the two organizations to ensure coherence in activity. It seems that RSCA and the Hub developed their workplans separately and later tried to identify synergies rather than agree and develop priorities jointly from the onset.
- Creation of a strong ‘community of practice’ would be highly beneficial for knowledge exchange between initiatives particularly at country level. A central knowledge repository where countries can log ongoing activities and see key events in other places can be useful in improving communication between programmes.
- **COVID-19-** has affected implementation of the project both at regional and country levels. The evaluation noted that a lot of activities planned could not occur in 2020 (including the annual YCA Summit). The nature of the project activities often requires mobilization of young people and other stakeholders through physical convenings which caused a challenge during the pandemic. The evaluation however noted that various activities were reformulated to leverage digital tools and maintain consistent remote support to young beneficiaries through webinars and innovation challenges.
- A well targeted resource mobilization strategy remains a recurring prerequisite to ensure sustainability of the programme. The evaluation recommends a strong focus on this in the second phase with active engagement of development partners, bilateral and multilateral organizations, financial institutions, private sector and many more. A continuous mapping of potential partners on the continent and a plan of action to engage with them would be critically important. This also reduces the reliance on government and UNDP core resources for implementation.

Recommendations

A15- it is also worth mentioning that:

- The evaluation observed that the project has great potential for impact at scale if it narrows down the scope and doubles down on successful activities such as the annual conferences (which can also include sub-regional conferences), innovation awards, and entrepreneurship development activities. It also notes that a lot of technical and financial support is still required by existing and new national YouthConnekt chapters for their sustainability which creates another layer of activity for the YC Hub and RSCA.
- Where the Covid-19 pandemic has created challenges for the project, the evaluation recommends using the opportunity to revise the project document and results framework making it more relevant and responsive, also leveraging digital tools as much as possible.

A-16- Based on the these two critical observations, the overall assessments made on achievements, and lessons learned, **it is recommended that the project is extended for 3 years, with considerable redesigning in all aspects such as the theory of change, focus and scope, results framework, required financial and human resources, monitoring framework, partnership and resource mobilization strategy, and a sustainability plan.**

A17- Programme Plan and Design

- The evaluation identified the need for an *updated context analysis* for the project. Due to the internal and external changes that the project has experienced in the first phase (including the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, organizational focus on peacebuilding, development of the UNDP renewed strategic offer, etc.), a clear and targeted context analysis is required. It is vital to actively engage national and regional partners in the assessment of the youth developmental challenges and formulation of new project priorities. This will ensure increased ownership and commitment from implementing partners from the onset.
- Revisit the overall scope: a focused and less ambitious Results Framework for the entire duration of the second phase should be developed.
- The overall project target outcomes should be reduced **to maximum of 2 with a reduced number of outputs**. Instead of focusing on multiple isolated outputs and activities, the Project results framework and related implementing plan should be focused on the principle of *‘Think big, start small & scale fast’*.
- **Following two Outcomes are proposed**

Outcome 1- Youth Social and Economic Participation, employment and Leadership are enhanced.

Outcome 2- African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship are developed.

A18- Programme Implementation and M&E

- The evaluation recommends redesigning the project implementation and monitoring board particularly at the technical level with the overall objective to achieve the following:
 - ❖ Guide the development of a structured, standardized, and well-coordinated implementation plan whereby specific support to country level YC projects are fairly distributed and coordinated. It

will help bring up performance of country YC chapters to a relatively even level and respond collectively to areas where the needs are greatest.

- ❖ Ensure strong engagement with the AU and RECs youth development programmes as well as their consistent inclusion and contribution to the YouthConnekt steering board.
- ❖ Develop a robust and well-coordinated M&E process that fosters clear linkages between country and regional level programming particularly in the provision of regular progress reports. The M&E process should be able to provide a real time snapshot of all activities at any given point in time. The annual and quarterly reports compiled at all levels should form the basis of accurately assessing the overall contribution of the project to youth development in Africa.
- The evaluation found that some of the country teams are reluctant to send periodic reports as they did not have a dedicated focal person working on YouthConnekt. Country teams should be required to set up the appropriate mechanism and ensure that reports are sent and used to inform performance-based resource allocations. It can be achieved through an integrated M&E system (perhaps online) that would make uploading of progress reports a prerequisite for accessing various materials and resources.
- More importantly the M&E board should develop a coordination mechanism between RSCA and YC Hub to have more regular senior management meetings, especially keeping in view the overall mandates they both carry in the overall implementation.
- Similarly, there is need for an interactive knowledge sharing platform (in addition to the existing website) whereby all participating country teams, national counterparts and stakeholders can share information with each other and communicate upcoming activities.
- Finally, the project needs to leverage on already existing initiatives in the region rather than only focus on its own implementation. Projects by the AU, RECs, Accelerator labs can be leveraged to achieve some of the specific project targets.

A19- Partnership Strategy

- The overall partnership strategy needs to be revised. With the initial recommendation of bringing AUC back as a central and key stakeholder to provide ownership and custodianship of the programme at regional level, the revised project document should have a refined partnership strategy that:
 - ❖ Clearly identifies the value proposition and collaborative advantage of each partner in the project.
 - ❖ Provides a uniform template and set of documents to be used for engaging with partners and mobilizing resources.
 - ❖ Assigns clear roles and responsibilities between stakeholders with a strong accountability framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background & Contextual Analysis

Over the past few years, Africa has been experiencing rapid and substantial changes in the size of its population, particularly the youthful component. It is estimated that up to 235 million youth¹ (15-24 years) were living in Africa in 2016, which accounts for approximately 19 percent of the global youth population. It is also estimated that by 2030, the number of youths living in Africa will have increased by up to 42 percent. While the growing youth population presents important opportunities, especially in the form of the demographic dividend, there are many challenges attendant to such rapid rates of growth of the youth population. These include i) increasing open youth unemployment as well as high and pervasive underemployment rates, with the latter ranging from 60-80% in most Sub-Saharan African countries; ii) high incidence of working poverty among the youth, with up to 40% percent of working youth living in extreme or moderate poverty in 2017; iii) lack of either coherent and coordinated deliberate transformative macro-economic and sectoral policies that foster job rich growth or ineffectual implementation of such policies where they exist; iv) lack of updated inclusive and supportive youth strategies and policies in most countries; iv) marginalization of youth in leadership, social, economic, and civic processes - which dampen their voice and dulls the impact of their contributions to society; v) lack of technical, entrepreneurship, and soft skills; and vi) lack of adequate access to productive assets, technology and financial resources.

To tackle these issues, 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 UNDP Regional programme for supporting the upscaling of the YouthConnekt model in Africa is a 4-year multi-country and regional initiative. The programme is anchored in UNDP's Regional Programme and contributes to the following outcomes:

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

Output 1.1.2: Marginalized groups, particularly the poor, women, people with disabilities and displaced are empowered to gain universal access to basic services and financial and non-financial assets 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.

Overall, the regional programme is aimed at following objectives:

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 cannot 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, and programmes to assess 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 programme creates a dedicated space for youth to discuss issues with high level government representatives and assess progress made in implementation of programmes of concern to them. Furthermore, the programme 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 programme seeks to catalyze. UNDP has hereby collaborated with partners such as the Tony Elumelu Foundation to support entrepreneurship skills development.

4. To increase the number of youths that is gainfully employed. The programme 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.

The programme seeks to leverage key elements of the YouthConnekt initiative, which also brings together different initiatives and partners supporting youth development. Specifically, the current project focuses on implementing the following four main outcomes:

Outcome I Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened.

Outcome II Youth Social and Economic Participation and Leadership are enhanced.

Outcome III African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship are developed.

Outcome IV Increased Number of African Youth are Gainfully Employed.

The purpose of this midterm evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the ongoing project, identify the key lessons learned and recommend a way forward in the changing and evolving uncertain environment.

The initial desk review noted the following key attributes:

- Overall, the programme has the start and end date of June 2018-June 2022 respectively, and has shown progress varying from one output to another. Initial review suggested significant progress in Output 2-4 however initial data could not be found to substantiate any major progress towards output 1. It does not necessarily mean that data collection will yield similar pattern.
- There are certain reported achievements during project implementation that includes a sustained partnership with the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) which has resulted in considerable progress in supporting youth entrepreneurship.
- After gaining momentum, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has created or is leading towards some sort of hiatus that affected envisaged progress.
- Although the annual reports provide an initial brief snapshot of progress towards results, a detailed indicator update is not found in the initial desk review. It is therefore included as a part of the inception report and data collection tool.
- The overall results framework seemed to be very ambitious with some apparent issues of alignment with the country level programmes and related results framework.
- These initial observations are in line with the findings/recommendation 2 & 3 of the recently issued UNDP RBA's audit report in December 2020. It was highlighted in the report that there are overall weaknesses in project design with unclear indicators, baselines, and targets as well as the lack of implementation activities during Covid-19 pandemic with currently nonexistent risk management strategy to address it. It emphasizes the need for development of a strategy and management action

plan to address challenges of programme implementation that are posed by Covid-19 pandemic. The YouthConnekt project faces these two limitations as well.

Keeping in view some of the attributes found in the desk review and while evaluating the project under the basic criteria of the midterm review, the assessment was based on two primary parameters:

- I. How has the project performed so far with reference to its Results Framework, related indicators and targets;
- II. How and if the project can cope with and realign with the evolving unforeseen impact caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic and/or any changing context of the Africa region

Following evaluation approach is proposed in this regard.

2. Evaluation Objectives Approach

2.1 Evaluation Objectives and Criteria

The midterm evaluation of the project was aimed at addressing the following objectives and related evaluation criteria and the criteria assessed the performance of the project since its inception till the time of the mid-term evaluation:

i) To assess & evaluate the relevance of the project under following sub criteria:

- To what extent is the project aligned with regional development priorities, the Regional programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?
- To what extent is the project aligned with the UNDP's mandate, Strategic Plan, CPD and UNDAF of the countries of intervention?
- Do the project outcomes address identifiable problems of the Africa region, in particular to the problems of youth?
- To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant programmes 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?
- How relevant was the geographical coverage of the project?
- How the project was able to cater the needs of the beneficiaries in the changed context? Is there any evidence that the project advanced any key national human rights, gender or inclusion policies and the priorities of UN & UNDP?
- 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 countries of intervention? 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?

ii) To assess/evaluate the Effectiveness & Impact the programme under the following broader sub criteria

- To what extent are 4 outputs and the related targets of the project's results framework achieved so far?
- To what extent have the project objectives and outcomes, as set out in the project Document, project's Results Framework, and other related documents, have been achieved so far?
- To what extent did the project contribute to the regional programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and regional/national development priorities?
- Are some components better achieved than others? If yes, then Why?
- What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the project results?
- How effective has been the contribution of the project to improving governments of the countries' ownership, planning and management capacity process towards enhancing youth empowerment and employment?
- Are the project objectives clearly stated and contribution to results measurable?
- Did women, and marginalized groups of targeted youth directly benefit from the project's activities? If so, how and what was the impact?
- Were any changes made in the project regarding approach, partnerships, beneficiaries etc. suggested by any internal or external project mid-point assessment, context/risk analysis? Did it affect programme results?
- How successful have partnership arrangements been in contributing to sharing institutional capacity?
- 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 its frame?

iii) To assess and evaluate efficiency of the project delivery and implementation under the following sub-criteria

- Are outputs achieved within expected cost and time so far?
- Could the activities and outputs have been delivered in fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity?
- Is there major cost- or time-overruns or budget revisions?
- Is there a management or coordination mechanism for the partnership?

- How frequently and by what means information is shared within the project's stakeholders?
- Are project objectives and strategies understood by staff?
- Are project objectives and strategies understood by partners?
- How many levels of decision making are involved in operational approval?
- To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?
- Were the project inputs and benefits fairly distributed amongst different genders and communities while increasing access for the most vulnerable? What factors influenced decisions to fund certain proposed activities, and not others?
- How efficient is the M&E system and to what extent did M&E mechanism provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?
- Were the risks identified in the project document or process the most important and the risk ratings applied appropriately?
- How useful was the results framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it?
- To what extent did the coordination with other UN agencies and UNDP project reduce transaction costs, optimize results, and avoid duplication?

iv) To assess and evaluate the programme sustainability under the following sub criteria

- How sustainable has been the contribution of the project to improving country level ownership, planning and management capacity?
- Was project sustainability strategy developed during the project design?
- How should the project be enhanced to support the government, and partners in improving youth empowerment and employment over the long term?
- Is the project itself sustainable? (Financial, Institutional, Socio Economic and Resources etc.)
- What indications are there that the outcomes will be sustained (systems, structures, staff, etc.)?
- To what extent has a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key stakeholders of a country, been developed or implemented?
- To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support?
- 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?
- What changes should be made in the current set of project partnerships in order to promote long term sustainability?

v) Cross Cutting Themes

- To what extent has 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?

vi) UNDP Partnership methodology

- UN being one of many development partners operating in the region, are there any UN's overall comparative strengths or value addition, vis-à-vis other development partners?
- Do partner organizations share the same goals as the UN?
- How effective the UN partnership strategy and the partners are in providing added benefits for the project to achieve overall outcomes and outputs?
- 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?

v) Assess and analyze any Lessons Learned, challenges faced and furnish recommendations

2.2 Inception/Introductory Meeting/Call

Upon receiving the contract, a Zoom based inception/introductory meeting was held between the Consultant and the UNDP's team on 2nd February 2021.

The meeting was initiated with a brief introduction of the programme by the UNDP team members. The overview was followed by discussion on methodology, scope and expectations about key deliverables, particularly, data collection tools. In addition, the inception meeting call served as an opportunity to discuss management approach and coordination mechanisms of the assignment and to request relevant important documents. During the meeting, UNDP also confirmed sharing all the readily available information as well

as documents pertaining to the program for desk review and document analysis. The Inception meeting call was followed by further correspondence on exchange of key information on programme (documents) and management of the virtual consultations.

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The following sections provide relevant details with regards to the **evaluation methodology** adopted on the basis of the TORs for undertaking the assignment **and findings from the initial Desk Review** undertaken.

PREPARATION OF THE EVALUATION

3.1. Desk Review and Document Analysis

The foundation of the desk review was the background documents shared with the Consultant by the UNDP team. It is worth mentioning that a multiple sourced set of documents were furnished that includes detailed programme documents, annual programme update report, fact sheets and AWP's etc. However, the lack of a Results Based Reporting format was a clear missing link as it would have provided the detailed snapshot of programme performance against the programme results framework and related indicators & targets. Although outputs were outlined in the beginning of the annual reports, only activity level details are provided without any clear linkages with the outputs. Nevertheless, this data will now be gathered through the primary data collection. The programme design document provided in-depth background contextual analysis and facilitated a good and in-depth understanding of the programme and enabled an effective assessment design. Some of the other documents will be further requested as required.

A list of documents reviewed during this stage is provided in the **Annex A**.

3.2 Programmatic Scope of the Assessment

The programmatic scope of the evaluation exercise will be primarily focused on evaluating the relevance, effectiveness & impact, efficiency and sustainability of the following key outputs, indicators, and targets of the results framework in the different years of programme implementation.

Table 1: Indicators Monitoring Framework

Results to be achieved 2018-2020			
Outcome	Outputs	Indicators to be Evaluated	Target
Outcome I Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened	Output 1.1 Transformative national development plans and policies that integrate deliberate job creation developed. And effectively implemented.	No. of dev. plans that are job rich & transformative effectively implemented. Baseline-30% of Plans fulfilling the criteria of being job rich.	2018 -35% 2019 - 45% 2020 - 50%
	Output 1.2 Conducive macro-economic and fiscal policies for job creation reinforced.	No. of conducive macro-economic and fiscal policies for job creation developed Baseline-50%	2018 -55% 2019 - 60% 2020 - 70%
	Output 1.3 Laws and regulations that promote and facilitate an enabling business environment for job creation improved.	No of reforms implemented Baseline- Less than 50% of African countries meeting the minimum stipulated benchmarks of the World Bank Doing Business Index.	2018 -55% 2019 - 65% 2020 - 70%
	Output 1.4 Youth policies updated and integrated into pro-growth national development strategies/plans	National development plans, strategies and policy frameworks of the various countries in Africa. Baseline: National development and Youth Empowerment strategies.	2018 -44 out of 54 countries (44/54) 2019 - 46/54 2020 - 48/54

Outcome II Youth Social and Economic Participation and Leadership are Enhanced.	Output 2.1 Sub-national, national and continental platforms and programmes to facilitate active youth interaction, participation and leadership developed.	No. of platforms developed. Baseline-1 No. of programmes developed Baseline-2	2018-2 2019- 10 2020- 15 2018-4 2019- 8 2020- 14
	Output 2.2 21st Century Leadership Skills programmes developed.	No. of programmes developed Baseline-2	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15
	Output 2.3 National volunteer programmes to promote active citizenship and civic engagement developed and implemented.	No. of participants (disaggregated by sex) in national volunteer programmes developed and rolled out through this programme Baseline-2	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 12
	Output 2.4 Technical and financial support provided to Youth and community organizations.	No. of community Development interventions implemented Baseline-0	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15
	Output 2.5 National YouthConnekt. models and products developed.	No. of YouthConnekt models & products developed Baseline-5	2018-8 2019- 15 2020- 18

	Output 2.6 Youth actively engaged and leading in SDG awareness and interventions.	No. of participants disaggregated by sex engaged in SDG awareness and interventions.	
Outcome III African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship Capacities are Developed or Reinforced.	Output 3.1 African Youth have increased capacities to actively engage in business, management and entrepreneurship.	No. of potential entrepreneurs (disaggregated by sex) and SMEs who received relevant entrepreneurial and managerial skills. Baseline-50	2018-250 2019- 250 2020- 250
	Output 3.2 Entrepreneurship culture and action advanced	No. of entrepreneurial culture advocacy and training programmes broadcasted by mass media Baseline-50	2018-250 2019- 250 2020- 250
	Output 3.3. Capacities for Job rich value chains and enterprises strengthened	No. of value chains strengthened Baseline-0	2018-2 2019- 5 2020- 10
	Output 3.4 Youth and SMEs facilitated access to innovative finance.	No. of SMEs facilitated access to innovative finance through this programme. Baseline-60	2018-100 2019- 200 2020- 300

	Output 3.5 Collective action multi-stakeholder platforms for inclusive business and social enterprises developed.	No of country level multi-stakeholder platforms created Baseline-0	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15
Outcome IV Increased Number of African Youth are Productively Employed.	Output 4.1 Research studies identifying direct employment opportunities and training needs at national and sectoral levels conducted.	No. of research studies. Baseline-5	2018-6 2019- 10 2020- 15
	Output 4.2 TVET Programmes reviewed and reinforced	No. of programmes reviewed Baseline-0	2018 1 Region – wide Study 2019- 4 Country reviews 2020- Focused Study on Implementation Frameworks for TVET
	Output 4.3	No. on the job training programmes. Baseline-0	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15

	Direct on-job training, and apprenticeship programmes developed.		
	Output 4.4 Employment Action Platforms and Industry Partnerships supported.	No of employment Action Plans Baseline-0	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15
	Output 4.5 Innovative partnerships for youth entrepreneurship and job creation established	No of partnership agreements and arrangements Baseline-4	2018-5 2019- 6 2020-8
	Outcome 4.5 Knowledge products on innovative YouthConnekt solutions developed and disseminated.	No. of Knowledge Products. Baseline-0	2018-2 2019- 5 2020- 6

3.3 Development of Assessment Tools

The TORs and the desk Review of the document provided an informed foundation for the development of assessment tools. These tools are based on the principles of three participatory techniques and comprise of:

- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)
- Questionnaire based Survey (QBS)
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) (wherever/if possible/required)

The above-mentioned tools were user friendly and provide a combination of qualitative and quantitative information. **Annex B** provides a detailed ‘**Evaluation Questions Matrix**’, relevant/related data collection methods and sources for the evaluation mission. These questions provided the guiding basis for the interviews, QBS and the Focused Group Discussions (FGDs, If any).

DATA COLLECTION FROM THE FIELD

3.4 Data Collection

To undertake the assessment, it was ensured that the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative information through a combination of primary and secondary sources. Data collected from one source were triangulated with the other to ensure accuracy and validity. An intelligent mix of both approaches will lend more quality and depth to ensure greater understanding of the phenomenon. This, therefore, presented information about the nature, extent, effect and impact of the issues in the targeted area.

The assessment was carried out in a participatory manner, where feedback was gathered both from stakeholders at the beneficiaries as well as the institutional levels. During the data collection, the Consultant conducted:

3.4.1 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

To consult the relevant programme stakeholders, key informant interviews were conducted. The KIIs were conducted virtually through Skype or Zoom. The **Annex D** will indicate the relevant stakeholders that were consulted for each of the key results areas of the project. It is however noteworthy that the response of stakeholders for interviews as well as for other tools has been very limited.

Annex B provides a guiding list of interview question for the key informant interviews under the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, cross cutting themes and UN’s partnership strategy

3.4.2 Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS)

Since the project geographical scope is vast and scattered and stretched to 20 countries of the African region, combined with no field mission and reliance on the virtual data collection, a comprehensive Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) is planned to capture data from a range of stakeholders of the project. It will assist in further validating and triangulating data gathered from the range of project documents, news articles, published stories, as well as data gathered during KIIs and FGDs. Annex C provided the overall set of questions for the QBS. **Annex C** provides the basic set of questions for QBS, divided into 2 parts i) For UNDP staff, (ii) Partners & Beneficiaries. Section A is of the QBS is highly recommended for the donors but it has still been kept optional for them.

It is worth mentioning that stakeholder's response to the QBS has been very limited. The questionnaire was indeed revised twice to make it shorter and easier to fill in as per the demand of the stakeholders. Nevertheless, extremely limited response was gathered.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Keeping in view the time constraints and nature of the project, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with the youth beneficiaries was proposed/planned to get a combined feedback from the beneficiaries including young entrepreneurs, who got employment and attended annual youth summits etc. While conducting FGDs, a selected set of direct stakeholders were gathered to discuss issues and concerns based on a list of key themes drawn up by the Consultant. The participants of the FDG will be selected in consultation with the UNDP team. While conducting FGDs, a group of 15+ young beneficiaries participated. **FGD turned out to be the highlight and most useful and beneficial data collection tool to gather data**

3.5 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was expected to be intensive as it aimed to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data from a broad stakeholder base and 5 outputs area; analytical tools were applied which permit comparisons. Triangulation of data gathered from various data collection tools were conducted as a basic data analysis mechanism. **Qualitative data** gathered during the course of the assessment was transcribed and categorized according to the various themes and topics explored with clear conclusions drawn. The **quantitative analysis** included percentages, comparisons, planned vs. actual quantitative targets (as per the programme's results framework in various AWP), etc. Data will also be presented in graphical form so that trends can be clearly read and correlations drawn.

Rating Criteria

Following ratings are used for the assessment of each of the sections of the programme

Ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency, Overall programme outputs Rating, M&E	Sustainability ratings	Relevance ratings
6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS): moderate shortcomings 3. Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2. Unsatisfactory (U): major shortcomings 1. Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe shortcomings	4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability	2. Relevant (R)
	3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks	1. Not relevant (NR)
	2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	
Additional ratings where relevant: Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)		

3.6 Evaluation Limitations

As briefly indicated above, the evaluation exercise faced few intrinsic as well unforeseen challenges;

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the data collection was entirely based on the virtual means and tools. It is noteworthy that despite continued effort as well repeated reminders by the UNDP project team to arrange KIIs and more specifically get feedback through QBS, with the exception of UNDP staff and TEF, no QBS is being submitted. It is also important to mention that the QBS was revised twice on demand of stakeholders to make it short and easy to fill in. However, the response remained very limited.

To mitigate these challenges, following measures were adopted:

- Worked with the Project Team to directly interact and communicate with the stakeholders to arrange meetings/consultations and following up about QBS etc. (with limited response)
- Heavy reliance on data gathering through documents review and KIIs (UNDP staff)
- FGD with youth beneficiaries assisted in collecting valuable data on youth summit and entrepreneurship components of the project
- QBS was revised twice and the deadline was extended twice to include as many remaining stakeholders as possible.
- Data collection phase was extended by conducting FGD as well as the data analysis phase was conducted in parallel (wherever possible) to manage the time constraints.

4. Evaluation Findings

4.1 Relevance

Overall Rating: *Relevant* with the UNDP Strategic Plan and Regional Plan for Africa as well as regional context of youth empowerment and employment. However, a more focus, concise and clear alignment with the country level UNDAF/CPDs (wherever it has been piloted) may be required for sustained ownership and ground level results.

Relevance of the project with the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa at the time of its inception is one of its strongest attributes. It is also indirectly aligned to the UNDP Strategic Plan as well as UNDP's renewed commitment in Africa. However, it is worth mentioning that since the programme's main aim is to upscale and pilot in other African countries (20 so far), clear and direct linkages of the project's results framework and focus areas of intervention with the 20-country level UNDAF/CPDs were not adequately found. Going forward it will be vital to draw these linkages with both UNDP's country level priorities as well as the relevant national youth policies and strategies to ensure sustainable ownership and anchorage of the project.

4.1.1 Relevance with the Regional Programme Document for Africa:

The project is very much aligned and contributing to the following outcome and related output of the Regional Programme for Africa

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.

4.1.2 Relevance with UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2012

Although indirectly, but the project outcomes and outputs are aligned, relevant and contributing to the following outcomes and output of the UNDP's Strategic Plan:

Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development.

Outcome 1: Advance Poverty Eradication in all its Forms and Dimensions.

Output 1.1.2: Marginalized groups, particularly the poor, women, people with disabilities and displaced are empowered to gain universal access to basic services² and financial and non-financial assets to build productive capacities and benefit from sustainable livelihoods and jobs.

4.1.3 Relevance with the UNDP's Renewed Strategic Offer in Africa

Interestingly and more significantly, the project is clearly and directly aligned and linked with the following key programmatic priorities of the UNDP's renewed strategic offer in Africa

Programme Priority Areas

Output 1: Sub-national, national, regional and continental youth platforms and programmes that facilitate active youth interaction, participation in SDG agenda, peacebuilding and leadership are developed

Activity 1.1: Support development of sub-national, national, regional and continental platforms that facilitate active youth participation in leadership and decision-making processes.

Activity 1.5: Support the establishment of national volunteer schemes to promote active citizenship and civic engagement, social cohesion and the participation of youth in development and peace processes.

Output 2: YouthConnekt is scaled-up and established in every RBA country over the next two to five years

Activity 2.1: Support formulation of transformative national development plans and policies that integrate deliberate job creation and active youth engagement. **Activity 2.2:** Support stakeholders in all RBA countries to develop innovative and responsive YouthConnekt programmes, and foster regional networks and knowledge sharing between initiatives. **Activity 2.3:** Support formulation of a multi-stakeholder interactive platform that integrates innovative strategies to accelerate youth development in Africa

Output 3: Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Programme expanded.

Activity 3.1: Support development of African youth capacity to actively engage in business, management and entrepreneurship through training, mentoring and apprenticeship programmes. **Activity 3.2:** Facilitate youth and SMEs access to innovative finance by partnering with financial institutions, private sector, bilateral, NGOs and foundations.

² Basic services include social services (e.g. health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, social housing, vocational training), economic services (including finance), environmental and energy services (e.g. renewables, clean fuels and technology, use of natural resources), and other services (e.g. rule of law and justice).

4.2 Effectiveness

Overall, the project has made considerable contribution to youth empowerment and employment in Africa. To date it has supported scaling up of the YouthConnekt model to a total of 20 African countries. However, the overall performance of the project varies from one outcome to the other as well as from one country to the other. The evaluation notes that the project has performed and maintained good momentum under the Outcome 2 (Youth Social and Economic Participation) and particularly Outcome 3 (Business and Entrepreneurship Development). However, despite registering some results under Outcome 4 (Youth employment), most of the key targets were not fully met. Similarly, it is also observed that very limited progress has been made under the Outcome 1 (Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened.) which seems to involve support to formulation of youth related policies and national frameworks. More importantly, since the core aim of the programme is to upscale YouthConnekt in other African countries, sustained implementation of activities in all 20 implementing countries were not consistently found, with the exception of countries such as Rwanda, Liberia, and Zimbabwe. For example, the implementation of YouthConnekt in other countries has not seen the same results and successes on a consistent basis as those experienced in the pioneering Rwanda model that was formed in 2012. The evaluation however notes that different countries are at different stages of implementation (some being implemented very recently while others still in process of formulation) which would also influence the non-uniform results registered. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for structured implementation & monitoring mechanisms to track progress across the continent and support national YouthConnekt programmes that require additional resource mobilization and capacity. A large component of this will entail strong technical capacity building and mobilization of financial resources from national and regional stakeholders. The UNDP regional YouthConnekt project document implies an allocation of regional financial resources mobilized to national YouthConnekt programmes. This has however not been forthcoming due to the significant resource gap and capacity. The limited progress in terms of each indicator in the UNDP YouthConnekt project document seems to be attributed to the overambitious and unclear results framework as well as limited resources (both financial and human resources) rather than the projects's overall performance. This observation is also in line with the point 2 & 3 of the recently issued UNDP RBA's audit report in December 2020. It was highlighted in the report that there are overall weaknesses in project design with unclear indicators, baselines and targets as well as the lack of consistent implementation of activities during Covid-19 pandemic with a small risk management strategy. There is reference to an annual project risk log developed by the regional programme to help ensure delivery of allocated resources despite emerging risks, nevertheless a more comprehensive risk management framework in the project document (and as agreed upon by stakeholders) is a missing link of the project formulation. A large list of vague and overambitious targets and indicators (such as 10 million jobs by 2025, 25 million opportunities through training, etc.) has clearly impeded on

some of the considerable progress made by the project, particularly in the area of youth participation and entrepreneurship. With the implementation of the project in 20 countries, it is likely that some of these ambitious results have been realized however there seems to be no effective monitoring mechanism to effectively quantify the results that can inform subsequent activities and priorities. The project needs to be clear and concise in terms of what it will contribute to achievement of these ambitious targets as it cannot directly or singularly influence all of them. A more modest focus will be required in the second phase of the project and should effectively distinguish between its priorities (such as scaling up the model to 45 RBA countries and supporting development of robust national frameworks) and those at national level.

Following is the output wise assessment of the programme effectiveness so far:

i) Outcome I Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened

Outputs	Indicators to be Evaluated	Target	Status on activities and targets
Output 1.1 Transformative national development plans and policies that integrate deliberate job creation developed. And effectively implemented.	No. of dev. plans that are job rich & transformative effectively implemented. Baseline-30% of Plans fulfilling the criteria of being job rich.	2018 -35% 2019 - 45% 2020 - 50%	Although some data on indirect support in 6 countries in developing similar plans are found, no concrete evidence is found validating the set targets
Output 1.2 Conducive macro-economic and fiscal policies for job creation reinforced.	No. of conducive macro-economic and fiscal policies for job creation developed	2018 -55% 2019 - 60% 2020 - 70%	Currently, there is an ongoing recruitment of consultants to conduct a comprehensive review of Macro-economic and Fiscal policies for job creation with a focus on youth unemployment is in process, however the targets are underachieved.

	Baseline-50%		
Output 1.3 Laws and regulations that promote and facilitate an enabling business environment for job creation improved.	<p>No of reforms implemented</p> <p>Baseline- Less than 50% of African countries meeting the minimum stipulated benchmarks of World Bank Doing Business Index.</p>	<p>2018-55%</p> <p>2019- 65%</p> <p>2020- 70%</p>	No evidence is found on any concrete achievement of any of these targets for the related indicators
Output 1.4 Youth policies updated and integrated into pro-growth national development strategies/plans	<p>National development plans, strategies and policy frameworks of the various countries in Africa.</p> <p>Baseline: National development and Youth Empowerment strategies.</p>	<p>2018-44 out of 54 countries (44/54)</p> <p>2019- 46/54</p> <p>2020- 48/54</p>	There is some partial progress towards some of the indicators, however most of the targets are under achieved. For instance, there is an ongoing recruitment of consultants to conduct review of youth policies in Africa. Moreover, some generic ongoing support towards national development plans, strategies and policy frameworks within the context of implementing the UNDP regional support for youth development

Overall Assessment

Overall, the assessment of data gathered indicates that there has been some progress made under outcome 1, however these have been disrupted by the ongoing pandemic. A large component of this outcome (conducive and enabling environment for job-rich growth is strengthened) involves supporting youth policy formulation and implementation with government. This inherently creates a challenge as it does not account for the heavy political dynamics at play. For of the outputs in the project document states that “The programme will support selected African governments to develop national policies, outline clear

mechanisms and steps for economic and social reintegration of voluntary returnees from extremist groups and those who are returning from adverse migration experiences. Each country will receive up to USD50,000 to hold consultations and develop the required documentation”. Although very important, this activity is very broad and complex and slightly deviates from the core focus of scaling up the YouthConnekt model. Adding a financial component/ incentive to this (as has been done in other outputs) may not necessarily be the appropriate approach. It would be recommended for the project to operate within existing infrastructures for peace and narrow down to a more specific youth related focus in the area of peacebuilding. Achievement of the specific targets under outcome 1 (such as hosting 4 regional dialogue events/seminars on job-rich growth and transformation strategies and policies.) will be challenging to complete within the remaining time of the project (which ends in 2022) and taking into account the various resource constraints and risks caused by the pandemic. In summary, the indicators and targets set in the results framework for the outcome 1 were found to be difficult to implement considering the scope of the programme, the resource constraints, and the political challenges. The evaluation therefore recommends narrowing down the focus, recognizing and working within existing infrastructures (such as those developed by African Union, RECs, and states) and defining the specific value addition of the project’s intervention rather than spreading the available capacities and resources too thin. The evaluation re-emphasizes the importance of sticking to the core functions of supporting implementation of robust national YouthConnekt programmes, as implied by the overall project orientation, and ensuring that all necessary mechanisms are in place to ensure their sustainability. Branching to policy formulation and peacebuilding could be done upon request by countries or based on a clear needs assessment (in areas such as the Sahel, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes region) and can be embedded in context specific national programmes.

ii) Outcome 2 Youth Social and Economic Participation and Leadership are enhanced

Output 2.1 Sub-national, national and continental platforms and programmes to facilitate active youth interaction, participation and leadership developed.	No. of platforms developed. Baseline-1 No. of programmes developed Baseline-2	2018-2 2019- 10 2020- 15 2018-4 2019- 8 2020- 14	Although strictly in terms of quantitative numbers, it has been found that targets are underachieved in terms of the ‘no of platforms’ developed. However, the YouthConnekt Africa Summit has turned out to be a high impact, deeply beneficial platform to ensure youth participation and interaction. This is one of the most compelling success stories of the programme so far
Output 2.2 21st Century Leadership Skills programmes developed.	No. of programmes developed Baseline-2	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15	Keeping over ambitious targets aside, Ongoing Regional Youth fellowship programme training seminars on 21st Century leadership skills, 4 training seminars, and 8 Webinars are found to

			be as highly beneficial events (validated by both youth beneficiaries, KIIS and documents)
Output 2.3 National volunteer programmes to promote active citizenship and civic engagement developed and implemented.	No. of participants (disaggregated by sex) in national volunteer programmes developed and rolled out through this programme Baseline-2	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 12	There is no specific or detailed data can be found under this output
Output 2.4 Technical and financial support provided to Youth and community organizations.	No. of community Development interventions implemented Baseline-0	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15	There is no specific or detailed data can be found under this output
Output 2.5 National YouthConnekt. models and products developed.	No. of YouthConnekt models & products developed Baseline-5	2018-8 2019- 15 2020- 18	Although most of the targets are underachieved, references are found about 3 YouthConnekt products developed through the programme. However, no data/feedback could validate the effectiveness and benefit of these products
Output 2.6 Youth actively engaged and leading in SDG awareness and interventions.	No. of participants disaggregated by sex engaged in SDG awareness and interventions.		Considerable progress could be found, backed by specific targeted interventions such as SDG awareness campaigns and support towards youth led innovative interventions. Moreover, it included annual YouthConnekt innovation Award challenge. Supported

			the Youth for Africa and SDGs Innovation challenge.
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Overall Assessment

The project's contribution towards youth participation and leadership development is one of the stronger attributes. For example, YouthConnekt Africa Summit signature event was found to be an excellent forum whereby youth are exposed to a range of national and regional stakeholders and effectively engage with them towards addressing youth related challenges. The 2018 YouthConnekt Africa summit saw 2,800 delegates representing governments, UN agencies, private sector, youth leaders, NGOs and civil society, convene with the aim of developing partnership, programs and policies to empower youth for continental transformation. Similarly, the following year convened 10,000 delegates comprising of 30 Youth Ministers, 25 UNDP Resident Representatives, AU, high level UN officials and UN goodwill Ambassadors, development partners, corporations and global business leaders, CSOs, private sector venture capitalists, business angels, development partners, youth, accelerators and innovation labs, from over 90 countries to deliberate and develop solutions to the underlying youth socio-economic challenges. At a more localized level, the YouthConnekt national programmes comprise of components (such as YouthConnekt Dialogue and YouthConnekt Convention) that seek to facilitate effective and consistent youth leadership and participation in decision making processes. The evaluation identified from a sample group of national programmes that implement of YouthConnekt across all countries has a component related to national dialogue and youth inclusion in national decision-making processes. As recurrently evident, the YouthConnekt Rwanda programme has registered the best and most consistent results. This may be attributed to the strong political leadership and national ownership of the programme. Other countries reviewed such as Liberia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Cabo Verde, and Madagascar have shown some activities and varying degrees of success in this areas but did not provide detailed information during the evaluation process. The evaluation did register a concerning lack of uniform and consistent implementation of youth related civic engagement activities such as the national dialogues and conventions in YouthConnekt implementing countries (although all seem to capture this within their initial framework). The replication of the blueprint developed by Rwanda seems to be irregular across existing programmes. It is therefore critical that the project does a clear assessment of the gaps and challenges experienced in other countries and develops appropriate responses to ensure that these programmes' implementation and sustainability frameworks are brought to par with that of the Rwanda model. This output in itself is quite intensive for the UNDP regional project (in terms of capacity and resources) and calls for concerted effort between the regional youth team and the YouthConnekt Africa Hub. **It is therefore critical that the project does not only focus on the number of implementing countries but monitors the effectiveness of each national programme and does a clear needs assessment to respond accordingly.** Each national YouthConnekt component needs to be well document and demonstrate regularity in activity and results.

Bringing it back to the regional project, the expected results framework again captures a series of ambitious, financial resource intensive, and difficult to quantify outputs and activities. For example, the ‘expected results’ section of the document outcome 2 states that “The project will host at least fifteen (15) national and sub-national youth conventions and dialogues in select African countries. Relevant national counterparts in 15 countries will be awarded up to USD50,000 each to roll out programmes where young people can connect with leaders, role models, peers, and resources aimed at enhancing 21st Century leadership skills, mindset changes, civic engagement and active youth participation capacities in both local and national governance”. The document also states that “UNDP will award up to 19 community building institutions USD50,000 each to hold events and interventions in areas that are most vulnerable to conflict for innovative community engagement activities aimed at reducing the intra as well as irregular migration”. These again deviates from the core objective of the project and spread resources and capacity too thin resulting in sporadic and elusive results. These activities proved challenging to implement with the financial resource gap. The evaluation therefore recommends revising activities captured under this outcome with stronger focus on technical support required to country level. Reinforcement of the activities captured under components such as the YC Dialogues and Conventions in national programmes to ensure their regular implementation may be a better measure of success. The project could also work within existing regional frameworks and processes such as those developed by the AU and RECs for consolidated and less capital intensive results.

Outcome 3: African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship Capacities are Developed or Reinforced.

Output 3.1 African Youth have increased capacities to actively engage in business, management and entrepreneurship.	No. of potential entrepreneurs (disaggregated by sex) and SMEs who received relevant entrepreneurship and managerial skills. Baseline-50	2018-25 2019-0 2020-25 2021-0	Excellent progress is made against the indicators and targets (validated from multiple sources). Supporting over 7,000 young leaders and entrepreneurs with capacity building through the UNDP TEF entrepreneurship programme, UNDP Regional Youth Fellowship Programme, and YouthConnekt Africa Annual Summits, backed by Bootcamps is an impressive achievement.
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Output 3.2 Entrepreneurship culture and action advanced	No. of entrepreneurship culture advocacy and training programmes broadcasted by mass media Baseline-50	2018-25 2019-0 2019-25 2020-0 2020-25 2020-0	No significant evidence is found on any campaign broadcasted by the media
Output 3.3. Capacities for Job rich value chains and enterprises strengthened	No. of value chains strengthened Baseline-0	2018-2 2019-5 2020-10	No evidence is found
Output 3.4 Youth and SMEs facilitated to access innovative finance.	No. of SMEs facilitated to access innovative finance through this programme. Baseline-60	2018-10 2019-0 2019-20 2020-0 2020-30 2020-0	The target is over achieved by some margin. Facilitated over 3,000 SMEs with access to innovative finance through the UNDP/ TEF Entrepreneurship Programme and the YouthConnekt Innovation Challenge Awards
Output 3.5 Collective action multi-stakeholder platforms for inclusive business and social enterprises developed.	No of country level multi-stakeholder platforms created Baseline-0	2018-5 2019-10 2020-15	Although no evidence is found on any existing model, this is one of the key attributes in going forward

Overall Assessment

- The evaluation recognizes that Outcome 3 of the project seemed to have registered the most direct and quantifiable contribution as captured within the results framework. It primarily focuses on

supporting business and entrepreneurship development of youth and was found progressive, both from year to year as well as in geographical scope. Compared to other outcome areas, the benefits of this outcome are spread in a relatively uniform way. For achievement of these results the project leveraged its partnership with the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) to deliver a parallel entrepreneurship programme with high impact results. It is noted in the project document that achievement of this outcome and associated activities would be realized by collaborating with existing partners such as TEF but did not necessarily imply that this would be specifically linked to YouthConnekt. The partnership with TEF has also been found as a strong point in delivering high impact results. UNDP has directly invested about USD 13.77 million with TEF to support youth entrepreneurship development under 4 iterations of the initiative within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that UNDP signed with TEF in October 2017 after the first annual YouthConnekt Africa Summit. UNDP initiated the collaboration in 2018, through the RSCA, supported 40 budding entrepreneurs through a 12- week targeted training and capacity programme preparing them to launch their startups. Following completion of the training modules and subsequent development of a business plan which was reviewed by Accenture, UNDP RSCA disbursed a total of USD 200,000 towards the 40 entrepreneurs (USD 5,000 startup capital each).

The programme overall directly seeks to addresses some of the most endemic challenges to African start-ups through a 4 step process:

1. An online toolkit- The programme provides access to TEF's proprietary online Start-up Toolkit training, which is a comprehensive, practical training that equips entrepreneurs with resources on financial planning, market analysis, product marketing, business management skills, and many more. Over the 12- week period, the entrepreneurs are assigned a module with assignments that are completed with dedicated mentors. A weekly webinar is held by TEF to facilitate deeper understanding of the principles covered and respond to questions. Interpretation in French is available for French-speaking entrepreneurs to attend the training programme as well.
2. Mentoring- The programme matches mentors selected from all over the world in a 1:2 ratio with entrepreneurs to coach and guide them through the 12- training programme. The mentorship leverages online tools such as the the TEFCconnect platform, emails, social media, etc. Mentor selection and matching is carefully conducted to ensure alignment with the entrepreneurs' goals and objectives.
3. Business plan preparation and review- The programme further supports entrepreneurs that have been through the 12- week training to develop a business plan using a simplified template provided. Subsequent to this, a business plan certification competitive process occurs to review, provide feedback and refine the document to ensure feasibility.
4. Seed capital investment- Upon certification of the business plan, the programme provides a non-refundable seed capital investment of up to USD 5,000 in a United Bank of Africa (UBA) corporate bank account in the business name of the entrepreneur. A due

diligence exercise is conducted in which the entrepreneur is required to fulfill certain compliance criteria before eligible for the funding.

Based on key lessons derived from the first iteration, a second programme was initiated in 2019 after UNDP conducted a micro-assessment as part of the requirements under the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Framework. The HACT framework represents a common operation outline for UN agencies' transfer of funds to government and non- governmental implementing partners. The micro-assessment evaluates the implementing partners' control framework to determine a risk rating (low, moderate, significant, or high) and informs eligibility for appropriate cash transfer modality for an implementing partner.

The second initiative focused on supporting 755 entrepreneurs using the same TEF model and mobilized USD 3.77 Million from 28 UNDP country offices while the third mobilized USD 5 million from the Regional Programme to train and finance over 3,000 startups in 7 countries within the Sahel. In 2020 a follow up initiative was implemented by the Mali country office and TEF support about 2,200 entrepreneurs with training and 1,862 with financing.

Additionally, UNDP organized a series of regional youth fellowship training seminars in Uganda and Addis ababa that sought to provide training modules on entrepreneurship, 21st Century leadership skills and volunteerism as well as connecting young entrepreneurs to opportunities and information in sectors such as Agribusiness, Blue Economy and ICT. The training seminars aimed to not only impart critical skills but also challenge the YouthConnekt Fellows to commit to transformative action in the 12 months that followed. Along these lines, the YouthConnekt Awards was launched to financially reward young entrepreneurs providing innovative solutions to big social problems.

Based on the feedback gathered during the evaluation process there are a few areas of consideration for the entrepreneurship development activities moving forward:

- ❖ The follow up mechanism after providing initial start-up support to monitor how the youth entrepreneurs are progressing needs to be strengthened.
- ❖ While providing bootcamp trainings, assisting young entrepreneurs in converting ideas into viable business plans are vital for the programme and should be captured as one of the eligibility criteria for the disbursements of funds, a separate stream of providing upscaling support to existing database of young entrepreneurs is also vital.
- ❖ There is a strong need/demand to create a regional digital platform to create a network of regional young entrepreneurs as well as mentors for continued support. The existing YouthConnekt website remains relatively static and should be redesigned into a more interactive portal. It is however noted that the Youth for Africa and SDGs (YAS) platform developed by the UNDP regional Private Sector team has been integrated in the website but does not fully harness its capabilities

due to financial recourse constraints for recruitment of a dedicated IT company to manage the website.

- ❖ Provision of digital access for disadvantaged youth, and the use of more offline approaches is also necessary for improved impact of the programme in areas where digital penetration is low. This has been particularly demonstrated as a challenge in implementing the UNDP/TEF entrepreneurship programme that is mainly online.
- ❖ There is need for a more targeted approach towards entrepreneurship development of young women as their participation remains relatively lower than their male counterparts.
- ❖ UNDP needs to develop a well-structured regional framework that clearly captures and caters to the country offices' needs to providing upscaling funding support to entrepreneurs. This can be done leveraging the TEF model as has been demonstrated in Mali, however additional partnerships and resource mobilization would be required.

Outcome 4- Increased Number of African Youth are Productively Employed.

Output 4.1 Research studies identifying direct employment opportunities and training needs at national and sectoral levels conducted.	No. of research studies. Baseline-5	2018-6 2019- 10 2020- 15	Apart from a comprehensive review of TVET programmes in Africa in 2018, no other targets are achieved
Output 4.2 TVET Programmes reviewed and reinforced	No. of programmes reviewed Baseline-0	2018 1 Region – wide Study 2019- 4 Country reviews 2020- Focused Study on Implementation Frameworks for TVET	Apart from a comprehensive review of TVET programmes in Africa in 2018, no other targets are achieved
Output 4.3	No. on the job	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15	No specific evidence on targets achievement is found

Direct on-job training, and apprenticeship programmes developed.	training programmes.		
	Baseline-0		
Output 4.4 Employment Action Platforms and Industry Partnerships supported.	No of employment Action Plans Baseline-0	2018-5 2019- 10 2020- 15	No specific evidence on targets achievement is found
Output 4.5 Innovative partnerships for youth entrepreneurship and job creation established	No of partnership agreements and arrangements Baseline-4	2018-5 2019- 6 2020-8	The output should have been merged with outcome III- There is an MOU signed with the Tony Elumelu Foundation to support entrepreneurship development on the continent
Outcome 4.5 Knowledge products on innovative YouthConnekt solutions developed and disseminated.	No. of Knowledge Products. Baseline-0	2018-2 2019- 5 2020- 6	Although the targets are underachieved, there are 2 YouthConnekt modules developed. The impact and benefit of these modules could not be validated through data collected

Overall Assessment

- Apart from the review of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes in Africa assignment that was commissioned by UNDP RSCA in 2018, no major activities related to the specific outcome in the results framework have been registered. The project launched a review of past and current generation of TVET programmes in Africa exercise that was conducted by 3 expert consultants who travelled gathering information in Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Africa. Following the

review exercise in 9 countries across the continent, the consultants prepared a comprehensive 150-page report highlighting their findings, recommendations, and conclusion. However, no further significant follow up to convert the study findings into concrete policy/reforms could be found. Since youth employment is a core foundation of the programme, it is worth considering the use of findings derived from the TVET report to address the underlying skills/ job mismatch in Africa. The project results framework also captured additional activities related to apprenticeship programmes and linking 500,000 entrepreneurs to employment opportunities. These had however not been translated into specific achievements in the first phase of the project and would require additional resources and capacity. As this is a critical area and overlaps with outcome 3, the evaluation recommends combining outcome 3 and 4 going forward as an entrepreneurship and employment collective.

4.2.3 Programme Effectiveness Summary of Overall Findings

Programme Effectiveness-Overall Rating: *Overall Moderately Satisfactory with significant contributions under outcome II and Outcome III.*

4.3 Efficiency

Overall Efficiency Rating: *Moderately satisfactory* in the overall operational areas despite the resource constraints but *unsatisfactory* in others such as planned vs. actual allocation of funds, and implementation and M&E mechanism with the exception of Partnership Strategy. The project document captures the need for a robust team of about 7-8 technical experts including a Senior Youth Programme Coordinator (P5), a Programme Advisor (P4), a Programme Specialist (P3), two Programme Analyst (P2 and NOB), and International UNVs. Since inception, the programme has operated without the technical capacity requirements but under the general supervision of the RSCA Director and Regional Programme Coordinator and recruitment 3 IUNVs (a regional coordination support officer, a partnerships and resource mobilization specialist, and a programme analyst). Due to the resource gap the project has operated without a dedicated senior project coordinator but has managed to maintain its core functions leveraging capacities available in country offices and national and regional partners. Recently the YouthConnekt Africa Hub has recruited the Executive Director to oversee activities.

4.3.1 Allocated Budget vs. Actual Expenditure

Planned budget envisaged to fully implement 4 outcomes of the project was too large at USD \$57,799,660 over the 5-year period. The actual budget allocated between the year 2018-2020 raised serious concerns about the overall resource mobilization strategy, funding mechanism and financial sustainability of the project. The evaluation did not register progressive annual resource mobilization to meet the ambitious

financial proposal but rather a steady allocation from UNDP core. It is exceedingly important that the project is able to mobilize resources from existing and new partners to ensure it remains sustainable beyond UNDP support.

Year	Actual Allocation (USD)
2018	540,000
2019	6,200,000
2020	1,200,000

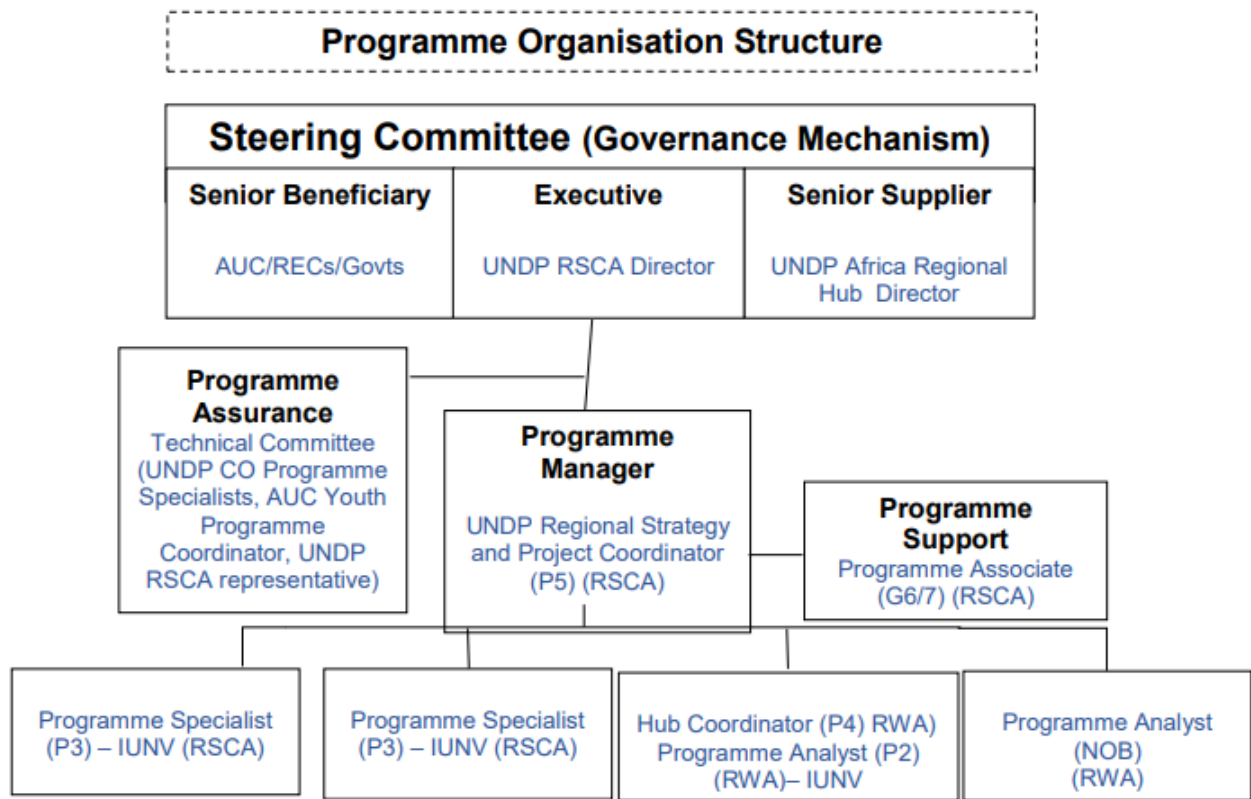
Overall Rating: *Moderately satisfactory* in the overall operational areas despite the resource constraints but *unsatisfactory* in others such as planned vs. actual allocation of funds, and implementation and M&E mechanism with the exception of Partnership Strategy.

4.3.2 Implementation Arrangement & Project Steering Committee

Overall Rating: *Moderately satisfactory* with the overall coordination and project board framework and *Unsatisfactory* at the technical level.

Although the overall YouthConnekt project coordination board is clear, relatively functional, and includes an annual steering committee meeting, the actual implementation arrangement and role of programme steering board when compared to what is envisaged in the project document was found to be missing various components. For instance, the project document defines a clear leading role for the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities but does not seem to engage with these and other relevant regional institutions on a consistent basis. The evaluation did however note that previous engagements with the AU had been made (including endorsement of YouthConnekt by the AU) but did not result in a sustained collaboration. A review of the steering committee minutes shows a predominantly government and UNDP led steering board with minimal inclusion of other key regional stakeholders. The overall project implementation modality is primarily coordinated between RSCA and the YC Hub (under the support of the Government of Rwanda). The roles of both key stakeholders are very much distinct. RSCA is primarily responsible for providing technical support to the country offices which co- implements YC, while the Hub communicates and coordinates with national stakeholders (the Ministry of Youth etc. Keeping in view that the core aim of the project is to upscale YouthConnekt through national chapters, a robust and well-structured implementation support process for new national chapters was not found. For example, the evaluation did not find a comprehensive process that supported the national project design (including project document), partnership development and resource mobilization, and monitoring. This may pose a serious implementation and sustainability risk going forward. Additionally, the evaluation noted the lack of technical YouthConnekt focal persons at country level (for most chapters) that could be engaged

with on a regular basis to attain information, reports, and updates on ongoing activities. This presents a gap in sharing of knowledge and best practices consistently before the steering committee convenes.



4.3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Overall Rating: Moderately unsatisfactory-

Keeping in view the geographical and programmatic scope of the project that presently covers 20 countries and 4 broad outcomes, the M&E mechanism has been found to be a weak component of the project. The main source of reporting (annual progress report) is not based on RBM principles rather it mainly captures activities that took place during the year at regional levels with limited information provided at country level. Although the data availability and relevant M&E system is in principle stronger in YC Hub, there remains no clear structured, standardized, M&E system that can assist data collection and reporting at country levels. This undermines the assessment of the project’s contributions in medium to long term. There is pressing need to have a centralized, structured and holistic M&E system that is fed by all targeted country offices and then consolidated in a joint regional results framework. This observation is also

consistently validated through stakeholder consultations and document reviews done within the evaluation process.

4.3.4 Project Partnership and Synergy Strategy

***Overall Rating: Moderately Satisfactory** with some key points to tackle as way forward*

The project partnership strategy envisaged in the project document has multiple partners to work with under different components

i) UNDP-AUC – It was clearly observed that despite having a very important strategic and political role as a partner, the AUC ‘s role in the project has not been consistent. This may hinder ownership of YouthConnekt at national and regional levels by stakeholders as a credible framework for coordination youth interventions. The AUC had been a key strategic partner of the project and officially endorsed YouthConnekt initially as a continental youth empowerment platform. They have also participated in previous YC Summits and committed to supporting the continental scale up. However no specific evidence was found supporting the actual role the AUC played in the project achievements

ii) YouthConnekt Africa Hub: Being most vital entity in ensuring the sustainability of YouthConnekt, YC Hub continues to play an active role in keeping the momentum going. However, it is worth mentioning that YC Hub has a much bigger role to play as it was envisaged in the project document. The Hub is in principle there to provide direct support to the implementation of national YouthConnekt programmes; serve as a platform of exchange on tools and best practices of YouthConnekt chapters across Africa; serve as a repository and advocate for improved sharing of communication about African and global youth initiatives; support partnerships and resource mobilization; manage and coordinate a YouthConnekt Africa Empowerment Fund. Although there is data found on the role played by the YC Hub in direct implementation of national YouthConnekt chapters, the overall structured, uniform mechanisms and tools are missing. Similarly to RSCA, the YC Hub experiences capacity and resource constraints that limit implementation of its full mandate. It is therefore crucial for it as an independent institution with a wide range of partners to effectively mobilize resources for its operation and sustainability.

iii) The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF): It was observed that UNDP’s partnership with TEF **turned out to be** a very successful and high impact collaboration that provided direct and quality benefit to youth entrepreneurship development. However, a revised approach to include a follow up mechanism to monitor youth beneficiaries is required to assess the long-term impact of the partnership.

iv) Jack Ma Foundation and UNCTAD- No direct evidence on any sustained partnership and related impact could be found with Jack Ma Foundation and UNCTAD

4.4 Sustainability

Overall Rating: Moderately likely with the exceptions of few components and conditioned with a very strong and effective resource mobilization strategy for countries other than Rwanda

The evaluation noted that the project lacks a comprehensive sustainability/exit plan for completion of the project cycle. It however notes that the YC Hub was established to ensure continuity of YouthConnekt but could not assess the extent to which it was self-sustaining. The evaluation identifies the following findings as critical for sustainability of YouthConnekt:

- As some of the UNDP project targets and indicators have not been achieved in the first phase, it is highly unlikely that all outputs and related activities could be sustained, particularly under outcome 1 & 4. It is therefore critical that the project revises its scope to a more modest and targeted results framework dispensing of unclear or highly expensive activities.
- Although YouthConnekt as a whole has effectively mobilized support from partners for the annual Summits, the evaluation observed that there is no continuous regional and national programming of that intensity throughout the year, including consolidation of commitments made during the summits. The sustainability of YouthConnekt relies on aggressive and continuous engagement of all key partners.
- **The financial sustainability of the entire project at the current level of activities is also a great concern. This is mainly due to lack of an effective and well targeted partnerships and resource mobilization strategy.** The evaluation observed limited sustained engagement with bilateral and multilateral partners already working/interested in youth development. A robust resource mobilization strategy (as well as a targeted communications plan) for the next phase therefore remains a prerequisite.

4.5. Gender Equality, Empowerment & Vulnerable Groups

Overall Rating: Satisfactory

The project registered varying degrees of success in ensuring gender equality. As the project is underpinned by the UN principles of gender inclusion it has actively promoted gender parity in all activities. However, this has not been successful across the board, for example, with the Mali entrepreneurship programme registering 30 % of the total female beneficiaries or 34% female participants at the YouthConnekt Summits. There is therefore a lot to be done to ensure socio-economic inclusion of women

5. Lessons Learned

- The involvement of all key stakeholders in the design and planning of the project (whether at national or regional levels) could result in more clear and well-coordinated targets also leveraging collaborative advantages. At national level, this has been primarily been done to some degree between the UNDP offices and government but could be expanded to other stakeholder that engage with the same institutions on youth development, thereby reducing duplication and overlap between initiatives.
- Since the core aim of the project is to upscale YouthConnekt programme in up to 45 countries in Africa, a strong implementation framework between the YC Hub and RSCA along with a well-established monitoring and evaluation process would be crucial. The evaluation therefore recommends a harmonized workplan between the two organizations to ensure coherence in activity. It seems that RSCA and the Hub developed their workplans separately and later tried to identify synergies rather than agree and develop priorities jointly from the onset.
- Creation of a strong ‘community of practice’ would be highly beneficial for knowledge exchange between initiatives particularly at country level. A central knowledge repository where countries can log ongoing activities and see key events in other places can be useful in improving communication between programmes.
- **COVID-19-** has affected implementation of the project both at regional and country levels. The evaluation noted that a lot of activities planned could not occur in 2020 (including the annual YCA Summit). The nature of the project activities often require mobilization of young people and other stakeholders through physical convenings which caused a challenge during the pandemic. The evaluation however noted that various activities were reformulated to leverage digital tools and maintain consistent remote support to young beneficiaries through webinars and innovation challenges.
- A well targeted resource mobilization strategy remains a recurring prerequisite to ensure sustainability of the project. The evaluation recommends a strong focus on this in the second phase with active engagement of development partners, bilateral and multilateral organizations, financial institutions, private sector and many more. A continuous mapping of potential partners on the continent and a plan of action to engage with them would be critically important. This also reduces the reliance on government and UNDP core resources for implementation.

6. Recommendations

- it is also worth mentioning that:

- The evaluation observed that the project has great potential for impact at scale if it narrows down the scope and doubles down on successful activities such as the annual conferences (which can also include sub-regional conferences), innovation awards, and entrepreneurship development activities. It also notes that a lot of technical and financial support is still required by existing and

new national YouthConnekt chapters for their sustainability which creates another layer of activity for the YC Hub and RSCA.

- Where the Covid-19 pandemic has created challenges for the project, the evaluation recommends using the opportunity to revise the project document and results framework making it more relevant and responsive, also leveraging digital tools as much as possible.

Based on the these two critical observations, the overall assessments made on achievements, and lessons learned, **it is recommended that the project is extended for 3 years, with considerable redesigning in all aspects such as the theory of change, focus and scope, results framework, required financial and human resources, monitoring framework, partnership and resource mobilization strategy, and a sustainability plan.**

Following are some of the key recommendations in this regard:

6.1- Project Plan and Design

- The evaluation identified the need for an ***updated context analysis*** for the project. Due to the internal and external changes that the project has experienced in the first phase (including the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, organizational focus on peacebuilding, development of the UNDP renewed strategic offer, etc.), a clear and targeted context analysis is required. It is vital to actively engage national and regional partners in the assessment of the youth developmental challenges and formulation of new project priorities. This will ensure increased ownership and commitment from implementing partners from the onset.
- Revisit the overall scope: a focused and less ambitious Results Framework for the entire duration of the second phase should be developed.
- The overall project target outcomes should be reduced **to maximum of 2 with a reduced number of outputs**. Instead of focusing on multiple isolated outputs and activities, the Project results framework and related implementing plan should be focused on the principle of ***‘Think big, start small & scale fast’***.
- **Following two Outcomes are proposed**

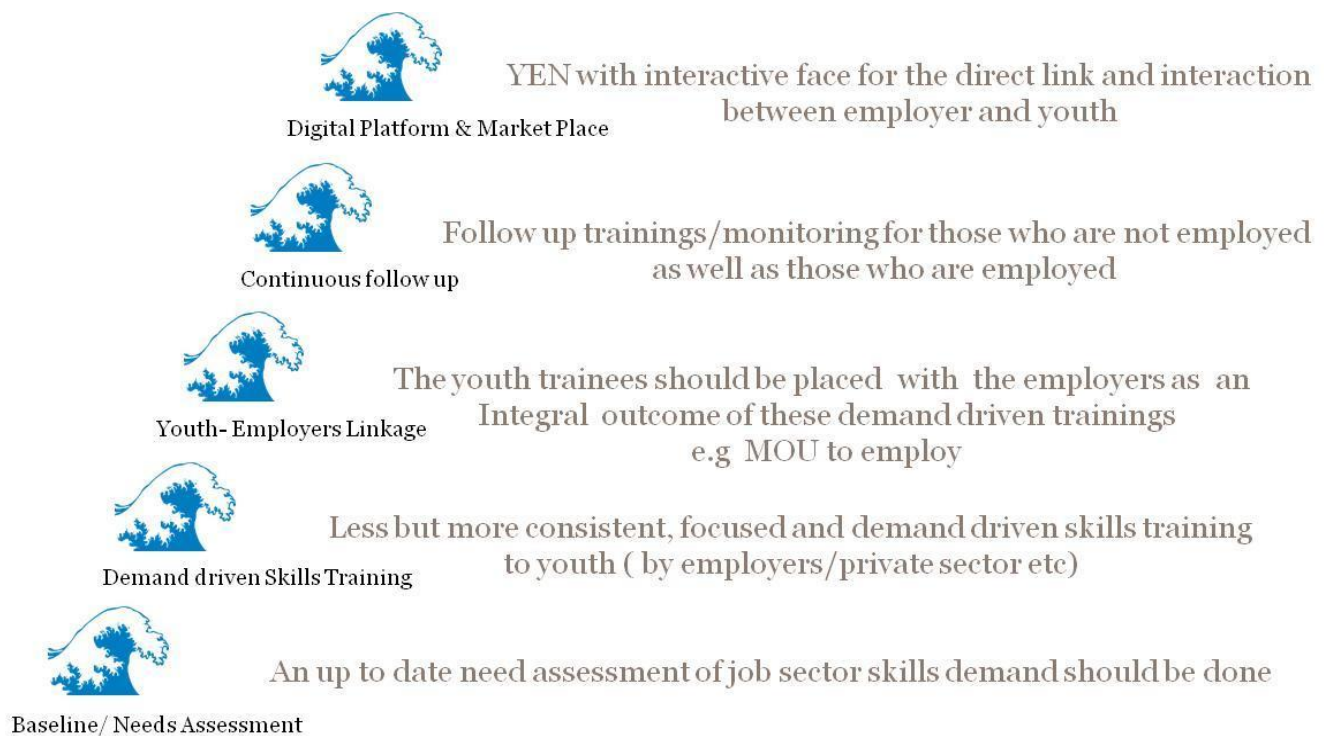
Outcome 1- Youth Social and Economic Participation, employment and Leadership are enhanced.

Outcome 2- African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship are developed.

It is recommended that both outputs should be based on 5 steps processes.

Outcome 1- Youth Social and Economic Participation, employment and Leadership are enhanced.

- ❖ **It is recommended that the outputs related to the signature events, leadership skills training and conferences of Annual Youth Summit should be continued, however with more even, uniform and fair distribution among 20 countries instead of concentrating them in one or few countries**
- ❖ **New Market Needs Assessment-** it is highly recommended that while drawing lessons from the TVET study conducted in 2018, an up to date job market demand need assessments and baseline should be conducted, specifically with reference to the emerging job skills requirement in during and post Covid-19 Pandemic contexts
- ❖ **Select less in number but high impact sectors-** On the basis of an up to date Market Needs Assessment (MNAs) and baseline study, focused and only selected sectors with high job demands should be prioritized. Focus on only these sectors that have regional uniformity in terms of demand rather than all sectors to ensure ‘value for money’.
- ❖ **More private sector/employers led trainings & involvement** Training should be provided by the employers/private sector etc based on their skills demands with an intrinsic and integral understanding that a certain number of these participants can be placed in jobs by these potential employers.
- ❖ **Launching the of internship training programme** However with the following recommendations;
 - ❖ Combine the internship & soft skills training with the other sectoral based trainings instead of a standalone activity
 - ❖ Creating an intrinsic and integral mechanism through e.g. MOU that a certain number of the participants will be provided an internship by the employers.
 - ❖ Clear understanding with the employer to provide internees a predefined & agreed on-job skills training.
 - ❖ Continued follow up and creation of linkages for those internees who could not secure the job afterwards.
- ❖ **Development of Interactive African Regional Digital Youth Employment Network-** with interactive face for the direct link and interaction between employer and youth with least (if not any) role of an intermediary. This digital platform will include online job skills trainings/modules, jobs announcements, employers-youth interface,



Outcome 2- African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship are developed

Keeping in view the already established model and success stories that also covers countries beyond the pioneering Rwanda YC programme, it is highly recommended that the project focuses on continuing with the youth entrepreneurship programme with few further recommended refinements:

- ❖ Apart from one off start up support through bootcamp and developing business plan, resource should be mobilized to provide upscale support to the selected youth beneficiaries as well
- ❖ Since resources from other non-recommended outcomes can re-channelized, it is highly recommended that UNDP-TEF along with national counterparts can pilot Small Business Incubators to provide a ‘whole of process’ support to the young entrepreneurs as well as providing them shared workplace and access to mentors
- ❖ UNDP should explore more partnership opportunities, particularly with private sectors that are already working in the area of encouraging youth entrepreneurs in the region

- ❖ Since the Covid-19 Pandemic may hinder immediate establishment of such SBIs, it is highly recommended that an African Young Entrepreneurs Digital Market Place should be developed that provides complete package the young entrepreneurs

Following is a proposed cycle in the regard



An online market place for the Africa's Young

Africa Young Entrepreneurs Digital Market Place **Entrepreneurs**



Young Entrepreneurs should be linked with the investors,

Young Entrepreneurs-Market Linkages **angel fund, and market etc.**



The selected youth with good ideas must be brought in UNDP-TEF

Small Business Incubator

managed SBI for continuous start up, mentoring & acceleration services



Selected youth with the ideas should be provided complete entrepreneurship training

Complete Entrepreneurship Training



An up to date baseline on entrepreneurial eco system in the country

Baseline study on entrepreneurship ecosystem

I-Baseline for the Development of Entrepreneurship Ecosystem- It is vital to have a basic baseline on regional and country level entrepreneurial ecosystems before setting any targets. The standard concepts and definition of 'entrepreneurship', 'entrepreneurial cycle' etc. should be clearly defined and highlighted in the project design document

II-Selection of Young Entrepreneurs for SBI- Mainstreaming successful winners of innovation awards and other competitions as an integral part of the selection of youth with startup ideas should be followed by dedicated training on full cycle of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship competitions etc.

III- Development of ‘SBI- (Most important) UNDP-TEF along with national counterparts should establish SBIs to provide cohering space for young entrepreneurs as well as access to mentoring services etc.

IV- Provision of startup mentoring & acceleration services- SBI will provide the necessary start up and mentoring services to the young entrepreneurs with the help of the private sector

V- Linking Entrepreneurs with the Market- Africa’s digital workplace for Young entrepreneurs. With features like access to financial information, angel funds, investors, mentoring and coaching services, sharing knowledge platforms etc.

6.2 Implementation and Management

iii) Project Implementation and M&E

- The evaluation recommends redesigning the project implementation and monitoring board particularly at the technical level with the overall objective to achieve the following:
 - ❖ Guide the development of a structured, standardized, and well-coordinated implementation plan whereby specific support to country level YC projects are fairly distributed and coordinated. It will help bring up performance of country YC chapters to a relatively even level and respond collectively to areas where the needs are greatest.
 - ❖ Ensure strong engagement with the AU and RECs youth development programmes as well as their consistent inclusion and contribution to the YouthConnekt steering board.
 - ❖ Develop a robust and well-coordinated M&E process that fosters clear linkages between country and regional level programming particularly in the provision of regular progress reports. The M&E process should be able to provide a real time snapshot of all activities at any given point in time. The annual and quarterly reports compiled at all levels should form the basis of accurately assessing the overall contribution of the project to youth development in Africa.

- The evaluation found that some of the country teams are reluctant to send periodic reports as they did not have a dedicated focal person working on YouthConnekt. Country teams should be required to set up the appropriate mechanism and ensure that reports are sent and used to inform performance-based resource allocations. It can be achieved through an integrated M&E system (perhaps online) that would make uploading of progress reports a prerequisite for accessing various materials and resources.
- More importantly the M&E board should develop a coordination mechanism between RSCA and YC Hub to have more regular senior management meetings, especially keeping in view the overall mandates they both carry in the overall implementation.
- Similarly, there is need for an interactive knowledge sharing platform (in addition to the existing website) whereby all participating country teams, national counterparts and stakeholders can share communicate to each other and disseminate upcoming activities.
- Finally, the project needs to leverage on already existing initiatives in the region rather than only focus on its own implementation. Projects by the AU, RECs, Accelerator labs can be leveraged to achieve some of the specific project targets.

6.3- Partnership Strategy

- The overall partnership strategy needs to be revised. With the initial recommendation of bringing AUC back as a central and key stakeholder to provide ownership and custodianship of the programme at regional level, the revised project document should have a refined partnership strategy that:
 - ❖ Clearly identifies the value proposition and collaborative advantage of each partner in the project.
 - ❖ Provides a uniform template and set of documents to be used for engaging with partners and mobilizing resources.
 - ❖ Assigns clear roles and responsibilities between stakeholders with a strong accountability framework.

6.4 Sustainability

A clear, coherent and comprehensive sustainability/exit strategy should be developed covering political, socio economic, institutional and financial components of the project. The sustainability strategy should be complemented by a well-planned and targeted **‘resource mobilization strategy’ to ensure timely financial sustainability of the project.**

Following are high level recommendations/steps to develop a resource mobilization strategy³

- **Developing A rationale:** Once the results and resource framework are finalized, the Resource Mobilization Rationale should be finalized.
- **Review the Resource Requirement:** set by the finalized results and resource framework
- **Assessment of External resource environment in thematic area of the project** - Once the gaps of resources to be fulfilled after the internally available funding resources are identified, an updated assessment of external resources environment should be conducted. It is important to note that apart from the other partners/donors working directly or indirectly in areas of youth empowerment and entrepreneurship, there are windows of funding opportunities opened by the ongoing pandemic to respond to the current human rights needs
- **Develop a concrete action Plan with concrete performance indicators, targets and timelines.**
It should be focused on:

i) Identification of Resource Partners- by mapping the common interest such as youth engagement, empowerment and entrepreneurship. If direct linkages are not drawn, indirect linkages that will cater to the youth needs that are high priority for the potential resource partners. It can include other UN agencies OHCHR, UNICEF, ILO, regional stakeholders like AUC/RECs African Development Bank, host governments private sector, bi/lateral & multi-lateral stakeholders (EU, SIDA, USAID, DFID, NORaid, SDC etc.).

ii) Engage: By setting up meetings, developing advocacy tools, proposals sharing, preparing presentations for the resource partners on project objectives and results etc. Bring them as voluntary member of the project Board to present the project's key achievements and seek their interests

iii) Negotiate: and reach agreement on joint interests, develop partnership conditions, reach to a legal agreement

IV) Manage & Report: Acknowledge the contribution of resource partner, fulfill all legal obligations,

v) Communicate Results: The RM strategy should clearly outline tools and mechanism to regularly communicate results to the resource partners against their contributions and continuously advocate for their support

- **Continuous Monitoring of the RM strategy-** to identify key lessons learned and to take corrective measures so that resource partners can continuously be identified, engaged and involved

³ The detailed Resource Mobilization Strategy is beyond the scope of the evaluation. Inputs/details can be provided separately

7. Conclusions

7.1 Project Relevance: Relevant and aligned with the UNDP Regional Programme for Africa (2018-2021), the United Nations Youth Strategy (2018), the UNDP Renewed Strategic Offer for Africa, the African Union Youth Charter, and other regional youth development frameworks. However, the review identified a need for a more focused, concise, and well-defined alignment with country level frameworks such as UNSDCF/CPDs which would effectively result in sustained ownership, planning and budgeting, and improved results from UNDP country offices and national partners. The project's overall orientation is indeed relevant to the broader youth development challenges but needs to be embedded in the UNDP country level frameworks and national development plans. The project has shown great potential for scale and widespread impact as it is primarily implemented by government (through relevant ministries in charge of youth affairs) and co-supported by a range of development partners. It appears to be more of a coordination framework that consolidates youth related programmes and activities among a wide range of partners. The challenge would therefore be experienced in aligning and integrating workplans, budget, and priorities among a wider range of partners.

7.2 Project Effectiveness: Overall, the project has made considerable contribution to youth empowerment and employment in Africa. To date it has supported scaling up of the YouthConnekt model to a total of 20 African countries. However, the overall performance of the project varies from one outcome to the other as well as from one country to the other. The evaluation notes that the project has performed and maintained good momentum under the Outcome 2 (Youth Social and Economic Participation) and particularly Outcome 3 (Business and Entrepreneurship Development). However, despite registering some results under Outcome 4 (Youth employment), most of the key targets were not fully met. Similarly, it is also observed that very limited progress has been made under the Outcome 1 (Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened.) which seems to involve support to formulation of youth related policies and national frameworks. More importantly, since the core aim of the project is to upscale YouthConnekt in other African countries, sustained implementation of activities in all 20 implementing countries were not consistently found, with the exception of countries such as Rwanda, Liberia, and Zimbabwe. For example, the implementation of YouthConnekt in other countries has not seen the same results and successes on a consistent basis as those experienced in the pioneering Rwanda model that was formed in 2021. The evaluation however notes that different countries are at different stages of implementation (some being implemented very recently while others still in process of formulation) which would also influence the non-uniform results registered. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for structured implementation & monitoring mechanisms to track progress across the continent and support national YouthConnekt programmes that require additional resource mobilization and capacity.

7.3 Project Efficiency: Overall, the efficiency of the project has been unsatisfactory where resource mobilization, implementation modality and M&E all concerned.

7.4- Project Sustainability- is moderately likely with the exceptions of few components and strictly conditioned with effective resource mobilization strategy. The evaluation noted that the project lacks a comprehensive sustainability/exit plan for completion of the project cycle. It however notes that the YC Hub was established to ensure continuity of YouthConnekt but could not assess the extent to which it was self-sustaining. The evaluation identifies the following findings as critical for sustainability of YouthConnekt:

7.5 Gender Equality & Vulnerable Group- The project registered varying degrees of success in ensuring gender equality. As the project is underpinned by the UN principles of gender inclusion it has actively promoted gender parity in all activities. However, this has not been successful across the board, for example, with the Mali entrepreneurship programme registering 30 % of the total female beneficiaries or 34% female participants at the YouthConnekt Summits. There is therefore a lot to be done to ensure socio-economic inclusion of women

7.6 Lessons Learned

- The involvement of all key stakeholders in the design and planning of the project (whether at national or regional levels) could result in more clear and well-coordinated targets also leveraging collaborative advantages. At national level, this has been primarily been done to some degree between the UNDP offices and government but could be expanded to other stakeholder that engage with the same institutions on youth development, thereby reducing duplication and overlap between initiatives.
- Since the core aim of the project is to upscale YouthConnekt programme in up to 45 countries in Africa, a strong implementation framework between the YC Hub and RSCA along with a well-established monitoring and evaluation process would be crucial. The evaluation therefore recommends a harmonized workplan between the two organizations to ensure coherence in activity. It seems that RSCA and the Hub developed their workplans separately and later tried to identify synergies rather than agree and develop priorities jointly from the onset.
- Creation of a strong ‘community of practice’ would be highly beneficial for knowledge exchange between initiatives particularly at country level. A central knowledge repository where countries can log ongoing activities and see key events in other places can be useful in improving communication between programmes.
- **COVID-19-** has affected implementation of the project both at regional and country levels. The evaluation noted that a lot of activities planned could not occur in 2020 (including the annual YCA Summit). The nature of the project activities often require mobilization of young people and other stakeholders through physical convenings which caused a challenge during the pandemic. The evaluation however noted that various activities were reformulated to leverage digital tools and maintain consistent remote support to young beneficiaries through webinars and innovation challenges.

- A well targeted resource mobilization strategy remains a recurring prerequisite to ensure sustainability of the project. The evaluation recommends a strong focus on this in the second phase with active engagement of development partners, bilateral and multilateral organizations, financial institutions, private sector and many more. A continuous mapping of potential partners on the continent and a plan of action to engage with them would be critically important. This also reduces the reliance on government and UNDP core resources for implementation.

7.7 Recommendations: The evaluation observed that the project has great potential for impact at scale if it narrows down the scope and doubles down on successful activities such as the annual conferences (which can also include sub-regional conferences), innovation awards, and entrepreneurship development activities. It also notes that a lot of technical and financial support is still required by existing and new national YouthConnekt chapters for their sustainability which creates another layer of activity for the YC Hub and RSCA.

Where the Covid-19 pandemic has created challenges for the project, the evaluation recommends using the opportunity to revise the project document and results framework making it more relevant and responsive, also leveraging digital tools as much as possible.

ANNEXES

- UNDP (2018), 'Regional Programme for Supporting the Upscaling of the YouthConnekt model in Africa 'ProD0c
- UNDP (2020), 'Performance Audit of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa
- UNDP (2021), 'Annual Report 2020'
- UNDP (2020), 'Annual Report 2019'
- UNDP (2019), 'Annual Report 2018'
- UNDP (2020), 'Annual Work Plan 2020'
- UNDP (2019), 'Annual Work Plan 2019'
- UNDP (2018), 'Annual Work Plan 2018'
- YouthConnekt Africa (2019)' 'The 4th Steering Committee meeting of YouthConnekt Africa October 10, 2019'
- YouthConnekt Africa (2018)' 'YouthConnekt Annual Summit 2018'
- YouthConnekt Africa (2016)' 'Genesis, Evolution and Success Factors'

ANNEX B Evaluation Criteria & Questions Matrix Checklist–Supporting the Upscaling of the YouthConnekt Model in Africa				
Evaluation Criteria	Key questions specific sub-questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/Successes Standard
Relevance/design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent is the programme aligned with regional development priorities, the Regional programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs? ● To what extent is the programme aligned with the UNDP's mandate, Strategic Plan, CPD and UNDAF of the countries of intervention? ● Do the programme outcomes address identifiable problems of the Africa region, in particular to the problems of youth? ● To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant programmes considered in the programme'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 programme design processes? ● How relevant was the geographical coverage of the programme? ● How the programme was able to cater the needs of the beneficiaries in the changed 	UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation , Ministries of Youth, Google, Samsung, National Youth Service/ Commissions ,	Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) Document Review	programmes' results indicators Linkages with UNDP strategic plan

	<p>context? Is there any evidence that the programme advanced any key national human rights, gender or inclusion policies and the priorities of UN & UNDP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the programme 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 countries of intervention? 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? 			
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are 4 outputs and the related targets of the programme's results framework achieved so far? • To what extent have the programme objectives and outcomes, as set out in the programme Document, programme's Results Framework and other related documents, have been achieved so far? 	<p>UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation , Ministries of Youth, Google, Samsung, National Youth Service/</p>	<p>Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) FGDs Document Review</p>	<p>Overall Results Framework Indicators</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●To what extent did the programme contribute to the regional programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan and regional/national development priorities? ●Are some components better achieved than others? If yes then Why? ●What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the programme results? ●How effective has been the contribution of the programme to improving governments of the countries' ownership, planning and management capacity process towards Youth empowerment and employment? ●Are the programme objectives clearly stated and contribution to results measurable? ●Did women, and marginalized groups of targeted youth directly benefit from the programme's activities? If so, how and what was the impact? ●Were any changes made in the programme regarding approach, partnerships, beneficiaries etc. suggested by any internal or external programme mid-point assessment, context/risk analysis? Did it affect programme results? ●How successful have partnership arrangements been in contributing to sharing institutional capacity? 	<p>Commissions , youth beneficiaries particularly young entrepreneurs and any other stakeholder</p>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the programme's objectives? • Are the programmes objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame? 			
Outcome I Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the outline indicators in the results framework progressing towards achievement of the year wise indicators achieved? If not why 	UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , , Ministries of Youth, National Youth Service/ Commissions , any other stakeholder	Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) FGDs Document Review	Indicators of the 4 outputs from the programme's results framework
Outcome II Youth Social and Economic Participation and Leadership are Enhanced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the outline indicators in the results framework progressing towards achievement of the year wise indicators achieved? If not why <p>What are the key success and challenging factors</p>	UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation , Ministries of Youth, Google, Samsung, National Youth Service/ Commissions , youth	Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) FGDs Document Review	Indicators of the 5 outputs from the programme's results framework

		beneficiaries particularly young entrepreneurs and any other stakeholder		
Outcome III African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship Capacities are Developed or Reinforced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the outline indicators in the results framework progressing towards achievement of the year wise indicators achieved? If not why 	UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation , Ministries of Youth, Google, Samsung, National Youth Service/ Commissions , youth beneficiaries particularly young entrepreneurs and any other stakeholder	Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) FGDs Document Review	Indicators of the 5 outputs from the programme's results framework
Outcome IV Increased Number of African Youth are Productively Employed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the outline indicators in the results framework progressing towards achievement of the year wise indicators achieved? If not why 	UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation , Ministries of Youth, Google, Samsung, National Youth	Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) FGDs Document Review	Indicators of the 5 outputs from the programme's results framework

		Service/ Commissions , youth beneficiaries particularly young entrepreneurs and any other stakeholder		
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are outputs achieved within expected cost and time so far? ● Could the activities and outputs have been delivered in fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity? ● Are there major cost- or time-overruns or budget revisions? ● Is there a management or coordination mechanism for the partnership? ● How frequently and by what means information is shared within the programme stakeholders? ● Are programme objectives and strategies understood by staff? ● Are programme objectives and strategies understood by partners? ● How many levels of decision making are involved in operational approval? ● To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time? 	UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation , Ministries of Youth, Google, Samsung, National Youth Service/ Commissions , and any other stakeholder	Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) Document Review	Results Framework Indicators AWPs Planned vs. Actual Budget Allocation & utilization

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the programme inputs and benefits fairly distributed amongst different genders and communities while increasing access for the most vulnerable? What factors influenced decisions to fund certain proposed activities, and not others? • How efficient is the M&E system and to what extent did M&E mechanism provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly? • Were the risks identified in the programme document or process the most important and the risk ratings applied appropriately • How useful was the results framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it? • To what extent did the coordination with other UN agencies and UNDP programmes reduce transaction costs, optimize results and avoid duplication? 			
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How sustainable has been the contribution of the programme to improving country level ownership, planning and management capacity? • Was programme sustainability strategy developed during the programme design? • How should the programme be enhanced to support the government, and partners in 	UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation , Ministries of Youth, Google, Samsung, National Youth	Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) Document Review	Sustainability strategy Resource mobilization mechanism

	<p>improving youth empowerment and employment over the long term?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the programme itself sustainable? (Financial, Institutional, Socio Economic and Resources etc) • What indications are there that the outcomes will be sustained (systems, structures, staff, etc.)? • To what extent has a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key stakeholders of a country, been developed or implemented? • To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support? • Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of programme outputs and the programme's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes? • Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the programme operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of programme benefits? • What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will be sufficient to allow for the programme benefits to be sustained? • To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary 	Service/ Commissions , youth beneficiaries particularly young entrepreneurs and any other stakeholder		
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	<p>stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do stakeholders support the programme's long-term objectives? • To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the programme team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the programme? • To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies? • What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability? • What changes should be made in the current set of programme partnerships in order to promote long term sustainability 			
Cross Cutting Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the programme? • Is the gender marker data assigned to this programme representative of reality? • To what extent has the programme promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of 	<p>UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation , Ministries of Youth, , National Youth Service/ Commissions ,</p>	<p>Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) FGDs Document Review</p>	<p>Programme Indicators on gender, youth and other vulnerable groups</p>

	women? Were there any unintended effects?	youth beneficiaries particularly young entrepreneurs and any other stakeholder		
UNDP Strategic Position & Partnership Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN being one of many development partners operating in the region, are there any UN's overall comparative strengths or value addition,' vis-à-vis other development partners • Do partner organizations share the same goals as the UN? • How effective the UN partnership strategy and the partners are in providing added benefits for the programme to achieve overall outcomes and outputs • To what extent have stakeholders been involved in programme implementation? • To what extent are programme management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the programme objectives? • To what extent has the programme been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities? 	UNDP staff, YouthConnekt Africa Hub, AUC , Tony Elumelu Foundation, Ministries of Youth, National Youth Service/ Commissions , and any other stakeholder	Key informant Interviews Questionnaire Based Survey (QBS) Document Review	

Annex C

Survey- Questionnaire

Name	Title, Department (if applicable)	Institution
Category of Stakeholder a) UNDP staff b) Implementation Partners & Beneficiaries c) Donors	Email Address	Country

Introduction: The UNDP Regional Bureau office is conducting a Mid Term programme evaluation of **Regional Programme for Supporting the Upscaling of the YouthConnekt model in Africa**

It examines UNDP's contribution to programme results to ensure organizational learning and accountability. The evaluation is carried out by an independent international evaluation specialist.

You have been identified as one of the key stakeholders of the UNDP's programme in the region, and we would like to receive your feedback on your experience with the UNDP-supported programme. Your feedback is valuable and will be used as part of the overall analysis together with other information and data collected by the consultant. You will send the response directly to the consultant.

The survey questions are divided into 2 sections: A. **for all stakeholders (UNDP Core staff/ programme staff, IPs & Beneficiaries B. Additional Questions for Implementation Partners & beneficiaries. For Donors**, it is recommended to fill in at least Section A.

BACKGROUND:

1. Please identify yourself as a stakeholder in the programme that provides the basis of providing your feedback (UNDP staff, Implementation Partners and member of beneficiary countries, Donor):

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Annex C

A. QUESTIONS FOR UNDP CORE STAFF/ PROGRAMME STAFF & IPS/BENEFICIARIES (RECOMMENDED BUT OPTIONAL FOR THE DONORS)

1. RELEVANCE:

1.1 To what extent is the programme aligned with the regional level priorities, policies and strategies of the UNDP strategic Plan, in particular to the thematic area of youth empowerment and employment?

1.2 To what extent is the programme aligned with the CPD and UNDAF for the region and/or of the selected countries?

1.3 Do the programme outputs address identifiable problems of African Region in context of the youth empowerment and employment issues?

1.4 How relevant are the geographical coverage of the programme and the rationale of choosing the selected countries where the programme has been implemented so far?

1.5 How is the programme able to cater the needs of the beneficiary countries in the given context? Is there any evidence that the programme advanced towards a better situation of youth empowerment and employment in the countries of intervention?

1.6 In the changing environment caused by the Pandemic, do you think that programme focus is still relevant to the evolving regional context both in general and particularly with reference to youth empowerment and employment?

2. EFFECTIVENESS:

2.1 To what extent are outputs and targets of the programme's results framework achieved so far?

2.2 To what extent have the programme objectives and outcomes, as set out in the programme document, have been achieved so far?

2.3 Are some components better achieved than others?

2.4 What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the programme outcomes?

2.5 How effective has been the contribution of the programme to improving governments' ownership, planning and management capacity process towards youth empowerment and employment?

2.6 Are the programme objectives clearly stated and contribution to results measurable?

Annex C

2.7 Did marginalized and women segments of the youth groups directly benefit from the programme's activities? If so, how and what was the impact?

2.8 Were any changes made in the programme regarding approach, partnerships, beneficiaries etc. suggested by programme board meeting, periodic assessment, and context/risk analysis? Did it affect programme results?

2.9 How successful have partnership arrangements been in contributing to sharing institutional capacity?

2.10 What impact did the work of the programme have so far in creating awareness about youth employment opportunities and choices?

3. EFFICIENCY:

3.1 **Managerial and operational efficiency:**

- a) Has the programme been implemented within expected dates, costs estimates so far? Were there any deviations? If yes, Why?
- b) Has UNDP taken prompt actions to solve implementation and other operational issues? What is the current programme management structure (incl. reporting structure; oversight responsibility)? What has worked/ not worked in this structure?
- c) How often and how have the monitoring and evaluation activities been conducted? How are the results reported to UNDP programme units, donors and other partners? What worked, or did not work, and why?

3.2 **Programmatic efficiency:**

- d) Were the **financial resources and approaches** (conceptual framework) envisaged appropriate to achieving planned objectives?
- e) Were the resources focused on a set of activities that were expected to produce significant results (**prioritization**)? Has the programme achieved 'value for money'?
- f) Were there any efforts to ensure '**synergies**' among various programmes within UNDP (and those with other partners)? Explain results, and contributing factors.
- g) Have **alternative approaches and 'innovative' solutions** been actively explored? What could be done to ensure the overall efficiency of the UNDP programme?

Annex C

- h) Were the programmes inputs and benefits fairly distributed amongst different genders and segments of the youth group while increasing access for the most vulnerable? What factors influenced decisions to fund certain proposed activities, and not others?

4. SUSTAINABILITY:

4.1 How sustainable has been the contribution of the programme to improving selected countries level ownership, planning and management capacity in the area of youth empowerment and employment?

4.2 Was any sustainability strategy developed during the programme design?

4.3 How sustainable has been the programme to improve efforts of enhancing youth empowerment and employment in the region?

- Is the programme itself sustainable? (Financial, Institutional, Socio Economic and Resources etc.)
- What indications are there that the outcomes will be sustained (systems, structures, staff, etc.)?
- To what extent has a sustainability strategy, including capacity development of key stakeholders of countries, been developed or implemented?

5. Please list down top 3 lessons learned so far

5.1 Please List down top 3 challenges that have or may hinder performance of the overall programme so far

5.2 Please provide 3-5 high priority recommendations for the way forward

B. ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS & BENEFICIARIES ONLY

6. For which outcome and related output of the programme your organization partnered with the UNDP? Please tick the relevant outcome and output
- i. **Conducive and enabling environment for job rich growth and transformation is strengthened** (e.g. policy development for job creation, national level youth/macroeconomic strategies/policies any other related output/activities etc.)
 - ii. **Youth Social and Economic Participation and Leadership are Enhanced** (e.g. developing and managing youth platforms to facilitate youth interaction/participation, youth leadership training programmes, National Youth Volunteer programmes, supporting youth organizations any other related output/activities etc.,)

Annex C

- iii. **African Youth Businesses, Managerial Skills and Entrepreneurship Capacities are Developed or Reinforced** (e.g. capacity building of young entrepreneurs, developing and enhancing entrepreneurship culture and ecosystem, enhancing capacities of value chain, increasing access to finance for entrepreneurs, creating multi stakeholder based platforms any other related output/activities etc)
- iv. **Increased Number of African Youth are productively employed.** (e.g. conducting research to identify employment opportunities and training needs for youth, TVET programmes developed or revised, providing on-job training opportunities, creating employment action platforms and partnerships with employers, or any other related output/activities)

- 7. What was your organization's role in the programme?
- 8. What are the key achievements of your activities under the programme?
- 9. Were the programme objectives, outcomes, outputs and targets fully explained to your organization before the start of the partnership/initiative?
- 10. Were there any shortcomings in achieving the set targets? If yes, then what are the main factors behind it?
- 11. UNDP is one of many development partners operating in your country/region. What is your view on UNDP's performance (or contribution) in the following areas? Please Rate?

i) Highly Effective ii) Effective iii) Moderately Effective iv) Not effective

- 11.1. Overall responsiveness to emerging priorities and needs of Africa Region and particularly in the area of youth empowerment and employment
- 11.2. Ability to influence national-level development policies (e.g. SDGs) with its technical knowledge and expertise in thematic areas.
- 11.3. Ability to **lead other development partners** on important issues?
- 11.4. Ability to **coordinate and establish effective partnerships and networks** with relevant partners (e.g., CSOs, private sector, UN agencies, donors, academic/research institutions).
- 11.5. Ability to integrate **gender and human rights** issues **into its programmes**. Any Examples?
- 12. What are UNDP's overall 'comparative strengths, 'value added,' vis-à-vis other development partners, if any
- 13. What are the key challenges (if any) faced by your organization as an implementation partner with UNDP and/or programme itself?

Annex C

Considering the programme performance so far and challenges posed by the Pandemic and/or any other changes in the regional context, do you have any recommendations for the way forward

Stakeholder List and data collection tools used to approach/consult the stakeholders

Sn o	Name of the Stakeholder	Institution
1	Juveline Ngum Ngwa	Bleaglee
2	Ambrose Mbuvi	The Nico Organics
3	Djonabaye Israel	iPLUS Global Solutions
4	Luke Kizito Muleka	Signs Media Kenya Limited
5	Tafara Makaza	ZimTaxi
6	Tashobya Stephen	Wekebere Company Ltd
7	Blandine Umuziranenge	kosmotive
8	Beth Wanjiku Koigi	Majik Water Technologies LTD
9	Ndéye Marie Aida NDIEGUENE	Ecobuilders
10	Kelvin Emmanuel Steven Machumu	Maswa Family Group
11	INGABIRE THEOGENE	Rwanda Bio Solution
12	Bookwa Boloy Jireh	EAU POUR TOUS S.P.R.L
13	Dr Charles Umeh	Jara internet company Ltd
14	David Kinzuzi	Workers Affordable Properties (WAP)

Annex D**List of Stakeholders**

15	Russell Osah	My Green Home Ltd
16	Emmastella Gakuo	Savanna Circuit Tech LTD
17	AHUNNA EZIAKONWA	UNDP
18	Hon. ROSEMARY MBABAZI	Gov. of Rwanda
19	JIDE OKEKE	UNDP RSCA
20	NJOYA TIKUM	UNDP Dakar Sub- Regional Hub
21	OULIE KEITA	YouthConnekt Africa Hub
22	STEPHEN RODRIQUES	UNDP Liberia
23	VARSHA.REDKAR-PALEPU	UNDP Rwanda
24	Nicolas Schmids	UNDP Rwanda
25	IFEYINWA UGOCHUKWU	Tony Elumelu Foundation (Entrepreneurship Programme)
26	DEWUNMI ALUGBIN	Tony Elumelu Foundation (Entrepreneurship Programme)
27	QAMER JATTOI	UNDP/ YouthConnekt Africa Hub
28	AMINE AMMOR	UNDP/ YouthConnekt Africa Hub
29	SYLVIA SEFAKOR SENU	UNDP Ghana
30	NANOU FIANKINANA RABEMAN	UNDP Madagascar

Annex D

List of Stakeholders

31	ETHEL BANGWAYO	UNDP Zimbabwe
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Terms of Reference
Mid Term Evaluation of UNDP Regional
YouthConnekt model in Africa



Programme for Supporting the Upscaling of the

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 YouthConnektprogramme, 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 programme 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 's intervention on.

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:

- i. Project document and budget (contribution agreement)
- ii. Regional programme document;
- iii. Project activity reports;
- iv. Result Oriented Analysis Report
- v. Support services provided to country offices; vi) country office reports; vii) UNDP's corporate strategies and reports; and viii) government, media, academic publications.
- vi. Theory of change and results framework
- vii. Programme and project quality assurance reports
- viii. Annual workplans
- ix. Activity designs
- x. Consolidated quarterly and annual reports.
- xi. Results-oriented monitoring report.
- xii. Highlights of project board meetings.
- xiii. 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 out following 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 preliminary debriefing and findings.

Draft evaluation report (within an agreed length).⁴ 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 draft report 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.

⁴A length of 40 to 60 pages including executive summary is suggested

- 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	Final evaluation report	5

Report at Validation Workshop	(18December)	
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	2
Draft Evaluation Report and lessons learned report	5
Final Evaluation Report with annexed lesson learned report	3

ANNEX 1

Table 1. Sample evaluation matrix

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key ques- tions	Specific sub- ques- tions	Data sources	Data collection methods /tools	Indicators / success stand- ards	Metho- ds for ordi- nary data ana- lysis