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Annex I
Terms of Reference (TOR)

International Consultant for Terminal Evaluation of wetlands Lake Urmia component
"Contribution to Restoration of Lake Urmia via Local Community Participation in
Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation (2014-2019) &
Local community participation in sustainable agriculture and biodiversity conservation
for Lake Urmia Restoration (Special component of UNDP's Conservation of Iranian
Wetlands Project) (2019-2021)

1. **Background:**

During the past two decades, different factors including continuous drought, increasing number of dams, over-abstraction of underground waters, etc. have impacted many wetlands in Iran, particularly the Lake Urmia, the largest hyper-saline wetland of Iran supporting more than 5 million inhabitants and important biodiversity. To overcome this challenge, the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran, together with national and international organizations such as UNDP, started several initiatives to stop the degradation trend and restore this important Lake. UNDP's special efforts on LU restoration started since 2014, with financial support of the government of Japan, and implemented through its long- standing "Conservation of Iranian Wetlands Project" (CIWP). Initially, the project focused on local communities' participation in restoration measures mainly Sustainable Agriculture practices and biodiversity conservation but the results of experiences and lessons learnt led to extension of the scope of activities to other areas such as socio-economics and introduction of complementary tools to practice more integrated approach during seven phases of the project.

The project activities fall within the following areas:

2. Institutional development and mainstreaming participatory ecosystem-based management and conservation of wetlands and their biodiversity conservation;
3. Piloting and scaling up sustainable agriculture practices;
4. Establishing and sustaining wetland friendly alternative livelihoods;
5. Participatory technology development (PTD);
6. Communication, capacity building, education, participation and awareness (CEPA); and
7. Innovative tools contributing to conservation of wetlands and their biodiversity such as economic valuation and payment for ecosystem services.

2. **Objectives of Final Evaluation**

1) Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the Project in terms of: achieving the outputs as per the Project Document;
2) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project in terms of the implementation of activities that achieve outputs and outcomes, following up on lessons learned;
3) Establish the impact and sustainability of the Project, and the extent to which the approach and implementation of the Project contributed to restoration of Lake Urmia and its participatory ecosystem-based management and conservation;
4) Review the Project Design and Management structures, in terms of achieving clear objectives and strategies, the use of monitoring and evaluation, the level of coherence, and the appropriateness of management structures at national, province, and local levels (wetland secretariats); and
5) Make clear and focused recommendations that may be required for enhancing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of scaling up and replication of project achievements and results across the LU basin and other wetlands across the country.

3. **Scope of Work**

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In assessing the Project and its alignment to the broader Project Document, the evaluation will take into consideration the following criteria:

Relevance and appropriateness

1. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to LU restoration goals and challenges withfocus to local community participation in Lake restoration?
2. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the mandate, strategy, functions, roles, and responsibility of the UNDP, the Department of Environment (DOE), and the Ministry of Agriculture Jahad (MOJA) as the major stakeholders of the Project and key actors within thoseinstitutions?
3. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the UNDP assistance mandate and development goals?
4. Was the project relevant, appropriate and strategic to the international and nationalstrategic/upper-hand documents, e.g. SDGs, UNDAF, UNDP CPD, and UNDP Strategic Plan?
5. Evaluate how the project addressed country priorities. Evaluate country ownership. Was theproject concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country?
6. Evaluate how the project addressed donor priorities. Evaluate donor ownership. Was the projectconcept in line with the donor development priorities and plans?
7. Evaluate how private sector and local cooperative were engaged in the process?
8. Evaluate of local community participation in the project. Evaluate local community ownership.

Effectiveness and efficiency

9. Were the actions to achieve the outputs and outcomes effective and efficient?
10. Were there any lessons learned, failures/lost opportunities? What might have been done betteror differently?
11. How did the project deal with issues and risks?
12. Were the outputs achieved in a timely manner?
13. Were the resources utilized in the best way possible?
14. Were the resources (time, funding, human resources) sufficient?

Impact and sustainability

15. Will the outputs/outcomes lead to benefits beyond the life of the existing project?
16. Were the actions and result owned by the local partners and stakeholders?
17. Was the capacity (individuals, institution, and system) built through the actions of the project?
18. What is the level of contribution of the project management arrangements to national ownershipof the set objectives, result and outputs?
19. Were the modes of deliveries of the outputs appropriate to promote national ownership and sustainability of the result achieved?
20. Did the Project contribute to sustainable management of LU and its satellite wetlands?
21. Did the Project address cross cutting issues including gender?
22. Evaluate the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provided the most effectiveroute towards expected/intended results.
23. Socio-economic risks to sustainability: Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
24. Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?
25. Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability: Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

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26. <u>Environmental risks to sustainability</u>: Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?
27. <u>Financial risks to sustainability</u>: What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the donor assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and otherfunding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Project design
28. To what extent did the design of the project help in achieving its own goals?
29. Was the context, problem, needs and priorities well analysed while designing the project?
30. Were there clear objectives and strategy?
31. Were there clear baselines indicators and/or benchmark for performance?
32. Was the process of project design sufficiently participatory? Was there any impact of the process?
33. Was there coherence and complementarity by the project to the country's wetland conservation efforts by the DOE and its key players within this institution?
34. Was there coherence, coordination and complementarity by the project with other donor funded activities in the field of LU restoration, conservation and biodiversity (including Japan, GEF, etc.)?
35. Evaluate the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Evaluate the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
36. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
37. <u>Evaluate decision-making processes</u>: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
38. Evaluate the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design.

Project management, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management
<u>Management Arrangements:</u>
39. Are the project management arrangements appropriate at the team level and project board level?
40. Evaluate overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
41. Evaluate the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
42. Evaluate the quality of support provided by the Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.

<u>Work Planning:</u>
43. Evaluate any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
44. Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planningto focus on results?
45. Examine the use of the project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

<u>Finance and co-finance:</u>
46. Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.

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47. Review and evaluate the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
48. Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
49. Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

50. Evaluate the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
51. Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

Stakeholder Engagement:

52. Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
53. Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
54. Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?

Reporting:

55. Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
56. Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)
57. Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications:

58. Was there appropriate visibility and acknowledgement of the project and donors?
59. Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
60. Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)

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61. For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.

Gender Equality

62. To what extent have gender equality, the economic empowerment of women, socialinclusion and youth been addressed in the Project design, implementation and reporting? What are the key achievements?

63. In what way could gender equality be enhanced in the future similar projects?

COVID-19

64. To what extent has the project results been affected by Covid-19 and what remedialmeasures/tools/ processes were introduced to address this?

65. In what way the project management/implementation/monitoring approaches could beadapted based on Covid-19 and similar crisis, in future similar projects?

Results Framework/Logframe

• Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.

• Were the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible withinits time frame?

• Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance, etc.) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.

• Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

• Review and evaluate the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix; colour code progress in a "traffic light system"based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red). If there are majorareas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Project Strategy	Indicator[1]	Baseline Level[2]	Level in 1st PIR(self-reported)	Midterm Target[3]	End- of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment[4]	Achievement Rating[5]	Justification for Rating
Objective :	Indicator (if applicable):							
	Indicator 1:							

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[1] Populate with data from the Logframe and scorecards

[2] Populate with data from the Project Document

[3] If available

[4] Colour code this column only

[5] Use the 6-point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

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Outcome1:	Indicator 2:							
Outcome2:	Indicator 3:							
	Indicator 4:							
	Etc.							
Etc.								

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved

This work will include reference to an ecosystem approach at the core of the project design. The Final Evaluation should be aligned with the principles established in UNDP's Evaluation Policy and the UN Evaluation Group's Norms and Standards for Evaluation.

5. Methodology

Based on UNDP guidelines for evaluations, and in consultations with UNDP Iran, the evaluation will be inclusive and participatory, involving principal stakeholders into the analysis. During the evaluation, the consultant is expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis. Moreover, the International consultant will work closely in team with a national consultant and the former will be the team leader and responsible for finalizing the report. The national consultant will assist the international consultant in all terminal evaluation process including preparation, mission, and reporting phases.

- Desk review of relevant documents including progress reports and any records during the life of the Project;
- Key informative interviews with the DOE, MOJA and other assistance providers/partners, and UNDP Senior Management and Project Staff in the Country Office, local communities and other major stakeholders;
- Briefing and debriefing sessions with the former Project Technical and Steering Committees
- Interviews with partners and stakeholders, government officials, service providers including CSO partners and donor partners, etc.

During the implementation of the contract, the consultant will report to the UNDP Programme Team, who will provide guidance and ensure satisfactory completion of final evaluation deliverables. There will be close coordination with the project team who will assist in connecting the consultant with senior management, development partners, beneficiaries and key stakeholders. In addition, the project staff will provide key project documentation prior to fieldwork.

Note: The International Evaluation Consultant is expected to work in team with a national consultant to deliver the required tasks.

6. Expected outputs and deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report;
- A draft preliminary evaluation report and presentation with, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with the CIWP and UNDP as well as other major partners as deemed necessary;
- Final report, including a 2-3 pages' executive summary, including issues raised during presentation of draft.

The Implementation Arrangements and Reporting Requirements are as follows:

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	Output	Due date
1	Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report	2 November 2021
2	A draft preliminary evaluation report and presentation, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with the IEC and partners	30 November 2021
3	Final evaluation report	15 December 2021
	TOTAL:	

7. Duration of Work
The contract shall commence on 17 October 2021 till 15 December 2021.

Special note:
Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions may require many of the in-person missions / consultations and data gathering / activities to be carried out remotely using electronic conferencing means. Alternatively, some or all in person interviews may be undertaken by the national consultant in consultation with the evaluation team leader.

8. Qualifications of the Successful Individual Contractor

Competencies:
The candidate should be able to*:*
- Ability to work under pressure against strict deadlines
- Ability to think out of the box
- Ability to present complex issues persuasively and simply
- Ability to contextualize global trends in accordance with dynamics of the operating working environment
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Excellent writing skills and proven ability to produce quality and analytical reports within the shortest period of time

Qualifications and Professional Experience
- Advanced university degree and/or professional background in institutional/governance aspects of natural resource management and environment;
- 15 years of relevant professional experience;
- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience in applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Preferably 5 years of experience in international development cooperation;
- Fluency in English, both written and spoken;
- Competent in usage of MS Office programmes (MS Word, Excel, Power point);
- Experience working in Asia/the Middle East (experience in Iran will be an asset); and
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset.

9. Evaluation ethics
This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' which are available here:

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http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102. The consultants 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 consultants 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 without the expressauthorization of UNDP and partners.

10. Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest due to past engagement
UNDP commissioning units may not assign consultants to the evaluation of UNDAFs, country programmes, outcomes, sectors and thematic areas in which they have had prior involvement whether in design, implementation, decision-making or financing. Following this principle, UNDP staff members —including advisers based in regional centres and headquarters units, civil servants or employees of NGOs that may be or have been directly or indirectly related to the programme or project — should not take part in the evaluation team. More broadly, UNDP programme units should consider whether conducting multiple assignments could create a conflict of interest. Many consultants and evaluators undertake numerous assignments for UNDP and its partners during the course of their professional careers. This can include a mixture of evaluation and advisory roles with multiple agencies at different levels. Programme units should make a judgement as to whether a consultant with a high reliance on work with UNDP may preclude them from producing an impartial evaluation. The ERC gives a history of evaluations undertaken by an evaluator in recent years.

Conflict of interest to due potential future involvement
Programme units must ensure that the evaluators will not be rendering any service (related or unrelated to the subject of the evaluation) to the programme unit of the project or outcome being evaluated in the immediate future. Evaluators should not subsequently be engaged in the implementation of a programme or project that was the subject of their evaluation. Equally, evaluators should not be engaged as designers of next phases of projects that they have evaluated.

Evaluator's obligation to reveal any potential conflicts of interest
Evaluators must inform UNDP and stakeholders of any potential or actual conflict of interest. The evaluation report should address any potential or actual conflict of interest and indicate measures put in place to mitigate its negative consequences. If a conflict of interest is uncovered or arises during the evaluation, the organization should determine whether the evaluator should be dismissed and/or the evaluation terminated.

11. Location:

Tehran, Iran (*Given the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic and travel restrictions that are in place, the consultant may be required to conduct many of the in- person missions/activities remotely using electronic conferencing means. However, required travel costs could be included into the financial proposal so that travel to Tehran can be done if/when restrictions are lifted*)

12. Supervision and Verification:

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The tasks will be performed under overall supervision of Resident Representative (RR). International consultant work directly with Head of Development Effectiveness Unit.

13. Payment Term:

In full consideration for the services performed by the contractor under the terms of this contract the UNDP shall pay the contractor the total agreed and contracted amount of EUR 15,100 in one instalment after completion of the work and finalization and approval of the evaluation report, and against submission of signed invoiced and certificate of payment form (COP):

No.	Output/Deliverables	Due Date	Amount (EUR)
1	Inception report on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and proposed structure of the report	2 November 2021	3000
2	A draft preliminary evaluation report and presentation, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with the IEC and partners	30 November 2021	9000
3	Final evaluation report	15 December 2021	3000
4	Communication		100

- Consultant shall not do any work, provide any equipment, materials and supplies or perform any other services which may result in any cost in excess of the contract's amount.
- The offer shall be submitted in EUR and the contract is also issued in EUR. However, for those consultants who are residing in Iran, the payment can be only made in Iranian Rial. Therefore, the request for payment/invoice shall be submitted in Iranian Rial using the UN official exchange rate of the day of request.
- The risks in fluctuations due to changes in the official exchange rate rests solely with the contractor -i.e. risks associated with currency appreciation or depreciation are expected to be factored in by the contractor when submitting an offer. For using UN Official Exchange Rate, please refer to https://treasury.un.org/operationalrates/default.php.
- Communication costs, costs of typing and preparing the soft and hard copies of documents and any other relevant costs regarding this activity.
- The travel costs to join duty station and repatriation, if applicable, shall be included in the financial proposal.
- Upon receiving and verification of deliverables, payments will be transferred by UNDP to the account number of the consultant introduced through an official letter.
- Payments will be made according to UNDP regulations as explained in the contract documents.
- Payments will be made to the consultant against invoices submitted by the consultant.
- If the contractor is required to travel inside the country, such arrangement shall be fully coordinated in advance with UNDP. The cost of such travels will be covered by UNDP, i.e., the travel cost is excluded from the total consultancy fee. The travel arrangements should be in line with UNDP rules and regulations.

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14. Travel Requirements:

If travel is required under the contract, the individual contractor shall:

- Obtain the required Security Clearance from UNDP office (the details of travel including date of departure and arrival, accommodation and purpose of travel shall be submitted to UNDP office 2 working days before date of travel);
- Undertake the training courses on BSAFE and provide UNDP with the certificate. The link to access the course is https://training.dss.un.org/course/category/6
- Undertake a full medical examination including x-rays and obtain medical clearance from an UN- approved physician. This is only applicable for the Consultant on the age of 65 years or more.
- All ICs who will be hired during the COVID-19 Pandemic period are required to submit "Statement of Good Health" based on the WHO information on the impact of COVID-19 on individuals with underlining conditions before their travel.
- The Contractors shall consult with the delegated authorities on the bases on Travel requirements before date of departure and arrival, and inform UNDP accordingly.

15. TOR annexes

Annex A: List of Documents to be reviewed by the evaluators

- Project Original Documents, Logframe
- UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results
- Strategic Results Framework (and proposed revision of the SRF)
- All Project Implementation
- Progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
- Audit reports
- All technical reports and plans produced by the project
- Oversight mission/back-to-office reports
- All monitoring reports prepared by the project
- Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team
- Financial and Administration documents

The following documents will also be available:
- Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
- UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
- Minutes of the Project Steering Committee and other meetings
- Project site location maps

Annex B. Key stakeholders and partners
- Department of Environment
- The Tehran Embassy of Japan (as the representative of the Government of Japan)
- The UNDP Tehran Office
- Ministry of Agriculture Jahad
- Ministry of Energy
- Forests, Range, and Watershed Organization
- Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism

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- Ministry of Health and Medical Education
- Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare
- Universities and research centres
- The pioneer farmers
- The implementing partners (local companies)
- The related NGOs

Annex C: Evaluation matrix (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report)
The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

TABLE 1. SAMPLE EVALUATION MATRIX

Relevant Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods/Tools	Indicators/Success Standards	Methods for Data Analysis

Annex D: Schedule of tasks, milestones and deliverables.
Based on the time frame specified in the TOR, the evaluators present the detailed schedule.

Annex E: Inception report template
Follow the link: Inception report content outline

Annex I: Required format for the evaluation report.
The final report must include, but not necessarily be limited to, the elements outlined in the quality criteria for evaluation reports. Follow the link: Evaluation report template and quality standards

Annex J: Evaluation Recommendations.
Follow the link: Evaluation Management Response Template

Annex K: Evaluation Quality Assessment
Evaluations commissioned by UNDP country offices are subject to a quality assessment, including this evaluation. Final evaluation reports will be uploaded to the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC site) afterthe evaluations complete. IEO will later undertake the quality assessment and assign a rating. IEO willnotify the assessment results to country offices and makes the results publicized in the ERC site. UNDPLao PDR aims to ensure evaluation quality. To do so, the consultant should put in place the quality control of deliverables. Also, consultants should familiarize themselves with rating criteria andassessment questions outlined in the Section six of UNDP Evaluation Guidelines

Annex L: Code of conduct.
UNDP requests each member of the evaluation team to read carefully, understand and sign the 'Code of Conduct for Evaluators in the United Nations system', which may be made available as an attachmentto the evaluation report. Follow this link: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

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