



Ms. Miragul Kochkorova, Project Coordinator

“Strengthening capacities for sustainable development finance in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region”

Miragul Kochkorova

Kanybek Konokbaev, SEG Cluster Team leader

Kanybek Konokbaev

20-Aug-2021

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Final Evaluation of the regional project “Strengthening capacities for sustainable development finance in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region”

Title of the Programme:	“Strengthening capacities for sustainable development finance in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region”
Short title of the assignment:	International Evaluation Consultant
Duty station:	Home based with travel to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
Contract type:	Individual Contract
Duration:	October-November 2021 (18 effective person days)

BACKGROUND

The regional project “Strengthening capacities for sustainable development finance in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region”, funded by the Russian Federation, was launched in November 2017 for an initial period of 36 months and in October 2020, it was extended for additional 14 months. The current project ends in December 2021.

In general, the project contributes to the UNDAF Outcome 1: By 2022, inclusive and sustainable industrial, agricultural and rural development contribute to economic growth, decent work, improved livelihoods, food security and nutrition, especially among women and vulnerable groups, as well as CPD Results Area 1: Sustainable and Inclusive economic growth with the respective CPD output: Women, youth and people from the regions with high poverty rate benefit from improved services and infrastructure, better skills, access to resources, sustainable jobs and livelihoods. The project’s objective is to raise awareness and strengthen capacities of ministries and governmental agencies, national financial institutions, business entities and entrepreneurs in dealing with international financial institutions’ (hereinafter referred to as IFIs) projects in the Commonwealth of Independent States countries (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, including clients of the Eurasian Development Bank) (hereinafter referred to as CIS).

The achievement of the following results shall support this objective:

- Building capacity for preparation and implementation of investment development projects in the Kyrgyz Republic;
- Building capacity of the CIS member-states in accessing new development finance sources.

The following two activities shall contribute to the achievement of these results:

Activity 1. Technical assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic in the identification, preparation and implementation of bankable projects for financing from the Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund (hereinafter referred to as RKDF).

Activity 2. Technical assistance in project preparation for potential financing from the International Financial Institutions to governmental and business entities in Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, including clients of the Eurasian Development Bank (hereinafter referred to as EDB)

Overall, the project has two contributing outcomes to achieve the project targets: Outcome 1 Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded;

Outcome 4. Development debates and actions at all levels prioritize elimination of poverty, inequality and exclusion, consistent with our engagement principles.

The main implementing partners of the project are the Ministry of Economy and Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund, and the Eurasian Development Bank.

In accordance with the Project Document and UNDP Evaluation Plan, the project has to undertake an independent evaluation by its end. The aim of the evaluation is to assess the progress and results achieved within the project's lifespan.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the evaluation is to assess achieved results under Project, sustainability of benefits and draw lessons that can contribute to the decision making regarding the further engagement of this issue.

The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the programmatic progress, performance of the project interventions from the point of view of relevance, effectiveness, impact, organizational efficiency, sustainability as well as analysis of lessons learnt highlighting areas where the project performed less effectively than anticipated. The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, refining the approaches, organizational learning and accountability.

The evaluation presents an opportunity to assess the achievements of this project and its overall added value to building integrated disaster risk governance capacities in Kyrgyzstan and regional cooperation in central Asia.

Key Evaluation questions and guiding principles.

Final evaluation of Project will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines¹. The Evaluation will assess the Project according to standard evaluation criteria, as elaborated below, in line with the United Nations Evaluations Group norms and principles. However, the consultant in his methodology may propose new or different questions in close coordination and consultation with UNDP. The evaluation will address the following four main evaluation questions.

1. What did the UNDP Project intend to achieve during the period under review?
2. To what extent has the project achieved its intended objectives?
3. To what extent has UNDP project been able to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and support the country's response and recovery process?
4. What factors contributed to or hindered Project's performance to the sustainability of results?

To address above mentioned questions, a project Theory of change (ToC) approach will be used to better understand how project's interventions are expected to lead the sustainable finance management in CIS countries. Also, question 3 will help us examine UNDP's support to COVID-19 response at the Country level. In addition to the above questions, the evaluation is expected to produce answers surrounding the evaluation criterial of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and impact, national ownership and lessons learned. Below are guiding questions.

- Relevance
 - Was the Project relevant in addressing key challenges of access to resources of international financial institutions, identified by the Project Document?
 - Whether important gaps exist, or opportunities are being missed?
 - Did the Project activities and strategies fit the objectives, i.e. is there internal coherence between what the Project is doing and what it is trying to achieve?
 - To what extent were the Project interventions relevant to the needs and priorities of the target groups/beneficiaries?
 - Did the Project's outcome is expected to produce the desired change?
- Effectiveness
 - To what extent did the Project achieve its intended objectives and contribute to the project's strategic vision?
 - Assess the degree to which Project implementation was flexible and adaptive to the context.
 - To what extent did the Project mainstream a gender dimension and support gender responsive activities?
 - To what extent did the Project complement work with different entities and have a strategic coherence of approach.
 - How have stakeholders have been involved in the project's implementation?

¹ http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

- Efficiency
 - Assess whether the Project has utilized Project funding as per the agreed work plan to achieve the projected targets.
 - Analyze the role of the Project board and how efficiently did the Project use the Project board.
 - Assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the Project.
 - Analyze the performance of the M&E mechanism of the Project and the use of various M&E tools (any data available to the project etc.).
 - Assess the qualitative and quantitative aspects of management and other inputs (such as equipment, monitoring and review and other technical assistance and budgetary inputs) provided by the project vis-à-vis achievement of outputs and targets.
 - Identify factors and constraints, which have affected Project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional, and socio-economic policy issues in addition to other external factors unforeseen during the Project design (e.g. Covid-19 factor).
 - How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project (including with stakeholders? Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
 - How well did the project communicate on its implementation and results?
 - Overall, did the project provide value for money? Have resources been used efficiently?

- Sustainability and Impact
 - Assess preliminary indications of the degree to which the Project results are likely to be sustainable beyond the Project's lifetime (both at the community and government level) and provide recommendations for strengthening sustainability.
 - Did the intervention design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy?
 - How strong is the commitment of the Government and other stakeholders to sustaining the results of Project's support and continuing initiatives?
 - To what extent have national partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)?

- National ownership
 - Assess the degree of involvement of national partners and aligning to existing priorities of the local government in targeted areas.
 - How has the project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity?

- Lessons learnt/ Conclusions
 - An analysis of the main lessons learnt in relation to the effectiveness of foreseen strategies and theories of change to achieve the Project's objectives
 - An analysis of the main lessons learnt in relation to the effectiveness of implementation modalities

The review will cover the full period the project has been operational. And it is expected that the evaluator will develop and consecutively refine an evaluation matrix, which will relate to the above questions, the areas they refer to, the criteria for evaluating them, the indicators and the means for verification as a tool for the evaluation. The final evaluation matrix will be approved in the evaluation inception report.

Also, the project evaluation should cover the cross-cutting issues like Human Rights and Gender equality in line with the UNDP's Gender mainstreaming strategy and Gold Gender equality seal obtained in 2020. Gender disaggregated data will be collected, where available, and assessed against its project outcomes and awarded gender marker.

- To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the programme strategic design, implementation and reporting? Are there key achievements?
- In what way could UNDP enhance gender equality and human rights?

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation will be summative and will employ a participatory approach whereby discussions with and surveys of key stakeholders provide/ verify the substance of the findings. The evaluation will be based on gender and human rights principles and adhere to the UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct. Proposals submitted by prospective consultants

should outline a strong mixed method approach to data collection and analysis, clearly noting how various forms of evidence will be employed vis-à-vis each other to triangulate gathered information.

Proposals should be clear on the specific role each of the various methodological approaches plays in helping to address each of the evaluation questions. The methodologies for data collection may include but not necessarily be limited to:

- Data collection method. During this phase, the evaluation consultant will be engaged in data collection activities. Given the current travel limitations due to COVID some of the data collections and interviews will be undertaken virtually. The evaluation consultant will liaise with CO staff and management, key government stakeholders and other partners and beneficiaries during this stage.
- Rigorous **desk review** of documentation supplied by UNDP team: Project documents, previous evaluations, project reports, key intervention reports and policies, etc. Where possible and relevant more detailed monitoring information will be analyzed, such as community monitoring data and activity reporting.²
- Stakeholder engagement. A participatory and transparent process will be followed to engage with multiple project stakeholders. Key informant **interviews** as appropriate, with major stakeholders (Interviews will be conducted in person or online). Stakeholders will be selected in close coordination with the Project and will at minimum include:
 - Government authorities with a key responsibility towards the project;
 - UNDP COs in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Tajikistan and Armenia
 - Implementing partners, such as IFIs, experts and consultants.
 - Project beneficiaries.
 - Other stakeholders if relevant.

❖ *Desk research:*

Desk review of relevant documents such as project documents, progress reports, financial records, other relevant documents/reports, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation.

❖ *Interviews & focus group discussions with stakeholders (to be conducted in person or online):*

These interviews can take place on an individual basis or in groups, and have to cover all groups of partners, beneficiaries, implementing agencies, partners.

All meetings and conversations will be held only once the appropriate approvals have been obtained, for which UNDP will take primary responsibility. If approvals cannot be obtained on time, it is possible that some of these stakeholders may not be interviewed.

❖ *Validation*

The review findings will be presented to UNDP to collect feedback on these main findings and serve as a validation exercise.

Products expected from the evaluation:

- 1) Inception report with finalized and agreed terms of reference, evaluation matrix, questionnaires and agreed methodology of evaluation;
- 2) A comprehensive evaluation report with findings, recommendations, lessons learned.

The draft Report and Final Reports: The Report should be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations, and should be free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. The Report should respond in detail to the key focus areas described above.

Presentation: For presenting and discussing the draft final report interactively, UNDP will facilitate a concluding workshop for the Project stakeholders

The evaluation will be independent and led by the expert. The evaluation will be a consultative, inclusive and participatory process. The evaluation will be managed by the Project coordinator, UNDP M&E officer and Team Leader of UNDP SEG program leader to oversee evaluation management and quality assure throughout the evaluation process.

UNDP will help facilitate contacts and set up meetings, and overall support the evaluation.

² This data will only be included in the desk research when it is in a format that is accessible and relatively easily digestible for the reviewer.

Time Schedule

The timeframe and responsibilities for the evaluation process are tentatively as follows:

Tentative time schedule	Period (all tbc)
Inception report with agreed evaluation methodology, questionnaires, and action plan	2 days
Initial desk research	2 days
Interviews and/or group discussions	5 days
Preliminary analysis and the provision of the first draft report	3 days
Validation and the inception meeting with UNDP	1 days
Submission of final report (with minimum two rounds of comments)	3 days
Final discussion of the project with UNDP	2 day

FINAL DELIVERABLES

Deliverables	Due date	Payment structure
1 Provided Deliverable 1 (The first approved draft report)	November 15th, 2021	50%
2 Provided Deliverable 2 (The final approved report)	November 30th , 2021	50%

Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' which are available here: <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 express authorization of UNDP and partners.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Accountability and reporting:

Under the leadership and guidance of UNDP M&E officer and UNDP Sustainable Economic Growth Team Leader and under the direct supervision of the UNDP Sustainable Economic Growth Team Leader, the Consultant will fulfill the task within this ToR. The UNDP M&E Officer will provide overall strategic oversight and guidance for the entire process, and the coordination support will be assured by the CO respective team (Outcome 1 cluster). The Consultant will be certified against each deliverable by the UNDP Sustainable Economic Growth Team Leader, which will serve as a justification for payments.

1. All reports should be provided in electronic versions in English language, with the detailed description of the fulfilled tasks, according to the present Terms of Reference, and the direct contribution of the expert. Analytical documents, reports and notes developed by experts should be attached to the reports as annexes, which will serve as a justification for payment.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Minimum Master's degree in social science or other areas, relevant to the subject of the assignment.
- At least of 5 years of professional experience in the field of development finance/ in CIS countries/ in conducting evaluations / development finance related strategies and/or policies in programs and/or projects
- Strong knowledge of UNDP and its working approaches including partnership approaches with Government, civil society and community groups;
- Language requirements: Fluency in English language.

TRAVEL

This assignment does not require the travels.

All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal. This includes all travel to join duty station/repatriation travel. In general, UNDP should not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket and daily allowance exceeding UNDP rates. Should the Consultant wish to travel on a higher class he/she should do so using their own resources.

In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon, between the respective business unit and Individual Consultant, prior to travel and will be reimbursed.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE RECOMMENDED CONTRACTOR

Statement of Medical Fitness for Work

For an Individual Contractor who is of 65 years of age or older, and on an assignment requiring travel, be it for the purpose of arriving at the duty station or as an integral duty required under the TOR, a full medical examination and statement of fitness to work must be provided. However, this is not a requirement for individuals on RLA contracts

Where there is no UN office nor a UN Medical Doctor present in the location of the Individual Contractor prior to commencing the travel, either for repatriation or duty travel, the Individual Contractor may choose his/her own preferred physician to obtain the required medical clearance.

Inoculations/Vaccinations

Individual Consultants/Contractors are required to have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. The cost of required vaccinations/inoculations, when foreseeable, must be included in the financial proposal. Any unforeseeable vaccination/inoculation cost will be reimbursed by UNDP.

Security Clearance

The Consultant should undertake the Security training (BESAFE) prior to travelling. These requirements apply for all Consultants, attracted individually or through the Employer.

SCOPE OF PRICE PROPOSAL AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Contracts based on lump-sum

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables. Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including travel, per diems, and number of anticipated working days)..

Preferred Currency of Offer:

United State Dollars (USD)

UNDP CONTRIBUTION

- 1) Arranging meetings\interviews with counterparts and beneficiaries
- 2) Project related documents such as Project Document, Annual Work Plans and/or Progress Reports
- 3) Security charges are not applicable

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kanybek.konokbaev@undp.org

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