



TERMS OF REFERENCE

End of Project Evaluation of the Youth Connekt Zimbabwe Project

1. General information

Services Required	Expert (s) to undertake an evaluation of the Youth Connekt Zimbabwe Programme (2019-2021)
Project/Programme Title	Youth Connekt Zimbabwe
Type of Contract	Individual or Institutional Contract
Locations:	Travel to select locations – to interact with beneficiaries and implementing partners; online interactions
Duration	20 working days
Expected Start Date	Within 1 week after Contract Signing
Expected End Date	10 December 2021

2. Background

Young people in Zimbabwe face significant developmental challenges. Most notable among these is limited opportunities for education and training leading to low levels of employability. Young people have the highest unemployment rate of 16 per cent. When young people enter the labour market they face high levels of informality, higher rates of unemployment and are likely to be concentrated on low income and precarious conditions. According to a March 2019 UNICEF U-Report Poll, 80 per cent of young people believe that lack of employment opportunities is the major challenge being faced by young people in Zimbabwe today, with 53 per cent saying that job opportunities would give them hope for the future.

Facing these challenges, a significant portion of young people follow the route of entrepreneurship. There are generally unsupportive conditions for entrepreneurship that force young people to engage in negative coping mechanisms. The situation has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic which has affected the most vulnerable disproportionately.

A study conducted by the Government revealed that if Zimbabwe taps into youth demographic dividend, engaging them in skills development; employment, enterprise and sustainable livelihoods, Zimbabwe stands to increase its GDP by 3.5 per cent in addition to other economic and social benefits.

3. YouthConnekt

Launched by UNDP and the Government of Rwanda in 2012, Youth Connekt Africa is a platform which brings partners together, to help empower Africa's youth in a range of thematic areas which cover a wide socio-economic and political spectrum. So far, 21 other

African countries have set up Youth Connekt initiatives. Youth Connekt initiatives in these countries cover a wide range of youth empowerment themes.

Youth Connekt Zimbabwe was a pilot member of the Youth Connekt Africa initiative, which seeks to bring partners together to help empower Africa's youth in a range of thematic areas which cover a wide socioeconomic spectrum. Overall, Youth Connekt seeks to provide youth with the skills, networks and information needed to scale their initiatives and gain meaningful employment", and so far, 21 other African countries have signed up to the initiative.

The Youth Connekt Zimbabwe project, launched in 2019, was piloted successfully leading to Zimbabwe's performance being hailed as "best practice" and "innovative" in the region. UNDP and the Government of Zimbabwe have been implementing the Youth Connekt Programme as part of efforts to improve outcomes for young people. The objectives of the programme were to:

- Support entrepreneurship development
- Promote employment, skills development and other opportunities
- Facilitate networking and dialogue

Taking an evidence-based and demand-driven approach, the development of Youth Connekt Zimbabwe is informed by youth needs as articulated by the youth themselves at the 2019 Youth Indaba. Needs include (but are not limited to): access to funds (ensuring that women have equal access); business incubation; access to markets; skills development; apprenticeships and work experience; bridging the digital divide; equal opportunities for women in the arts; information and networking; and the need to reach rural youth with youth-centered interventions

The flagship component of the Youth Connekt Programme is the annual business competition. Two editions have already been successfully concluded, the 2019 Start Up Tour Bus and the 2020 Virtual Tour Bus with a focus on COVID-19. The 2021 edition is a continuation of this and builds on the lessons and success of the previous years. The 2021 competition is dubbed the "Business Growth Programme". The programme is in its third year of implementation, UNDP and the Ministry of Youth Sports Arts and Recreation (MoYSAR) believe it is an opportune time to reflect on the impact of the project.

4. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation is to:

- a) Provide an independent assessment of progress of the project across the three project outcomes outlined in the programme document; assessing performance as per the foreseen targets and indicators of achievement at output, outcome and impact levels both intended and unintended; strategies and implementation modalities chosen; partnership arrangements, constraints and opportunities;
- b) Provide recommendations for future programming based on the needs and aspirations of Zimbabwean youth; the results from the project while taking into account the aspirations of the Country Office to rationalize its portfolio

Evaluation Objectives

The following are the evaluation objectives

- Assess whether, and to what extent, the project's outcomes and outputs have been achieved;
- Assess UNDP's contribution and that of its partners to the achievement of project outcomes;
- Determine the impact, both positive and negative, as well as intended and non-intended from contribution of the project to the achievement of the outcomes;
- Assess the extent to which the UNDP-supported project outputs and non-project assistance contributed to the respective UNDAF and Country Programme outcomes, as well as their contribution to the TSP and NDS1 national frameworks;
- Examine the extent to which gender equality and women empowerment and human rights targets as cross-cutting issues were integrated and achieved;
- Document achievements, lessons learnt and best practices during the course of implementation to inform future decisions in project design, implementation and management of similar interventions;
- Provide a framework for a large and coherent programme encompassing priority interventions in the areas of youth empowerment, innovation and entrepreneurship
- Identify complementary initiatives for potential partnerships

5. Scope of work

The evaluation will measure progress towards all outcomes and will assess the overall level of achievement of the immediate outcomes to understand how and why these have taken place. The evaluation should include the application of the following data collection tools: document review, virtual interviews and focus groups with the past winners of the various YouthConnekt editions and a stakeholders' workshop.

The main aim of the final project evaluation is to highlight and analyse the results, identify challenges, lessons learnt, good practices, conclusions and recommendations that will help to improve future joint programming, strengthen organisational learning and accountability. This evaluation will capture evaluative evidence of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project, which can be used to strengthen existing programmes and/or to set the stage for new initiatives.

Firstly, the evaluation will assess the effectiveness of the implementation strategy to ascertain whether the specific and overall interventions and approaches were appropriate and effective. This will include:

1. The implementation modalities, in particular the effectiveness of the funding approach.
2. Partnership arrangements, institutional strengthening, and beneficiary participation
3. Scalability;
4. Cost effectiveness and efficiency as well as sustainability of the Project; and
5. Linkages, synergies and coordination with other Projects/programmes.

Secondly, the evaluation will also assess the Project design and assumptions made at the beginning of the Project and the development process. In this regard, the evaluation will place emphasis on:

1. The extent to which the Project results have been achieved, partnerships established, capacities built.

2. Whether the Project implementation strategy has been optimum and recommend areas for improvement and learning.
3. Assess the project contribution to achievement of UNDP Country Programme, UN Strategic Plan and Government of Zimbabwe development goals and results;
4. Assess the relevance and strategic positioning of this project's support to in the context of Zimbabwe as well as the overall contribution of the project to the strengthening of youth empowerment and entrepreneurial issues in Zimbabwe.
5. Draw, based on above objectives, lessons and recommendations for sustaining the project results, and providing guidance for the future strategic direction for similar projects in the context of Zimbabwe.
6. Programme accountability in as far as communication and visibility is concerned.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation will use standard OECD evaluation criteria to assess its performance, which includes relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Evaluation Questions

The analysis in the evaluation report shall be guided and must respond to **ALL** the below guiding questions. This analysis however should not only be limited to the below guiding questions and the evaluator where appropriate can propose additional questions to the below in the execution of the assignment.

- 1) **Design and Relevance** – Assess design and focus of the project
 - To what extent did the Project achieve its overall objectives?
 - What and how much progress has been made towards achieving the overall outputs and outcomes (including contributing factors and constraints);
 - To what extent were the results (impacts, outcomes and outputs) achieved?
 - Were the inputs and strategies identified, and were they realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the results?
 - Was the project relevant to the identified needs?
- Whether the problem the project addressed is clearly identified and the approach soundly conceived;
- Whether the relationship between outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs of the project are logically articulated; Were the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended outcomes and effects? Were the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Were the inputs and strategies identified realistic, appropriate and adequate to achieve the results? To what extent has the projects selected method of delivery been appropriate to supporting the current project and the overall development context
- Whether the outcomes and outputs of the project were stated explicitly and precisely in verifiable terms with SMART indicators;
- Whether the target beneficiaries of the project are clearly identified;
- Whether the project was relevant to the development priorities of the country; Did the outputs and outcome address the specific development challenges of the Country and the intended beneficiaries? Were there any unintended consequences (positive or negative) that have implications to the human development goals of the country?

- 2) **Effectiveness** - Describe the management processes and their appropriateness in supporting delivery
- Was the project effective in delivering desired/planned results?
 - To what extent did the Project's M&E mechanism contribute in meeting project results?
 - How effective were the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project?
 - How effective has the project been in responding to the needs of the beneficiaries, and what results were achieved? The reflection on the business competition module must be more detailed beyond conventional evaluations. how effective has been the support in promoting viable start-ups that create jobs and meet the important challenges in society. Aspects that can be examined include sustainability of the businesses (are they still operating); change in business performance across a number of key indicators (sales, profit, number of jobs) following the support; perceptions of young people towards the YouthConnekt programme.
- What are the major achievements of the project vis-à-vis its objectives, performance indicators and targets? Were the stated outputs achieved? Did they contribute to the stated outcomes? What are the key development and advisory contributions that project has made/is making towards the outcomes, if any? Please explain in detail in terms of impact, sustainability of results and contribution to capacity development and partnerships.
 - Whether there is evidence of UNDP contribution to the outcomes of the project.
 - What major factors affected project delivery and offer what appropriate interventions might have strengthened or addressed them.
 - What are the future intervention strategies and issues to be addressed? To what extent has the project supported domestication of key regional frameworks, experiences and international best practices through the national development plans and strategies?
- 3) **Efficiency** – Was the process of achieving results efficient?
- Whether the project resources (financial, physical and manpower) were adequate in terms of both quantity and quality; Has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
 - Whether the project's resources were used effectively to produce planned results (Are the disbursements and project expenditures in line with expected budgetary plans)? Whether the project was cost-effective compared to similar interventions; Was the process of achieving the results efficient? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective? In general, do the results achieved justify the costs? Could the same results be attained with fewer resources? Are there other efficient ways and means of delivering more and better results with available inputs?
 - Whether the technologies selected (any innovations adopted, if any) were suitable; and
 - The delivery of Government counterpart inputs in terms of personnel, premises and equipment.
 - What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Project's implementation process

- Did the Project activities overlap and duplicate other similar interventions (funded nationally or by other donors)?
- Could a different approach have produced better results? 3 - How was the project's collaboration with the UNRCO, UNDP, the Government of Rwanda, national institutions, development partners, and the Steering Committee - How efficient were the management and accountability structures of the project? - How did the project financial management processes and procedures affect project implementation? - What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the project's implementation process?

4) **Sustainability-**

To what extent are the benefits of the Project likely to be sustained by national capacities after the completion of this Project? If not why?

What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve the prospects of sustainability of the Project outcomes and potential for replication of approach?

Has the project generated the buy-in and credibility needed for sustained impact

- What is the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of project outcomes and benefits after completion of the project?
- Is there an exit strategy to phase out the assistance provided by the Project including contributing factors and constraints?
- What is the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of the Project outcomes and benefits after the completion of the Project?
- Describe key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcomes and the potential for replication of the approach?
- How were capacities strengthened at the individual and organizational level (including contributing factors and constraints)?

5) **Coherence**

6. **Lessons** - Describe the main lessons that have emerged?
 - What are the recommendations for similar support in future?
7. What could be the main **elements for a future intervention** – successor program for YouthConnekt. Assess whether or not the UNDP resource mobilization strategy for the project was appropriate and effective - has the partnership strategy been appropriate and effective.

6. Methodology

The evaluation should be based on the five criteria laid out in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance, as defined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines.

The evaluation should be based on an analysis of secondary and primary data collected from various sources, including project quarterly reports, implementing partners' (IPs) reports,

minutes of project board meetings, interviews with key informants and focus group discussions (FGDs) with project beneficiaries. The evaluation will take a “theory of change” (TOC) approach to determining causal links between the interventions that have been supported and observed progress at the country level. The evaluation exercise will be, consultative, and participatory ensuring representation of both women and men, entailing a combination of comprehensive desk reviews, analysis and interviews, as highlighted above.

The methodology should include;

- a) Review of project documentation. Review of key project documents such as approved project documents, recent studies, reviews, project monitoring documents, back to office reports, annual reports, quarterly reports, disbursement reports, progress reports and other information available with implementing partners.
- b) Data collection: (i) visits to selected stakeholders to carry out in depth interviews, inspection, and analysis of project activities; (ii) phone interviews and performance data surveys of institutions not visited in person; (iii) interviews with implementing partners. For each of these interviews, the consultants should first develop and present their ideas (in the inception report) for the content and format of the interview forms that will be applied to capture the information required, as well as the method to be used in administering them and tabulating the results.
- c) Analysis: Data triangulation and analysis triangulation to validate evidence and arrive at findings.
- d) The evaluator will be expected to develop and present detailed statement of evaluations methods/approaches in an inception report to show how each objective, evaluation question and criterion will be answered.
- e) While interviews are a key instrument, all analysis must be based on observed facts, evidence and data. This precludes relying exclusively upon anecdotes, hearsay and unverified opinions. Findings should be specific, concise and supported by quantitative and/or qualitative information that is reliable and valid. The evaluation methodology must be explained in detail and be appropriate and of sufficient rigor to produce valid results. Limitations to the evaluation with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.) must be disclosed in the evaluation report.

The evaluation team will be expected to:

- Employ study techniques that ensure internal validity of study results
- Utilize social science methods and tools that reduce the need for evaluator-specific judgments.
- Employ standardized recording and maintenance of records from the evaluation (e.g., focus group transcripts).

7. Expected Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected.

- a) **An inception report**, outlining the consultants understanding of the scope of the work and intended work plan of the analysis, and evaluation questions, shall be submitted

after 5 days of commencing the consultancy. The evaluators will prepare an inception report which will outline their understanding of the scope of work, intended work plan and analysis, towards delivering on the defined assignment.

- b) **A draft comprehensive report** of finding, submitted for comments. Once cleared the report the full word version and a presentation will be tabled to key stakeholders (workshop).
- c) **The Final Report**, which will be submitted 10 days after receiving comments from the stakeholders.
- d) **PowerPoint presentation** – which will summarise the findings from the evaluation report.

The contents and structure of the draft and final reports should include the following:

- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Description of the evaluation methodology
- Situational analysis with regard to the outcome, outputs, and partnership strategy
- Key findings (tailored around the evaluation questions), including best practices and lessons learned
- Analysis of opportunities to provide guidance for future programming
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Appendices:
 - Impact of YouthConnekt on entrepreneurship – a report on the state of past YouthConnekt winners (detailed response to research question 4 under effectiveness) -15 pages
 - Draft concept note for the next generation YouthConnekt project (including theory of change) - 5 pages
 - Charts, terms of reference, field visits, people interviewed, documents reviewed

8. Institutional Arrangements for Management of this consultancy

The principal responsibility for managing this assignment lies with the UNDP Country Office, Zimbabwe. UNDP will contract the consultant and ensure the timely provision of reimbursable costs and remuneration. UNDP will mobilise internal technical expertise to support the consultant's work. UNDP will support the consultant's engagement with stakeholders, arrange for meetings, field visits and coordinate with stakeholders and Government officials.

Under the overall supervision of the UNDP Head of PRECC and the CO M&E Specialist, the consultant will be in charge of the quality of the consultations with stakeholders, collection and analysis of data and generation of all the reports as per the TORs.

9. Experience and qualifications

Work can be undertaken by an individual, team of evaluators or a firm.

Service provider will need to have appropriately qualifications to deliver the tasks identified above. The service provider's proposal shall demonstrate capabilities and experience in undertaking similar work. At least 3 references are mandatory.

- Minimum 10 years' experience in international development and evaluation. Experience in the areas of youth employment; enterprise development – track record with business competitions will be an added advantage; and the provision of innovative solutions to improve outcomes for young people
- At least 5 years' experience of conducting project/programme evaluations and specifically experience in conducting evaluations for UN agency, government or international aid agency projects will be an added advantage
- A Masters Degree in the fields of development, economics, entrepreneurship, business, monitoring and evaluation and other related fields
- Experience in basic research techniques with strong skills in writing analytical reports
- 3 references from previous similar projects

10. Expression of interest and scoring

Potential evaluators must submit technical proposals following the guidelines below:

- Technical proposal must be a maximum of 10 pages summarizing proposed approach and work plan with the expected number of working days.
- Annex 1, maximum of 1 page providing evidence of similar work done and experience to undertake the assignment.
- Annex 2, summary CV's of the proposed evaluator/s – maximum of 2 pages per team member

The technical proposal will be reviewed paying attention to

- a) Quality of the methodological proposal
- b) Demonstrated expertise in the area of work
- c) Feasibility and cost effectiveness of proposed approach

The proposal should cover all arising costs (travel, materials, and any envisaged costs for provision of requested services). The contracted individual, team or organisation will be expected to travel within Zimbabwe for any relevant offline sessions. Locations of travel will include targeted urban areas, as well as will be determined further based on final screening and selection data on the participants. In line with this the service provider should provide their estimated:

- Daily Subsistence Rate (Accommodation and Food for travel/training away from Harare)
- Cost of Travel/Transport per KM

05-Nov-2021

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07-Nov-2021

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08-Nov-2021

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08-Nov-2021