

**Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the**

**Malawi Electoral Cycle Support Project**

1. **BACKGROUND**

The Malawi Electoral Cycle Support (MECS) project was designed to contribute directly to the SDG 16 goal of ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. The primary goal of the Project was to assist in Malawi’s consensual development of procedural certainty among key electoral stakeholders. This goal arose against the backdrop of a unique opportunity for transformation stemming from electoral and political reform processes done in 2016/2017. Furthermore, the project design was guided by a 2016 Needs Assessment Mission (NAM), conducted by the UN Department of Political Affairs and UNDP’s Electoral Assistance Division after a formal request from the Government of Malawi on the need for electoral cycle assistance for the 2019 tripartite elections.

In contrast to past efforts, the scope of the project’s outputs emphasized a broader conceptual approach toward engaging key actors in fostering democratic development in Malawi. This methodological shift reflects an appreciation for the anticipated challenges that were deemed likely to arise for the 2019 Tripartite elections and draws from the experience of past processes and, among others, is aimed at strengthening the capacity of MEC to address the multi-dimensional challenges of election administration. As such, in addition to the support to the MEC, the Project supported identified key stakeholders whose work directly impacts on the conditions conducive for credible and genuine elections. In substance, this multifaceted approach sought to enhance the engagement of the MEC in managing the electoral process by engendering higher levels of capacity, engagement and ownership among influential stakeholders in the electoral process, and thereby, furthering the acceptance of outcomes. Equally, the coordination of these efforts through a single project was to ensure strengthened horizontal dialogue among stakeholders and commensurately improve the coherency, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of national and international efforts to support Malawi’s electoral process and democratic development.

The project contributed to the 2012-2018 United Nations Development Assistance Framework Outcome 4, namely: **National institutions effectively support transparency, accountability, participatory democracy and human rights**. The Project is structured around five outputs:

1. The Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) is trusted by the public and political parties as an impartial entity possessing the capacity to administer and manage elections in accordance with regional and international obligations;
2. Women’s political empowerment throughout the electoral cycle is strengthened;
3. Enhanced ability of key stakeholders, including political parties, to contribute to orderly and inclusive elections; and
4. Support to the Malawi Police Service (MPS) for heightened security around elections
5. Effective and efficient management, partnership formation and monitoring and evaluation of the Project.

The project was signed off by the Ministry of Finance, Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC), UNDP, UNWOMEN and Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD), and Malawi Police Service (MPS) with an implementation period extending to 30th June 2021 after its third amendment and third cost and time extension, due to emerging issues and increased donor contributions. The project is a multi-donor basket fund with contributions from the European Union, Norwegian Government, Irish Government, UK Government (FCDO), USA Government (USAID), and UNDP. Total project value after at the time of the evaluation is USD 15,041,915.

The project’s multifaceted approach enabled the project to address various electoral issues ahead of the 2019 tripartite elections with various stakeholders to foster the spirit of consensus on electoral processes and acceptance of results. Since the 2019 Presidential Elections were contested in the Constitutional and Supreme Courts with a ruling to hold Fresh Presidential Elections in 2020, the MECS project was revised to provide strategic activities that would assist MEC to hold the 2020 elections and conduct post-elections reviews to act as building blocks to further electoral laws review process.

1. **PURPOSE, SCOPE OF WORK AND OBJECTIVES.**
   1. **Purpose of the Evaluation**

The main purpose of the evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the extent to which the expected results were achieved and to identify challenges faced during implementation. The evaluation will also document lessons for improving project design, relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of similar projects in future.

The evaluation findings, lessons learned, and recommendations will be shared with key stakeholders the financing and technical partners.

**2.2 Scope**

The evaluation will assess the performance of the project by applying the standard DAC/OECD criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The criterion of impact is not included due to difficulties in measuring it in the absence of a baseline survey or any pre-designed impact indicators in the project’s results matrix. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the design, implementation and monitoring of the project addressed or sought to strengthen the application of the rights-based approach and mainstream gender issues. It will also be mindful of distinguishing between the delivery of project-level Outputs (under the direct control of the project) and project Outcomes (that are not entirely under the control of the project as influenced by external factors).

The review will cover the period of the project from August 2017 to February 2021.

**2.3 Objectives**

More specifically, the objectives of the evaluation are to a:

* Assess the extent to which the project results (outputs and outcome) were achieved;
* Analyze factors that contributed to achievement of project results and those that hindered implementation and achievement of results;
* Assess the extent to which gender equality and human rights issues were incorporated in project design, implementation, monitoring and reporting;
* Compare the cost-effectiveness of organizing tripartite general elections in 2019 with 2014 elections;
* Assess the effectiveness of the governance arrangements (Technical Committee and Steering Committee).
* Determine whether project results will be sustained after completion of the project’s development phase.
* Make recommendations that would improve the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability of similar projects in future;
* Document lessons learnt to inform future similar projects and the design of the next electoral cycle support project.

1. **GUIDING EVALUATION QUESTIONS**
2. **Relevance**

* To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme’s outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?
* To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?

To what extent did the project apply risk management processes and whether the strategies ensured adequate safeguards.

1. **Effectiveness**

* To what extent were the project outputs achieved?
* What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended country project outputs and outcome?
* In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements?
* In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements?

1. **Efficiency**

* To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve results?
* What project strategies or factors contributed to project implementation efficiency and which hampered it?
* To what extent was gender equality and the empowerment of women addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
* To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

1. **Implementation:**

* What partnerships were built or strengthened to improve performance of project implementation?
* Was responsiveness of the project management to significant changes in the environment in which the project functions (both facilitating or impeding project implementation) adequate?

1. **Coherence**

* Was the project consistent and complementary with other interventions providing electoral support in the country?

1. **Sustainability**

* To what extent will financial resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
* Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
* To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development

1. **METHODOLOGY**
   1. **Preparatory phase**

The Consultant will be given key documents of the project to prepare and submit an inception report in consultation with a national consultant and the project management team. She/he will prepare an evaluation work plan and finalize the methodology of the study.

**4.2 Desk Review**

The evaluator will be expected to review key programme documents (e.g. project documents, progress reports, monitoring visits reports, baseline report, disbursement report/financial report etc.) to respond to some of the evaluation questions.

**4.3 Data collection**

The evaluator will be expected to meet (physical or virtual) key project stakeholders, including the development partners and implementing partners, in order to collect all the relevant data needed for the evaluation. S/he will also be required to conduct key informant interviews with some implementing partners to understand their perception of the project and validate some of the project interventions and results. The consultants will be expected interview project beneficiaries and target groups to obtain their views on various aspects of the project.

The evaluation will be conducted by two experts: an international evaluator who will be team leader and a national evaluator, team member. The team leader will work remotely while the local expert will combine face to face engagements and virtual contacts, as will be dictated by the Covid 19 pandemic preventive measures or situation.

**5.0 MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

**Country Office Evaluation Management**: UNDP CO management is ultimately responsible and accountable for the quality of the evaluation process and products under the leadership of the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative - Programmes (DRR-P). The DRR-P will assign an **Evaluation Manager** (UNDP M&E Specialist) who shall be responsible for engaging and debriefing the consulting team, coordinating review of reports, and ensuring compliance with UNDP/UNEG evaluation standards, ethics and code of conduct for evaluations. The CO Management will take responsibility for the approval of the final evaluation report

The CO management will develop a management response to the evaluation within two weeks of report finalization.

**Project Management**: The Programme Analyst responsible for the MECS project will support the evaluator on a daily basis with respect to providing background information and progress reports and other documentation, setting up stakeholder meetings and interviews, and coordinating with beneficiaries and key stakeholders.

**Evaluation technical group:** To ensure the independence, credibility and ownership of the evaluation, an evaluation technical group will be established to help guide the process. The nomination of members will be done before the assignment commences and the group details shared. Development partners contributing the project will be requested to nominate a member each. Other members of the group will be drawn from among key stakeholders of the project.

**Evaluators:** There will be an independent international consultant (Team Leader), and a national consultant (Team Member). They should not have worked for UNDP or have been involved with national partners, in the design or implementation of the project. The evaluators will have the overall responsibility for the conduct of the evaluation exercise as well as quality and timely submission of reports (inception, draft, final etc). An individual consultant procurement notice on the evaluation will include information on criteria for selecting proposals. An except on the criteria is provided an annex to the ToR.

The evaluator will be expected to be fully self-sufficient in terms of office equipment and supplies, communication, accommodation and transport. Furthermore, the evaluators will be expected to familiarize themselves with the United Nations Evaluation Group’s standards and norms and ethics for conducting project evaluations. The evaluator will provide the Evaluation Manager with regular updates and feedback.

**6.0 EVALUATION DELIVERABLES**

The evaluator is expected to deliver the following:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Deliverable /Activity** | **Content** | **Estimated time-frame** | **Responsible person** |
| **Entry meeting** | Confirm ToR, discuss possible issues and approaches | 1 day | Evaluation manager |
| Preparing Inception Report (IR) | Evaluator shall provide an understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing  how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods, proposed sources of data and data collection procedures. The inception report shall include a proposed schedule of tasks, risks, activities and deliverables, designating a team member with the lead responsibility for each task or product. It shall also have an Evaluation Matrix–a template for an Evaluation Matrix will be provided to the evaluator. | 5 days | Evaluator |
| Presentation and review of Inception Report | Presentation of IR by evaluator and review of methodology and other aspects by Reference Group | 1 day | Evaluator and Evaluation Manager |
| Consultation and data collection | Collection of data from project personnel and stakeholder meetings, beneficiaries’ interviews, etc. | 13 days | Evaluator/Programme Analyst |
| Report drafting | Preparation of report consistent with ToR and IR | 5 days | Evaluator |
| Preparation of draft final report | Exit consultations with development partners and stakeholders and revision of draft report, with audit trail | 1 days | Evaluator/Evaluation Manager |
| Stakeholder review workshop | Validation of facts and comments on evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations | 1 day | Evaluation Manager/Programme Analyst |
| Finalization and submission of final report with an audit trail of comments. | Consolidation and finalizing the Draft Final Report in full report with contents as per annex I of the ToR. | 3 days | Evaluator |
| Total number of estimated days for the evaluation: 30 | | | |

1. **REQUIRED EXPERTISE AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The Evaluator should have the following expertise and qualifications:

**7.1 Evaluator: qualifications and experience**

* The consultant must be a holder of a minimum of a master’s degree in political science, public administration, electoral cycle management or related social science field.
* Extensive expertise, knowledge and a minimum of 7years’ experience in research and programming within governance and at 2 years focused on participatory democracy, electoral policy and administration.
* A minimum of 5 evaluation assignments carried out in a leading position.

– Experience in gender mainstreaming initiatives.

**7.2 Evaluator’s competencies:**

* Strategic thinking
* Organizational development and management
* Strong analytical, reporting and communication skills

1. **TIME AND DURATION:**

The evaluators will be hired for a maximum total of 30 working days.

Estimated Contract period: 1 March to 15 May 2021.

1. **TIME TABLE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** |  | **Weeks** | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|  | March | | | April | | | May | |
| Contract and entry meeting | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Inception report, draft revised | x |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Data collection and analysis |  | x | x | x |  |  |  |  |
| Drafting and submission of evaluation report |  |  |  |  | x |  |  |  |
| Meetings with evaluation technical group (composition TBD) |  |  |  |  |  | x |  |  |
| Draft report review workshop/receipt of comments from stakeholders and reference group members |  |  |  |  |  |  | x |  |
| Revision and submission of final report |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |

1. **EVALUATION ETHICS**

It is the responsibility of the CO to ensure credibility and independence of evaluation; responsibility of Team Leader to provide impartial, evidence-based, report adhering to international evaluation standards, etc.

The evaluation will follow UNEG guidelines on the ethical participation of human participants, including children and other vulnerable groups [http://www.uneval.org/document/guidance-documents]. All participants in the study will be fully informed about the nature and purpose of the evaluation and their requested involvement. Only participants who have given their written or verbal consent (documented) will be included in the evaluation.

**ANNEX I.1: RECOMMENDED EVALUATION REPORT CONTENTS**

The final report (maximum 50 pages, excluding annexes, shall be submitted by the consultant upon working on comments and inputs on the draft report.

The suggested table of contents of the evaluation report is as follows:

Title

Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

Executive Summary

Introduction

Background and context

Evaluation scope and objectives

Evaluation approach and methods

Data analysis

Findings and conclusions

Lessons learned

Recommendations

Annexes

* + - * Annex I: List of people met or interviewed
      * Annex II: List of documents reviewed
      * Annex III: Interview questionnaire
      * Annex IV: Interview guide, if any.