**Terms of Reference**

**Final Evaluation of the SwedBio-funded Component of**

**the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) Project**

Location: Home based

Type of Contract: Individual Contract

Languages Required: English (Knowledge of one or more additional UN official languages is an advantage)

Starting Date: 1 December 2020

Duration of Assignment: 30 days spread between December 2020 and February 2021

**I. Background and Context**

[The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net)](http://www.besnet.world/) is a capacity sharing “network of networks” that promotes dialogue among science, policy and practice for more effective management of biodiversity and ecosystems services, contributing to long-term human well-being and sustainable development. BES-Net aims at contributing to the capacity building work of the [Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)](http://www.ipbes.net/). In particular, first phase of the BES-Net initiative (2016-2021) has been committed to facilitate and promote dialogue on topics linked to IPBES thematic assessments as well as in key areas of UNDP’s work on biodiversity and ecosystems management through three inter-linked areas of work:

* [Face-to-face capacity building support through Regional Trialogues](https://www.besnet.world/events?trialogues): Trialogues bring together BES-Net’s three target communities of science, policy and practice for face-to-face dialogues around the themes of the completed IPBES Thematic Assessments, particularly on pollinators/pollination and land degradation/restoration. Fostering mutual learning, inter-cultural understanding and interinstitutional coordination on specific policy-relevant questions at the national and regional levels, Trialogues strengthen the interface between these communities and enhance national capacity to integrate scientific findings of the IPBES assessments into policy, decision-making and on-the-ground practices. Special geographic focus is placed on Eastern Europe, the Caribbean, Anglophone/Francophone Africa and Central Asia;
* [National Ecosystem Assessments (NEA)](https://www.besnet.world/national-ecosystem-assessments): BES-Net supports the development of national capacity to conduct NEAs in pilot countries, namely Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia and Vietnam, complementing the global assessment being undertaken by IPBES. Leveraging the expertise of the Sub-Global Assessment Network (SGAN), the NEA process encompasses not only the production of national assessment reports but also the development of a set of policy support tools to integrate assessment findings into decision-making; and
* [Online platform for global networking](https://www.besnet.world/networking): The BES-Net web portal provides a comprehensive knowledge resource library on biodiversity and ecosystems services, and a rich database of organizations and experts working on the IPBES thematic assessment areas. The latest news and updates from BES-Net and its 100+ network partners are circulated via social media channels and disseminated through bi-monthly e-newsletters.

The BES-Net Phase I is managed by the Nairobi-based Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification (GC-RED), which is one of UNDP’s Global Policy Centers, in partnership with the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). The total budget of the BES-Net Phase I is about US$ 4.95 million, which is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) with the contribution of approximately US$ 4.65 million, and SwedBio at the Stockholm Resilience Centre with the contribution of approximately US$ 300,000. The SwedBio-supported component of BES-Net will expire on 31 December 2020, while the BMU-supported component will end on 31 June 2021.

The overall aim of the SwedBio-supported component of BES-Net is to further the outreach and operations of BES-Net in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe, particularly the developing countries to:

1. Assist in integrating thematic issues of biodiversity and ecosystems management into national poverty alleviation and development programmes;
2. Accelerate the policy uptake and use of the thematic assessments produced by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; and
3. Support the participation of indigenous and local knowledge holders in policy dialogues.

In 2016-2018 period, SwedBio support focused on supporting:

* *Enhancing the BES-Net web-portal* - system and content development as well as the operationalization of the BES-Net web-portal as a key tool supporting the global capacity network of scientists/knowledge holders, policymakers and practitioners with a focus on developing countries and on gender balance
  + Output 1.1. BES-Net web portal is fully operational, accessible and interactive for users in developing countries with registered users from the communities of science, policy and practice
  + Output 1.2. Specific networks are supported by the BES-Net web portal
  + Output 1.3. There is increased visibility of BES-Net
* *Networking and communication* activities around BES-Net in developing countries; outreach

activities will also be gender sensitive and target marginal groups.

* + Output 2.1. An increased number of user and expert (institutions) from developing countries and the community involved in ILK are registered on BES-Net
  + Output 2.2. Gender is taken into account into the BES-Net Trialogues

In 2018-2020 period (extended period), SwedBio support has been dedicated:

* To enhance global knowledge exchange and mutual learning among scientists/knowledge holders, policymakers and practitioners
  + Output 1.1. Accessibility to and utilization of BES-related knowledge resources improved
  + Output 1.2. Interactions among scientists/ knowledge holders, policymakers and practitioners increased beyond geographic and sectoral boundaries
* To improve the environment for effective science-policy-practice dialogue and collaborative actions towards the achievement of common BES goals
  + Output 2.1. Guiding frameworks for science-policy-practice dialogue and collaborative actions developed/refined and experiences shared
  + Output 2.2. Representation of IPLCs in policy dialogues improved

**II. Evaluation Purpose, Scope and Objectives**

This final evaluation is being conducted in accordance with the project proposals and the agreements with the project donors, and in line with the GC-RED Evaluation Plan submitted to the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre, UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021, Evaluation Policy (2016) and Evaluation Guidelines (2019), among other resources, which set out a number of guiding principles, norms and standards for evaluation within UNDP. In compliance with the overall UNDP Evaluation Policy, the evaluation exercise must be independent, impartial, credible and designed with utility in mind. The evaluation should generate relevant and useful information to support evidence-based decision making.

The main objective of the final evaluation is to assess the achievements of the SwedBio-supported component of the BES-Net project, i.e. the extent of attainments of the expected results, as initially planned and as adjusted upon the extension of the support, and review the SwedBio component’s theory of change (TOC) as part of broader BES-Net TOC vis-à-vis the component’s accomplishments. The exercise is also expected to highlight key good practices, weaknesses/gaps and other lessons learnt during the implementation of the component within the broader BES-Net project framework to provide forward-looking insights, and practical and actionable recommendations to increase the likelihood of success relating to impact and sustainability, taking into account the continuity of the BES-Net initiative through the Phase II (2020-2028) and in order to inform future programming in the field of BES.

Under the direction of the BES-Net Project Manager and working closely with the Monitoring and Evaluation focal points, the independent evaluator is expected to focus on the key criteria, which include, among others:

* Relevance of the component interventions under the overall BES-Net project to the first and second IPBES work programmes, particularly the Platform’s Capacity Building Rolling Plan, and overall policy-science interface enhancement at global, regional and national levels;
* Effectiveness of the components within the wider BES-Net project;
* Efficiency of the component design and implementation to-date (including implementation approaches employed as a basis to guide possible future improvements in delivery);
* Potential sustainability in terms of the contribution of the component towards the BES-Net Phase II (2020-2028) and other BES initiatives;
* Likelihood of achieving projected impact of the component vis-à-vis the assumptions used in the development of the overall BES-Net project; and
* Fulfilment to gender equality.

Pertinent issues such as management arrangements, procurement and financial procedures, timeliness of interventions, selection of beneficiaries, incorporation of innovative solutions and prospects for sustainability should also be included in the analysis.

The evaluation findings will be utilized and the recommendations be applied by the BES-Net project team in order to improve the implementation of the rest of Phase I up to 2021, and Phase II of the project in both technical and operational terms. The results will also be utilized for the consultation with SwedBio and other potential donors on the possible continuous/new collaborations in support of BES-Net Phase II.

**III. Evaluation Criteria and Key Questions**

The following are guiding questions within the framework of the evaluation criteria, which are to be reviewed by the evaluator and elaborated/targeted/specified further in the evaluation inception report in line with the above evaluation purpose, scope and objectives:

***Relevance***

* Was there a clear and logical consistency between, inputs, activities, outputs and progress towards achievement of objectives (quality, quantity and time-frame)?
* How has the component contributed to the priorities of the overall BES-Net project and those of the first and second IPBES work programmes?
* Were the component’s objectives, including specification of targets and identification of beneficiaries, clear and realistic?
* Was the component relevant to the needs of target beneficiaries?
* How well did the component react to changing work environment and how well has the design able to adjust to emerging circumstances?

***Effectiveness***

* To what extent is the component successful in achieving the expected results?
* In which areas does the component have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the component build on or expand these achievements?
* In which areas does the component have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
* What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the results, and how effective have BES-Net partnerships been in contributing to achieving the planned results?
* To what extent have the targeted stakeholders and beneficiaries benefitted from the component? Are there any other beneficiaries, besides the targeted, who have benefitted from the component?
* To what extent are the current results benefitting women and men equally?
* To what extent are the component management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the component and broader BES-Net objectives?

***Efficiency***

* To what extent are funding, staff, and other resources used to achieving the expected

results of the component and the overall BES-Net project? Was there economic use of resources?

* Were the strategies utilized adequately? How have they contributed to the maximum intervention efficiency?
* To what extent was component implementation (e.g. procurement, recruitment) guided by effectiveness principles such as accountability, fairness and value for money?
* To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?
* Were there any unanticipated events (e.g. COVID 19), opportunities or constraints contributed to or hindered the delivery of the interventions on timely manner?

***Sustainability***

* What strategies and mechanisms have been incorporated to the implementation of the component to guarantee the sustainability of expected outputs in the broader BES-Net project framework?
* To what extent did the capacity building activities under the component produce lasting results?
* To what extent have partners and other stakeholders committed to providing continuing support?
* To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the BES-Net project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the BES-Net project/SwedBio-supported component?
* To what extent can the results of the component be replicated/ upscaled in other areas?

***Potential Impact***

* Did the component have the intended impact and/or is the component likely to on the overall BES-Net project and beyond?
* What specific contribution did the component make within the broader BES-Net project framework? What specific part of this difference can be attributed to the component?

***Gender equality***

* To what extent has gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
* To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender?

**IV. Methodology**

The final project evaluation is to be undertaken in accordance with UN evaluation norms and policies, including UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluations and UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results and the UNDP Evaluation Guidance document.

Given the nature of the BES-Net project including the SwedBio-supported component, with the combination of global, regional and national focus, and in view of the current COVID-19 situation, the collection of data will be undertaken on a home basis. The assignment is envisaged to cover at least the following areas:

* Desk study review of all the project related documents, such as the project proposals, annual work plans, annual progress reports, minutes of the biannual Advisory Committee meetings and other evidence-based sources of information (e.g. periodic online user survey reports Regional Trialogue outcome monitoring reports), etc.
* Virtual meetings/email-based consultations with the BES-Net project team (i.e. UNDP, UNEP-WCMC and sub-contracted organizations), the Project Advisory Committee members, donors and other key partners; and
* Online questionnaires and/or interviews with those who have participated in and benefited from the component activities.

The UNDP GPC-Nairobi, in support of the final project evaluation, will:

* Provide all relevant background documents to the Consultant;
* Provide an overall briefing on the BES-Net project and the SwedBio-supported component;
* Avail any necessary follow-up support for online/email-based consultations and interviews; and
* Provide any additional information and support, as required.

The type of information and methods selected must produce evidence, and they should combine both qualitative and quantitative aspects. The evaluation findings should not rely only on perceptions, but the evidence should be validated by triangulation of different data sources /or methods.

## V. Evaluation Products (Key Deliverables)

The main product of the final project evaluation will be a final project evaluation report. The language of the report is English. The report should articulate the project results and findings for the BMU funded and SwedBio-supported components respectively, and comply with other UNDP requirements. The detailed outline of the report shall be agreed upon the commencement of the assignment. The expected deliverables will include:

***Inception report***: An inception report shall be submitted within 5 days of commencing the consultancy, based on a desk review and preliminary analysis of the available information supplied and the initial meetings with the UNDP GC-RED/BES-Net project team. The report should contain an evaluation matrix (See Annex) that displays for each of the evaluation criteria, the questions and sub questions that the evaluation will answer, and for each question, the data that will be collected to inform that question and the methods that will be used to collect that data (all based on the evaluation criteria outlined). It should also include a proposed schedule of tasks/activities and deliverables and a table of contents for the final evaluation report (See Annex). The methodology should be robust enough to ensure high quality, triangulation of data sources, and verifiability of information.

***Presentation of the preliminary findings:*** The evaluator should present the preliminary findings of the evaluation and tentative conclusions of the evaluation to the UNDP GC-RED/BES-Net project team as well as the relevant partners/stakeholders.

***Draft consolidated evaluation report***: The draft evaluation report, containing the initial findings including key observations and recommendations based on verifiable facts and figures, shall be circulated to the all with any responsibility in oversight regarding the BES-Net project, including the SwedBio-supported component, as well as the organizations/individuals participating in the evaluation process to ensure that the evaluation needs are met based on the quality criteria, as well as validate the finding, recommendations identified in the report. This should also be accompanied by an audit trail detailing how comments, questions and clarifications have been addressed.

***Final report***: The draft report will be amended further by the Consultant taking into account all the comments and inputs from the stakeholders. The final report shall be submitted to GC-RED in digital form using latest MS-Office programs. GPC-Nairobi will share the copies of the report to the donor and any other relevant stakeholders.

**VI. Evaluation Ethics**

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866>. The evaluator 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 it. The evaluator 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.

## VII. Management and Implementation Arrangement

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with UNDP GC-RED and will contract the evaluators.

While the evaluation will remain fully independent GC-RED’s BES-Net Project Manager and the M&E focal points will serve as the focal point for providing both substantive and logistical support to the contractor. In close cooperation and consultation with UNDP GC-RED/BES-Net team, the contractor will develop the plan, identify key interview partners and organize virtual meetings.

This TOR shall be the basis upon which compliance with assignment requirements and overall quality of services provided by the consultants will be assessed by UNDP.

During the evaluation, the Consultant is entitled and expected to discuss with the all the persons and organizations relevant to the assignment. The Consultant has no authorization to make any commitments on behalf of UNDP, its implementing partners or donors.

**VIII. Evaluation Timeframe and Payment Schedule**

This consultancy is envisioned to be completed in 30 (thirty) working days spread over the period of two (2) months between December 2020 and January 2021.

Payment will be made based on satisfactory submission of the deliverables:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Deliverables/Outputs** | **Number of working days** | **Payment**  **(Target Due Date)** |
| Satisfactory submission of the inception report | 5 | 15%  (By 15 December 2020) |
| Presentation of the Preliminary Findings | 13 | 39%  (By 22 January 2020) |
| Satisfactory submission of the draft consolidated evaluation report | 7 | 21%  (By 5 February 2021) |
| Satisfactory submission of the final consolidated evaluation report | 5 | 15%  (By 28 February 2021) |
| **Total** | **30** | **100%** |

## IX. Evaluation Team Composition and Required Skills and Experience

The lead evaluator will be responsible for collating all information collected and finalizing the reports and deliverables. The evaluator selected must be independent from any organization that was involved in the project and must not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and must not have conflict of interest with project related activities. The Lead evaluator is expected to take primary responsibility for:

* Planning, conducting and reporting on the evaluation including providing guidance to the other evaluator(s), if any
* Documentation review
* Organizing the collection of the relevant data and inputs to the reports/deliverables
* Supervision of the evaluation and ensuring timelines are met
* Use of best practice evaluation methodologies in conducting the evaluation
* Drafting and finalizing of the Inception Report for the Final Evaluation
* Leading presentation of the draft evaluation findings and recommendations in-country
* Conducting the de-briefing for the UNDP GC-RED/BES-Net project team and other stakeholders
* Drafting and finalization of the Final Evaluation Report

The evaluator should have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with UNDP projects is an advantage. The evaluator must also present the following qualifications:

***Competency:***

*Corporate Competencies*:

* Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN’s values and ethical standards:
* Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
* Treats all people fairly without favouritism.

*Functional Competencies*:

* Extensive knowledge of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods
* Good analytical and strategic thinking skills

*Development and Operational Effectiveness:*

* Ability to lead strategic planning, change processes, results-based management and reporting;
* Ability to conduct evaluation considering the specific country context and to identify creative, practical approaches to overcome challenging situations.
* Ability to meet tight deadlines

*Management and Leadership*:

* Excellent inter-personal, communication, and teamwork skills
* Builds strong relationships with clients, focuses on impact and result for the client and responds positively to feedback;
* Consistently approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude;
* Demonstrates openness to change and ability to manage complexities;
* Ability to lead effectively, mentoring as well as conflict resolution skills;
* Remains calm, in control and good humoured even under pressure;
* Proven networking, team-building, organizational and communication skills.

***Education:***

* Advanced university degree in natural resources management/environment or related disciplines;

***Experience:***

* At least 8 years of professional experience in results-based management and participatory monitoring and evaluation;
* At least 3 years of relevant experiences in the area of biodiversity and various BES-Net thematic fields;
* Solid understanding of UNDP’s results-based evaluation policies and procedures and past project M&E experiences within United Nations system; and
* Good communication and analytical, and visualization skills including gender-sensitive analysis.

***Language:***

* Fluency in written and spoken English (Prerequisite)
* Knowledge of one or more additional UN official languages is an advantage

**X. Application Submission Process**

Applicants must submit a duly completed and signed application form in English, which include the below components:

* **P11 form**, indicating all relevant past experiences and the contact details of at least three (3) professional referees;
* **CV** in alignment with the required qualification and relevant experience;
* **Proposed Methodology** on how the applicant will approach and complete the assignment; and
* **Financial Proposal** that indicates the daily rate/fee of the candidate in US dollars, using the **Offeror’s letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability**

**XI. Criteria for Selection**

Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the technical criteria will be weighted at 70% and the financial offer will be weighted at 30%. Only candidates scoring 49 points or higher from the review of education, experience, language and methodology (i.e. technical criteria) will be considered for the financial evaluation. Those applications not meeting the prerequisite language requirement (i.e. fluency in English) will not be considered Applicant receiving the highest combined score and has accepted UNDP’s General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

*Technical Criteria (70% of total evaluation; maximum 70 points):*

* Demonstrated academic qualification (Max. 5);
* Demonstrated professional experience in results-based management and participatory monitoring and evaluation (Max. 15);
* Demonstrated relevant experiences in the area of biodiversity and various BES-Net thematic fields (Max 10)
* Solid understanding of UNDP’s results-based evaluation policies and procedures and past project M&E experiences within United Nations system (Max. 10)
* Communication and analytical, and visualization skills including gender-sensitive analysis (Max. 5)
* Knowledge of one or more additional UN official languages (Max. 5)
* Quality of methodology based on level of understanding of the task, extent of addressing the important aspects of the task and degree of aligning the scope of task to the TOR (Max. 20)

*Financial Criteria (30% of total evaluation; maximum 30 points) – to be computed as a ratio of the proposal being evaluated and the lowest priced proposal of those technically qualified;*

**XII. Annexes**

All the below documents are available at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3k75p1xcvaxr7ct/AADqoyz2PI3TBh-2_sOe8Wfga?dl=0>

* Project proposal to SwedBio for 2016-18 under BES-Net Phase I
* Project extension proposal to SwedBio for 2018-2020 under BES-Net Phase I
* GC-RED Project Document including BES-Net Component
* Project proposal to BMU International Climate Initiative (IKI) for BES-Net Phase I
* Project proposal to BMU IKI for BES-Net Phase II
* List of key stakeholders and partners
* Preliminary documents to be consulted
* Evaluation matrix template
* Outline of the evaluation report format
* Code of conduct forms