**Terms of Reference**

**International Consultant: Mid-term Evaluation of UNDP Regional Programme for Europe and the CIS 2018-2021**

**Type of Contract:** Individual Consultant Contract

**Languages Required:** English (Knowledge of Russian is an asset)

**Duration:** November 2020 – January 2021 (app. 55 working days over 3 months)

**Location:** Home based with possible travel to Istanbul if needed

## **Background and Context**

The Regional Programme Document (RPD) for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) 2018-2021 was approved by the UNDP Executive Board in January 2018.[[1]](#footnote-1) The regional programme focused on regional public goods and common development challenges that are best addressed regionally or sub-regionally. Under the overall objective of accelerating achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in Europe and the CIS and closely aligned with UNDP’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021, the priorities of the regional programme are captured in the following three programme outcomes: (a) accelerating structural transformation for sustainable development through more effective governance systems; (b) addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive growth; and (c) building resilience to shocks and crises. The regional programme delivers on its priorities through (a) targeted regional, co-funded initiatives; (b) dedicated, high-quality programme and policy advisory services; and (c) a regional platform and impartial space for countries to address regional, sub-regional and transboundary issues.

The Regional Programme is directly implemented by UNDP, under programme oversight delegated to the Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC). The Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH) Manager, under the supervision of the Deputy Regional Director, is responsible for ensuring the effective management and monitoring of the regional projects. The Advisory Board (consisting of resident representatives from the region and senior management of central headquarter bureaus) provides overall guidance and quality assurance to the regional programme and help to validate its relevance vis-à-vis country and global activities. The programme is implemented through regional and sub-regional activities with country-level components.

Total financial resources for the RPD are estimated at $62.6 million over 2018-2021, including expected core resources of $4 million and $58.6 million of other or non-core resources. This midterm review is planned to take place in 2020 as per the RBEC Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for 2018-2021, and it will provide an opportunity to review progress against the planned milestones of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and the regional programme. This evaluation is informed by and builds on “The Evaluation of The Government of Turkey’s Contribution to UNDP’s Regional Programme for Europe and the CIS for 2015-2019”. The mid -term evaluation is expected to guide the Regional Programme in its final year of implementation and to inform the design of the next Regional Programme (2022-2025).

## **Description of Responsibilities**

## **Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Objectives**

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

* Assess the progress of the Regional Programme implementation and identify gaps in achieving planned development results in the region.
* Provide RBEC Management with an objective assessment of the development contributions that have been achieved through Regional Programme support and partnerships with other key players during the last three years.
* Adjust implementation through introducing corrective measures, help capture innovations, sustain and scale-up successful approaches that work in the implementation of the current programme and facilitate learning to inform current and future programming at the regional and corporate levels.
* Provide inputs to other relevant evaluations and regional reports with quantitative and qualitative results achieved through the Regional Programme.
* Ensure that country level support through the Regional Programme is risk informed.
* Contribute to the validation/refinement of the theory of change underlying the Regional Programme.
* Assess the Regional Programme interventions effectiveness in mainstreaming gender in development efforts as well as application of right-based approaches in the region and provide concrete recommended actions, as required.
* Review and suggest adjustments to the Regional Programme results framework to better capture results at regional level.

Scope and methodologies should be tailored to investigate the Regional Programme’s contribution to both development results and development effectiveness.

The present evaluation will cover the first half of the current regional programme cycle, i.e. 2018 and 2019, as well as 2020 to the extent feasible. The assessment should be forward-looking giving specific programmatic recommendations for the final year of the Regional Programme and for the design of the successor Regional Programme Document, 2022-2025.

## **Evaluation Criteria and Key Guiding Questions**

The contribution of the Regional Programme to the outcomes will be assessed according to a set of evaluation criteria:

* ***Relevance:*** How relevant is the Regional Programme to the priority development challenges and emerging needs of the region? What changes should UNDP make in order to make its interventions more relevant?
* ***Effectiveness:*** To what extent has the Regional Programme contributed to the realization of the intended three outcomes as outlined in the Regional Programme Document?
* ***Efficiency:*** Has the Regional Programme made good use of its financial and human resources?
* ***Sustainability:*** To what extent are the results that the Regional Programme contributed to are sustainable? Did the Regional Programme create capacities for sustained results?

The following key questions should be addressed during the evaluation:

* ***Context:*** How has UNDP’s operating environment shifted in the region since the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2018-20201 and the RPD? What strategic opportunities and risks are emerging as a result?
* ***Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment of Results:*** Is the Regional Programme on track to make its contribution to the Strategic Plan and support Country Offices in the region? What are the gaps left to achieve UNDP's targets in the region and is the pace good enough to do so? What are the underlying causes of underperformance, if any, and key drivers of success?
* ***Lessons Learned and Recommendations:*** What are the key thematic, operational and institutional lessons to be drawn? What are the main recommendations for the final year (2021) of the Regional Programme and for the design of the next Regional Programme Document (2022-2025)?

Additionally, the following cross-cutting issues should be reviewed:

* ***Gender Equality:*** To what extent has the Regional Programme promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?
* ***Human Rights:*** To what extent have the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the region?
* ***Innovation:*** How well did the Regional Programme integrate innovative solutions and solutions to emerging development trends and challenges into the interventions under the three Outcomes?
* ***Partnerships:*** How well did the Regional Programme nurture current partnerships and build new partnerships?
* ***Capacity development***: Did the Regional Programme adequately invest in, and focus on, regional and/or national capacity development to ensure sustainability and promote efficiency?
* ***Knowledge management:*** Were the knowledge products (reports, studies, policy briefs, etc.) delivered by the Regional Programme relevant to the needs of countries in the region?

The evaluation team is expected to develop an evaluation matrix by identifying and incorporating additional issues and questions.

## **Methodology**

The followings are suggested approach, and final design and methods for the evaluation will be determined in consultations among the IRH, the evaluator and agreed by the Inception Report.

* **Desk reviews**: The evaluation consultant will collect and review all relevant documentation, including the following:
  + RPD (2018-2021), Strategic Plan (2018-2021); all relevant Regional Project Documents;
  + Annual Work Plans and Budgets, Progress Reports for 2018, 2019 and 2020;
  + RBEC Integrated Work Plans and Results-Oriented Annual Reports;
  + Related documentation of selected regional projects contributing to the RPD results in Europe and the CIS region, including websites, articles and other relevant reports;
  + Evaluation reports of regional projects, relevant thematic or donor-specific evaluation reports;
  + Mid-term evaluation of UNDP’s Strategic Plan 2018-2021;
  + Programme Advisory Board and other Meeting Reports pertaining to regional priority setting, annual work planning;
  + Regional knowledge products, knowledge management and innovation initiatives supported by the RPD;
  + Other relevant documents that inform analysis of the environment in which UNDP in the region operates.
* **Discussions with the relevant programme and project staff**: The evaluation consultant will be working and consulting the evaluation exercise with relevant teams on a continuous basis. Briefing and debriefing meetings with the Management Team will be conducted to inform the review and evaluation process and to share any preliminary findings and observations as necessary.
* **Stakeholder interviews and focus groups**: The evaluation consultant will conduct interviews with a representative sample of relevant stakeholders, including UNDP staff (managers and programme/project officers) at Headquarters, Istanbul Regional Hub, and Country Offices, policy makers, beneficiary groups, donors and other development partners.

During the preparatory work, a set of representative projects will be identified by the evaluation consultant, based on the consultation with IRH Management.

## **Evaluation Products / Expected Deliverables / Timeframe for the Evaluation Process**

A tentative schedule of activities and travel plans are provided below. Estimated number of working days for the evaluation consultant is 55 days. The timeline will be adjusted, and concrete dates finalized during the inception process.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Timeline*** | ***Tasks / Deliverables*** |
| 2nd week of November | * Orientation of the team members * Desk review |
| 3rd Week of November | * Submission of the Inception Report |
| 4th Week of November –1st Week of January | * Data collection and analysis * Stakeholder interviews * Report writing |
| 2nd week of January | * Presentation of preliminary results to the IRH * Submission of the draft midterm evaluation report for comments (1 weeks) |
| 3rd Week of January | * Finalization of the report by incorporating IRH and other stakeholders’ comments * Submission of the revised report for final comments (1 week) |
| 4th Week of January | * Submission of the final midterm evaluation report |

## **Schedule of Payments Based on Expected Outputs**

The total number of days of work is estimated approximately 55 working days. The breakdown corresponds to the expected outputs and schedule of payments as follows:

• 10 % of payment upon submission of the inception report by the 3rd Week of November 2020.

• 30 % of payment upon submission of the draft report by the 2nd week of January 2021.

• 60 % of payment upon submission of the final report by the 4th Week of January 2021.

Payments will be made only upon confirmation of UNDP IRH that the above reports are accepted.

## **Duration**

The Contract will enter into effect upon signature by both parties, expected to come to an end by 31 January 2021. The international consultant is expected to start in the second week of November 2020.

## **Travel requirements**

Subject to international travel conditions in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, the evaluation consultant may need to work remotely, if travel to Istanbul for this evaluation is not feasible. In such case, introduction to and interviews with the relevant stakeholders and IRH teams and personnel as well as data collection will be arranged virtually.

## **Evaluation Team Composition and Required Competencies**

The mid-term review and evaluation will be carried out by one independent external consultant. The evaluation consultant is responsible for developing an evaluation design, undertaking data collection activities, and preparing the draft and final reports for submission to the Istanbul Regional Hub, as well as any supporting documents prepared during the evaluation.

The evaluation consultant shall have prior experience in similar evaluations and should not have participated in the RPD 2018 - 2021 preparation and should not have conflict of interest with any project or activity of the Programme.

## The evaluation consultant is expected to be an experienced evaluation expert, he/she should have substantive knowledge of one or more areas of the UNDP regional programme, and work experience in the region under evaluation. The consultant should have a demonstrated capacity in strategic thinking and policy advice. He/she should also have proven drafting skills, excellent communication skills, and familiarity with UN/UNDP operations.

## **Qualifications Requirements for the Evaluation Consultant**

* Advanced university degree in social science, monitoring and evaluation, or any other relevant field.
* At least 8 years relevant experience and proven track record with policy advice and programme/project development and implementation, , including at least 3 years’ experience in conducting evaluations and reviews for international organizations;
* Good knowledge of evaluation and assessment methods, demonstrated in professional working experience;
* Experience in similar assignments which require extensive consultations and interactions with national governments and senior government officials; and also with other stakeholders such as donors, regional organizations, CSOs, etc.;
* Good knowledge and technical understanding of the UN, and in particular UNDP programmes in the relevant thematic sectors of the RPD, good understanding of Europe and the CIS region in terms of its development programmes, development issues and other evolving environment;
* Experience on application of result-based approaches to evaluating programmes and projects.
* Strong analytical capability; openness to change and ability to receive and integrate feedback;
* Strong interpersonal skills and communication skills and ability to adhere to agreed timelines and to meet tight deadlines;
* Excellent report writing, presentation and editing skills in English (knowledge of Russian is an asset).

## **Evaluation Ethics**

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

## **Implementation Arrangements**

The RPD Midterm Evaluation consultant will work under the guidance of the Chief, Country Office Solutions and Programme Coordination , IRH and be supported by the Programme Support Unit.

## **Application Submission Process and Criteria for Selection**

The selection process will be based on the roster of vetted experts.

## **Evaluator Ethics**

The evaluation consultant will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a Code of Conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the ‘[UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations’](http://www.unevaluation.org/ethicalguidelines)

## **Consultant Independence:**

The consultant cannot have participated in the programme preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Regional Programme Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with Programme’s related activities.

Payments will be made only upon confirmation of UNDP on delivering on the contract obligations in a satisfactory manner.

The consultant is responsible for ensuring he/she has vaccinations/inoculations if travelling to certain countries as part of this assignment, as designated by the UN Medical Director. The consultant is also required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under dss.un.org

General Terms and conditions as well as other related documents can be found under: <http://on.undp.org/t7fJs>

1. UNDP Regional Programme Document for Europe and the CIS 2018-2021 [https://undocs.org/DP/RPD/REC/4](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fundocs.org%2FDP%2FRPD%2FREC%2F4&data=02%7C01%7Chazal.bolerek%40undp.org%7Cddb128ba64c541a7799408d7c5bc7401%7Cb3e5db5e2944483799f57488ace54319%7C0%7C0%7C637195285501435344&sdata=W43qVTFK5zUjMLr24FFnT786FRMcFQK4kN0W3HRauNM%3D&reserved=0) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)