



FINAL REPORT

Mid-Term Review of the Czech- UNDP Partnership for SDGs

Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia,
Moldova, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Zambia

(Full Final Report)

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Program Information

Project Title: Czech-UNDP Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals

Project Number: 109001

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Start Date: 30 April 2018

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Brief Description		
<p>Project Output: Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>The main goal of the Czech – UNDP Partnership for SDGs (hereinafter CUP) is to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries.</p> <p>The CUP will address development challenges identified as key by the UNDP COs in its three partner countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. At the same time, due to the wide range of development challenges being addressed by UNDP COs, CUP will focus on areas where the Czech Republic has substantive expertise and can offer added value and innovative solutions. As such, CUP priorities will be aligned as much as possible with the priorities of the Czech ODA in partner countries and its Programme documents.</p> <p>The three components of the project will include: 1. <i>Expertise on Demand</i> through which hands on experience and trainings in the partner countries will be provided to facilitate transfer of Czech expertise. 2. <i>Challenge Fund: Czech solutions for SDGs</i>, will provide scalable solutions for the identified development problems, applicable at the country and sub-regional level. 3. <i>Knowledge management</i>. To mobilize knowledge and know-how and feed it into resolving specific development objective, the project will apply a KM strategy to ensure that its activities contribute to broader outcomes and make impact. The project aims to achieve positive spill overs by collecting knowledge and making it widely available across the region.</p> <p>The initiatives under this project will be identified and co-designed by the CUP, UNDP Country Offices and Czech Embassies, in collaboration with Czech Development Agency and other partners.</p>		
<p>Contributing Outcome (RPD 2018-2021): RP OUTCOME 2: Addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways Output 2.3. Enabling environment strengthened through diverse partnerships to expand opportunities for public and private sector, including alternative, financing for the achievement of the SDGs Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN 1</p>	<p>Donor: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic</p>	<p>US\$ 830,000 (equivalent of CZK 17,000,000) in 2018, additional contributions to be specified every year in a letter sent to UNDP, following the annual decision of the Government of the Czech Republic</p>
	<p>UNDP (COs)</p>	<p>US\$ 444.200</p>

Agreed by (signatures):

Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Czech Republic	UNDP
<p>Václav Bálek Director of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Department</p> 	<p>Rastislav Vrbensky Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director for Europe and the CIS</p> 
<p>Date: 25.4.2018</p>	<p>Date:</p>

Program Extension Information

Brief Description		
<p>Reason for Project Document Revision: Extension of the Czech-UNDP Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals until 31 December 2024.</p> <p>Project Output: Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner remains unchanged.</p> <p>In 2020, the Project Board decided on the inclusion of Cambodia, Ethiopia and Zambia besides Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova, into the group of project priority countries for the Challenge Fund component. In 2021, the Project Board however decided that the geographical scope of the Expertise on Demand will remain focused on the current three priority countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia). Should there be a strong demand for Czech expertise, it may be further expanded (subject to MFA decision) to Cambodia, Ethiopia and Zambia, once the epidemiological conditions allow for experts' visits to these partner countries. The Project Board also decided to strengthen the linkages of the Expertise on Demand with the priority areas as of Czech Development Cooperation.</p> <p>Background: The Czech Republic and UNDP are long-standing partners with cooperation dating back to the late 1990s and taking a mature institutionalized form of the Czech UNDP Trust Fund in 2004. Since 2004, the Czech-UNDP Trust Fund implemented over 200 technical assistance initiatives in 17 ECIS countries. The total project budget was US \$10,000,000. The project was completed in 2018. The current phase of cooperation under the title "the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs" was launched in 2018. The main goal of the Czech-UNDP Partnership for the SDGs (CUP) is to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries. Since 2020, other 3 partner countries (Zambia, Ethiopia and Cambodia) have been added alongside with Moldova, Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The geographical extension has aligned CUP partner countries with the Czech ODA priority countries. According to the 2020 Project Board decision, CUP thematic priorities have been aligned with UNDP COs priorities to enable further synergies between project initiatives and COs ongoing or planned projects. The three components of the project include:</p> <p>1. Expertise on Demand: through which hands-on experience and trainings in the partner countries will be provided to facilitate the transfer of Czech expertise.</p> <p>2. Challenge Fund: Czech solutions for SDGs will provide scalable solutions for the identified development problems applicable at the country and sub-regional level. Since the beginning of the Program there have been 3 rounds of Call for Applications (the 3rd is still running). 17 projects have been supported for the implementation in 2018 and first half of 2019.</p> <p>3. Knowledge management: to mobilize knowledge and know-how and feed it into resolving specific development objective. The project applies KM strategy to ensure that its activities contribute to broader outcomes and make an impact.</p>		
<p>Contributing Outcome (RPD 2018 - 2021):</p> <p>RP OUTCOME 2: Addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways</p> <p>Output 2.3.</p> <p>Enabling environment strengthened through diverse partnerships to expand opportunities for public and private sector, including alternative, financing for the achievement of the SDGs.</p> <p>Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN1</p>	<p>Total resources required:</p>	<p>US \$750,000 (equivalent of CZK16,000,000) in 2022, 2023 and 2024</p> <p>Annual contribution will be allocated based on Exchange of Letters between UNDP and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic</p>
	Total resources allocated:	US\$ 2,250,000
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Government	UNDP	
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More importantly, the Evaluation Team is grateful to the implementers, local partners and beneficiaries for their valuable contribution to the success of the evaluation exercise. We thank them greatly for their relevant analysis on the path achieved, challenges encountered, lessons learned as well as the appropriate recommendations for strengthening the project and a better continuity for its next cycle.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Bi-H	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CIS	The Commonwealth of Independent States
CUP	Czech-UNDP Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals
CzDA	Czech Development Agency (CzechAid)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
ECIS	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
GDPR	The General Data Protection Regulation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GRES	Gender results effectiveness scale
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IRH	Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS
KM	Knowledge Management
LCDs	Least Developed Countries
LMIC	Lower-middle-income country (LMIC)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NPED	New Partnerships and Emerging Donors
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS
RPD	Regional Programme Document
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety & Security
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Executive Summary

The Czech-UNDP Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals (CUP) appears as a concept mainly financed and driven by an established development assistance actor, the Czech Republic. Czechia yet has to make its place as an important player in the international development assistance and partnership scene. In this sense, the CUP stands out as a model of partnership that should be further strengthened and expanded. The collaborative framework with the UNDP which has the largest structure and the most developed cooperation network in the world, gives the project a natural comparative advantage.

The project convincingly proved its effectiveness and positive development impacts generation, even though limited so far. Despite the global pandemic, all project output indicator targets were overachieved. The project objective (*to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries*) was achieved and exceeded, as well as the project outcome (*addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways*) and the Development Impact (*to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks*). The project demonstrated a positive impact on its key stakeholders and final beneficiaries and was deemed satisfactory. In addition, findings indicate that the CUP sustainability with regard to its outputs and results was moderately satisfactory. Both the Czech expertise implementers as well as the local beneficiaries were convinced of the lasting impact of the interventions. However, they had some reservations concerning the need for additional funding and their larger deployment in the partner countries.

The Challenge Fund appears as a less sustainable component of the project. For an intervention to be funded, it has to be i) a new approach, product, idea, or service that has not been tested anywhere; ii) a new to the beneficiary country; iii) or was not applied to the sector in question in the beneficiary country. As the project's local partners had no vetted experience and local best practices and lessons to apply, a success was not necessarily certain, and innovative approaches often led to unexpected and unforeseen situations. Further focus on scalable solutions and interventions where the initial project would serve as a pilot for broader adoption of know-how and solutions, adapting the approach based on lessons learned would ensure smoother and more successful implementation in key areas across the partner countries; rather than the implementation of multiple small-scale projects with limited overall impact, but which may have been perfectly scalable and impactful if there was a mechanism for further financing. On the contrary, with regard to Expertise on Demand, the expertise to be provided should have a catalytic effect and result in positive changes in recipient organizations. Additionally, Czech experts have to stay for a minimum of three months in the partner country and cooperate with UNDP COs and other local partners and beneficiaries, ensuring better local ownership and sustainability. Knowledge Management also intends primarily to local capacity building, know-how and to achieving broader outcomes and make an impact, contributing to improved local capabilities and sustainability.

The CUP objective is extremely relevant as it focuses on poverty reduction, good governance, resilience building, and climate finance, key important themes for the concert of United Nations

Agenda 2030 on the SDGs. The project remains valid and it needs to be strengthened and expanded. This is also justified by its extension for the second cycle of three years by the Czech government and the UNDP. The table below describes the project's overall performance rating with OECD / DAC evaluation criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability*.

Criteria	Rating		Rationale
Relevance	4	Satisfactory	The CUP is aligned with the SDGs Agenda 2030, UNDP, and the partner countries' development priorities. However, the project design is elaborated mainly by the UNDP IRH and the Czech Republic officials with no direct involvement of partner countries' government counterparts, responsible for their respective national development strategies.
Effectiveness <i>Gender & Gender Equality</i>	4	Excellent	All outputs are achieved and exceeded and its stakeholders and beneficiaries assess it the same way. Despite the global pandemic, all project output indicator targets are overachieved. The project components achieved their objectives.
	2	Moderately Unsatisfactory	The CUP is initially designed under the gender marker GEN1 (will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly). However, findings reveal that in most cases, neither intentional gender mainstreaming objectives nor specific activities nor into its implementation process have been incorporated into the Project Document.
Efficiency	4	Satisfactory	Project resources were adequately managed in the planning and execution requirements of specific interventions, including monitoring and reporting, with appropriate M&E tools. The expected deliverables were delivered for the prices estimated in the budget, with some delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Impact	4	Satisfactory	The project demonstrates a positive impact on its key stakeholders and final beneficiaries as they recognize it and deems as satisfactory with regard to the related result criterion.
Sustainability	3	Moderately Satisfactory	The Czech expertise implementers, as well as the local beneficiaries were convinced of the lasting impact of the interventions. The introduced products were business and social enterprise oriented. Hence, the implementers coming from the private sector had a self-evidenced interest in continuing to promote their products which must adapt to the needs and purchasing power of the communities where they were established. However, stakeholders and beneficiaries had some reservations concerning the need for additional funding and their larger deployment, catalytic role, and lasting development results impact in the partner countries.

LESSONS LEARNED

- i. **The first lesson learned from CUP's first cycle 2018 – 2021 is its capacity for positive results despite the COVID-19 pandemic.** Despite delays as well as difficulties or even impossibility regular of communication with the final beneficiaries of the partner countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the objectives were met, even surpassed. This is explained in the first place by the quality of the human capital (experience and know-how) of the of the CUP, the Czech Development Agency (CzechAid), as well as by the operational efficiency of the project team, including realistic (SMART¹) initial objectives of the project with subsequent funding.
- ii. **The capacity for crisis adaptation and resilience ultimately determines the well-being and development of people, especially the most vulnerable groups in society. While this is evident at the level of the project leaders, it is less so with the final beneficiaries for whom the project is ultimately intended.** The major challenge faced by the project was the COVID-19 pandemic. The inability to work closely with targeted rural communities and their populations, caused by the complications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, led to delays in some initiatives implementation. The most important factor in the CUP's adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic was undoubtedly the availability and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in a triangular fashion: i) Between the Czech Development Agency, MFA, embassies, and the UNDP; ii) Between the project team at the UNDP IRH and the project facilitators and implementers; iii) Between the project facilitators and implementers, and between the beneficiaries in partner countries. However, it appears from the MTR analysis that if the tools to adapt to the crisis, ICTs in particular, were available at the level of strategic actors (CzechAid, UNDP IRH and COs, including the MTR team), they were less so at the level of the most vulnerable groups, final and ultimate beneficiaries of the project. This led some of the stakeholders consulted to believe that the project had to some extent better helped the implementers (contractors) than addressing the problems of poverty and adaptation which is its ultimate goal.² The lack of contact or regular communication between the facilitators / implementers and the local final beneficiaries because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions is *de facto* a factor of marginalization and worsening of their conditions of poverty and vulnerability. Thus,

☞ The current challenge faced by the CUP is to find the appropriate means of communication and exchange with grassroot groups to effectively reach the most vulnerable in partner countries and to be perfectly in line with the project outcome of *addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways*) and the Development Impact (*to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks*) and meet the SDG-1 (No poverty), and SDG-17 (Partnership for the Goals³).

¹ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely

² Some of the stakeholders suggest a balanced perspective business oriented versus aid to the project. A social enterprise perspective will ensure mutual interest and benefit CzechAid / UNDP versus partner countries' beneficiaries.

³ Vertically (from the top to grassroot actors) and horizontally (between people of comparable conditions of life)

- iii. **Having excellent communication between partners and mutual understanding is highly important for successful project implementation.** The close consultation with the beneficiary was a key for the success of the project, to align project expectations with the key actors at all levels (The CUP, embassies, UNDP, implementers, local partner stakeholders, and the project host community) to support the implementation of the project activities, and to validate the project results. Frequent and transparent communication between all the above-mentioned actors was important for assessing projects' progress and risks, and for agreeing on mitigation actions, especially those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, the winning condition was the flexibility of the project partners, the beneficiaries, and the CUP in adapting to the travel and gathering restrictions imposed in various countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- iv. **It is extremely useful for the CUP to get expertise and innovative solutions from other countries. Collaborative expertise development will undoubtedly strengthen the Czech expertise and its better adaptation to partner countries' context.** This was evidenced by the presented best practice and success story of Diaconia ECCB Centre of Relief and Development project in Cambodia engaging partnership with local NGOs such as Green Lady Cambodia to develop a joint domesticated prototype menstruation hygiene pad which met the price conditions for girls and women to be affordable for them, praised by the 1250 women and girl who tried the products app.⁴ In this way, not only an innovative solution was obtained as a result of mutual experience of experts, but also the capacities of the partners organizations were strengthened, and the network was expanded.
- v. **The secondment of Czech personnel to the CUP proved efficient and beneficial to the current CUP modality.** While this organization of human resources was flexible and compliant with good financial management principles (economy, efficiency, and effectiveness), it also ensured appropriately the representation of the donor in the CUP.
- vi. **Development and participatory tested approaches and ideas maximize long-term sustainability post-intervention.** Pilot testing of some new approaches, innovations, and solutions for development problems provided for the best practices and sound lessons for full-scale development interventions and larger deployment.
- vii. **Previous experience from partners countries helps a lot in implementing and results success.** Contacts to local experts, ministries, etc. were of utmost importance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen and capitalize on these achievements, the following recommendations are formulated for the attention of the project leaders:

Essential:

- i. **Ensure a stronger partnership with partner countries national development cooperation authorities, local and final beneficiaries and actors for long-term development results' achievement.** It would be desirable for the project design and

⁴ See details in page 43, paragraph 73.

implementation process to follow a full project identification and management standards with a greater attention to the government counterparts, grassroots initiatives, and mutual co-working. Innovative approaches often lead to unexpected and unforeseen situations. Thus, better specified project objectives on communication to partner countries' national authorities will help focus on specific priority goals in line with beneficiary agendas and policies. Strengthening this partnership can start with the CUP extension Project Documentation joint update with the IRH, Czech MFA, embassies, UNDP COs, and partner countries' development cooperation authorities and selected private sector/NGOs actors). Thus, the role of UNDP COs and Czech embassies in the partner countries will be very important for this purpose.

- ii. **Develop a strong communication strategy vis-à-vis the Czech public and partner countries.** Based on the interviews, according to project implementers consulted, many people they encountered did not know the CUP at all, more importantly in the partner countries. Well-documented and shared project results can help get support from a range of stakeholders and donor and involve key stakeholders to ensure sustainability. The UNDP COs and Czech embassies can be strongly engaged as communication facilitators.
- iii. **It is very important to strengthen Czech embassies involvement in decision-making, projects identification, and communication with local governments and key stakeholders to better reflect update priorities of the local partners, stakeholders, and final beneficiaries.** Demand should not be only set as among the UNDP Country Programme priorities, but also, they should reflect the priorities of the Czech Republic set by the embassies' leadership in the partner countries, in line with the CzechAid areas and strategy. As the embassies have a good insight in the local context, some more delegation of authority to them would be beneficial.
- iv. **Alongside short-term and quick-impact initiatives, it is recommended that the CUP also initiate long-term, large-scale projects (at least years of duration) with substantial and lasting anticipated impact with generally recognized development project management protocols.** This implies a participatory process fully involving local stakeholders and beneficiaries from partner countries since the project prioritizes its design, planning, resources mobilization (including local contribution), execution, and monitoring, and evaluation. If financing a lot of interventions as it is currently the case (95 microprojects funded to date) makes it possible to reach a larger number of beneficiaries, the absence of substantial and sustainable development results may be the reason. Short-term initiatives, also called quick-impact interventions, are popular, democratic, and easily accessible to the most marginalized and vulnerable groups. Additionally, funding a myriad of projects can be an administrative, procurement, monitoring, and evaluation burden for the project team for a quality follow-up and delivery.
- v. **It is important to find new financing sources to replicate the project in other locations in order to enable better coverage with the new technology which would help better project effectiveness.**
- vi. **The CUP should officially integrate a gender component into its interventions, with a specific dedicated budget, gender mainstreaming activities (subject matter awareness and training), planned funding of projects oriented towards gender and gender equality.** Without proactive gender mainstreaming interventions, the preexistence

of societal gender-based inequalities will be socially reproduced and perpetuated. That could imply a Gender negative status⁵. The gender mainstreaming indicators should be SMART and involved in planning, the progress, and final reports.

- vii. **There is the need to integrate a pre-deployment cultural sensitivity training (beyond the UNDSS pre-deployment mandatory BSAFE training and certificate) into the program.** This issue arose precisely during the consultations of the evaluation team with the project implementers and as a part of the challenges mentioned by them. During the current expansion of the CUP's interventions to other regions of the world, especially Asia (Cambodia) and Africa (Ethiopia and Zambia), the experts to be deployed should be adequately prepared for cultural differences and hardship conditions they will face in the field in the partner countries. In this sense, the role and contribution of the UNDP CO and Czech embassies in beneficiary countries of the program are thus critical.
- viii. **Personnel enhancement of the procurement unit in the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub is recommended, as the unit is currently understaffed.**
- ix. **Improvement of project management of individual projects: guidelines and document templates⁶ for implementers should include a coherent structure of project outcomes, objectives, and results** (outputs or deliverables) which should be mentioned in plans and progress / final reports. The project objectives should be explicitly linked to the project outputs (and outcomes). The SMART method is recommended for setting project objectives, outputs, and for the indicators in relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. Ideally, the project application should already define the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. These criteria should be involved in planning, progress and final reports of the individual projects to facilitate and further rationalize the selection, approval, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects.
- x. **The project output indicators on visits to the Czech Expert Database should be transformed into the number of Czech experts in the database and the number of Czech experts included in the Global GPN roster.** The project output indicator on solutions tested for the Challenge Fund is recommended to be eliminated as obsolete since the innovative solutions are tested during implementation of the individual projects. The information on testing has not been specifically stipulated in the Project Documentation and therefore it seems redundant.
- xi. **The synergy between the CUP and the Czech Development Agency should be formally organized** regarding reciprocal communication, knowledge exchange, and information sharing, without changing the current model of the CUP, e.g. bilateral proposals on cooperation can take place, with possible other options to be considered.
- xii. **Feedback from a defined minimum number of the final beneficiaries should be obligatorily sent to the CUP as a part of individual projects' final reports.** The feedback should contain the evaluation criteria of relevance, sustainability, impact, efficiency, effectiveness, and potentially gender inclusion in the project.

⁵ As per the Gender results effectiveness scale (GRES), a Gender negative status indicates that result had a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced existing gender inequalities and socially constructed norms.

⁶As application, plans, progress / milestone report, final report, etc. The templates should involve the respective section with explanation of their expected content.

Nice to have:

- xiii. **Ideally, the local partner and/or beneficiaries (depending on the context) should co-finance the project by a very low amount (1-2%)** to get motivated regarding the project ownership, sustainability, and other issues.⁷
- xiv. **Sustainable procurement should be endorsed in the whole supply-chain.** Final Reports of the individual projects should include a section describing the sustainable procurement in accordance with Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact (2021a); incongruous sub-vendors should not be hired by the implementers (UN Global Compact (2021b)).
- xv. **A mandatory communication strategy should be presented by the implementer to the CUP as a part of the project application.** The strategy should include: an introduction, the communication procedure, tools and techniques, records log, reporting template, timing of communication activities, roles and responsibilities, a stakeholder analysis, and an overview of information needs for each interested party.
- xvi. **A simple cost-benefit analysis of each project should be obligatorily presented by the implementer to the CUP as a part of the project application to facilitate the project selection and monitoring.** Regarding the non-profit projects, the costs are the CUP funding + project co-financing, and the benefits can be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively, e.g. in terms of number of citizens trained, number of citizens newly aware of the issues, etc.

⁷This recommendation is based on the best practice in development, e.g. recommended by Oxfam. This method of implementation is more difficult but more sustainable in the long-term.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1. Since 2004, the government of the Czech Republic and the UNDP in Europe and Central Asia have cooperated to bring the best practices and comparative knowledge to countries throughout the region. In 2018, the UNDP and the Czech Republic entered the next stage of collaboration with the project referred to as "Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs (CUP)". CUP's project is linked to UNDP 2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan impact which is to "to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks". As per the project output, it ambitions that "the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner". It is designed under the UNDP Regional Programme Document (RPD) 2018–2021 OUTCOME 2: "Addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways" and Output 2.3. "Enabling the environment strengthened through diverse partnerships to expand opportunities for the public and private sector, including alternative financing for the achievement of the SDGs Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN 1.

2. The main goal of the CUP project is to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries through three components: i) Expertise on Demand through which hands-on experience and trainings in the partner countries have been provided to facilitate the transfer of Czech expertise aligned with the priority areas of Czech Development Cooperation Strategy 2018-2030; ii) Challenge Fund aimed at providing scalable (ascendant / workable) solutions for the identified development problems applicable at the country and sub-regional level; iii) Knowledge management (KM) designed to mobilize knowledge and know-how and feed it into resolving specific development objective. The project applies KM strategy to ensure that its activities contribute to broader outcomes and make an impact. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Moldova were originally defined as partners for the CUP. Since 2020, another three partner countries, Zambia, Ethiopia, and Cambodia, have been added.

3. Directly implemented by the UNDP's Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS, the CUP focuses on areas where the Czech Republic has substantive expertise and can offer added value and innovative solutions: i) Good governance and rule of law (SDG16), ii) Sustainable management of natural resources (SDG6, SDG13), iii) Economic transformation and development (SDG7, SDG8), and iv) Agriculture and rural development (SDG2, SDG15). Since the start of the CUP, there have been 5 rounds of Call for Applications and 50 initiatives in the Challenge Fund, 33 in the Expertise on Demand, and 266 knowledge products have been delivered despite the hardship experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the 2020 Project Board decision, Challenge Fund thematic priorities have been aligned with UNDP Country Offices (COs) priorities to enable further synergies between project initiatives and COs ongoing or planned projects. The current phase of the Czech-UNDP Partnership has been set for 2018–2021; in September 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (MFA) and the UNDP agreed on the project extension until 31 December 2024. Thus, the current Mid-Term Review aims at assessment of the progress achieved, lessons learned, and provision of the necessary recommendations to 2022 Project Board for strengthening of project implementation cycle 2022 –2024.

2.0 THE CZECH-UNDP PARTNERSHIP FOR SDGs (CUP)

2.1. Development context and challenges justifying to the CUP 2018 –2022 design and implementation

2.1.1. The regional development assistance context prior to the CUP design and implementation

4. **The CUP initiative is the continuation of the decade of cooperation tradition between the UNDP and the Czech Republic in the region.** The global development cooperation landscape is constantly evolving. The development landscape in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent states (ECIS) is changing too. Many countries that until relatively recently had been net aid recipients are have been becoming recognized development actors themselves. These donors, from or outside of the European Union (EU), bring new perspectives, approaches and resources. The UNDP recognizes their value for achieving its own development mandate and continues to foster the existing partnerships with them. One of the relatively new but well-established development assistance provider is the Czech Republic that became a full member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee in May 2013. Prior to this recognition, a pilot program of evaluation of Czech Development Assistance projects was launched in cooperation with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (REBEC) from May 2010 and October 2011. In 2011, the UNDP also supported the first ever joint evaluation of the Czech and Slovak projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an important innovation for the new donors and a significant regional contribution to the effective development cooperation agenda.

5. The countries in ECIS have made significant progress in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thirteen of the UNDP's programme countries in Europe and the CIS now scored high or very high in Human Development Index (CUP Project Document 2018-2022, p. 2). Yet, many development challenges have persisted, including considerable poverty levels, income and non-income inequalities, exclusion of marginalized groups, gender discrimination, unequal access to public services, slow progress in democratic governance reforms, increased migrant and refugee flows or persistence of violent extremism. This was also true for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova (UNDP/Europe and CIS, 2016). These countries have been selected as three priority countries for the CUP to create synergies with the priorities of the Czech Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the RBEC region. Being a part of broader regional UNDP projects and programs has allowed the CUP to leverage Czech expertise and innovative solutions and bring them to scale.

2.1.2. The Context of Republic of Moldova prior to CUP 2018 - 2022 design

6. The Republic of Moldova is a landlocked, low middle-income country with population of 2.9 million with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1,8221 and a poverty rate of 41.9 per cent at \$5 purchasing power parity per day (World Bank, 2015). However, the country's recent growth performance reduced poverty and promoted shared

prosperity; extreme poverty declined from 7% to 3.1% between 2011 and 2013 (World Bank), and the International Monetary Fund projects 4.5% growth in 2017. The Gini coefficient showed a decreasing trend in income inequality, and the Human Development Index was 0.699 in 2016. According to the *UNDP Country Programme Document for the Republic of Moldova (2018-2022)*, the government committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the new National Development Strategy 2030 was fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. The government recognized the need for consolidating policy planning and budgeting frameworks and for strengthening horizontal and vertical integration and coordination and requested the UNDP support in these areas. Although the country ranked 26 of 145 countries in the Global Gender Equality Index, women were significantly underrepresented in decision-making positions (UNDP CPD Moldova 2018 – 2022, p. 2). In addition, the country had one of the most carbon and energy-intensive economies in the region, with energy usage twice the European Union (EU) average (National Green House Gas Inventory Report 2013). Pollution and unsustainable management of natural resources were also a sign of weak environmental governance, which affects the country's sustainable development. These had been, among others, the challenges the UNDP and the Czech Republic wanted to contribute to solve by initiating the CUP.

2.1.3. The Context of Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to CUP 2018 – 2022 design

7. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, shortcomings related to the effectiveness and impartiality of the judiciary were persisting along with widespread corruption (UNDP 2019). Implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy was stalled due to failure to adopt its Action Plan. Slow reduction of the cases backlog and inadequate procedures for execution of court decisions continued to harm judicial efficiency. Services such as support to victims and witnesses, and provision of free legal aid, remained limited in availability and quality. More than 150,000 people lacked access to modern energy services, water and sanitation, while more than 20% of GDP was spent on energy (three times the Western European average). According to the UNDP CPD 2015 – 2019, over 50% of the population was suffering from some form of social exclusion. Despite mild decrease in unemployment rate compared to 2015, it was high at 25.4%, particularly among youth (54.3%). The business environment was weak, impeding faster economic growth, according to the World Bank's Doing Business report 2017. Women's rate of participation in the labor market was 34% and men's 57%. Participation of women in the labor market was therefore a priority challenge to attaining development and gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The country also lagged behind in terms of innovation as compared to its neighboring countries (see 2016 – 2017 Global Competitiveness Report). As per agriculture, an important contributor to GDP, the majority of its producers were typically selling their produce unprocessed, although a number of food processing companies existed. Overall, there was a need for further product development and diversification, coupled with enhanced market access strategies.

2.1.4. The Context of Georgia prior to CUP 2018 - 2022 design

8. In Georgia, despite deepening democratic governance and the recent democratic consolidations, several challenges remained: insufficiently independent judiciary; limited capacity of the parliament to exercise law-making, policy formulation, and oversight functions; underrepresentation of women in elected functions; unemployment, inequality, poverty and low productivity, especially in the rural economy (UNDP Georgia, 2020). At the same time, exposure to environmental hazards and a lack of evidence-based adaptation measures to reduce disaster risk, combined with the impact of climate change, exposed communities to significant risks, especially in rural areas and river basins. Over 40 years, 70% of Georgia was suffering repeated hydro-meteorological and geological events, with economic losses exceeding US\$14 billion.⁸ Similar to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova, women's economic participation was a big challenge in Georgia. Men's participation in labor market represented 75% and women's only 57% (UNDP Georgia, 2020).

9. UNDP was supporting the strengthening of governance and democracy in Georgia. The evaluation of the Country Programme, 2011 –2015, underscored that UNDP played a key role in ushering in an era of transparent, pluralistic democratic elections through support to legal reforms and voter education (UNDP Georgia, 2020). Regional development planning was introduced, along with decentralization, evidence-based policymaking and strengthened government-civil society engagement. The democratic reform agenda was identified as a work in progress with many reforms yet to meet the association agreement and other international obligations. Therefore, the UNDP was invited to remain actively engaged in the country. The CUP 2018 –2021 was precisely aligned with this engagement.

2.2. CUP Geographical extension, thematic priorities and the project extension to a 2nd cycle

10. Since 2020, the CUP has focused on six priority countries of the Czech ODA – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Moldova, and Zambia. In 2021, the Project Board however decided that the geographical scope of the Expertise on Demand would remain focused on the current three priority countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia). Should there be a strong demand for Czech expertise, it may be further expanded by the Czech MFA decision to Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Zambia, once the epidemiological conditions allow for experts' visits to these partner countries. The geographical extension has aligned CUP partner countries with the Czech ODA priority countries and with UNDP COs priorities to enable further synergies between project initiatives and COs ongoing or planned projects. During the same occasion, the Project Board also decided to strengthen the linkages of the Expertise on Demand with the priority areas of the Czech ODA. In September 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the UNDP agreed on the project extension until 31 December 2024 while the geographical scope remains the same.

⁸ Statement of the Government of Georgia, Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, March 2015, Sendai, Japan, <http://www.preventionweb.net/files/globalplatform/georgiafinal.pdf>

2.3. The CUP Strategy, anticipated Results and Partnerships

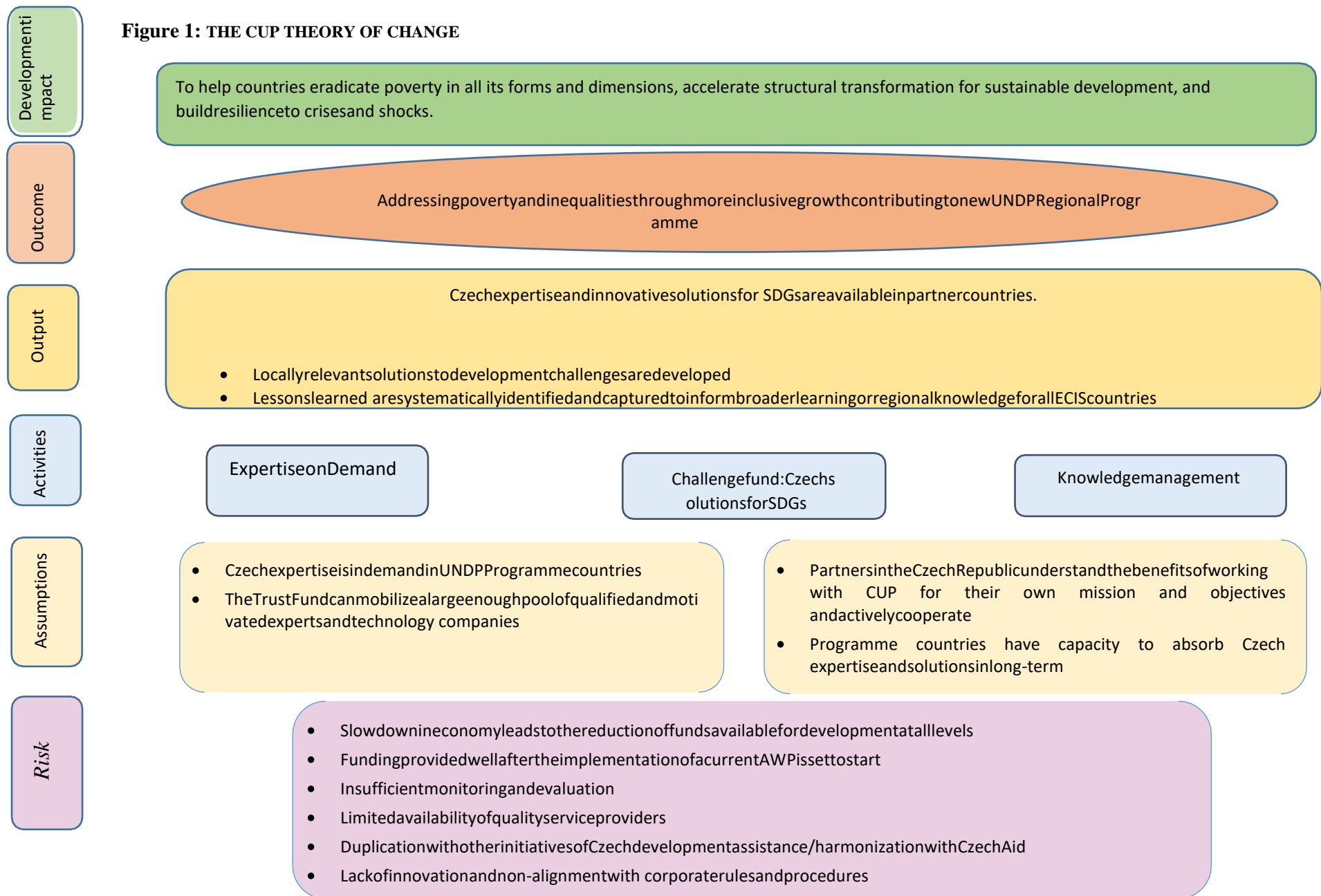
2.3.1. The CUP Strategy

11. The CUP strategy is driven by the ambition of addressing development challenges identified as key by the UNDP COs in its partner countries. The CUP serves as a mechanism for knowledge, expertise and innovative solutions transfer to its partner countries via initiatives identified and co-designed by the CUP, UNDP Country Offices and Czech Embassies, in collaboration with the Czech MFA and other partners. This approach is designed to assure better development impact and longer-term involvement of Czech expertise going beyond CUP intervention. Wherever possible, the initiatives solicits synergies between demand from all three focus countries and have multi-country design. Due to the wide range of development challenges being addressed by UNDP COs, CUP focuses on areas where the Czech Republic has a substantive expertise and can offer added value and innovative solutions, particularly on the following four thematic areas: i) Good governance and rule of law (SDG 16); ii) Sustainable management of natural resources (SDG 6, SDG 13); iii) Economic transformation and development (SDG 7, SDG 8); and iv) Agriculture and rural development (SDG 2, SDG 15).

12. Following a survey of the UNDP COs' priorities in each of the first three priority countries and compared with Czech ODA priorities as stated in bilateral development cooperation programs for the given country, several areas of mutual interest were identified where future CUP interventions could be focused:

- ☞ Bosnia and Hercegovina: Sustainable, low carbon energy resources; Inclusive economic growth; Agriculture; Good governance and rule of law;
- ☞ Georgia: Access to justice; Economic transformation and SME development; Transfer of modern agriculture technologies;
- ☞ Republic of Moldova: Economic transformation and SME development; Inclusive economic growth; Food quality and food safety; Agricultural value chain development; Sustainable agricultural production.

13. The theory of change underling the CUP overall strategy is presented in Figure 1 below:



14. As per the project funding, USD \$ 830 000 was initially allocated by the Czech government and \$ 444 200 by the UNDP for a total of \$ 1 274 200. Additional contribution was to be specified every year in a letter sent to the UNDP following the annual decision of the government of the Czech Republic. Financial contribution to the project is done annually based on the Exchange of letters. A financial agreement is not used for the project. The annual contribution is 17 million CZK (\$ 750,000). In 2019, project received extra contribution through transfer of unspent funding of the Czech contribution to the UNDP project in Bihac (832 140.16 USD). For 2022 – 2024 outlook, the annual contribution slightly decreases and amounted of \$ 750 000 (16 million CZK), for an overall funding of \$ 2 250 000 (Project Documentation 2018 – 2021 and 2022 – 2024).

15. The concrete development challenges to be addressed through three project components (Expertise on Demand, Challenge Fund, and Knowledge Management) are identified by the CUP, UNDP COs, Czech embassies and the Czech Development Agency, in close consultations with partners in the beneficiary countries. This vows to allow the project to create synergies, identify, and address problems where Czech expertise and know-how is available and offers the best solutions.

16. The CUP positions itself as a service line for UNDP COs, contributing to one of the key objectives of the UNDP which is to “help countries build capacities to address complex and interconnected development challenges ...”⁹. It supports them in solving key development challenges by facilitating transfer of top-notch Czech expertise, know-how and innovative solutions. In doing so, it builds on previous success of the Czech-UNDP Trust Fund 2014 – 2018. Being part of the wider UNDP regional infrastructure and based in Istanbul Regional Hub allows the CUP to bring Czech development efforts in the region to scale and create high efficiencies.

2.3.2. Anticipated Results

17. The main goal of the CUP is to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries. The project contributing output states that “*the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner*”. Specifically: i) Locally relevant solutions to development challenges are developed; ii) Lessons learned are systematically identified and captured to inform broader learning or regional knowledge for all ECIS countries; iii) Facilitated stronger partnerships with the EU, UN sister agencies, donor agencies, private sector or international NGOs. Six output indicators are designed to measure the project results: i) Enhanced knowledge of final beneficiaries; ii) Number of cases where Czech knowledge and expertise has been applied; iii) Number of innovative solutions tested in beneficiary countries; iv) Number of innovative solutions applied; v) Number of knowledge products in Czech Expertise database; vi) Visits of Czech Expertise Database. Three key components (Expertise on Demand, Challenge Fund, and Knowledge Management) are expected to contribute to the main CUP development result outcome.

⁹ UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, p.6.

2.3.2.1. Component 1: Expertise on Demand

18. Hands on experience and trainings in the partner countries are provided by experts transferring Czech expertise. In order to assure longer term impact of experts' work, the experts are assigned for up to 90 days. In all cases, expertise provided should have a catalytic effect and result in positive changes in recipient organizations. They have to cooperate with UNDP COs and other local partners and beneficiaries with particular focus on marginalized and poor people. Assignments must focus on transferring Czech expertise and know-how. They can have various forms, for example providing technical assistance, expert support and consultations to the UNDP COs projects, elaborating feasibility studies, providing on-site assessments and trainings, etc. Where meaningful, the transfer of expertise can be supplemented by trainings in the Czech Republic. This is especially useful in case of on-the-job trainings during which beneficiaries are trained or seconded in partner institutions, public or private, in the Czech Republic. The experts should make themselves available for short consultations via e-mail or phone for up to six months and up to three working days in total after the end of the initiative. From UNDP COs, it is required to co-fund initiatives submitted under this component, corresponding to 20% of the total value of the assignment. The co-financing can be financial or in-kind. Project staff cost attributable to the implementation of the CUP initiatives on the ground count as a co-financing as well as costs incurred in the program country related to local travel, interpretation services, and other. The procurement process is managed by the CUP in IRH.

2.3.2.2. Component 2: Challenge Fund: Czech Solutions for SDGs

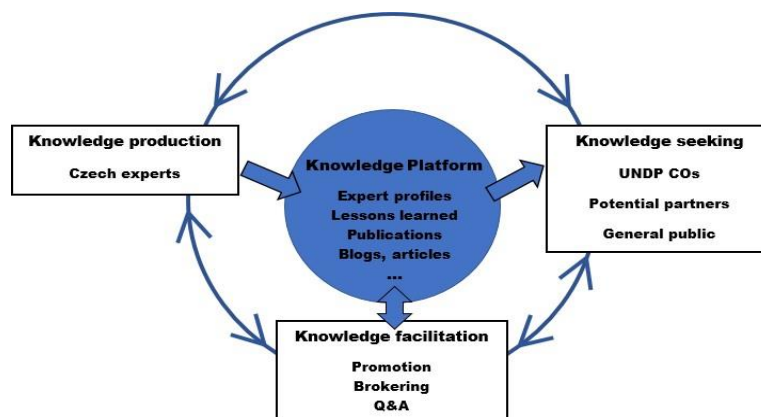
19. The objective of this component is to facilitate transfer of Czech know-how and innovative solutions that would address development problems identified by the UNDP COs. Innovation challenge must directly impact the achievement of specific outputs and contribute to agreed results and outcomes of UNDP Country Programmes. Following the best practice of a similar UNDP instrument, the Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund,¹⁰ innovation is defined as follows: ***a new approach, product, idea or service that has not been tested anywhere; is new to the beneficiary country; or has not been applied to the sector in question in the beneficiary country.*** The proposed solutions need to have a potential for **commercial sustainability** and scale up in the partner country and a broader region. They must be available for sharing, replicable and must built on technologies or methodologies that are adaptable to various contexts. The intellectual property rights of solicited ideas and / or solutions remain with the UNDP who will issue appropriate licenses to the developer of the idea. The eligible applicants include private sector, NGOs, universities, state institutions, research centres, and individuals that can transfer Czech know-how and solutions. The awardees are required to **engage local partners** to assure viability, sustainability and transfer of know-how as “innovation is a process of co-creation among various partners” (UNDPSP, 2018 – 2021). Initiatives under this instrument have to be coordinated with the B2B Program of the Czech Development Agency and other partners in the Czech Republic.

¹⁰ Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund: <http://www.micf.mw>, in: The CUP (2018): Project Document.

2.3.2.3. Knowledge Management (KM)

20. The objective of this component is the implementation of the KM strategy to ensure that the knowledge transfer activities contribute to achieving broader outcomes and make impact and achieve positive spillovers by collecting knowledge and making it widely available (i.e. the best practices, lessons learned, and all other important information produced and collected during project initiatives are collected, validated, documented, and made available throughout the entire duration of the project. The ability to mobilize knowledge and know-how and feed it into resolving specific development objective is central to the success of the CUP. Based on the recommendations of the external evaluation conducted in the spring 2017, the CUP applies the KM strategy.

Figure 2: CUP Knowledge Management Framework



Source: CUP 2018-2022 ProDoc

2.3.3. Partnerships

21. CUP is a part of the New Partnerships and Emerging Donors Team. It therefore shares relevant experience with similar donors and links contributions of the Czech ODA to the efforts of other donors in the region. Most activities funded through the CUP are integrated in projects COs implement with funding from other donors. The project seeks synergies with the ongoing bilateral Czech ODA projects and will partner with relevant institutions to connect with experts and institutional partners in the Czech Republic. The project is implemented in close cooperation with Czech Embassies in beneficiary countries, CzechAid, and other relevant actors. Thus, the partnerships include universities, institutes, research centres, academic institutions, NGOs, individuals, and private and public sectors that can transfer Czech solutions.

3.0 EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. Evaluation Scope

22. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) aims at assessment of the extent to which the specific project objective, outcome, results, and outputs have been achieved since mid-2018 (based on the Project Documentation and results framework). The MTR looks into all project activities and processes implemented in the partner countries. Specifically, the evaluation reviews and makes recommendation regarding the implementation of the critical project's aspects, such as strategies, implementation mechanisms and partnerships with the UNDP COs in transfer of the Czech expertise and innovative solutions.

3.2. Evaluation Objectives

23. The evaluation objective is to examine the overall performance of the project, its results, inputs and activities; and how the outputs delivered positive changes in partner countries to strengthen cooperation in reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development goals and to what extent the project succeeded to involve private sector as a source of technological solutions and investments for SDGs. In a substantive analysis of the effectiveness of the project approach and feedback from UNDP COs, innovators, targeted groups, and beneficiaries, the evaluation should highlight strengths, weaknesses, gaps, good practices and impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the project and provide forward-looking actionable recommendations to the Project to enhance effectiveness of transfer of the Czech expertise and innovative solutions in partner countries. Specifically, the MTR aims to provide an impartial review of the Project in terms of its **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability**. The information, findings, lessons learned, and recommendations generated by the evaluation will be used by the Project Board, UNDP, and by the implementing partners to strengthen the project implementation for the phase of project extension for 2022 – 2024.

3.3. Evaluation Questions

24. The project evaluation is to answer the following questions to determine the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, including lessons learned and forward-looking recommendations. The evaluation questions are summarized below.

Table 1: Evaluation questions

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	
	N°	Evaluation questions
Relevance	1	Are the Project's objectives relevant to the needs of the UNDP partner countries in terms of their social and economic development?
	2	To what extent is the Project aligned with the relevant national development priorities in the partner countries as the beneficiaries, UNDP strategic objectives and SDG 17 - partnership?
	3	To what extent is the Project responsive to the changing environment in country at national and subnational levels and how should it adapt to these changes?
	4	To what extent was the methods of delivery selected by the Project appropriate to the development context?
	5	To what extent does the Project address UN commitment of Leave No One Behind and contribute to the cross-cutting issues of good governance, human rights, gender equality and environmental protection?
Effectiveness	6	To what extent are the Project activities implemented and intended results and the specific objective/outcome achieved and reported? What are the main project achievements? Please provide outline of a measurable overview of the Project results against the indicators and their target values/statements as defined in the Project results framework
	7	What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the Project's interventions? This may, inter alia, include an overview of benefits the Project brought to beneficiary institutions and citizens in partner countries
	8	What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended specific objective/outcome and outputs/results?
	9	To what extent has the Project managed to perform sharing of Czech knowledge, expertise and innovative solutions to the UNDP COs and their national partners?
	10	How COVID-19 pandemic affected or limited the Project activities and what actions were undertaken to offset the negative impact?
	11	Assess the degree to which project implementation was flexible and adaptive to the context.
Gender and Gender Equality¹¹	12	To what extent have gender considerations been integrated into the project design and implementation?
	13	Were there any constraints when it comes to addressing gender issues during implementation? Which efforts were made to overcome these?
	14	To what extent have the output and outcome levels generated results for gender equality and the empowerment of women?
Efficiency	15	Have resources (financial, human, technical) been allocated strategically to achieve the Project results?
	16	Are there any weaknesses in the Project design, management, human resource skills, and resources?
	17	Analyse the role of the Project Board and whether it is optimally being used for decision making.
	18	What are the strengths and weaknesses of the introduced modality (secondment) that is used for the project management?
	19	Assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the Project.
	20	Identify factors and constraints, which have affected the Project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to COVID-19 related challenges and other external factors unforeseen during the Project design.
	21	To what extent did Project engage or coordinate with beneficiaries, implementing partners, other United Nations agencies and national counterparts to achieve outcome-level results?
	22	Are the outcomes of Expertise on Demand and Innovation solution initiatives effectively communicated in the partner countries, in donor's country and within the UNDP? Is there a communication strategy in place?
Impact	23	What are the Project effects and impact in terms of implemented Project activities, both in qualitative, and quantitative terms, on achievement of specific development results by partner countries via transfer of the Czech expertise and innovative solutions?
	24	To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the Project implementation, specifically in terms of the partnership support and what are specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance?
Sustainability	25	To what extent the Project outputs/results are likely to be sustainable beyond the Project's lifetime? How could the Project results be further sustainably projected and expanded in the countries?
	26	What would be future priority interventions to ensure long-term sustainability of the project's achievements and contribute to further sharing knowledge and expertise to partner countries?
	27	How has the Project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in partner countries, donor country and of the Czech experts and innovators?
Lessons learned	28	Analyze the main lessons learned in relation to the effectiveness of implementation modalities.

¹¹ This sub-criterion was incorporated into the evaluation questions by the evaluation team

4.0 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

4.1. The MTR Methodological Approach overview

25. The methodology of the MTR mainly combines **quantitative and qualitative approaches**, as well as gender mainstreaming, participatory and theory of change techniques.

26. A thorough analysis and use was made of all relevant **secondary information sources** such as the UNDP Country Programme Document (United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF)/CPD, UNDP 2018 –2021 Strategic Plan, Czech-UNDP Partnership for the SDGs (2018–2021)) and all relevant documents related to the projects, including Work Plans (WPs), PIRs, etc. Specifically, the following documents, but not limited to, will be consulted: i) Challenge Fund Guidelines; ii) Expertise on Demand Guidelines; iii) Project Annual Progress Reports; iv) Project Quarterly Reports; v) Minutes of the Project Board meetings; vi) Evaluation reports; vii) Mission Reports BTRs); viii) Communications and Visibility Strategy; ix) CUP website, LinkedIn; xi) UNDP Country Programmes; xii) Target country development strategies.

27. Additionally, extensive consultation was conducted with **primary information sources** such as the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub (IRH), UNDP COs, project team, government counterparts, project facilitators / implementers (from the private sector, NGOs, CBOs, in partner countries). Specifically, the following stakeholders, but not limited to, were consulted: i) UNDP Country Offices and the national partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Zambia; ii) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, and embassies in partners countries; iii) Accelerator Labs in BiH and Ethiopia; iv) Green City Lab in City of Chisinau; v) Selected experts engaged in the assignments under the Experts on Demand modality; vi) Selected innovators of the Challenge Fund modality; vii) Local Partners of the Czech innovators; viii) Local institutions and other stakeholders as beneficiaries of the initiatives.

28. Further, three case studies were conducted. The cases of *Implementation of Weather Road System in Moldova*, *Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia* and *Youth Community Centre in Mongu (Zambia)* were selected to provide for detailed insights with regard to the best practices and key challenges for lessons learned purposes.

4.2. The evaluation instruments

4.2.1. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guidelines and Semi-structured Individual Questionnaire

29. In order to answer the evaluation questions, in addition to a thorough desk review, a total of 12 Focus Group Discussions¹² and 46 individual interviews were conducted with project

¹² Focus group discussions were conducted with 1 – Relevant representatives of Czech MFA, 2 – Development diplomats from Embassies in CUP partner countries, 3 – UNDP (meant partner COs), 4/5 -Stakeholders/Local partners from Bosnia

stakeholders and beneficiaries in the UNDP IRH, Czech Republic, and the six partner countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Moldova, and Zambia) for a total of 73 respondents. The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide was designed under six key evaluation question attached to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, including lessons learned, innovations, and forward-looking recommendations. The FGD Guide is presented in Annex 2. As for the Semi-structure Individual Questionnaire, it was mainly developed under the OECD / DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, including lessons learned and forward-looking recommendations. Every criterion is divided into specific evaluation questions, as per the TORs requirements. The individual interviews¹³ sample is presented in the table 2 below. The very different numbers of respondents from the individual target countries stem from their distinct willingness to participate in the survey. All projects representatives in all priority countries were approached with the questionnaire.

Table 2: Individual interviews sample distribution

		Local Partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA &Embassies	Total
Country of intervention	Czech Republic	0	1	0	0	1
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	7	1	0	11
	Georgia	1	12	1	1	15
	Moldova	1	5	0	1	7
	Ethiopia	3	2	0	0	5
	Cambodia	0	2	0	0	2
	Zambia	1	3	0	0	4
	All countries	0	0	0	1	1
Total		9	32	2	3	46

30. The Semi-structure Individual Questionnaire is presented in Annex 3. The Evaluation Matrix is presented in Annex 4, the list of documents consulted in Annex 5, and the list of the project stakeholders, facilitators / implementers, and beneficiaries consulted is presented in Annex 6.

4.2.2. Project's performance rating scale

31. The project's performance was measured with the above-mentioned OECD D AC evaluation criteria and was rated through the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) newly developed evaluation rating scale presented in the table 4 below.

and Herzegovina, 6/7 – Stakeholders/Local partners from Moldova, 8/9 – Stakeholders/Local partners from Georgia, 10/11 – Stakeholders/Local partners from Ethiopia/Zambia/Cambodia

¹³ Completed with the Semi-structure Individual Questionnaire

Table 3: Project Performance Rating Matrix

Score	Performance rating	Description
4	Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	A rating of this level means that outcomes exceed expectations/ All intended program outputs and outcomes have been delivered, and results have been (or likely to be) achieved time of evaluation
3	Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory	A rating of this level is used when there are some limitations in the contribution of UNDP programs that prevented an 'Excellent' rating, but there were no major shortfalls. Many of the planned program outputs/outcomes have been delivered and expected results (likely to be) achieved. Overall, the assessment is substantially positive, and problems were small relative to the positive findings.
2	Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	A rating of this level is used when significant shortfalls are identified, but there were also some positive findings. Only some of the intended outputs and outcomes have been completed/achieved. Overall, the assessment is less positive.
1	Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory	A rating of this level means that the contribution of the UNDP program faced severe constraints and the negative assessment outweighs any positive achievements. There has been limited or no achievement of planned program outputs / outcomes.

Source: UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)

4.2.3. Evaluation Project Gender Mainstreaming Level

32. The project performance was also analyzed through the extent to which UNDP support was designed to and contributed to gender equality. Thus, the MTR applied the gender marker (in program design, implementation and monitoring process) and the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale – GRES (after the different project interventions were implemented to date) to the project assessment. While the gender marker, developed by UNDP / PBF, classifies the gender mainstreaming level in four categories (GEN-0, GEN-1, GEN-2, GEN-3)¹⁴, the GRES developed by the UNDP / IEO classifies gender results in five categories (gender negative, gender blind, gender targeted, gender responsive, gender transformative (UNDP/IEO, 2015). The CUP was initially designed under the gender marker GEN 1. Therefore, the evaluation reviewed it with the related gender scoring grid.

Table 4: Gender Marker Score

Score	Description
0	No observable contribution of outputs to gender equality is expected
1	Projects that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly
2	Projects that have gender equality as a significant objective
3	Projects that have gender equality as a principal objective

Source: UN Peacebuilding Fund (2019)

33. The evaluation also assessed the project results with the GRES. If it is important to targeting gender mainstreaming in Project Documentation and Results Frameworks, it is even more rewarding to note that the anticipated results became a reality at the end of the process. This makes it possible to validate the Theory of Change (ToC) of the project, essentially based on the development results once the outputs were implemented. It determined the way outputs were turned into outcomes and

¹⁴https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_guidance_note_on_gender_marker_scoring_2019.pdf

sustainable development results. The MTR applied the following GRES grid to evaluate the project's results.

Table 5: Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES)

SCALE	DESCRIPTION
Gender negative	Result had a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced existing gender inequalities and norms
Gender blind	Result had no attention to gender, failed to acknowledge the different needs of men, women, girls and boys, or marginalized populations
Gender targeted	Result focused on the number of equity (50/50) of women, men or marginalized populations that were targeted
Gender responsive	Results addressed differential needs of men or women and address equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights but did not address root causes of inequalities in their lives
Gender transformative	Result contributes to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures and the roots of gender inequalities and discriminations. The aim was to redefine systems and institutions where inequalities are created and maintained.

Source: UNDP IEO (2015, p. 46)

4.3. Limitations of the evaluation

34. The first self-true limits of the evaluation research and analysis were of course related to the quantity and quality of the information and data collected through the content analysis of the project material, and the ensuing field interviews with the project stakeholders, facilitators, implementers, and beneficiaries. In addition, relatively short time and resources allocated to the study as well as the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow the team of evaluators to consult more local actors and beneficiaries in the six partner countries of the project.

5. FINDINGS

5.1. Overview: The CUP – achievements, reporting, monitoring, communication, and visibility

35. The project objective (*to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries*) was achieved and exceeded, as well as the project outcome (*addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways*) and the Development Impact (*to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks*) with a budget utilization of 85%. The first sign of the outstanding success of the project is observable through its budget mobilization exceeding the planned expectation by 128%. This is due to the additional funding (unused funds) from the Czech MFA. On the other hand, delivery level was also highly satisfactory.

Table 6: Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs: planned and utilized budget

Project Output	Planned budget (2018-2021)	Actual budget (2018-Sep. 2021)	Percentage Mobilized Resources	Expenditures (2018-Sep. 2021)
Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner	\$3,018,019	\$3,850,159	128%	\$3,279,977

Financial detailed data 2018-2022

Period	Annual Contribution USD	Available Budget per Year USD	Delivery USD	Yearly Balance USD	With Yearly Accruals USD	Delivery in %
2018	793 428,54	793 428,54	156 238,58	637 189,96	-	20%
2019	729 713,95	2 199 044,07	895 711,78	1 303 332,29	1 940 522,25	41%
2020	716 028,55	2 074 464,87	1 310 830,37	763 634,50	2 704 156,75	63%
2021	778 847,96	1 526 805,46	1 093 177,82	433 627,64	3 137 784,39	72%
2018-21	3 018 019,00	-	3 455 958,55	-	-	-

36. Altogether, 84 projects (95 if the ongoing projects and all individual experts are counted)¹⁵ were funded during the whole project period. It involved 25 projects conducted in BiH, 26 in Moldova, 34 in Georgia, four in Ethiopia, two in Cambodia, two in Zambia, and one generic (covering a general issue not related to any specific country). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, all project output indicator targets were overachieved. The project components achieved their objectives in all first three priority countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Moldova. While the targets in the component 1 were exceeded by 138%, the project output targets were achieved at 340% in the component 2 (the Challenge Fund). The project output in the component 3 (KM) achieved the targets of the project output indicator on the number of knowledge products on Czech Expert Database by 266%. As per November 2021 (the MTR period), 50 initiatives in the Challenge Fund (compared to 15 anticipated), 33 in the Expertise on Demand (compared to 24 anticipated), 62 innovative solutions tested in beneficiary countries (compared to 30 anticipated) and 266 knowledge products were delivered (compared to 100 anticipated). In addition, in 2020, the number of the CUP priority countries increased to six by addition of Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Zambia.

5.1.1. Component 1: The Expertise on Demand

37. The project output with regard to Expertise on Demand is delivered, including the sub-outputs: *locally relevant solutions to development challenges were developed to fulfil the needs of the specific contexts and locations*. Lessons learned were systematically identified and captured in the annual and quarterly reports, and stronger partnerships were facilitated with the Czech

¹⁵The number of the projects in the table below is higher due to separate budgeting of the individual experts in the Expertise on Demand component (working individually or in the teams on the projects).

Embassies, UNDP Country Offices, and the Accelerator Labs in priority countries. The project output indicators (no. of cases where Czech knowledge and expertise applied) were fulfilled by 138% (nine implemented initiatives more).

Table 7: Expertise on Demand Indicators Overall Achievements

Year	No. of cases where Czech knowledge and expertise applied		Achievement percentage
	Target Numbers	Delivery Numbers (implemented)	
2018	6	0 ¹⁶	0 %
2019	6	11	183 %
2020	6	12	200 %
2021	6	10	167 %
TOTAL	24	33	138 %

38. The Expertise on Demand component delivered stable results in the evaluated period 2018 – 2021. In 2019, 11 initiatives were fully implemented (three in Bosnia and Herzegovina, two in the Republic of Moldova, and six in Georgia). Czech expertise was shared through hands-on experience and trainings, e.g. in the area of sustainable mobility plans, biomass utilization technology, and disaster risk measures. Czech expertise also helped develop the Social Impact Bonds in Georgia – an innovative financial instrument designed to bring together the public, and the private sector, and NGOs. Despite the worldwide uncertainty, the CUP succeeded to complete 12 transfers of the Czech expertise and launch nine more transfers in Moldova, Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2020. In 2021, the CUP continued to cooperate with the UNDP Accelerator Lab in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Food waste management. In addition, the Strategy on Food Waste for the City of Sarajevo was delivered. The Standard Operational Procedure on crisis and risk management response in the wood biomass sector was drafted for Bosnia and Herzegovina. While in Georgia, Czech expertise and innovative solutions were applied to enhance good governance at local level, in Moldova, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Strategy developed by the team of the Czech experts was assessed by the respective authorities and a plan for the Intelligent Transport System by the Czech company Smart Plan was presented to the Municipality of Chisinau. In Georgia, a team of Czech experts from Unico a.i. launched their assistance to the Rustavi Innovation Hub in the economic assessment and smart urban solutions at the municipal level. In December 2020, the CUP also assisted to the Moldova's General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations with the national DRR strategy including COVID-19 pandemic response and with developing DRR Strategy for Moldova.

39. An activity held with respect to Expertise on Demand worth to mention was the Research for Policy Sustainability Series involving round table panels streamed online. Six round tables were conducted in 2021. Among their topics were food waste, policy data-driven options to speed up COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery, linkages between debts, remittances, and migration from a social protection point of view in the Georgian, as well as regional context, public sector innovations at local level. The main goal of this activity was to support the evidence-based policy research in Georgia within the context of current CUP and UNDP interventions. However, in many

¹⁶The first year of full implementation of the CUP was 2019 as the budget was not approved until October 2018

cases also the CUP's projects implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova were presented – this was done with the goal to increase the exposure. The series hosts distinguished speakers from various national / international organizations and offered space for results and lessons learned of research-based projects supported by the CUP. A video database of all round tables up to date can be found on the [CUP YouTube channel](#).¹⁷ The Research for Policy series had many positive side effects for CUP experts – as they could for example collect feedback on their work and / or master their presentation / communication skills. The potential of the project component 1 was high regarding the scope extension to three more countries (Cambodia, Ethiopia, Zambia) and deepening the impact by increase of the number of initiatives in accordance with the project output indicators.

5.1.2. Component 2: The Challenge Fund

40. Similarly as the Expertise on Demand component, the project objective with regard to the Challenge Fund was achieved. Compared to the anticipated results, the Challenge Fund delivered a substantial achievement with regard to the component objective (*to facilitate transfer of Czech know-how and innovative Czech solutions for SDGs providing scalable solutions for the identified development problems*) was achieved. The Challenge Fund also performed above expectations and by raising the number of priority countries from three to six in 2020 that was not required by the project initiation documentation. The project output indicators were fulfilled as the overall number of innovative solutions tested and applied highly exceeded the targets per year for an overall 340% one year before the end of the project first cycle (2018 – 2022).

Table 8: Challenge Fund Indicators Overall Achievements

Year	Solutions tested			Solutions applied		
	Target Numbers	Delivery Numbers	Delivery percentage	Target Numbers	Delivery Numbers	Delivery percentage
2018	5	9	180 %	0	0	0 %
2019	8	3	38 %	5	12	240 %
2020	8	20	250 %	5	20	400 %
2021	9	31	344 %	5	19	380 %
TOTAL	30	63	210 %	15	51	340 %

41. Since 2018, the Challenge Fund essentially extended its scope of initiatives, e.g. in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While Damaris Solutions addressed the topic of hospital waste treatment, especially crucial during the COVID-19 pandemic, Gisat Ltd. offered the innovative computer visual flood forecasting and prevention. Since its start, the Challenge Fund supported nine initiatives (out of 15 applications) in three Czech ODA priority countries. The number of the sponsored initiatives increased to 22 in 2019 (10 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 10 in Georgia, and 2 in the Republic of Moldova), focusing on the preparation of feasibility studies connecting innovations and traditional procedures. Here, 12 projects were completed including the nine projects in the area of sustainable

¹⁷https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz-jIFpLaI3_gfV84uy-BsQ

management of natural resources, e-platforms for efficient information and data management. In addition, universities and state institutions appeared newly among applicants besides Czech private companies and NGOs. For example, TechWorm, a specific pipeline system detection (by Zikmund electronics Ltd.), was nominated for the Czech Innovation Award of 2019 and took part at the Expo 2020 in Dubai. Among other outstanding partners of the CUP is Nadace Veronika which introduced responsible textile production and fashion. In cooperation with Aarhus Centar Sarajevo, it promoted the Upcycling Challenge on International Fora including the European Regions Research and Innovative Network or Circular Economy Festival. Company Smart Guide that digitalized Touristic Content of Sutjeska National Park was awarded a Seal of Excellence in COVID-19 response from the European Commission and it was recommended for public funding. Finally, the project Efficient Wood-Burning Stoves for Mtskheta-Mtianeti achieved a phenomenal scale-up when the local partner, expert in geophysics Zaal Kheladze, trained in Czechia by Czech implementer Agora in the production of efficient and ecological stoves, built a factory in Georgia producing tens of thousand of stoves thanks to a new funding from German development agency GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit).

42. **The project also played a catalytic role as its interventions were implemented in partner countries.** Opportunities for scaling up of the initiatives grew in number in the snow-ball way (each initiative attracting others). For example, the Challenge Fund solution on establishing pilot weather stations in Moldova implemented by the Czech company Cross Zlín resulted in further cooperation between the implementer and the State Road Administration of the Republic of Moldova on the installation of 30 weather road stations during the following three years. In some cases, the Challenge Fund initiatives managed to draw a significant attention on the partner's side. Aspiro's initiative on Smart City Data Crowdsourcing Platform was fully incorporated into the UNDP CO digitalization work in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the CUP cooperates with the UNDP Accelerator Lab to enhance the economic development by supporting a sustainable nature-based tourism. The well-known Czech traveler Tadeas Sima and the artist Adam Kaspar are the faces of the campaign. Therefore, the Czech company Smart Guide project aimed at digitalization of tourism content regarding Sutjeska National Park. Moreover, the project not only addressed the COVID-19 pandemic by continuous online activities to endorse the local partners in the beneficiary countries to continue with the project activities, but also contributed to its mitigation. For example, the Czech company Ego Zlin implemented an initiative on improving the approach of Bosnia and Herzegovina for emergency preparedness and response, supplying Biobags for the transport of infected patients.

43. In 2020, despite the hardship caused by COVID-19 pandemic, the number of the CUP priority countries increased to six by addition of Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Zambia. In 2021, the CUP implemented 19 Challenge Fund solutions. Beside onboarding partners from the Czech private and public sectors, municipalities, business associations, NGOs, and academia to assist their counterparts in the beneficiary countries in application of the innovative solutions. The 2021 call for applications resulted in selection of 12 innovative solutions out of 49 innovation proposals, e.g. Intelligent Transport system solutions, water treatment solutions, and digitalization at local level or about piloting of HIV self-testing solution.

44. In the last months, synergies of the public and private parties proved beneficial by combining the private sector's financial resources, knowledge, problem-solving and innovation capacity, interest in market expansion and the public agencies' ability to address social and environmental development challenges at the systemic level. Further, the company Empress focused on greening the roofs of residential buildings and creating sustainable space in Sarajevo. In spite of a delay, a great attention was attracted to the solutions implemented in cooperation with the UNDP Accelerator Lab in Bosnia and Herzegovina (including financial support from municipal and UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina budgets). The UNDP Accelerator Labs are flagship UNDP initiatives that accelerated learning network on sustainable development challenges in 114 countries.

45. While **in Cambodia**, two initiatives were implemented (a project of Mendel University in Brno sharing Czech research outputs on conserving tropical fruit using solar energy, and Diakonie ČČE project supporting the local production of reusable menstrual pads).

46. In Georgia, the NGO Care Czech Republic implemented a solution on preservation of fruit and other agricultural products with a focus on female farmers. Digitalization ensuring effective citizen's communication and participation in the city of Rustavi was implemented by the International Counselling Centre of Municipalities (MEPCO). Capacity building initiative for the civil society in the communities of Ambrolauri and Tkibuli was delivered by the non-profit organization Nesehnutí. Unico company delivered an online and AI-enhanced platform Experts.ai aimed at technology transfer from research and development (R&D) to industry. The Czech NGO People in Need completed its initiative addressing poverty and debt, promoting consumer-friendly and accountable debt practices through sharing Czech experience in Georgia. The project encouraged an awareness-raising public debate on personal debts, attractive for key stakeholders including policymakers. Further, a comprehensive desk research was completed, a debt advisory guide for local CSOs was elaborated and several recommendations were proposed. The Czech company Dekonta completed the significantly delayed project Enhancing Georgian Approach Towards Emergency Preparedness and Management based on the previously implemented project Capacity Building in the Major Accident Prevention in Georgia, aimed at harmonizing existing Georgian legislation with the EU SEVESO Directive and UNECE Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents Convention.

47. **In Moldova**, the NGO BEZK conducted a research on energy efficiency of residential buildings and the potential of programs to support renewable energy, attracting the interest in its exploitation by the Agency for Energy Efficiency and the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Trade of Moldova. Coordination with the UNDP CO was established as well. The companies Cross Zlín and Incinity ltd. tackled the issue of transport in smart cities by installing a dynamic traffic control and a platform for a smart transport system. The University of Chemical Technology in Prague established an innovative experimental laboratory supporting agriculture and the food industry. The Czech University of Agriculture in Prague aimed at introduction of new tools for processing waste from wine production.

48. **In Ethiopia**, the Accelerator Lab in Addis-Ababa engaged in the implementation of Aquatest company initiative on the sustainability of shallow groundwater resources through monitoring wells

mitigating the negative effects of the climate change, and the Czech start-up DOT Glasses started a distribution network for affordable glasses with the help of local small enterprises.

49. **In Zambia**, the Skate World Better start-up created a community youth centre in Mongu serving as a safe place for social gatherings, sports, and educational activities. The project attracted attention of Czech and Zambian mainstream media. It can also serve as the show case of the South-South cooperation since the solution was implemented based on the cooperation with other countries in the region.

5.1.3. Component 3: Knowledge Management

50. **As the first two components of the project (Expertise on Demand and Challenge Fund), the objective related to Knowledge Management component was achieved and exceeded. Knowledge was collected, stored, disseminated, and transferred through the newly created project website and other instruments as the Research for Policy round tables and a range of visibility and communication activities online (social networks as LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr) and in the mainstream media (as Czech TV, Aktualne.cz, Radio 1). The project output (*the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner*) was delivered and the related indicators were fulfilled, as the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions were made available via the project website, the Czech Expert Database, and the online application system. Regarding the project output indicators on visits of Czech Expert Database, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) prevented to make the database public and thus, the data do not exist. Rather, it would be relevant to consider the transformation of the indicators into the number of Czech experts in the database and number of Czech experts included in the Global GPN roster. The project output indicators related to the number of knowledge products on Czech Expert Database were fulfilled as the overall number of knowledge products (published information on the Challenge Fund projects, Expertise on Demand initiatives, supportive materials, unique posts, items, and articles on the project website and the CUP's LinkedIn) exceeded the targets by 166% per the (whole) project period.**

Table 9: Knowledge Management Indicators Overall Achievements

Year	Number of knowledge products on Czech Expert Database		Visits of Czech Expert Database	
	Target Numbers	Delivery Numbers	Target Numbers	Delivery Numbers.
2018	20	Aggregated data	500	N/A
2019	20	Aggregated data	200	N/A
2020	30	Aggregated data	300	N/A
2021	30	Aggregated data	500	N/A
TOTAL	100	266 %	1500	N/A

51. The KM component began implementation of the new KM strategy in 2018 to ensure that its knowledge transfer activities contribute to achieve broader outcomes and make an impact through

establishing a public online platform shared with the MFA the Czech Development Agency for joint operations. The purpose of the website is collecting and presenting information on Czech development expertise, addressing the Czech experts, companies, NGOs, and other contractors to engage in the CUP supported initiatives of 2018 – 2021. The website was created in 2019 (<http://undp.cz>), allowing for a collection and organization of various know-how products developed by the Czech development expertise, and creation of an electronic database of the Czech experts placed to UNDP intranet webpage for internal use.

52. Further, the Challenge Fund online application process was successfully digitalized in 2020 when the CUP also finalized its online database of experts to better address opportunities for the Czech expertise. Currently, the database includes 65 experienced experts. In addition, the work on inclusion of the Czech experts into the UNDP's Global Policy Network roster continued. At the moment, there are 54 Czech experts included that makes the Czech expertise readily deployable within the UNDP. The CUP digitalized the project processes through the Czech Expert Database and online application system enhancement and development of online reporting system for the Challenge Fund initiatives. The 2020 and 2021 Calls for Applications to the Challenge Fund took place via the online application system. Additionally, online reporting was developed and designed to be used for the implementation of the 2021 and further Challenge Fund initiatives. The interactive SDG portfolio on the project website is currently being finalized. Moreover, the website ensured the CUP's visibility, extended by sharing updates on the official UNDP Eurasia website, courtesy of the UNDP Communications team. Except for the website, the KM involved the Research for Policy round tables hosting the Czech experts presenting their work within the UNDP, organized in cooperation with the UNDP CO in Georgia. The main audience of the round-tables academia, local authorities, and interested public in the priority countries (mainly in Georgia where this activity started). Finally, the new website dedicated to results of Research for Policy project round tables is currently being prepared by CUP's UN Online Volunteer.

5.2. Case Studies

53. The following three Case studies are presented in Annexes 13, 14, and 15, respectively.

☞ *Implementation of Weather Road System in Moldova,*

☞ *Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia, and*

☞ *Youth Community Centre in Mongu (Zambia).*

54. The case studies are aimed to illustrate the evaluation with detailed insights with regard to the best practices and key challenges for lessons learned purposes. The case selection was random, aimed at proportionate geographical and thematic distribution, with regard to the willingness of interlocutors to participate in the survey.

5.3. Assessing evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability

55. This section analyzes the project level of relevance, effectiveness (including Gender and Gender Equality), efficiency, and sustainability. Here, findings are drawn from the evaluation Desk Review and consultation of the project stakeholders, facilitator, implementers and partner countries' local partners and beneficiaries.

5.3.1. Relevance:Satisfactory (4)

The extent to which the Project aligned with the relevant national development priorities in the partner countries as the beneficiaries, UNDP strategic objectives and SDG 17 – partnership. Are the Project's objectives relevant to the needs of the UNDP partner countries in terms of their social and economic development?

56. **Findings reveal that the project relevance is satisfactory with the rating of 4.** The project design and intervention are aligned with the SDGS Agenda 2030, UNDP, and the partner countries development priorities. However, the project design is mostly elaborated by the UNDP IRH and the Czech Republic officials. Even though the project embraces and aims to help address the development issues and challenges of partner countries, official government counterparts of these countries were apparently not involved in project design to ensure that their strategic development priorities were actually taken into account. They could have been represented in the project. However, as the Challenge Fund and Expertise on Demand are locally driven initiatives, the components are deemed aligned with the local partners needs and development priorities. Overall, the project relevance is satisfactory for the reasons described below.

57. First: The "Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs (CUP)" is well aligned with seven (7) out of the 17 SDGs, especially with the topics related to "Good governance and rule of law (SDG 16)", "Sustainable management of natural resources" (SDG 6, SDG 13), "Economic transformation and development" (SDG 7, SDG 8), "Agriculture and rural development (SDG 2, SDG 15)", and Partnership (SDG 17). The project is also linked to UNDP 2018 – 21 Strategic Plan impact focusing "to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks".

58. Second: The Czech Republic development cooperation framework is perfectly in line with the above-mentioned SDGs as well as the UNDP Regional Development strategy. Per the project output, it ambitioned that "the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner". It was designed under the UNDP Regional Programme Document (RPD) 2018 – 2021 OUTCOME 2: "Addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways" and Output 2.3. "Enabling the environment strengthened through diverse partnerships to expand opportunities for the public and private sector, including alternative financing for the achievement of the SDGs Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN 1".

59. Third: **In Bosnia Herzegovina**, the CUP focused on i) Sustainable, low carbon energy resources; ii) Inclusive economic growth; iii) Agriculture; and iv) Good governance and rule of law.

These ambitions were aligned with the country's Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF, 2021) between authorities in BiH and the United Nations (UN) system describing four strategic priorities such as i) domestication of SDG targets (UNSDCF, 2019) and "The human rights commitments of BiH and other agreed international and regional development goals and treaty obligations". These development priorities are also stressed, among others issues, in the 2030 Agenda for SDGs in BiH of April 2017 stating that : i) Governance and SDG 16 are acting as a bottleneck; ii) There is need to finance implement, improve coordination of public and private sector financing for the SDGs as critical and activate participation of civil society, private sector, other stakeholders in the discussion of draft strategic documents in relation to attainment of SDG targets; and iv) Necessity to accelerating SDGs such as promoting a green economy would help overcome current policy gaps and bottlenecks in the planet theme and could help inject ideas into key sectors (UNEP 2018, p. 28-29). Moreover, in Bosnia and Herzegovina the Project connected very well with the Accelerator Lab (now the Integration and Innovation Cell) within the UNDP CO and the innovation solutions as well as the expertise from the Project was connected with the priorities and the portfolio of experiments of the Accelerator Lab. This approach was very successful and connected the innovation contribution and resources of the project to a wider innovation portfolio led by the UNDP CO, also with maximized impact.

60. Fourth: In Georgia: The CUP focuses on i) Access to justice; ii) Economic transformation and SME development; and iii) Transfer of modern agriculture technologies. Economic policy of the government of Georgia is based on three main principles (UNSDCF, 2019): i) Ensuring fast and efficient economic growth driven by development of real (production) sector of the economy, which will resolve economic problems that exist in the country, create jobs and reduce poverty; ii) Implementation of economic policies that facilitate inclusive economic growth, prosperity, social equality, and improvement of the living standards of population; iii) Rational use of natural resources, ensuring environmental safety and sustainability and avoiding natural disasters during the process of economic development.

61. Five: In Moldova: The CUP focuses on i) Economic transformation and SME development; ii) Inclusive economic growth; iii) Food quality and food safety; iv) Agricultural value chain development; and v) Sustainable agricultural production. These areas of intervention of the CUP are implicitly aligned with the country's National Development Strategy "Moldova 2020" (UNSDCF, 2019) aimed to "ensuring qualitative economic development and, implicitly, poverty reduction", and "Reducing energy consumption by increasing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources".

62. Six: In Cambodia: the CUP's output on "the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner" and the UNDP RPD 2018 – 2021 OUTCOME 2 on "Addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways" are aligned with 4 out of 7 priority areas (1, 2, 5, and 6) of Cambodian SDGs Framework 2016 –2030 (p. 4), especially: i) Promoting poverty reduction and inclusive growth; ii) Expanding agriculture; (v) combating climate change and deforestation; and (6) better governance. This is evidenced by the CUP implemented initiatives on

conserving tropical fruit using solar energy, and supporting the local production of reusable menstrual pads.

63. Seven: In Ethiopia: SDGs national priorities are integrated into the above CUP output and the UNDP RPD 2018 – 2021 OUTCOME 2. *Ethiopia 2030: The Pathway to Prosperity Ten Years Perspective Development Plan (2021 – 2030)* envisions, among other, the following area of priority: I) ensure quality growth (including reduced poverty in all indicators, inflation and unemployment), build climate resilient green economy, private sector's leadership in the economy, and focus on modern agriculture, manufacturing and mining. This is evidenced through the CUP intervention of Accelerator Lab in Addis-Ababa which engaged in the implementation of Aquatest company initiative on the sustainability of shallow groundwater resources through monitoring wells mitigating the negative effects of the climate change, and the Czech start-up DOT Glasses' efforts to create a distribution network for affordable glasses with the help of local small enterprises.

64. Eight: In Zambia: The CUP intervention is also aligned with the country's key priority development areas. Following Zambia's graduation into lower-middle-income country (LMIC) status and the medium human development category, the United Nations system in Zambia and the Zambian government have agreed to shift from development assistance to partnership (UNDP Zambia CPD 2016 – 2021, p. 2). Reflecting the sustainable development agenda and Zambia's own 'Vision 2030', they have set out their collective aspirations for transformation in an innovative Zambia-United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework 2016 – 2021 (the Partnership Framework). The Partnership Framework builds on the 2014 Human Development Report finding that populations that are marginalized from socioeconomic progress and suffer persistent vulnerability are not only left behind but their very exclusion constitutes a persistent drag on overall development. The Partnership Framework is designed with, among others, an explicit environmentally sustainable economic development. This Country Programme document identifies the comparative advantage of UNDP within the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and articulates its contribution through the Partnership Framework as thought leader, innovator, enabler and integrator of different programming and funding mechanisms.

65. Thus, the CUP's interventions in this country fitted perfectly into the above-described partnership framework perspective. For example, the CUP initiative with Skate World Better start-up created a community youth centre in Mongu serving as a safe place for social gatherings, sports and educational activities. The project attracted attention of Czech and Zambian mainstream media. The project served as the show case of the South-South cooperation since the solution was implemented based on the cooperation with other countries in the region.

66. It is worth to mention that, similarly to mentioning the Accelerator Lab initiative in Bosnia, CUP team conducted an intensive cooperation with colleagues from Moldovan, Ethiopian, Georgian Cos.

67. In addition, large majority (77%) of the CUP stakeholders and beneficiaries consulted overwhelmingly recognize the relevance of the project with respect to SDGs as excellent or satisfactory. 22% declare that the project relevance is good, mostly or moderately satisfactory. All categories of respondents judge positively the project relevance. While five (63%) out of eight local

partners and beneficiaries rate the project relevance as excellent or satisfactory, the remaining three (37%) of them rate it as mostly or moderately satisfactory. Higher percentage of project stakeholders' facilitators and implementers (81%) judge the project relevance as excellent or satisfactory and a fewer (19%) state the project relevance is mostly or moderately satisfactory.

Table 10: Stakeholders and local beneficiaries rating of the project relevance relating to SDGs

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative percentage	
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	34	73,9	77,3	77,3	
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	10	21,7	22,7	100,0	
Total	44	95,7	100,0		
	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA & embassies	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	5	26	1	2	34
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	3	6	0	1	10
Total	8	32	1	3	44

68. As per the project relevance related to its alignment with the national development priorities in the partner countries, a similar number of respondents (75%) as compared to the project relevance regarding SDGs (77%), rate it as excellent or satisfactory and as good, mostly or moderately satisfactory (even 23%). Partner countries' local beneficiaries also rate the project relevance less high than its stakeholders, facilitators and implementers (63% against 77%) as excellent or satisfactory. While 13% rate the project alignment with national priorities as Modest / Partially Achieved / Moderately Unsatisfactory, none of the project implementers declare the same.

Table 11: To what extent is the Project aligned with the relevant national development priorities in the partner countries as the beneficiaries, UNDP strategic objectives and SDG 17 - partnership?

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	33	71,7	75,0	75,0
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	10	21,7	22,7	97,7
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	2,2	2,3	100,0
Total	44	95,7	100,0	

	Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	Total
Local partner/ Beneficiary	5	2	1	8
Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	24	7	0	31
UNDP	2	0	0	2
MFA & Embassies	2	1	0	3
Total	33	10	1	44

69. As per the gender cleavage, it appears that male respondents rate the level of the project alignment with partner countries' national development priorities as Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory in the same way as females (evenly 75%).

5.3.2. Effectiveness: Excellent (4)

The extent to which the Project activities implemented and intended results and the specific objective / outcome achieved and reported?

70. **The project effectiveness is rated as excellent (4) as all output were achieved and exceeded and as its stakeholders and beneficiaries assess it the same way. In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, all project output indicator targets were overachieved. The project components achieved their objectives. While the targets in the component 1 were exceeded by 38%, the project output targets were achieved at 340% in the component 2 (the Challenge Fund). The project output in the component 3 (KM) achieved the targets of the project output indicator on the number of knowledge products on Czech Expert Database by 266%. Since the project beginning until November 2021 (the MTR period), 50 initiatives in the Challenge Fund (compared to 15 anticipated) and 33 in the Expertise on Demand (compared to 24 anticipated) have been delivered. 63 innovative solutions have been tested in beneficiary countries (compared to 30 anticipated) and 266 knowledge products have been delivered (compared to 100 anticipated). Based on the desk review, Focus Group discussions, and individual interviews with the project stakeholders, facilitators / implementers and beneficiaries consulted by the evaluation team, the project output is delivered including the sub-outputs on *locally relevant solutions to development challenges were developed to fulfil the needs of the specific contexts and locations*. The project outstanding level of achievement is evidenced through the its specific outputs results in table 13 below.**

Table 12: The CUP specific outputs' level of achievement

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)				Actual progress value (November 2021)
			Value	Year	Year 1 5/2019	Year 2 3/2020	Year 312/2020	Year 4 12/2021	
Output 1 Czech expertise and innovative solutions for partner	1.1 Enhanced knowledge of final beneficiaries	Questionnaire and project reports MTR interviews	0	2018	70% satisfaction rate ¹⁸	80% satisfaction rate	80% satisfaction rate	80% satisfaction rate	
				Actual					88% ¹⁹
	1.2 Number of cases where Czech knowledge and expertise has been applied ²⁰	Questionnaires and project reports	0	2018	6	12	18	24	
				Actual	0	11	23	33	33
	1.3 Number of innovative solutions tested in beneficiary countries	Project reports	0	2018	5	13	21	30	
				Actual	9	12	32	63	63
	1.4 Number of innovative solutions applied	Questionnaires	0	2018	0	5	10	15	
				Actual	0	12	32	51	51
	1.5 Number of knowledge production Czech Expertise data base	Project report	0	2018	20	40	70	100	
				Actual	Aggregated data	Aggregated data	Aggregated data	Aggregated data	266 ²¹
	1.6 Visits of Czech Expertise Database		0	2018	500	700	1000	1500	
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹⁸At least 70% of beneficiaries of Czech expertise/trainings confirmed they substantially improved their knowledge

¹⁹ CUP MTR November 2021 data

²⁰Targets for indicators 1.2–1.6 are cumulative.

²¹ Aggregated data for the whole period

71. Almost all (98%) of the project stakeholders, facilitators, implementers and local beneficiaries consulted state that the project objectives' achievement is Excellent /Achieved / Satisfactory (75%) or Good / Mostly achieved / Moderately Satisfactory (23%). Similarly, to the project relevance rating, a higher number of project stakeholders, facilitators, implementers positively rate the project effectiveness, compared to the country local partners and beneficiaries even though this latter category rate it positively too.

Table 13: Stakeholders and local beneficiaries rating of the project effectiveness

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	33	71,7	75,0	75,0
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	10	21,7	22,7	97,7
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	2,2	2,3	100,0
Total	44	95,7	100,0	

	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA & embassies	
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	2	23	2	2	29
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	1	5	0	0	6
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	2	2	0	0	4
Don't know	3	1	0	1	5
Total	8	31	2	3	44

72. While 25% of the local partners and beneficiaries assess the project effectiveness with respect to its objective/outcome achievement as Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory, 75% of its stakeholders and implementers judge it the same.

Gender and Gender Equality: Moderately unsatisfactory (2)

The extent to what have gender considerations been integrated into the **project design and implementation?**

73. **The CUP was initially designed under the gender marker GEN1: Projects that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly. However, the evaluation findings reveal that no intentional gender mainstreaming objectives or specific activities were incorporated to the Project Documentation, nor into its implementation process.** Project stakeholders, facilitators, implementers as well as its partner countries' beneficiaries consulted by the evaluation team recognized during the interviews that no specific gender mainstreaming aspect was incorporated to their various interventions. Most just tried to justify the gender component of their project by their managerial team (natural²²) mix composition and the nondiscriminatory aspect of the projects' benefits. If the project interventions had not been not set as Gender negative (Result had a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced existing gender inequalities and norms), they

²² Evaluation team choice of word.

would have been somehow gender neutral, without proactive activities related to gender and gender equality.

74. **However, there are four cases that can be set as good practices where women were specifically targeted as project direct beneficiaries.** The first case is the solution on preservation of fruit and other agricultural products implemented in Georgia in partnership with the NGO Care Czech Republic in 2021 where female farmers were specifically targeted. The second gender targeted best story comes from the project *Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia* with Nesehnuti which intensively engaged in gender equality promotion with a ratio of wo / men in the project reached 50:50 as well as among the final beneficiaries (citizens) among whom women were very active, including Gender Based Violence (GBV) awareness activities. The third full mainstreaming intervention refereed to Diaconia ECCB Centre of Relief and Development project in Cambodia engaging partnership with local NGOs such as Green Lady Cambodia to develop a joint domesticated prototype menstruation hygiene pad, which meet the price conditions for girls and women to be able to afford them, with now overall satisfaction of the 1250 women and girls that have already tried the products. The fourth case is with Care Economy, an EoD initiative in Georgia and which supported the establishment of VET courses for care workers.

75. Data analysis from the individual interviews confirms the presumed misunderstanding of gender and gender equality mainstreaming of the project's interventions.

Table 14: Stakeholders, implementers and local beneficiaries rating of Gender integration into the project design and implementation

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	20	43,5	46,5	46,5
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	9	19,6	20,9	67,4
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	2	4,3	4,7	72,1
Don't know	12	26,1	27,9	100,0
Total	43	93,5	100,0	

	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA &Embassies	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	2	17	0	1	20
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	1	5	2	1	9
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	1	0	0	2
Don't know	3	8	0	1	12
Total	7	31	2	3	43

	Male	Female	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	12	8	20
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	6	3	9
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	1	2
Don't know	9	3	12
Total	28	15	43

76. 67% of the interviewed respondents declared that gender considerations been integrated into the project design and implementation, at an Excellent /Achieved / Satisfactory level, compared to 21% of them judging it as Good/Mostly achieved / Moderately Satisfactory. Higher number of male respondents (60%) rated project gender considerations as integrated to the project design than females (53%) at Excellent /Achieved / Satisfactory level. A significant number of the respondents (28%) stated that they did not know if gender considerations had been integrated into the project design and implementation.

5.3.3. Efficiency:Satisfactory (4)

The extent to which resources / inputs (**funds, time, human resources**, etc.) have been turned strategically into results? Have UNDP been able to ensure an efficient use of resources so that project donor and beneficiaries got value for their money? To what extent the efficiency of the implementation methods for the disbursement of funds and support to targeted beneficiaries was achieved?

77. **Project resources were adequately managed in the planning and execution requirements of specific interventions, including monitoring and reporting. The expected deliverables were delivered for the prices estimated in the budget, with some delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the project efficiency is rated as mostly satisfactory / mostly achieved.** At intervention levels, as the amount of money allocated to the various projects is in general small, its management is well addressed. While the majority of the individual interview respondents (82%) declared that the project's fund was managed in Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory (52%) or Good / Mostly / Moderately Satisfactory (30%) way, 9% considered it as Modest / Partially Achieved / Moderately Unsatisfactory.

Table 15: Stakeholders and local beneficiaries rating of the project efficiency with respect to the funds management

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	23	50,0	52,3	52,3
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	13	28,3	29,5	81,8
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	4	8,7	9,1	90,9
Don't know	4	8,7	9,1	100,0
Total	44	95,7	100,0	

	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA &Embassies	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	3	18	1	1	23
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	2	9	1	1	13
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	0	3	0	1	4
Don't know	2	2	0	0	4
Total	7	32	2	3	44

78. While the majority of the individual interview respondents (82%) declared that the project's funding was managed in Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory (52%) or Good / Mostly / Moderately Satisfactory (30%) way, 9% of them considered it as Modest / Partially Achieved / Moderately

Unsatisfactory. Project implementers are of higher number (84%) in judging the funds management as Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory (56%) or Good/Mostly Achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory (28%) than final beneficiaries (71%) who rated it as Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory (43%) or Good / Mostly Achieved / Moderately Satisfactory (29%).

Table 16: Stakeholders and local beneficiaries rating of the project efficiency with respect to the Time management

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	22	47,8	51,2	51,2	
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	11	23,9	25,6	76,7	
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	4	8,7	9,3	86,0	
Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory	4	8,7	9,3	95,3	
Don't know	2	4,3	4,7	100,0	
Total	43	93,5	100,0		
Total	46	100,0			
	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA &Embassies	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	3	17	2	0	22
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	1	8	0	2	11
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	0	4	0	0	4
Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory	1	2	0	1	4
Don't know	2	0	0	0	2
Total	7	31	2	3	43

79. The criteria related to the time management is similarly rated the same way as the funds management. The majority of respondent (77%) judged it as Excellent/Achieved / Satisfactory (51%) or Good / Mostly Achieved / Moderately Satisfactory (27%).

Table 17: Stakeholders and local beneficiaries rating of the project efficiency with respect to the HR management

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative age	
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	30	65,2	73,2	73,2	
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	6	13,0	14,6	87,8	
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	2,2	2,4	90,2	
Don't know	4	8,7	9,8	100,0	
Total	41	89,1	100,0		
	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA &Embassies	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	2	23	2	3	30
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	2	4	0	0	6
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	0	0	0	1
Don't know	2	2	0	0	4
Total	7	29	2	3	41

80. However, higher number of respondents (88%) declared that the level of time management was (77%) judging it as Excellent /Achieved / Satisfactory (73%) or Good / Mostly achieved / Moderately Satisfactory (15%). Dissatisfaction with the CUP small-scale parameters as well as the impact of COVID-19 pandemic were the main reasons for the latter ratings.

81. **Monitoring and reporting are other strengths of the project with regard to its efficiency.** While the reporting consists of annual progress reports and since 2020 quarterly reports (as requested by the donor), prepared by the project management, the monitoring process evaluates the progress and achievements of the project implementation against project plan and benchmarks, assuring the financial expenditures are in accordance with the project budget for the respective period. Methods of monitoring include UNDP Result Oriented Annual Reporting, review of submitted progress reports and on-site monitoring visits in close cooperation among the CUP, the UNDP country offices (COs), and the Czech embassies in beneficiary countries. Furthermore, as regards the Challenge Fund, the CUP uses Monitoring Reports for each initiative, questionnaires for beneficiaries, post-monitoring questionnaires, and the UNDP evaluation form (PSU). As for the Expertise on Demand component, the CUP uses the questionnaires for COs and Personal Evaluation Form. The CUP shares all reports delivered by innovators for comments by partners. In 2021, the COs and the Czech Embassies commented on 47 reports. Two monitoring missions to BiH and to Georgia were conducted by the CUP program specialist in September 2019. Mission to the Republic of Moldova took place in February 2020. The monitoring mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina took place on April 11 – 15, 2021. The purpose of the mission was: i) Monitoring of ongoing and completed Challenge Fund and Expertise on Demand initiatives; ii) Planning of the new Expertise on Demand initiatives and preparation for the Challenge Fund call for applications planned for June/July 2021; iii) visibility events (Czech National TV program Objective on the Smart Guide Challenge Fund solution in Sutjeska National Park). The related M&E tools of the CUP can be consulted in Annexes 7 to 12.

82. **Communication and visibility are another positive feature of the CUP, with limited outreach with regard to its partner countries local beneficiaries.** A new initiative with this regard is the Online Reporting developed and designed to be used for the implementation of the 2021 and further Challenge Fund initiatives. The CUP was systematically endorsing the project visibility of the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs to reach general public and civil society, decision and policy-makers through various means including the project website and social media, UNDP IRH channels, and the media in the beneficiary countries and in the Czech Republic as the Czech magazine Koktejl article on the Digitization project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech national TV's episode of Objektív travel show on the Digitization project in Bosnia and Herzegovina or an article about the Czech solutions in UNDP published by the Czech mainstream media Aktualne.cz. Moreover, the CUP endorsed the project visibility via its own channels (Flickr, LinkedIn). The CUP also launched its own YouTube channel with videos from the CUP conferences and online events. To communicate the project outputs, outcomes, and impact to the professional audience of SDG practitioners in the UNDP and other UN bodies, the CUP made the project outcomes visible in the UN system. To

disseminate the project awareness and its possible exploitation among the direct beneficiaries, i.e. the local audiences in the priority countries, the CUP communicated the country-specific content in cooperation with the UNDP, e.g. the CUP’s country-specific content including for instance the World Bee Day and the World Environment Day. Consequently, the World Bee Day achieved 1,148 impressions and 23 engagements, and the World Environment Day 15,101 impressions and 79 engagements. However, it is noted that the monitoring mission in BiH found some deficiencies in the initiatives visibility, which were the innovator’s responsibility. As in many cases the CUP Visibility Guidelines were not followed and CzechAid and UNDP logos were missing.

5.3.4. Impact: Satisfactory (4)

The extent are key stakeholders / final beneficiaries satisfied with the Project implementation, specifically in terms of the partnership support and what are specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance.

83. **The project demonstrated a positive impact on its key stakeholders and final beneficiaries and is deemed as satisfactory with regard to the related result criterion.** Impact stemming from exploitation, dissemination, and communication of the project output in the component 1 was proportionate to the project implementation as the information on the CUP and the Expertise on Demand initiatives appeared on the project website, at specialized round tables streamed at the CUP YouTube channel, and in media, and the project output was exploited by the beneficiaries. As per the Challenge Fund level, the project impact was clearly implied by the initiatives highlighted in it progress reports as most of the interventions were described as positively received by the beneficiaries with some excellent projects exceeding expectations (as TechWorm, nominated for the Czech Innovation Award of 2019, participating at the Expo 2020 in Dubai, and Upcycling Challenge on International Fora including the European Regions Research). Company Smart Guide that digitalized Touristic Content of Sutjeska National Park was awarded a Seal of Excellence in COVID-19 pandemic response from the European Commission and recommended for public funding.

84. The large majority of the project key stakeholders / final beneficiaries (85%) declared that they were satisfied with the Project implementation, specifically in terms of the partnership support and the specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance. They viewed the project impact as Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory for a proportion of 68% and as Good / Mostly / Moderately Satisfactory for un proportion of 18%. Only 3% of them judged its impact as Modest / Partially Achieved / Moderately Unsatisfactory. While 63% of the local partners assessed the project impact as Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory, a far higher number of stakeholders and implementing partners (66%) stated the same.

Table 18: Stakeholders and local beneficiaries rating of the project relevance with respect to its impact

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	27	58,7	67,5	67,5
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	7	15,2	17,5	85,0
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	2,2	2,5	87,5
Don't know	5	10,9	12,5	100,0
Total	40	87,0	100,0	

	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA &Embassies	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	5	18	2	2	27
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	1	6	0	0	7
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	0	0	0	1
Don't know	1	3	0	1	5
Total	8	27	2	3	40

85. Further, a positive project impact was identified by stakeholders and beneficiaries regarding: i) jobs creation; ii) knowledge enhancement and capacity building of local representatives in the project area; iii) creation of networking opportunities, strengthening existing connections and creating new ones to support information flow, identifying the most burning issues and debating solutions, providing expertise and consultations; iv) high impact in local conditions, organic agriculture, and new and interesting for local people; v) increased awareness of digitalization in public bodies; vi) awareness of ways in which transparency & accountability can be expanded upon; vii) action groups developed and very active, increasing citizen participation in government decision-making and linkages between various sectors improved (government, citizens; viii) transfer of Czech expertise and innovation across a number of fields. Project presented a unique and innovative Czech experience in energy efficiency in buildings that could be replicated (extension of the scope innovations); ix) resource mobilization for COs and enterprises; x) improvement of waste management practices in rural settings and municipalities.

86. However, it is important to note that the small scale of the intervention (especially the Challenge Fund) led some stakeholders including from the CUP strategic level to state that the project according to its design had a limited impact on development of capacities at both donor and beneficiary countries. Thus, MTR recommendation N°1 precisely aims at addressing this concern.

5.3.5. Sustainability: Moderately Satisfactory (3)

The probability of the benefits of the interventions continuing in the long term. How has the Project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in partner countries, donor country and of the Czech experts and innovators?

87. Findings demonstrate that the CUP sustainability with regard to its outputs and results is moderately satisfactory. Not only the Czech expertise implementers as well as the local beneficiaries are convinced of the lasting impact of the interventions (however with some reservations concerning the need for additional funding to take off and/or their larger deployment in the partner countries), the products in promotion are business and social

enterprise oriented where the implementers coming from the private sector have a self-evidenced interest in continuing to promote their products, which must adapt to the needs and purchasing power of the communities where they are established. In general, the project's local partners and beneficiaries have less favorable judgement (though satisfactory) of the project sustainability than its implementers. For instance, local entrepreneurs and agents are already buying on a commercial basis DOT Glasses implemented in Ethiopia with a comparative advantage on being a low-cost eyeglasses distribution network. The majority of the project key stakeholders and final beneficiaries judged the project sustainability as Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory (58%) and as Good/Mostly/ Moderately Satisfactory (23%), while 14% of them declared that they did not know. Similar percentages of local partners / beneficiaries and stakeholders / implementers had a positive opinion of the project sustainability. While **87%** of the implementers considered the project sustainability as Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory (68%) or Good / Mostly / Moderately Satisfactory (19%), **71%** of the local partners and final beneficiaries judged it as Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory (25%) or as Good / Mostly / Moderately Satisfactory (38%).

Table 19: Stakeholders and local beneficiaries rating of the project outputs/results are likely sustainability beyond the Project's lifetime and expansion in the country/es

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	25	54,3	58,1	58,1
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	10	21,7	23,3	81,4
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	2	4,3	4,7	86,0
Don't know	6	13,0	14,0	100,0
Total	43	93,5	100,0	

	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA &Embassies	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	2	21	0	2	25
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	3	6	1	0	10
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	0	1	1	0	2
Don't know	2	3	0	1	6
Total	7	31	2	3	43

88. However, respondents gave a lower rating of the project (though satisfactory) with regard to its **enhancement and contribution to the development of national capacity in partner countries, donor country and of the Czech experts and innovators. 80%** assessed it as Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory (51%) or Good / Mostly / Moderately Satisfactory (29%).

Table 20: Stakeholders and local beneficiaries rating of the project *enhancement and contribution to the development of national capacity in partner countries, donor country and of the Czech experts and innovators*

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	21	45,7	51,2	51,2
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	12	26,1	29,3	80,5
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	2,2	2,4	82,9
Don't know	7	15,2	17,1	100,0
Total	41	89,1	100,0	

	Local partner/ Beneficiary	Stakeholder/ Implementing partner	UNDP	MFA &Embassies	Total
Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	2	15	1	3	21
Good/Mostly achieved/ Moderately Satisfactory	3	8	1	0	12
Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	0	1	0	0	1
Don't know	3	4	0	0	7
Total	8	28	2	3	41

89. Similarly, implementers considered the project sustainability with respect to its enhancement and contribution to the development of national capacity in partner countries higher (**82%**) as Excellent / Achieved /Satisfactory (54%) or Good / Mostly / Moderately Satisfactory (29%), than local partners and final beneficiaries (**63%**), judging it as Excellent / Achieved / Satisfactory (25%) or as Good/Mostly/ Moderately Satisfactory (38%).

6. LESSONS LEARNED

90. Following are the lessons learnt worth to be considered:

- i. **The first lesson learned from CUP's first cycle 2018 – 2021 is its capacity for positive results despite the COVID-19 pandemic.** Despite delays as well as difficulties or even impossibility regular of communication with the final beneficiaries of the partner countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the objectives were met, even surpassed. This is explained in the first place by the quality of the human capital (experience and know-how) of of the CUP, the Czech Development Agency (CzechAid), as well as by the operational efficiency of the project team, including realistic (SMART²³) initial objectives of the project with subsequent funding.
- ii. **The capacity for crisis adaptation and resilience ultimately determines the well-being and development of people, especially the most vulnerable groups in society. While this is evident at the level of the project leaders, it is less so with the final beneficiaries for whom the project is ultimately intended.** The major challenge faced by the project was the COVID-19 pandemic. The inability to work closely with targeted rural communities and their populations, caused by the complications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, led to delays in some initiatives implementation. The most important factor in the CUP's adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic was undoubtedly the availability and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in a triangular fashion: i) Between the Czech Development Agency, MFA, embassies, and the UNDP; ii) Between the project team at the UNDP IRH and the project facilitators and implementers; iii) Between the project facilitators and implementers, and between the beneficiaries in partner countries. However, it appears from the MTR analysis that if the tools to adapt to the crisis, ICTs in particular, were available at the level of strategic actors (CzechAid, UNDP IRH and COs, including the MTR team), they were less so at the level of the most vulnerable groups, final and ultimate beneficiaries of the project. This led some of the stakeholders consulted to believe that the project had to some extent better helped the implementers (contractors) than addressing the problems of poverty and adaptation which is its ultimate goal.²⁴ The lack of contact or regular communication between the facilitators / implementers and the local final beneficiaries because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions is *de facto* a factor of marginalization and worsening of their conditions of poverty and vulnerability. Thus,

☞ The current challenge faced by the CUP is to find the appropriate means of communication and exchange with grassroot groups to effectively reach the most vulnerable in partner countries and to be perfectly in line with the project outcome of *addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable*

²³Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely

²⁴ Some of the stakeholders suggest a balanced perspective business oriented versus aid to the project. A social enterprise perspective will ensure mutual interest and benefit CzechAid / UNDP versus partner countries' beneficiaries.

development pathways) and the Development Impact (to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks) and meet the SDG-1 (No poverty), and SDG-17 (Partnership for the Goals²⁵).

- iii. **Having excellent communication between partners and mutual understanding is highly important for successful project implementation.** The close consultation with the beneficiary was a key for the success of the project, to align project expectations with the key actors at all levels (The CUP, embassies, UNDP, implementers, local partner stakeholders, and the project host community) to support the implementation of the project activities, and to validate the project results. Frequent and transparent communication between all the above-mentioned actors was important for assessing projects' progress and risks, and for agreeing on mitigation actions, especially those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, the winning condition was the flexibility of the project partners, the beneficiaries, and the CUP in adapting to the travel and gathering restrictions imposed in various countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- iv. **It is extremely useful for the CUP to get expertise and innovative solutions from other countries. Collaborative expertise development will undoubtedly strengthen the Czech expertise and its better adaptation to partner countries' context.** This was evidenced by the presented best practice and success story of Diaconia ECCB Centre of Relief and Development project in Cambodia engaging partnership with local NGOs such as Green Lady Cambodia to develop a joint domesticated prototype menstruation hygiene pad which met the price conditions for girls and women to be affordable for them, praised by the 1250 women and girl who tried the products app.²⁶ In this way, not only an innovative solution was obtained as a result of mutual experience of experts, but also the capacities of the partners organizations were strengthened, and the network was expanded.
- v. **The secondment of Czech personnel to the CUP proved efficient and beneficial to the current CUP modality.** While this organization of human resources was flexible and compliant with good financial management principles (economy, efficiency, and effectiveness), it also ensured appropriately the representation of the donor in the CUP.
- vi. **Development and participatory tested approaches and ideas maximize long-term sustainability post-intervention.** Pilot testing of some new approaches, innovations, and solutions for development problems provided for the best practices and sound lessons for full-scale development interventions and larger deployment.
- vii. **Previous experience from partners countries helps a lot in implementing and results success.** Contacts to local experts, ministries, etc. were of utmost importance.

²⁵ Vertically (from the top to grassroots actors) and horizontally (between people of comparable conditions of life)

²⁶ See details in page 43, paragraph 73.

7. CONCLUSION

91. The CUP appears as a concept mainly financed and driven by an established development assistance actor, the Czech Republic. Czechia yet has to make its place as an important player in the international development assistance and partnership scene. In this sense, the CUP stands out as a model of partnership to be strengthened and expanded. The collaborative framework with the UNDP, which has the largest structure and the most developed cooperation network in the world, gives to the project a real comparative advantage.

92. The CUP proved convincingly its effectiveness and positive development impacts generation, even though limited so far. Despite the global pandemic, all project output indicator targets were overachieved. The project objective (*to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries*) were achieved and exceeded, as well as the project outcome (*addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways*) and the Development Impact (*to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks*). The project demonstrated a positive impact on its key stakeholders and final beneficiaries and deems as satisfactory. In addition, findings demonstrate that the CUP sustainability with regard to its outputs and results was moderately satisfactory. Not only the Czech expertise implementers as well as the local beneficiaries were convinced of the lasting impact of the interventions. However, they had some reservations concerning the need for additional funding and their larger deployment in the partner countries.

93. The Challenge Fund appears as a less sustainable component of the project. As stated by one of the key stakeholders consulted: "Focusing on scalable solutions and interventions, where the initial project would serve as a pilot for wider adoption of know-how and solutions, adapting the approach based on lessons learned to ensure smoother and more successful implementation in key areas across the partner countries; rather than implementation of multiple small scale projects with limited overall impact, but which may have been perfectly scalable and impactful if there was a mechanism for further financing".

94. The CUP objective is extremely relevant as it focuses on poverty reduction, good governance, resilience building, and climate finance, key important themes for the concert of Nations Agenda 2030 on the SDGs. The project remains valid and needs to be strengthen and expanded. This is also justified by its extension for a second cycle of three years by the Czech government and the UNDP.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

95. To strengthen and capitalize on these achievements, the following recommendations are formulated for the attention of the project leaders:

Essential:

- i. **Ensure a stronger partnership with partner countries national development cooperation authorities, local and final beneficiaries and actors for long-term development results' achievement.** It would be desirable for the project design and implementation process to follow a full project identification and management standards with a greater attention to the government counterparts, grassroots initiatives, and mutual co-working. Innovative approaches often lead to unexpected and unforeseen situations. Thus, better specified project objectives on communication to partner countries' national authorities will help focus on specific priority goals in line with beneficiary agendas and policies. Strengthening this partnership can start with the CUP extension Project Documentation joint update with the IRH, Czech MFA, embassies, UNDP COs, and partner countries' development cooperation authorities and selected private sector/NGOs actors). Thus, the role of UNDP COs and Czech embassies in the partner countries will be very important for this purpose.
- ii. **Develop a strong communication strategy vis-à-vis the Czech public and partner countries.** Based on the interviews, according to project implementers consulted, many people they encountered did not know the CUP at all, more importantly in the partner countries. Well-documented and shared project results can help get support from a range of stakeholders and donor and involve key stakeholders to ensure sustainability. The UNDP COs and Czech embassies can be strongly engaged as communication facilitators.
- iii. **It is very important to strengthen Czech embassies involvement in decision-making, projects identification, and communication with local governments and key stakeholders to better reflect update priorities of the local partners, stakeholders, and final beneficiaries.** Demand should not be only set as among the UNDP Country Programme priorities, but also, they should reflect the priorities of the Czech Republic set by the embassies' leadership in the partner countries, in line with the CzechAid areas and strategy. As the embassies have a good insight in the local context, some more delegation of authority to them would be beneficial.
- iv. **Alongside short-term and quick-impact initiatives, it is recommended that the CUP also initiate long-term, large-scale projects (at least years of duration) with substantial and lasting anticipated impact with generally recognized development project management protocols.** This implies a participatory process fully involving local stakeholders and beneficiaries from partner countries since the project prioritizes its design, planning, resources mobilization (including local contribution), execution, and monitoring, and evaluation. If financing a lot of interventions as it is currently the case (95 microprojects

funded to date) makes it possible to reach a larger number of beneficiaries, the absence of substantial and sustainable development results may be the reason. Short-term initiatives, also called quick-impact interventions, are popular, democratic, and easily accessible to the most marginalized and vulnerable groups. Additionally, funding a myriad of projects can be an administrative, procurement, monitoring, and evaluation burden for the project team for a quality follow-up and delivery.

- v. **It is important to find new financing sources to replicate the project in other locations in order to enable better coverage with the new technology which would help better project effectiveness.**
- vi. **The CUP should officially integrate a gender component into its interventions, with a specific dedicated budget, gender mainstreaming activities (subject matter awareness and training), planned funding of projects oriented towards gender and gender equality.** Without proactive gender mainstreaming interventions, the preexistence of societal gender-based inequalities will be socially reproduced and perpetuated. That could imply a Gender negative status²⁷. The gender mainstreaming indicators should be SMART and involved in planning, the progress, and final reports.
- vii. **There is the need to integrate a pre-deployment cultural sensitivity training (beyond the UNDSS pre-deployment mandatory BSAFE training and certificate) into the program.** This issue arose precisely during the consultations of the evaluation team with the project implementers and as a part of the challenges mentioned by them. During the current expansion of the CUP's interventions to other regions of the world, especially Asia (Cambodia) and Africa (Ethiopia and Zambia), the experts to be deployed should be adequately prepared for cultural differences and hardship conditions they will face in the field in the partner countries. In this sense, the role and contribution of the UNDP CO and Czech embassies in beneficiary countries of the program are thus critical.
- viii. **Personnel enhancement of the procurement unit in the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub is recommended, as the unit is currently understaffed.**
- ix. **Improvement of project management of individual projects: guidelines and document templates²⁸ for implementers should include a coherent structure of project outcomes, objectives, and results** (outputs or deliverables) which should be mentioned in plans and progress / final reports. The project objectives should be explicitly linked to the project outputs (and outcomes). The SMART method is recommended for setting project objectives, outputs, and for the indicators in relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. Ideally, the project application should already define the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. These criteria should be involved in planning, progress and final reports of the individual projects to facilitate and further rationalize the selection, approval, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects.

²⁷ As per the Gender results effectiveness scale (GRES), a Gender negative status indicates that result had a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced existing gender inequalities and socially constructed norms.

²⁸As application, plans, progress / milestone report, final report, etc. The templates should involve the respective section with explanation of their expected content.

- x. **The project output indicators on visits to the Czech Expert Database should be transformed into the number of Czech experts in the database and the number of Czech experts included in the Global GPN roster.** The project output indicator on solutions tested for the Challenge Fund is recommended to be eliminated as obsolete since the innovative solutions are tested during implementation of the individual projects. The information on testing has not been specifically stipulated in the Project Documentation and therefore it seems redundant.
- xi. **The synergy between the CUP and the Czech Development Agency should be formally organized** regarding reciprocal communication, knowledge exchange, and information sharing, without changing the current model of the CUP, e.g. bilateral proposals on cooperation can take place, with possible other options to be considered.
- xii. **Feedback from a defined minimum number of the final beneficiaries should be obligatorily sent to the CUP as a part of individual projects' final reports.** The feedback should contain the evaluation criteria of relevance, sustainability, impact, efficiency, effectiveness, and potentially gender inclusion in the project.

Nice to have:

- xiii. **Ideally, the local partner and/or beneficiaries (depending on the context) should co-finance the project by a very low amount (1-2%)** to get motivated regarding the project ownership, sustainability, and other issues.²⁹
- xiv. **Sustainable procurement should be endorsed in the whole supply-chain.** Final Reports of the individual projects should include a section describing the sustainable procurement in accordance with Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact (2021a); incongruous sub-vendors should not be hired by the implementers (UN Global Compact (2021b)).
- xv. **A mandatory communication strategy should be presented by the implementer to the CUP as a part of the project application.** The strategy should include: an introduction, the communication procedure, tools and techniques, records log, reporting template, timing of communication activities, roles and responsibilities, a stakeholder analysis, and an overview of information needs for each interested party.
- xvi. **A simple cost-benefit analysis of each project should be obligatorily presented by the implementer to the CUP as a part of the project application to facilitate the project selection and monitoring.** Regarding the non-profit projects, the costs are the CUP funding + project co-financing, and the benefits can be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively, e.g. in terms of number of citizens trained, number of citizens newly aware of the issues, etc.

²⁹This recommendation is based on the best practice in development, e.g. recommended by Oxfam. This method of implementation is more difficult but more sustainable in the long-term.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: TORs

International consultant for Mid-Term Review of the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs

Location :	Home-based
Application Deadline :	30-Aug-21 (Midnight New York, USA)
Type of Contract :	Individual Contract
Post Level :	International Consultant
Languages Required :	English
Starting Date : (date when the selected candidate is expected to start)	10-Sep-2021
Duration of Initial Contract :	Estimated 10-09-2021 – 30-10-2021
Expected Duration of Assignment :	Approximately 20 working days

UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.

UNDP does not tolerate sexual exploitation and abuse, any kind of harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks.

Background

The Czech Republic and UNDP are long-standing partners with cooperation dating back to the late 1990s and taking a mature institutionalized form of the Czech UNDP Trust Fund in 2004.

Since 2004, the Government of the Czech Republic and the UNDP in Europe and Central Asia have cooperated to bring the best practices and comparative knowledge to countries throughout the region. In 2018, the UNDP and the Czech Republic entered the next stage of collaboration – the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs (CUP). CUP is linked to UNDP 2018 – 21 Strategic Plan impact: To help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks.

Project document defines the Project Output as follows: *the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner*. Contributing Outcome (RPD 2018–2021): RP OUTCOME 2: *Addressing poverty and inequalities through more inclusive and sustainable development pathways Output 2.3. Enabling the environment strengthened through diverse partnerships to expand opportunities for the public and private sector, including alternative financing for the achievement of the SDGs Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN 1.*

The main goal of the [Czech-UNDP Partnership for the SDGs \(2018–2021\)](#) is to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries. The three components of the project include:

- Expertise on Demand through which hands-on experience and trainings in the partner countries have been provided to facilitate the transfer of Czech expertise. The Project Board decided to strengthen linkages of Expertise on Demand with the priority areas of Czech Development Cooperation.
- Challenge Fund: Czech solutions for SDGs have been providing scalable solutions for the identified development problems applicable at the country and sub-regional level. Since the beginning of the CUP

there have been 5 rounds of Call for Applications and 50 innovative solutions have been applied since 2018. According to the 2020 Project Board decision, Challenge Fund thematic priorities were aligned with UNDP COs priorities to enable further synergies between project initiatives and COs ongoing or planned projects.

- Knowledge management: to mobilize knowledge and know-how and feed it into resolving specific development objective. The project applies KM strategy to ensure that its activities contribute to broader outcomes and make an impact.

Three priority countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova) were originally defined as partners for the CUP. Those countries are in need of attracting socially and environmentally sound investments that could solve concrete development problems and assure sustainability. The UNDP Regional Programme stresses the need to engage more strategically with Private sector within the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that calls for investments with positive development impact. The Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2018 – 2030 also emphasizes support for development-oriented investments in riskier markets. According to UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018 – 2021, “the private sector is a critical development partner.” As such, private sector can become also a strategic partner and a source of technological solutions and investment for SDGs.

Since 2020, another 3 partner countries, Zambia, Ethiopia and Cambodia, have been added alongside with Moldova, Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The geographical extension has aligned CUP partner countries with the Czech ODA priority countries.

The CUP addresses development challenges identified as key by the UNDP COs in its three partner countries. At the same time, due to the wide range of development challenges being addressed by UNDP COs, CUP focuses on areas where the Czech Republic has substantive expertise and can offer added value and innovative solutions. As such, the CUP priorities are aligned as much as possible with the priorities of the Czech ODA in partner countries and its Programme Documents. It will focus on the following four thematic areas:

- Good governance and rule of law (SDG16)
- Sustainable management of natural resources (SDG6, SDG13)
- Economic transformation and development (SDG7, SDG8)
- Agriculture and rural development (SDG2, SDG15)

The CUP is directly implemented by the UNDP’s Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS within the delegated direct Implementation authority for the Regional Programme implementation, in line with UNDP’s Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures. The UNDP Regional Hub acts as the Executive responsible for the overall management, backstopping and monitoring of the project. The project is implemented in close coordination with and involvement of the participating UNDP Country Offices. The project is managed by two project Specialists, the Senior project Specialist seconded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Junior Project Specialist, UNV funded by the donor’s UNV programme. The annual budget of the project is 17 million CZK (750, 000 USD). The project donor is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

The CUP positions itself as a service line for UNDP COs, contributing to one of the key objectives of the UNDP which is to “help countries to build capacities to address complex and interconnected development challenges ...” It supports them in solving key development challenges by facilitating transfer of top-notch Czech expertise, know-how and innovative solutions. In doing so, it builds on previous success of the Czech – UNDP Trust Fund 2014 – 2017.

An independent 2014 - 2016 evaluation of the Czech – UNDP Trust Fund concluded, that the Fund managed to address the most important development needs identified by the national partners in partnership with UNDP COs, was successful in promoting Czech “know-how”. Its activities were aligned with geographic priorities of the Czech ODA and supportive of the overall programmatic framework and planned results of UNDP’s 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and Regional Programme Document for Europe and CIS for 2014-2017.

The current phase of the Czech-UNDP Partnership has been set for 2018-2021, however, the Czech MFA has already declared its interest to extend the Project Documentation for 2022-4.

Duties and Responsibilities

Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

Purpose

The purpose of the Mid-Term Review is to provide an impartial review of the Project in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, management and achievements including impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the Project implementation of the Project activities. The information, findings, lessons learned and recommendations generated by the evaluation will be used by the Project Board, UNDP, and by the implementing partners to strengthen the project implementation for the phase of project extension for 2022-4.

Objective

The evaluation objective is to examine the overall performance of the Project, its results, inputs and activities; and how the outputs delivered positive changes in partner countries to strengthen cooperation in reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development goals and to what extent the Project succeeded to involve private sector as a source of technological solutions and investments for SDGs. In a substantive analysis of the effectiveness of the project approach and feedback from UNDP COs, innovators, targeted groups and beneficiaries, the evaluation should highlight strengths, weaknesses/gaps, good practices and impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the project and provide forward-looking actionable recommendations to the Project to enhance effectiveness of transfer of the Czech expertise and innovative solutions in partner countries.

Scope

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the specific project objective/outcome and results/outputs have been achieved since mid-2018 (based on the Project Documentation and results framework). The evaluation will look into all project activities and processes implemented in the partner countries.

Specifically, the evaluation will review and make recommendation regarding the implementation of the critical project’s aspects, such as strategies, implementation mechanisms and partnerships with the UNDP COs in transfer of the Czech expertise and innovative solutions.

Evaluation criteria and key questions (based on OECD DAC criteria)

The Project evaluation is to answer the following questions to determine the Project’s relevance, performance, results, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, including lessons learned and forward-looking recommendations. The evaluation questions are summarized below.

Relevance

- Are the Project’s objectives relevant to the needs of the UNDP partner countries in terms of their social and economic development?
- To what extent is the Project aligned with the relevant national development priorities in the partner countries as the beneficiaries, UNDP strategic objectives and SDG 17 - partnership?

- To what extent is the Project responsive to the changing environment in country at national and subnational levels and how should it adapt to these changes?
- To what extent was the method of delivery selected by the Project appropriate to the development context?
- To what extent does the Project address need of marginalized groups and contribute to gender equality?

Effectiveness

- To what extent are the Project activities implemented and intended results and the specific objective/outcome achieved and reported? What are the main project achievements? Please provide outline of a measurable overview of the Project results against the indicators and their target values/statements as defined in the Project results framework.
- What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the Project's interventions? This may, inter alia, include an overview of benefits the Project brought to beneficiary institutions and citizens in partner countries.
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended specific objective/outcome and outputs/results?
- To what extent has the Project managed to perform sharing of Czech knowledge, expertise and innovative solutions to the UNDP COs and their national partners?
- How COVID-19 pandemic affected or limited the Project activities and what actions were undertaken to offset the negative impact?
- Assess the degree to which project implementation was flexible and adaptive to the context.

Efficiency

- Have resources (financial, human, technical) been allocated strategically to achieve the Project results?
- Are there any weaknesses in the Project design, management, human resource skills, and resources?
- Analyse the role of the Project Board and whether it is optimally being used for decision making.
- Assess the timeline and quality of the reporting followed by the Project.
- Identify factors and constraints, which have affected the Project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to COVID-19 pandemic related challenges and other external factors unforeseen during the Project design.
- To what extent did Project engage or coordinate with beneficiaries, implementing partners, other United Nations agencies and national counterparts to achieve outcome-level results?
- Are the outcomes of Expertise on Demand and Innovation solution initiatives effectively communicated in the partner countries, in donor's country and within the UNDP? Is there a communication strategy in place?

Impact

- What are the Project effects and impact in terms of implemented Project activities, both in qualitative, and quantitative terms, on achievement of specific development results by partner countries via transfer of the Czech expertise and innovative solutions.
- To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the Project implementation, specifically in terms of the partnership support and what are specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance?

Sustainability

- To what extent the Project outputs/results are likely to be sustainable beyond the Project's lifetime? How could the Project results be further sustainably projected and expanded in the countries?
- What would be future priority interventions to ensure long-term sustainability of the project's achievements and contribute to further sharing knowledge and expertise to partner countries?
- How has the Project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in partner countries and of the Czech experts and innovators?

Lessons learned

- Analyse the main lessons learned in relation to the effectiveness of implementation modalities.

Methodology

Based on the [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](#), [UNEG Norms and Stand for Evaluations](#) and in consultations with UNDP IRH the evaluation will be participatory, involving relevant stakeholders.

The International Evaluation Consultant (the Consultant) will propose an evaluation methodology and agree on a detailed plan for the assignment as a part of the evaluation Inception Report. The proposed methodology may employ any relevant and appropriate quantitative, qualitative or combined methods to conduct the Final Project Evaluation, exploring specific gender sensitive data collecting and analytical methods and tools applicable in the concrete case. The Consultant is expected to creatively combine the standard and other evaluation tools and technics to ensure maximum reliability of data and validity of the evaluation findings.

Standard UNDP evaluation methodology would suggest the following data collecting methods:

- Desk review: The Consultant will conduct a detailed review of the programmatic materials and deliverables including the Project Documentation, Challenge Fund Guidelines, monitoring and project quality assurance reports, annual workplans, progress and annual reports etc.
- Key informant interviews: The Consultant will interview representatives of main institutional partners, UNDP, innovators and their local partners, experts, representatives of targeted groups and final beneficiaries. For the interviews, the Consultant is expected to design evaluation questions around relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability criteria, according to different stakeholders to be interviewed.
- Meetings via Zoom, Teams or WhatsApp with will be arranged to meet with beneficiaries and stakeholders and review the results of the Project;
- Other methodologies, as appropriate, such as surveys, case studies, statistical analysis, social network analysis, etc.

The COVID-19 pandemic made travel to the countries impossible. In this case the evaluation team should develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the evaluation virtually and remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. This should be detailed in the Inception report and agreed with the Evaluation Manager.

The expected duration of the assignment is up to 20 workdays in the period September – October 2021.

The tentative Schedule of Activities and Deliverables

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (project specialists)	-	At the time of contract signing 10 Sept. 2021	remotely	Evaluation manager
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team	-	At the time of contract signing, 10 Sept. 2021	Via email	Evaluation manager
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	5 days	Within two weeks of contract signing, 24 September 2021	Home- based	Evaluation Expert

Submission of the inception report	-	Within two weeks of contract signing, 24 Sept. 2021		Evaluation Expert
Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within one week of submission of the inception report, 1 October 2021	Via email	Evaluation manager
Phase Two: Data-collection				
Consultations, in-depth interviews and focus groups	10 days	Within two weeks of contract signing, 24 Sept.2021	Remotely, with field visits	UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff, local authorities, NGOs, etc.
Debriefing to UNDP and key stakeholders	-	24 September 2021	Remotely	Evaluation Expert
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (5 pages)	3 days	Within three weeks of the completion of in-depth interviews	Home- based	Evaluation Expert
Draft report submission		14 October 2021		Evaluation Expert
Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	Within one weeks of submission of the draft evaluation report, 21 Oct. 2021	UNDP	Evaluation manager and evaluation reference group
Debriefing with UNDP	-	21 October 2021	Remotely	UNDP, evaluation reference group, stakeholder and evaluation team
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office	2 days	Within one week of final debriefing, 30 Oct. 2021	Home- based	Evaluation team
Submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP (50 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)	-	Within one week of final debriefing, 30 Oct. 2021	Home- based	Evaluation team
Estimated total days for the evaluation	20			

Deliverables

Deliverable	Number of days	Date	Payment in %
1. Inception Report	5 working days	24 September 2021	25%
1. Submission of Draft Final Report	10 working days	14 October 2021	50%
1. Submission of Final Report	5 working days	30 October 2021	25%
Total	20 working days	5 October 2021	100%

Competencies

Core values

- Demonstrates integrity and fairness by modelling UN values and ethical standards;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

Core competencies

- Demonstrates professional competence to meet responsibilities and post requirements and is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results;
- Results-Oriented: Plans and produces quality results to meet established goals, generates innovative, practical solutions to challenging situations;
- Communication: Excellent communication skills, including the ability to convey complex concepts and recommendations, both orally and in writing, in a clear and persuasive style tailored to match different audiences;
- Teamwork: Ability to interact, establish and maintain effective working relations with a culturally diverse team;
- Client orientation: Ability to establish and maintain productive partnerships with national partners and stakeholders and pro-activeness in identifying of beneficiaries and partners' needs and matching them to appropriate solutions.

Required Skills and Experience

Academic Qualifications/Education

- Advanced university degree in international relations, social sciences, economics, public administration, law or other related sciences; MA in any of indicated fields is considered an advantage.

Experience

- At least 3 years of extensive expertise and experience in evaluations of the projects/programs;
- Sound knowledge of UNDP results-based management systems, and gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- General understanding and knowledge of the political/administrative and development context in partner countries, with specific focus on project targeted beneficiaries and stakeholders;
- Proven analytical skills and ability to conceptualize and write concisely and clearly.

Languages Requirements

- Fluency in English
- Knowledge of Czech language is an asset

Other

- Excellent computer skills (MS Office applications) and ability to use information technologies as a tool and resource.

Evaluation of Applicants

Individual consultants will be evaluated based on a cumulative analysis taking into consideration the combination of the applicants' qualifications and financial proposal.

The award of the contract should be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

- a) responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
- b) Having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical (P11 desk reviews and interviews) and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

Only highest ranked candidates who would be found qualified for the job based on the P11 desk review will be invited for an interview”.

Financial

Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation – max. 70 points:

Criteria A (Relevant education) – max points: 5

Criteria B (Experience) – max points: 25

Criteria C (knowledge of English and Russian) – max points: 10

Criteria D – interviews (expertise in evaluation of projects/programs will be scored and evaluated) – max 10

Criteria E - interview (knowledge of results-based management systems will be scored and evaluated) – max 10

Criteria F – interview (knowledge of development context of the CIS region will be scored and evaluated) – max 10

Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation – max. 30 points

The financial proposal will specify a total lump sum amount and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables. Payments are based upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR and according to the lump sum breakdown as presented below.

Application procedures

Qualified candidates are requested to apply online via this website. The application should contain:

- **Cover letter** explaining why you are the most suitable candidate for the advertised position, personal CV including at list 3 references and a **brief methodology** on how you will approach and conduct the work. Please paste the letter into the "Resume and Motivation" section of the electronic application.
- **Filled P11** form including past experience in similar projects and contact details of referees (blank form can be downloaded from http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/hrforms/P11_modified_for_SCs_and_ICs.doc); please upload the P11 instead of your CV.
- **Financial Proposal in US\$*** - specifying a total lump sum amount for the tasks specified in this announcement. The financial proposal shall include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (number of anticipated working days, per diems and any other possible costs).

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please make sure you have provided all requested materials.

Please note that the **financial proposal is all-inclusive and shall take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant/contractor during the contract period (e.g. fee, health insurance, personal security needs and any other relevant expenses related to the performance of services). **Travel is not envisaged due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the closed borders.***

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

In line with the UNDP's financial regulations, when determined by the IRH and/or the Consultant that a deliverable or service cannot be satisfactorily completed due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and limitations to the evaluation, that deliverable or service will not be paid.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and its implications, an extension of the contract may be considered if the consultant invested time towards the deliverable but was unable to complete to circumstances beyond his/her control.

Qualified women and members of minorities are encouraged to apply.

Due to large number of applications we receive, we are able to inform only the successful candidates about the outcome or status of the selection process.

Evaluation ethics

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

TOR annexes (Application annexes can be found under the link: http://procurement-notices.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=82175)

Annex 1. Project results framework

Annex 2. Indicative list of main stakeholders to be interviewed in evaluation

Annex 3. List of documents to be considered for the evaluation desk review

Annex 4. Evaluation matrix template

Annex 5. Standard outline for the UNDP evaluation report

Annex 1. Project Result Framework

(attached separately)

Annex 2. Indicative list of main stakeholders to be interviewed in evaluation

UNDP Country Offices and the national partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Ethiopia, Cambodia and Zambia

Accelerator Labs in Bosnia and Harzegovina and Ethiopia

Green City Lab in City of Chisinau

Selected experts that were engaged for the assignments under the Experts on Demand modality;

Selected innovators awarded within the Challenge Fund modality;

Local Partners of the Czech innovators;

Local institutions and other stakeholders as beneficiaries of the initiatives;

Czech Embassies in partners countries;

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (donor);

Czech Development Agency

Annex 3. List of documents to be considered for the evaluation desk review

1. ProDoc;
2. Challenge Fund Guidelines;
3. Expertise on Demand Guidelines;
4. Project Annual Progress Reports;
5. Project Quarterly Reports
6. Minutes of the Project Board meetings;
7. Evaluation reports;
8. Mission Reports BTRs);
9. Communications and Visibility Strategy
10. CUP website

Annex 4. Evaluation matrix template

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods / Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard	Methods for Data Analysis

Annex 5. Standard outline for the UNDP evaluation report

1. Title and opening pages with details of the project/project/outcome and of the evaluation team.
2. Project and evaluation information details: title, Atlas number, budgets and project dates and other key information.
3. Table of contents.
4. List of acronyms and abbreviations.
5. Executive summary: a stand-alone section of maximum four pages including the quality standards and assurance ratings.
6. Introduction and overview. What is being evaluated and why?
7. Description of the intervention being evaluated. Provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and evaluability analysis result, assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results.
8. Evaluation scope and objectives. The report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation's scope, primary objectives and main questions.
9. Evaluation approach and methods. The evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis.
10. Data analysis. The report should describe the procedures used to analyse the data collected to answer the evaluation questions.
11. Findings and conclusions. Evaluation findings should be based on an analysis of the data collected and conclusions should be drawn from these findings. Specifically, the Project Evaluation Report will include a review of impact and effects of the Project on its beneficiary institutions.
12. Recommendations. The report should provide a reasonable number of practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make prior and during the Project Phase III to be elaborated.
13. Forward-looking actionable recommendation for the Project, outlining key strategic priorities to be addressed in the potential next phase of the project.
14. Lessons learned. As appropriate and as requested in the TOR, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation of the intervention.
15. Annexes.

Annex 2: Focus Group Discussion Guidelines



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Mid-Term Review of the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Zambia

=====

Prepared by: Komi GLIGBE, Ph.D: International Consultant, Lead Evaluator
Karolina SVOBODOVA, Ph.D, International Consultant, Assistant Evaluator

October 2021

Once completed, this document is strictly confidential. The information contained in it, once completed will only serve as source of data to this study and only accessible by the independent team.

Please, send the completed questionnaire directly to Dr Komi Gligbe at Komi.Gligbe@undp.org

I/ SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE CUP 2021 MID-TERM REVIEW

Background: In 2018, the UNDP and the Czech Republic launched the collaboration project of **Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs (CUP)**. CUP's project is linked to the of Czech Development Cooperation Strategy 2018-2030, UNDP 2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan impact which is to “to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks”. As per the project output, it envisioned that “the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner”. The main goal of the CUP project is to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries through three components: **i) Expertise on Demand; ii) Challenge Fund and; iii) Knowledge Management.**

After three years (2018-2021) of implementing the project activities and on the eve of the extension of the project for a new 3-year cycle (2022-2024), it is therefore necessary to take stock of the progress achieved, analyze good practices, the challenges, lessons learned and to propose a strategy for consolidating and strengthening the development results anticipated by the Czech government and the UNDP. Therefore, you are requested to provide the evaluation team with the necessary insights at the best of your knowledge for this purpose.

The methodology of the evaluation is based on the evaluations OECD/DAC criteria of **Relevance, Effectiveness (including Gender and Gender Equality), Efficiency, Sustainability**. Generally, the criteria will be measured against the following UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) Performance Rating Scale:

Rating score	Performance rating	Description
4	Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	A rating of this level means that outcomes exceed expectations/ All intended program outputs and outcomes have been delivered, and results have been (or likely to be) achieved time of evaluation
3	Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory	A rating of this level is used when there are some limitations in the contribution of UNDP programs that prevented an 'Excellent' rating, but there were no major shortfalls. Many of the planned program outputs/outcomes have been delivered and expected results (likely to be) achieved. Overall, the assessment is substantially positive, and problems were small relative to the positive findings.
2	Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	A rating of this level is used when significant shortfalls are identified, but there were also some positive findings. Only some of the intended outputs and outcomes have been completed/achieved. Overall, the assessment is less positive.
1	Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory	A rating of this level means that the contribution of the UNDP program faced severe constraints and the negative assessment outweighs any positive achievements. There has been limited or no achievement of planned program outputs/outcomes.

II/ RESPONDENT/S IDENTIFICATION

2.1. Belonging Institution(s) and Country

Type of respondent	
Stakeholders/ Implementers	
Local countries' partner/ Final Beneficiaries	
UNDP	
Ambassador	
Other (Specify)	

2.2. Project's component where involved in (Please, check the correct box/es)

1. Expertise on Demand	
2. Challenge Fund	
3. Knowledge Management	

III/ AT STRATEGIC LEVEL (REGARDING MAIN OBJECTIVES)

Mostly with key stakeholders

- 3.1. **RELEVANCE:** To what the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the Czech ODA priorities, UNDP Country Program Documents, the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country and achieving the SDGs?
- 3.2. **EFFECTIVENESS:** To what the objectives of the development intervention have been achieved?
- 3.3. To what extent have **gender considerations** been integrated into the project design and implementation?
- 3.4. To what extent have **gender considerations** returned into results (do results reflect what was anticipated with regard to gender mainstreaming ?)
- 3.5. **EFFICIENCY:** To what extent resources/inputs (**funds, time, human resources**, etc.) have been turned into results?
- 3.6. **SUSTAINABILITY:** Are project activities and benefits likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn ? Are projects environmentally as well as financially sustainable in long-term?

3.7. LESSONS LEARNED, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What are the lessons learned from the CUP 2018-2021 (from its design, to its outcomes, including its implementation processes)?	
What are the specific innovations developed through this project?	
What are your recommendations for a better capacity strengthening, national ownership et results for the next project cycle	

3.8. Any other comments?

☺ Thank you for contributing to better expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries in a sustainable manner.

IV/ **AT OPERATIONAL LEVEL** (Sub-projects/ specific interventions)

Mostly with final beneficiaries

4.1.RELEVANCE: To what the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country and achieving the SDGs?

4.2.EFFECTIVENESS: To what the objectives of the development intervention have been achieved?

4.3.To what extent have **gender considerations** been integrated into the project design and implementation?

4.4.To what extent have **gender considerations** are turned into results (do results reflect what was anticipated with regard to gender mainstreaming ?)

4.5.EFFICIENCY: To what extent resources/inputs (**funds, time, human resources**, etc.) have been turned into results?

4.6.SUSTAINABILITY: Are project activities and benefits likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn ? Are projects environmentally as well as financially sustainable in long-term?

4.7.LESSONS LEARNED, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What are the lessons learned from the CUP 2018-2021 (from its design, to its outcomes, including its implementation processes)?	
What are the specific innovations developed through this project?	
What are your recommendations for a better capacity strengthening, national ownership et results for the next project cycle	

☺ Thank you for contributing to better expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries in a sustainable manner.

Annex 3: Semi-Structured Individual Questionnaire



INDIVIDUAL SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Mid-Term Review of the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Zambia

=====

Prepared by: Komi GLIGBE, Ph.D: International Consultant, Lead Evaluator
Karolina SVOBODOVA, Ph.D, International Consultant, Assistant Evaluator

October 2021

Questionnaire N° ____ Date _____ Name of the interviewer: _____

Once completed, this document is strictly confidential. The information contained in it, once completed will only serve as source of data to this study and only accessible by the independent team.

Please, send the completed questionnaire directly to Dr Komi Gligbe at Komi.Gligbe@undp.org

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Background: In 2018, the UNDP and the Czech Republic launched the collaboration project of *Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs (CUP)*. CUP's project is linked to the Czech Development Cooperation Strategy 2018-2030, UNDP 2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan impact which is to “to help countries eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development, and build resilience to crises and shocks”. As per the project output, it envisioned that “the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner”. The main goal of the CUP project is to bring Czech expertise and innovative solutions for SDGs to partner countries through three components: **i) Expertise on Demand; ii) Challenge Fund and; iii) Knowledge Management.**

After three years (2018-2021) of implementing the project activities and on the eve of the extension of the project for a new 3-year cycle (2022-2024), it is therefore necessary to take stock of the progress achieved, analyze good practices, the challenges, lessons learned and to propose a strategy for consolidating and

strengthening the development results anticipated by the Czech government and the UNDP. Therefore, you are requested to provide the evaluation team with the necessary insights at the best of your knowledge for this purpose.

The methodology of the evaluation is based on the evaluations OECD/DAC criteria of **Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability**. Generally, the criteria will be measured against the following UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) Performance Rating Scale:

Rating score	Performance rating	Description
4	Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory	A rating of this level means that outcomes exceed expectations/ All intended program outputs and outcomes have been delivered, and results have been (or likely to be) achieved time of evaluation
3	Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory	A rating of this level is used when there are some limitations in the contribution of UNDP programs that prevented an 'Excellent' rating, but there were no major shortfalls. Many of the planned program outputs/outcomes have been delivered and expected results (likely to be) achieved. Overall, the assessment is substantially positive, and problems were small relative to the positive findings.
2	Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory	A rating of this level is used when significant shortfalls are identified, but there were also some positive findings. Only some of the intended outputs and outcomes have been completed/achieved. Overall, the assessment is less positive.
1	Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory	A rating of this level means that the contribution of the UNDP program faced severe constraints and the negative assessment outweighs any positive achievements. There has been limited or no achievement of planned program outputs/outcomes.

II/ RESPONDENT/S IDENTIFICATION

2.1. Belonging Institution(s) and Country

Type of respondent	
Stakeholders/ Implementers	
Local countries' partner/ Final Beneficiaries	
UNDP	
Ambassador	
Other (Specify)	

2.2. Project's component where involved in (Please, check the correct box/es)

1. Expertise on Demand	
2. Challenge Fund	
3. Knowledge Management	

2.3. Demographic data

Gender: 1.1. Male /__ / 1.2. Female /__ / 1.3. Not specify /__ /

Group of age 1.4. 15 – 30 /__ / 1.5. 31-40 /__ / 1.6. 41-50 /__ / 1.7. 51 + /__ /

2.4. Please, specify the project(s)/output(s): _____

2.5. Level of Knowledge of the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs (CUP): "the Czech expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries are available and applied in a sustainable manner").

How can you rate your knowledge of the CUP 2018-2021?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

3. Relevance (The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the needs & interest of the people and the country in achieving the SDGs)

3.1. Are the Project's objectives relevant to the needs of the UNDP partner countries in terms of their social and economic development?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

3.2. To what extent is the Project aligned with the relevant national development priorities in the partner countries as the beneficiaries, UNDP strategic objectives and SDG 17 - partnership?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

3.3. To what extent is the Project responsive to the changing environment in country at national and subnational levels and how should it adapt to these changes?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

3.4. To what extent was the methods of delivery selected by the Project appropriate to the development context?

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ /**e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

3.5. To what extent does the Project address UN commitment of Leave No One Behind and contribute to the cross-cutting issues of good governance, human rights, gender equality and environmental protection?

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ /**e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

3.6. What **recommendation(s)** would you make for a better relevance of the project?

4. Effectiveness (Extent to which the objectives have been achieved)

4.1. To what extent are the Project activities implemented and intended results and the specific objective/outcome achieved and reported?

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ /**e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

4.2. What are the positive or negative, intended or unintended, changes brought about by the Project's interventions? This may, inter alia, include an overview of benefits the Project brought to beneficiary institutions and citizens in partner countries.

Positives changes: _____

Negative changes: _____

4.3. What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended specific objective/outcome and outputs/results?

Which factors have contributed to achieving the intended results or targets?

- a.** _____
b. _____
c. _____

Which factors have contributed to not achieving as expected the intended results or targets?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4.4. To what extent has the Project managed to perform sharing of Czech knowledge, expertise and innovative solutions to the UNDP COs and their national partners?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ /e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

4.5. How COVID-19 affected or limited the Project activities and what actions were undertaken to offset the negative impact?

4.6. To what extent the project implementation was flexible and adaptive to the context.

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

4.7. What **recommendation(s)** would you make for a better effectiveness of the project?

5. Gender and Gender Equality

5.1. To what extent have gender considerations been integrated into the **project design and implementation**?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

5.2. Were there any **constraints** when it comes to addressing gender issues during implementation? Which efforts were made to overcome these?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

5.3. To what extent have the **output and outcome levels generated results** for gender equality and the empowerment of women?

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / **e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

5.4. What **recommendations** (if any) would you make for a better gender mainstreaming of the project? _____

6. Efficiency (Extent to which resources/inputs (**funds, time, human resources**, etc.) have been turned strategically into results ?Have UNDP been able to ensure an efficient use of resources?)

6.1. In terms of **Funds** (To what extent the efficiency of the implementation methods for the disbursement of funds and support to targeted beneficiaries was achieved?)

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / **e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

6.2. In terms of **Time** (Were the expected outputs delivered on time?)

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / **e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

6.3. In terms of **Human Resources**

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / **e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

6.4. What are the strengths of the introduced modality (secondment) that is used for the project management?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

6.5. Are there any weaknesses in the Project design, management, human resource skills, and resources?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

6.6. Identify factors and constraints, which have affected the Project implementation including technical, managerial, organizational, institutional and socio-economic policy issues in addition to COVID-19 related challenges and other external factors unforeseen during the Project design.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

6.7. To what extent did Project engage or coordinate with beneficiaries, implementing partners, other United Nations agencies and national counterparts to achieve outcome-level results?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ /
- b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ /
- e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

6.8. To what extent are the outcomes of Expertise on Demand and Innovation solution initiatives effectively communicated in the partner countries, in donor's country and within the UNDP?

- a. Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ /
- b. Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ /
- e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

6.9. Is there a communication strategy in place?

5.10. What **recommendations** would you make for a better efficiency of the project?

7. Impact

7.1. What are the Project effects and impact in terms of implemented Project activities, both in qualitative, and quantitative terms, on achievement of specific development results by partner countries via transfer of the Czech expertise and innovative solutions?

- a.** _____
- b.** _____
- c.** _____
- etc.** _____

7.2. To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the Project implementation, specifically in terms of the partnership support and what are specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance?

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c.** Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d.** Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / **e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

8. Sustainability (Probability of the benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term)

8.1 To what extent the Project outputs/results are likely to be sustainable beyond the Project's lifetime? How could the Project results be further sustainably projected and expanded in the country es?

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c.** Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d.** Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / **e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

8.2. What would be future priority interventions to ensure long-term sustainability of the project's achievements and contribute to further sharing knowledge and expertise to partner countries?

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /
- c.** Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
- d.** Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / **e.** Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

8.3. To what extent the Project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in partner countries, donor country and of the Czech experts and innovators?

- a.** Excellent/Achieved /Satisfactory /__ / **b.** Good/Mostly achieved/Moderately Satisfactory /__ /

- c. Modest/partially achieved/Moderately Unsatisfactory /__ /
d. Poor/not achieved/ Unsatisfactory /__ / e. Do not know /__ /

Please, explain your rating _____

8.4. What **recommendations** would you make for a better sustainability of the project?

9. Lessons learned, innovations, and recommendations

What are the lessons learned from the CUP 2018-2021 (from its design, to its outcomes, including its implementation processes)?	
What are the specific innovations developed through this project?	
What are your recommendations for a better capacity strengthening, national ownership et results for the next project cycle	

10. Any other comments?

😊 Thank you so much for contributing to better expertise and innovative technological solutions for SDGs in partner countries in a sustainable manner.

Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation main question	N°	Evaluation sub-questions	Indicators/ Judgementcriteria	Data sources	Methods
Relevance	To what extent to the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the needs & interest of the people and the country in achieving the SDGs?	1	Are the Project's objectives relevant to the needs of the UNDP partner countries in terms of their social and economic development?	Project stakeholders consider the CUP relevant to their needs and interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Progress Report 2018 - Annual Project Progress Report 2019 - Annual Report CUP 2020 - Czech-UNDP partnership forSDGsProDoc 2018-2021 - Project Board meeting minutes - Interviews - Focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documents review - Quantitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of focus groups - Triangulation
		2	To what extent is the Project aligned with the relevant national development priorities in the partner countries as the beneficiaries, UNDP strategic objectives and SDG 17 partnership?	Project stakeholders consider the CUP relevant to the UNDP strategic objectives and SDG 17 The project is in line with the UNDP strategic objectives and SDG 17		
		3	To what extent is the Project responsive to the changing environment in country at national and subnational levels and how should it adapt to these changes?	Project stakeholders consider the CUP responsive to the changing environment in country		
		4	To what extent was the methods of delivery selected by the Project appropriate to the development context?	Project stakeholders consider methods of delivery appropriate to the development context		
		5	To what extent does the Project address UN commitment of Leave No One Behind and contribute to the cross-cutting issues of good governance, human rights, gender equality and environmental protection?	Project stakeholders consider the CUP addressing the UN commitment of Leave No One Behind and contributing to the cross-cutting issues The project documentation stipulates the links between the UN commitment of Leave No One Behind and the cross-cutting issues and the project outputs		
Effectiveness	To what extent the objectives	6	To what extent does the Project address UN commitment of Leave No One Behind and contribute to the cross-cutting	Project stakeholders consider the CUP addressing the UN commitment of Leave No One Behind and contributing to the cross-cutting issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Progress Report 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documents review - Quantitative analysis of interviews

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation main question	N°	Evaluation sub-questions	Indicators/ Judgementcriteria	Data sources	Methods
	have been achieved?		issues of good governance, human rights, gender equality and environmental protection?	The project documentation stipulates the links between the UN commitment of Leave No One Behind and the cross-cutting issues and the project outputs	Annual Project Progress Report2019 Annual Report CUP 2020 - Czech-UNDP partnership forSDGsProDoc 2018-2021 - Output indicators from programme result Framework - Project Board meeting minutes - Interviews - Focus groups	- Qualitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of focus groups - Progress and trends analysis - Triangulation - Validation
		7	To what extent are the Project activities implemented and intended results and the specific objective/outcome achieved and reported?	The project outputs and achievements are in line with the benchmarks and plans		
		8	To what extent has the Project managed to perform sharing of Czech knowledge, expertise and innovative solutions to the UNDP COs and their national partners?	IProject stakeholders consider the transfer of Czech knowledge, expertise and innovative solutions successful		
		9	How COVID-19 pandemic affected or limited the Project activities and what actions were undertaken to offset the negative impact?	Project stakeholders describe the COVID-19 pandemic impact Project documentation refers to potential delays explained by COVID-19 pandemic		
		10	To what extent the project implementation was flexible and adaptive to the context?	Project stakeholders consider the implementation as flexible and adaptive		
Gender and Gender Equality	To what extent have gender been considered?	11	To what extent have gender considerations been integrated into the project design and implementation?	Project stakeholders consider the gender considerations well integrated Project documentation describes the integration, number of wo/men involved etc.	- Project Progress Report 2018 Annual Project Progress Report2019 Annual Report CUP 2020 - Czech-UNDP partnership forSDGsProDoc 2018-2021 - Project Board meeting minutes - Interviews - Focus groups	- Documents review - Quantitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of focus groups - Progress and trends analysis - Triangulation - Validation
		12	Were there any constraints when it comes to addressing gender issues during implementation? Which efforts were made to overcome these?	Project stakeholders describe the gender constraints and their solution Project documentation describes the gender constraints and their solution		
		13	To what extent have the output and outcome levels generated results for gender equality and the empowerment of women?	Project stakeholders describe the gender equality increase in project outputs Project documentation describes the gender equality increase in project outputs		

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation main question	N°	Evaluation sub-questions	Indicators/ Judgementcriteria	Data sources	Methods
Efficiency	Extent to which resources/inputs have been turned strategically into results? Have UNDP been able to ensure an efficient use of resources?	14	To what extent the efficiency of the implementation methods for the disbursement of funds and support to targeted beneficiaries was achieved?	Project stakeholders consider the funding proportionate and efficient, especially, there was an optimal procurement management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Progress Report 2018 - Annual Project Progress Report 2019 - Annual Report 2020 - Czech-UNDP partnership forSDGsProDoc 2018-2021 - Project Board meeting minutes - Interviews - Focus groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documents review - Quantitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of focus groups - Progress and trends analysis - Triangulation - Validation
		15	Were the expected outputs delivered on time ?	Project stakeholders consider the timing and schedule proportionate and they got value for money and on time		
		16	To what extent the efficiency of the implementation methods for the human resources ?	Project stakeholders consider the human resources provision and management adequate and they got their value for money and on time		
		17	To what extent did Project engage or coordinate with beneficiaries, implementing partners, other United Nations agencies and national counterparts to achieve outcome-level results?	Project stakeholders describe the project synergies		
		18	To what extent are the outcomes of Expertise on Demand and Innovation solution initiatives effectively communicated in the partner countries, in donor's country and within the UNDP?	Project stakeholders consider the communication of the project effective in partner countries, in donor's country and within the UNDP		
Impact	What is the project impact?	19	What are the Project effects and impact in terms of implemented Project activities, both in qualitative, and quantitative terms, on achievement of specific development results by partner countries via transfer of the Czech expertise and innovative solutions?	<p>Project stakeholders and beneficiaries consider that the project has an impact describable in qualitative and quantitative terms</p> <p>Project stakeholders and beneficiaries consider that the project has an effective and lasting effect on their lives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Progress Report 2018 - Annual Project Progress Report 2019 - Annual Report 2020 - Czech-UNDP partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documents review - Quantitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of focus groups

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation main question	N°	Evaluation sub-questions	Indicators/ Judgementcriteria	Data sources	Methods
		20	To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the Project implementation, specifically in terms of the partnership support and what are specific expectations for the potential follow-up assistance?	Project stakeholders consider the project implementation and outputs in a satisfactory and lasting manner Project stakeholders and beneficiaries consider that the project has an effective and lasting effect on their lives	forSDGsProDoc 2018-2021 - Project Board meeting minutes - Interviews - Focus groups	- Progress and trends analysis - Triangulation - Validation
Sustainability	What is the probability of benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term?	21	To what extent the Project outputs/results are likely to be sustainable beyond the Project's lifetime?	The project outputs are in place after the project end and the benefits last in long-term Project stakeholders consider the benefits to be long lasting	- Project Progress Report 2018 Annual Project Progress Report 2019 Annual Report 2020 - Czech-UNDP partnership forSDGsProDoc 2018-2021 - Project Board meeting minutes - Interviews - Focus groups	- Documents review - Quantitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of focus groups - Progress and trends analysis - Triangulation - Validation
		22	What would be future priority interventions to ensure long-term sustainability of the project's achievements and contribute to further sharing knowledge and expertise to partner countries?	Project stakeholders consider the benefits to be long lasting		
		23	To what extent the Project enhanced and contributed to the development of national capacity in partner countries, donor country and of the Czech experts and innovators?	Project stakeholders consider the national capacities to be developed		
Lessons learned, Innovations, and Recommendations	What are the lessons learned, innovations, and recommendations?	24	What are the lessons learned from the CUP 2018-2021 (from its design, to its outcomes, including its implementation processes)?	The lessons learned described by the project stakeholders The lessons learned described in the project documentation	- Project Progress Report 2018 Annual Project Progress Report 2019 Annual Report 2020 - Czech-UNDP partnership for SDGs ProDoc 2018-2021 - Project Board meeting minutes - Interviews - Focus groups	- Documents review - Quantitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of interviews - Qualitative analysis of focus groups - Progress and trends analysis - Triangulation - Validation
		25	What are the specific innovations developed through this project?	The innovations described by the project documentation The innovations described by the project stakeholders		
		26	What are your recommendations for a better capacity strengthening, national ownership et results for the next project cycle?	The recommendations of the project stakeholders		

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Annex 6: List of Stakeholders, facilitators/implementers, and beneficiaries consulted

N°	Last name	First name	Position	Institution
1	Novohradská	Dagmar	Sr Project Specialist	UNDP IRH
2	Hager	Jonas	Project Specialist	UNDP IRH
3	Faus	Pavel	Jr Project Specialist	UNDP IRH
4	Bayazit	Berna	Program Specialist	UNDP IRH
5	Bursikova	Ivana	Project manager, Head of Agora (ex)	Agora
6	Zacharova	Sona	Project manager	Ego
7	Neumann	Michal	Project manager	Incinity
8	Kucera	Miroslav	Project manager	Aspiro
9	Houzvova	Sona	Expert	Kokoza
10	Mecnarovska	-	Project manager	Empress
11	Lungu	Octavian	Local partner, Moldova	Partner to Czech Technical University in Prague
12	Svart-Groger	Valeria	Local partner, Moldova	Katalyst, partner to University of Chemistry and Technology Prague
13	Melnicneco	Ecaterina	Local partner, Moldova	Partner to Hydrometeorological Institute
14	Santrucek	Stepan	Development Cooperation Coordinator	Czech Embassy in BiH
15	Žáková	-	Development Cooperation Coordinator	Czech Embassy in Cambodia
16	Rotaru	Alexandru	Development Cooperation Officer	UNDP CO Moldova
17	Hosek	Benedikt	Development Cooperation Officer	UNDP CO Georgia
18	Omicevic	Amina	Development Cooperation Officer	UNDP Accelerator Lab, BiH
19	Sandroshvili	Khatuna	Development Cooperation Officer	UNDP CO Georgia
20	Podoroghin	Inga	Development Cooperation Officer	UNDP CO Moldova
21	Fekadu	Okelo	Development Cooperation Officer	UNDP Accelerator Lab, Ethiopia
22	Pana Carp	Silvia	Development Cooperation Officer	UNDP CO Georgia
23	Valentova	Kristyna	Development Cooperation Coordinator	MFA
24	-	Selma	Local partner, BiH	Federal hydromedrological institute, BiH
25	Dzajic-Rghei	Senida	Local partner, BiH	Federal hydromedrological institute, BiH
26	Danihelka	Pavel	Head of Research and Management	Czech Occupational Safety Institute
27	Vancura	Karel	International Relations Officer	Czech National Hydrometeorological Service
28	Musilek	Jiri	Head of civil emergency preparedness	Fire Rescue Service
29	Cincera	Pavel	Consultant on climate disasters	At freelance
30	Suon	Sopheap	Local partner, Cambodia	Diakonie
31	Tehle	Vaclav	Director of Operations and Financ	Dot Glasses
32	Beranova	Zuzana	Analyst	LIAZ
33	Nemec	Petr	Professor	Mendel University
34	Vacková	Michaela	Project Coordinator Southeast Asia	Diakonie

N°	Last name	First name	Position	Institution
35	Louzecky	Martin	CEO	Skate World Better
36	Strnadova	Kristyna	Project Management	Association of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Crafts
37	Hong	Sonth	Local partner, Cambodia	Mendel University
38	Mocidlan	Jiri	Professor	Mendel University
39	Melkamumebrate	John	Local Partner, Zambia	Skate World Better
40	Sic	Petr	Consultant on tea production	At freelance
41	Bathesby	Dion	Country Director, Georgia	People in Need
42	Blinka	Jan	Head of Mission in Georgia	Charita
43	Sobotova	Lenka	Program Manager	Care
44	Nosek	Vojtech	CEO	Unico.ai
45	Lachmann	Jana	International Project Manager	Unico.ai
46	Guba	Martin	Project Manager	Mepco
47	Svanidze		Local partner to People in Need, Georgia	GOL
48	Tskhvediani	Giorgi	Local partner to Nesehnuti, Georgia	Abkhazintercont
49	Gilbreath	Dustin	Deputy Research Director	Caucasus Research Resource Centre
50	Barbakadze	Revaz	Head	Rustavi Innovation Hub
51	Gamisonia	Rostom	Director	Rural Communities Development Agency
52	Továřková	Helena	Director	Nadace Veronica
53	Gochelaschvili	Zaza	Facilitator	Local partner to Nesehnuti, Georgia
54	Kortua	Irma	Facilitator	Local partner to Nesehnuti, Georgia
55	Novak	Jaromir	Managing Director	Holistic Solutions
56	Koutkova	Karla	Researcher	At freelance
57	Nemec	Jaromir	Coordinator	Nesehnuti
58	Hlavaty	Jan	Head of Implementation	Smart Guide
59	Cernik	Jan	Development Councilor in Georgia	Czech Embassy in Georgia
60	Halaxa	Petr	Development Coordinator	MFA
61	Valkova	Jana	External Expert on Family, Gender equality, and labor market policy	Masaryk University
62	Raja	Jan	Project Manager	Vcelin
63	Krispin	Jan	CEO	Eveco
64	Misikova	Marta	Project Coordinator	Nesehnuti
65	Bem	Matous	Project Manager	Skate World Better
66	Neumann	Michal	Project manager	Cross
67	Silhankova	Katerina	Attache for Development	Czech Embassy, Moldova

Annex 7: CUP template for monitoring of Challenge Fund projects



Report

Project title:	
Ref.:	
Implementer of the project:	
Local partner:	
Phase of the project:	
Place of realization of the project:	
Date of monitoring:	
Sources of information:	
Names of monitoring persons:	
Goals of monitoring:	

Structure of report

1. Is project developing according to the original plan?
2. Are there any problems related to project implementation? If yes – how implementer approached them?
3. How looks the cooperation of the implementer with project partner?
4. How often and in which form are you communicating with the implementer about project-related activities?
5. Describe innovativeness of project.
6. Is project adequately propagated?
7. How is project impacting project beneficiaries and the wider community?
8. Does the project seem to be sustainable (environmentally, socially, financially)?
9. Additional comments.
10. Summary

Annex 8: CUP questionnaire for final beneficiaries of Challenge Fund projects

Questions for each project are the same (see example below). Gathered data are used for monitoring and analytical purposes. Every project is newly required to deliver at least 5 filled questionnaires together with final report.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdowOJPPtVstfqRMEP6f50Ki_OAFjpqsYi-oFqw9h6O7FdpQQ/viewform

Annex 9: CUP Post-monitoring questionnaire for Challenge Fund projects, which finished more than one year ago



CZECH-UNDP PARTNERSHIP FOR SDGS

Questionnaire for Challenge Fund projects, which finished more than 1 year ago.

- The goal of this questionnaire is to provide us information about the impact of our interventions from a long-term perspective. Moreover, information will help us to guide our future work. This form of exchange also supports our idea to stay in touch with former implementers.

All provided information will be treated confidentially and not shared externally.

Project title	
Implementer	
Local partner/s	

1. What project brought to you?
2. What do you consider as biggest success/achievement of the project?
3. Looking back, what would you do differently?
4. Are you still in contact with the local project partner and did the project help to deepen your cooperation?
5. Please describe to which extent is applied solution still used?
6. Did project generate some follow-up activities? Are there any future perspectives?
7. Please provide us a quote or visual material from the project partner or beneficiaries reflecting the impact of the project.
8. Space for additional comments (you can comment your overall experience with Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs)

Annex 10: UNDP PSU Evaluation Form for finished Challenge Fund projects

SERVICES

SUPPLIER PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SHEET



Name of Supplier _____

Duration of Engagement _____

Project Title _____

Brief Description of Work

	Fully met Expectations	Partially met Expectations	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
Completed work on time				
Strictly adhered to, and respected their contracted obligations				
Reported to, and updated, the project personnel on issues/status/ completion of milestone sub-activities				
Consistently demonstrated technical and professional expertise in the performance of the contracted work				
Understood, considered and adjusted themselves to the specific project context and its unique operating environment				
Delivered high quality and high impact reports and presentations				
Paid close attention to accuracy and details				
Adopted creative, innovative and practical measures to improve quality of work				
Implemented all suggested improvements to the work				
Organized work in a manner that achieves maximum productivity				
Responded sensitively to project staff, stakeholders, etc., and applied discretion in choosing words and methods of response				
Recognized cultural diversity and related to others in an equal, non-discriminatory of race, social status, background, gender, etc.				
Communicates effectively and appropriately with various people from varied social levels and with varying levels of capacity				
Recognized and analyzed problems as they came, developed and acted upon effective solutions in the performance of the work				
Envisioned and analyzed possible adverse situations/implications of some actions, and prepared for them, addressed them, or avoided them accordingly				

Other Comments:

Evaluated by: _____ Signature: _____

Annex 11: CUP questionnaire for COs/supervisors of EoD projects

CZECH-UNDP PARTNERSHIP FOR SDGS

EXPERTISE ON DEMAND (EoD) ASSIGNMENT EVALUATION FORM

- This evaluation form aims to provide feedback on the satisfaction with the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs' "Expertise on Demand" consultants that will be used further for progress reports, quality control and amelioration of future assignments and tasks of the Czech experts.
- The evaluation form should be completed by the UNDP CO direct supervisor / project manager of the respective consultant.
- All information provided in the evaluation form will be treated confidentially and not shared externally.

Assignment title	
Name and surname of the consultant	
Duration of the assignment	
Assignment dates (starting / ending date)	
Assignment country	
Assignment supervisor	

1. Did the consultant achieve objectives in the ~~ToRs~~?

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

2. Were the ~~ToRs~~ drafted adequately, accurately and did they reflect the needs of the assignment?

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

3. Please rate your overall experience with the consultant.

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Weak ☐ Poor

4. Please rate the quality of work of the consultant.

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Weak ☐ Poor

5. Did the consultant respect deadlines?

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

6. Was the consultant able to engage/communicate effectively with the CO at the programmatic/operational level?

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

7. Was the consultant able to engage effectively with partners/local consultants?

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

8. The consultant's work will be used for the next project/has proved beneficial for other CO's activities (if yes, please specify).

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

9. The consultant's work helped the Cos widen their thematic focus/open new work strands (if yes, please specify).

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

10. The consultant's work was promoted through media channels/social networks/was used for visibility and outreach purposes (if yes, please specify).

☐ Yes ☐ Partially ☐ No

11. Would you recommend the consultant for future UNDP assignments?

☐ Yes ☐ With hesitation ☐ No



Any other comments or recommendations:



Annex 12: UNDP Personal Evaluation Form

UNDP PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM FOR INDIVIDUALS HIRED UNDER IC

DATE:

I. GENERAL

Consultant/Contractor Name:

Project Number:

Project Title:

Dept./Duty

.....

Start Date: End Date:

II. PLEASE RATE THE CONSULTANT/CONTRACTOR'S FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES: (1= Excellent, 2=very good, 3=Good, 4=fair, 5=Unsatisfactory).

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Technical expertise in the subject area of the assignment? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Imagination? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Initiative? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Interpersonal skills? | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Quality of the reports submitted. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Timeliness of reports submitted. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Linguistic skills? | <input type="radio"/> |

Language	Written	Spoken
----------	---------	--------

III. PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW ANY RATINGS THAT WERE ASSIGNED IN PART II. YOU MAY ALSO ADD ANY COMMENTS THAT YOU FEEL SHOULD REMAIN IN THE CONSULTANT'S FILE:

SHOULD THIS CONSULTANT/CONTRACTOR REMAIN ON THE ROSTER (Check one) Yes No

VI. DO YOU WANT RESTRICTED ACCESS (ACCESS WILL BE PROVIDED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE MANAGEMENT)
FOR THE INFORMATION IN PARTS II & III (Please Check one) Yes No

NAME AND SIGNATURE OF THE EVALUATOR:

DIVISION:

Implementation of Road Weather System in the Republic of Moldova
A case study



Karolina Svobodova, Ph.D.
26/11/2021

The Case Study No. 1: Implementation of Road Weather System in the Republic of Moldova

1. The case study design

The purpose of this case study is to analyze the case of the project *Implementation of Road Weather System in the Republic of Moldova* to evaluate its performance, and to recommend possible improvements for future projects. The case study is one of three case studies elaborated as a part of the Czech UNDP Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals (CUP) Mid-Term Review.

The methodology of the case studies is the same as the method of the whole Mid-Term Review, i.e. a mixed-method using quantitative and qualitative analytical tools. In particular, two online interviews have been conducted with the project implementer and a Czech embassy representative, and one focus group meeting was conducted with the CUP project management (three respondents). Each interview consisted of regular semi-structured questionnaires used by the whole project and of specialized semi-structured questionnaires with additional open questions, used only for the case studies. These questions were organized chronologically to simulate a spontaneous narration about the case, with ad-hoc auxiliary questions posed when necessary.³¹ The examiner took notes during the interview to get a highly corresponding content transcription. The interviews were not recorded regarding the personal data protection. Further, project materials as progress reports, plans, and the project contract, were used. Thus, triangulation of different data sources is ensured by cross-check of diverse interlocutors' statements and the mentioned written materials. Altogether, the data were collected from five interlocutors. The subject case has been selected randomly with regards to the other case study location in order to choose projects from different countries.

The analysis of the collected data consists of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the project benchmarks (planned deliverables compared with achievements as described in the Project Documentation) and of a simple quantitative analysis of the data collected through the standard questionnaires, aimed at evaluation of the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. These criteria together with lessons learned (as set by the UNDP) and achievement of the planned outputs, objectives, and outcomes serve as independent variables while the overall project performance is considered as the dependent variable. This method is the most appropriate regarding the simplicity, homogeneity, and the low volume of data collected. Specifically, the questions related to each criterion were responded by the interlocutors in the range of excellent / good / modest / poor / do not know, N/A. To quantify the answers, they were nominally indicated by points (4 – excellent, 3 – good, 2 – modest, 1 – poor, 0 – do not know / N/A). Due to the nature of the data, a simple average value was calculated for each variable without using median values.

The collected data were categorized according to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and lessons learned which are analyzed and presented in this case study together with the best strengths and weaknesses of the case project.

³¹See Annex 1.

The qualitative analysis of the collected data shows the project performance in a deep detail, using the narrative part of the questionnaires, particularly regarding the additional specialized questionnaire. The Prince2 methodology is used for a basic project management assessment.

2. Overview of the case

The project *Implementation of Road Weather System in the Republic of Moldova* was implemented in 2019 by Czech private company Cross Zlin in Moldova where the climate and its change cause harsh road conditions. By placing road weather stations on specific sites and installing the corresponding software, the local beneficiary, the State Road Administration (agency of the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure) was enabled to monitor the current situation and to apply adaptive measures immediately to avoid traffic problems. Another local beneficiary is the State Hydrometeorological Service.

Thus, Moldova can effectively (without additional costs) improve its road weather maintenance capacity and overall road conditions, particularly during winter. The project brought an innovative solution, new in Moldova, and it transferred the respective software knowledge and technical expertise. The final target beneficiaries of the project were citizens of Moldova and all road users there who could have benefited from improved safety on Moldavian roads and more efficient use of resources for road maintenance.

3. Overview of the project performance

According to the Project Documentation, the project objectives are articulated as following:

“By placing road weather stations on selected sites and implementing corresponding software and transferring the knowledge from the Czech Republic in this field, Moldova significantly improved its road weather maintenance capacity, in particular in winter period.”

The project objective is very vaguely stated and the Project Documentation lacks links between the project objective, outputs, and the outcome defined as “introduction of a road weather system, beneficial for the Ministry and roads quality, allowing to put exact quantities of salt during winter, thus improving road safety.”

The project output is defined in the contract as project deliverables, i.e. the technical assessment of the installation sites, the equipment production and installation, connection to the software, training of the local users, and a study trip to the Czech Republic. According to the project Final Report, all project deliverables have been successfully delivered and handed over to the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure of the Republic of Moldova. In particular, two road meteorological stations with data access through cloud software Metis have been installed and the State Road Administration personnel have been trained for its operation and maintenance. The study trip to the Czech Republic was carried out. Subsequently, the project outcome took place as the State Road Administration of Moldova uses the road weather system to improve its road weather maintenance capacity, and it plans to develop the system further with more road weather stations in future.

In addition, the beneficiary gave a highly positive feedback to the project. Especially, the State Road Administration of Moldova published a press release about the project at its website,³² also published at the website of the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure and distributed to the press for further publishing.

Provided the project objective is “placing road weather stations on selected sites and implementing corresponding software together with the transfer of Czech knowledge to Moldova”, the objective has been fulfilled. The project objective delivery is further assessed as reflected by the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

3.1. Relevance

The criterion of relevance was assessed quantitatively as “excellent” (four points out of four).

RELEVANCE			
Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	Relevance of the project objectives to the needs of the partner countries and their social and economic development	4	4
2	Alignment of the project with the national development priorities in the partner countries and SDG 17?	4	4
3	Responsiveness and adaptability of the project to the changing environment in country at national and subnational levels	4	4
4	Appropriateness of methods of delivery to the development context	4	4
average		4	4
TOTAL result			4

The Czech implementers ensured the relevance of the project by pre-negotiations in cooperation with the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade and Moldovan Vice-Minister of Economy and Infrastructure. Subsequently, a pilot project had been planned in the framework of the Moldovan National Strategy for Road Safety. Hence, the interests of Moldovan state institutions were articulated and the project was adjusted to the country needs. The recent Moldovan pro-EU political direction also endorses cooperation with the EU countries that also helped the project approval on Moldovan side.

Further, other interconnected projects of Czech companies (under the CUP) followed-up, and more are expected to take place also outside of the CUP. According to the CUP project management, the high relevance of the project was enhanced by a synergy with the Slovak – UNDP Partnership.

The main relevance of the project regarding the SDGs is for the climate change, resilient infrastructure, and sustainable industrialization. The project addresses a sustainable, low carbon and energy efficient management of natural resources in Moldova through decreased salting during winter roads maintenance, among other aspects.

³² State Road Administration of Moldova (2019): *Implementation of Weather System*, online <http://asd.md/blog/implementarea-sistemului-meteoro.html>.

The Czech embassy in Moldova is also in contact with the State Road Administration and the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure which gave a positive feedback to the project at the diplomatic level and expressed a will to continue with the project scale-up.

3.2. Effectiveness

The effectiveness was assessed by respondents as “excellent” (four points) as the project was delivered and the two meteo stations were installed together with the software and the expertise was transferred.

EFFECTIVENESS

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	The extent to which the Project activities are implemented and the project results and objectives achieved	4	4
average		4	4
TOTAL result			4

The local partner selected and prepared the location, and subsequently, the Czech implementer Cross finished the installation of two meteorological stations and the related software on time. Cross company also trained the local partners and other final users in usage of the stations and the software. The study trip to Czechia was organized by Cross for the local partners to enhance the knowledge transfer. The trip was highly appreciated by the trainees as it successfully delivered the Czech expertise to them.

The two meteo stations served as a pilot project to the local partner who plans a scale-up through a public procurement procedure where Cross will compete for further tenders. Eventually, tens of stations shall be installed and another projects enhancing road safety are planned.

The CUP project management also highly evaluated the project effectiveness, on-time delivery, and a successful cooperation with the Green City Lab endorsed by the UNDP CO.

3.3. Efficiency

The efficiency proved to be “excellent”, reaching 3.5 points out of four according to the interviews.

EFFICIENCY

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	The extent to which funds have been turned strategically into results	3	3
2	The extent to which time has been turned strategically into results	4	3
3	The extent to which human resources have been turned strategically into results	4	4
average		3.667	3.333
TOTAL result			3.5

From financial point of view, the project was highly efficient as the project staff salaries involve only 15% of the whole budget according to the project financial reporting. Cross would

appreciate slightly higher funding (60 000 USD) but the present contribution of 40 000 USD was sufficient for the project. The timing of the project was satisfactory as the project was delivered on time with no major problems. Human resources were highly appreciated, particularly in relation to the CUP project management and its structure.

3.4. Impact

The project impact was quantified as “excellent” (four points).

IMPACT

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the project implementation, impact, and the potential for a follow-up	4	4

TOTAL result **4**

According to Cross, the meteorological stations fitted to the technology requirements of Moldovan State Road Administration which helped the impact increase and the already existing scale-up of the project. The solution was technologically feasible for the local partners and the project beneficiaries.

Hence, Czech implementers as Cross Zlin and other companies including a sister firm of Cross, Incinity, implemented more projects regarding smart transportation systems and other projects are planned for future (e.g. a traffic intensity measuring, info screens on highways, and weight in motion measurement that is planned in cooperation with Czech Technological University). The project *Implementation of Road Weather System in the Republic of Moldova* was received with enthusiasm by the beneficiaries and hence, more projects were approved by the Moldovan Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure. Some of the subsequent projects are covered by the CUP as well.

The impact is objectively high, regarding the number of the follow-up projects in place. The project has a high commercial potential for Czech companies as more tenders will be open by Moldovan authorities in the field of smart transport.

However, the gender equality was perceived as not applicable by the interlocutors.

GENDER

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	To what extent the gender considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation	0	0
2	How effectively the gender issues and constraints were managed	0	0
3	The extent to which the project generated gender equality and women empowerment	0	0

average 0 0
TOTAL result **0**

The Czech and local teams were rather male but due to the purely technical character of the project, the gender dimension was not taken into account by the Cross project management.

3.5. Sustainability

The sustainability was assessed as “excellent” (four points out of four) by the interlocutors, based on the interest of Moldovan authorities as the State Road Administration in the project, and the follow-up projects approval. Also the CUP project management highly evaluated the project impact.

SUSTAINABILITY

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	The extent to which the Project outputs/results are likely to be sustainable after the project's closing	4	4
2	Long-term sustainability of the project's achievements and further sharing knowledge and expertise	4	4
3	The extent to which the project enhanced the development of national capacity in partner and donor countries	4	4
average		4	4
TOTAL result			4

Cross Zlin managed to establish personal contacts with the State Road Administration, the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, the UNDP CO, and with the municipality of Chisinau, which help approval of more projects that are much needed in Moldova. The tenders and locations have been already prepared, and the requirements for more technologies have been raised. Particularly, a tender for another 15 meteorological stations is in place currently (with a prospective further increase in future). Incinity company is actively engaged with the State Road Administration, planning more projects. The development of smart cities, intelligent transport, and energy efficiency is highly supported by Moldovan authorities now. Their interest was expressed also by a diplomatic trip of seven Moldovan state representatives to Czechia regarding future bilateral cooperation in this area. Moreover, the UNDP CO helps the Moldovan authorities with the project follow-up extension to other Moldovan cities.

According to the Project Documentation, the road weather system ensures savings of natural resources and operational costs of Moldovan road maintenance, improving the quality of road surface and driving safety. Using less salt thanks to real-time information on the road situation allows for an environmental sustainability enhancement. Most of all, the system is fully scalable and replicable.

4. Overview of strengths and weaknesses of the project implementation

4.1. Strengths

The Czech implementers consider the best strengths of the project the personal contacts and meetings, e.g. with Moldavian Vice-Minister of Economy and Infrastructure, the study trip to Czechia, further commercial relations of Moldovan authorities with Cross, and the excellent communication with the CUP, the Czech embassy, and the UNDP CO promising cooperation on future projects. The UNDP CO substantially supports the Chisinau municipality in development planning including the smart transport systems.

Czech embassy praised the visible results of the CUP small-scale projects which are fast to develop and deliver in comparison with larger projects. The mode of organization of human resources under the CUP (expert secondment) is also seen very positively by the embassy as well as the current CUP project management team, perceived as fast-reacting, communicative, and hard-working. The embassy also highly appreciated the cooperation with the UNDP CO despite the fact of lacking resources on both sides, the CO and the embassy. Should the personnel be increased in number, the collaboration and the information sharing could be more effective.

4.2. Weaknesses

According to the Czech embassy, the weak Moldovan state infrastructure and political instability is a long-term reality that will not change in the near future. Thus, the embassy recommends to adjust the approach to Moldovan state institutions in order to facilitate the adoption of innovative solutions. The Czech implementers realized this issue and reacted by development of personal contacts in Moldovan authorities which helped overcome the impacts of organizational changes in their structure.

Further, the Czech Diplomatic Mission to Moldova mentioned the advantages of a possibility of larger, more time-flexible, follow-up projects to ensure scale-up and sustainability in the long-term which might be hampered in the present settings of small-scale projects under the CUP.

In addition, the Cross' project management deliverables are loosely organized and quite limited in scope although involving all the obligatory information.

5. Lessons learned

The project Final Report refers to the lessons learned regarding the clear definition of local partner engagement in written form (as a discrepancy between the expected and delivered outputs of the local partner occurred due to a misunderstanding), risk management of political instability in Moldova and related implementation delays, importance of personal communication (meetings and phone calls) in Moldova compared to emails, and significance of knowledge transfer of the road weather system as a new topic in Moldova.

The respondents also stipulated the benefits of the study trip to Czechia and they mentioned they would appreciate an extension of the CUP to more countries, e.g. to regions as Balkan, CIS, and Central Asia.

6. Summary

To sum up, the project *Implementation of Road Weather System in the Republic of Moldova* was successfully implemented and the Road Weather System was delivered in accordance with the needs of the Moldovan state infrastructure, as formulated by the State Road Authority. The smart transportation systems have been established recently in Moldova which is in need of more projects in this area, opening a possibility of future commercial and development cooperation with the Czech Republic and the CUP.

The innovative solution of smart Road Weather System introduced a key technological change in Moldovan road infrastructure and maintenance since Moldova lacks the modern technological

equipment and also the whole systematic solution which is common in the Czech Republic and other EU countries. This modern innovation reduced environmental damage caused by excessive salting of roads and it saves the operational costs of road maintenance by automation, data-based decision-making, electronic operation of automated machinery, usage of statistics for long-term trends extrapolation based on the data collected, and the possibility of a real-time reaction to the current road conditions, among many others.

The novelty and benefits of the Road Weather System for roads maintenance were highly appreciated by the project beneficiaries, the State Road Authority and the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure. The satisfaction of the beneficiaries is reflected by the large project scale-up which has already started, promising a long-term sustainability and high impact of the project. CrossZlin proved to be an excellent project implementer and it can be recommended for future projects.

The recent political developments in Moldova have brought a pro-EU orientation which can be used for enhancement of the development aid and possibly of business and political relations between Czechia and Moldova through the CUP. The interest of Moldovan UNDP CO in smart transport solutions can be used in fostering collaboration with the CUP.

7. Recommendations

The recommendations are general, stemming from the analysis of the subject case but not necessarily reflecting the project deficiencies in all regards. Rather, they show a way for further improvement to be considered by the CUP project management, and they are mostly applicable to other projects as well.

To the CUP:

- To follow the sustainability and continuity of the CUP projects in Moldova by frequent contacts with the local authorities.
- The project board should consider the option for increased funding of selected projects above the existing 40,000 USD mark, with the goal of assuring larger implementation scope and scale-up.
- To monitor and support the sustainability and continuity of the CUP projects as the political instability and staffing discontinuity can prevent scale-up of the projects and implementation of the feasibility studies delivered by the CUP projects although there is a potential for a long-term application. In particular, close cooperation among the CUP / Czech embassy / UNDP CO and the respective Moldovan state authorities should be endorsed.

To Cross:

- The project objectives should be explicitly linked to the project outputs (and outcomes).
- SMART method is recommended for setting project objectives, outputs, and for the indicators in the area of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability.
- The project management deliverables should be organized and extended in depth and scope.

Annex 1: The sample questionnaire:

A. Warm up questions and demographic data.

B. Main questions:

1. How did the project start?
2. What was your role in the project?
3. How did you learn about the project?
4. What is the project about?
5. Why the project took place?
6. How do you use the results?
7. How do you like the results?
8. Is there something you do not like about the project and its results?
9. Is there some improvement you would suggest?
10. Can you mention one biggest advantage and one biggest mistake in the project?
11. Do you think it makes sense to implement such projects in future?
12. Do you know the project donors?

Annex 14: Case study 2: *Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia*

Public involvement into the process of regional development via community
planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia
A case study



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13/11/2021

The Case Study No. 2: Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia

1. The case study design

The purpose of this case study is to analyze the case of the project *Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia*, to evaluate its performance, and to recommend possible improvements for future projects. The case study is one of three case studies elaborated as a part of the Czech UNDP Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals (CUP) Mid-Term Review.

The methodology of the case studies is the same as the method of the whole Mid-Term Review, i.e. a mixed-method using quantitative and qualitative analytical tools. In particular, four personal and online interviews have been conducted with the project stakeholders as the implementers (two), local partners (two), and one focus group meeting was conducted with the CUP project management (three respondents). Each interview consisted of regular semi-structured questionnaires used by the whole project and of specialized semi-structured questionnaires with additional open questions, used only for the case studies. These questions were organized chronologically to simulate a spontaneous narration about the case, with ad-hoc auxiliary questions posed when necessary.³³ The examiner took notes during the interview to get a highly corresponding content transcription. The interviews were not recorded regarding the personal data protection. In addition, inputs from a focus group discussion of a local partner in Georgia were used. Further, project materials as progress reports, plans, and the project contract, were used. Thus, triangulation of different data sources is ensured by cross-check of diverse interlocutors' statements and the mentioned written materials. Altogether, the data were collected from eight interlocutors. The subject case has been selected randomly with regards to the other case study location in order to choose projects from different countries.

The analysis of the collected data consists of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the project benchmarks (planned deliverables compared with achievements as described in the Project Documentation) and of a simple quantitative analysis of the data collected through the standard questionnaires, aimed at evaluation of the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. These criteria together with lessons learned (as set by the UNDP) and achievement of the planned outputs, objectives, and outcomes serve as independent variables while the overall project performance is considered as the dependent variable. This method is the most appropriate regarding the simplicity, homogeneity, and the low volume of data collected. Specifically, the questions related to each criterion were responded by the interlocutors in the range of excellent / good / modest / poor / do not know, N/A. To quantify the answers, they were nominally indicated by points (4 – excellent, 3 – good, 2 – modest, 1 – poor, 0 – do not know / N/A). Due to the nature of the data, a simple average value was calculated for each variable without using median values.

³³See Annex 1.

The collected data were categorized according to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and lessons learned which are analyzed and presented in this case study together with the best strengths and weaknesses of the case project.

The qualitative analysis of the collected data shows the project performance in a deep detail, using the narrative part of the questionnaires, particularly regarding the additional specialized questionnaire. The Prince2 methodology is used for a basic project management assessment.

2. Overview of the case

Nesehnuti is a Czech NGO focusing on social and environmental issues in Czechia and abroad, particularly in Ukraine and Caucasian region. Nesehnuti cooperated with the CUP on the project *Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia*. The project which took place in Georgian rural areas, specifically in municipality Ambrolauri (village Tsesi) and municipality Tkibuli (village Tsutskhvati), was aimed at an introduction of the concept of community planning and the related capacity building in civil society.

The main assumption of the project is the idea of engaged and democratic society constructed on the real needs of its citizens.³⁴ In Georgian context, the project (implicit)³⁵ outcome is the Georgian civil society awareness on modes of contribution to governance and decision-making processes on the local level which shall lead to more transparent, inclusive and democratic decision-making processes. As the civic engagement is essential in community planning and development, the project involved capacity building of civic organizations and municipal actors to enable a productive dialogue on community development and to increase public involvement. The project is the first project of the CUP in the Racha-Lechkumi and Kvemo Svaneti region which lack external and international funding. The regions were chosen by Nesehnuti because the areas are peripheral in view of international donors and hence, the local beneficiaries had a chance to finally get a funding.

The community development experts of Nesehnuti visited Georgia frequently during the project implementation while cooperating with their Georgian project partners from the local NGO Abchazintercont which has an office and training hall in Ambrolauri, facilitating the everyday contact with project beneficiaries. The other facilitators were hired through the local job-offering website.

3. Overview of the project performance

According to the Project Documentation, the project objectives are articulated as following:

“The action will strengthen the capacity of communities and municipal actors to enable an effective dialogue on community development, and increase public involvement in decision-making processes at the local level. Active citizens’ participation in governance processes will contribute to improved quality of municipality actions and to more transparent, inclusive and democratic decision-making processes. A better reflection of community concerns in the public policy and programs at the local levels is expected to have a positive impact on the status of the indirect beneficiaries (local citizens, under-represented groups of citizens such as women and

³⁴Nesehnuti (2021) online, <https://nesehnuti.cz/cestainiciativy/>.

³⁵Not formally articulated by the project.

youth). More understanding of community planning decision-making processes will help municipalities and villages advance their approaches when designing their policies, thus bringing them closer to their target groups.”

The definition of the project objectives is quite vague without specific mentions of the project outputs (deliverables) and outcomes. The progress / final reports do not mention the deliverables (as in the project’s contract) but only this ambiguous definition. The project outcomes are not defined and the link between the project objectives, outputs, and outcomes is not explicitly stated and remains vague. On the other hand, the monitoring report of the CUP representative³⁶ compares the deliverables with the achievements in an exemplary way, recommendable also for the respective project management deliverables (plans and reports).

According to the project contract, the project deliverables (“results”) are four - engagement of the local municipalities in the project, training of the community facilitators and municipality representatives on community planning, mobilization and participation of the community of Ambrolauri and Tkibuli (and pilot villages Tsesi and Tsutskhvati) in development planning, and publication of a guide based on lessons learned of the project. The deliverables were divided in eight activities which have been all achieved according to the monitoring, progress, and final reports, with the exception of the study trip to the Czech Republic which had to be cancelled after a consultation with the UNDP representatives due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, training seminars on microprojects and social enterprises were delivered, equipment for internet access in Tsesi and Tsutskhvati was donated, wages of the project team members were raised (thanks to the remaining budget), working rooms for two initiative groups were arranged, and one project was implemented in each pilot village (the arrangement of outdoor recreation and entertainment space in the village park in Tsesi and the improvement of the preschool care facility backyard in Tsutskhvati).

Among the other project activities were lobbying at municipalities, a training for the facilitators on facilitating techniques, a long-term mentoring including a community planning program and three online meetings, a communication campaign consisting of meetings with general public in the community area, two-day community planning sessions in Tsesi and Tsutskhvati where basic community plans were created, elaboration of a manual summarizing the experience³⁷ and distributed in the communities and to the municipalities leadership, a press conference on the project results with representatives of the municipalities, facilitators, and community representatives.

Due to severe limitations on travel caused by the pandemic, Abchazintercont, a long-term valued partner of Nesehnuti’s projects in Georgia, assumed a larger role in the project and commenced the first round of community planning sessions in several municipalities. In general, Nesehnuti delivered the expert work, whereas Abkhazintercont was responsible for local implementation of the project.

Hence, the project outputs (deliverables) have been all achieved. The project outcomes are not stated in the Project Documentation at all and thus, their achievement cannot be evaluated. The assessment of the project objectives is problematic due to the vagueness of their definition and

³⁶ Hager, J. (9/4/2021): *Report – Monitoring of the project “Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia”*.

³⁷ A publication named *People from Tsutskhvati and Tsesi are planning their future. Community planning and development of two Georgian villages*.

the missing explanation of the link between the project objectives and the project outputs (results). However, the project objectives are reflected by the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability which will be addressed in the next paragraphs.

3.1. Relevance

According to the respondents, the relevance of the project was very high. The quantitative analysis of the four interview subjects showed high relevance assessment at 3.8 out of four points or “excellent” in the narrative range of answers.

RELEVANCE

Question no. and description		sub. 1	sub. 2	sub. 3	sub. 4
1	Relevance of the project objectives to the needs of the partner countries and their social and economic development	4	4	4	4
2	Alignment of the project with the national development priorities in the partner countries and SDG 17?	4	4	4	3
3	Responsiveness and adaptability of the project to the changing environment in country at national and subnational levels	3	4	4	4
4	Appropriateness of methods of delivery to the development context	4	4	4	4
average		3.75	4	4	3.75
TOTAL result		3.875			

The qualitative analysis also discovered a high satisfaction with the project relevance. The respondents stipulated the positive feedback from the final beneficiaries to whom the village development in the peripheral region is very important. The project seemed very interesting with regard to community planning which was a new experience for the final beneficiaries who appreciated Czech expertise. The communities had no experience with donors and the local facilitators highlighted a lack of infrastructure, educational facilities and a relative isolation. Nesehnuti with their local partners visited the communities personally and pre-analyzed the situation to identify their real needs. Several visits were needed as the facilitators describe the local citizens as shy and not open before a relationship is established, unwilling to share their issues at the first meeting. The local partner Abchazintercont aimed their efforts to village development in order to train actors who will keep on developing the village in future.

Nesehnuti found the relevance high, related to the lack of community involvement in development planning in Georgia and particularly in the project location. Hence, Nesehnuti presented the possibility of change to get the citizens involved, to connect the community and to create a community development plan which shall be further elaborated and implemented by the citizens.

Project management of the CUP also assesses the project as highly relevant and inclusive, although the innovative part of the project is rather on average. However, the CUP experience shows that project relevance is often more important than a highly innovative (but hard to implement) solution. The project matches thematically the Czech Development Aid priorities (that is currently more endorsed than the UNDP CO priorities). In addition, synergies with other organizations were highlighted as a point of relevance and engagement of the EU was mentioned as well.

3.2. Effectiveness

The criterion of effectiveness was assessed quantitatively as “excellent” (four points by all four subjects) that corresponds with the project delivery which is complete now.

EFFECTIVENESS

Question no. and description		sub. 1	sub. 2	sub. 3	sub. 4
1	The extent to which the Project activities are implemented and the project results and objectives achieved	4	4	4	4
average		4	4	4	4
TOTAL result					4

In view of the project stakeholders, the project identified the development priorities of the communities and the plans for each community were prepared accordingly. The project was perceived by the final beneficiaries to be above expectations as the change was visible, attracting citizens' attention. The local partners established a Facebook group focused on improvement of living conditions in the communities and the community members are still active in the group which is monitored by the local partners of Nesehnuti. The local partners appreciated the practical results, reflected also by involvement of 37 citizens in the community planning in the village of Tsesi, and more than 40 participants in Tsutskhvati. (Normally, such number of people almost never meet there). Further, the apolitical character of the gatherings was mentioned, viewed as a success as usually, the village is divided by a political cleavage to two political sides. After the project completion, the citizens have a clear plan and a vision of what they want to achieve, and they have the respective budget already approved.

The CUP project management views the project as very effective with highly engaged staff willing and able to do an extra step, particularly in transferring the information to the local partners (which is not common among the implementers). Nesehnuti was found to be flexible in finding solutions and working very independently, coordinating with other Czech NGOs in the country (as Caritas, People in Need) and with the UNDP. Moreover, Nesehnuti implements more projects in the country which allows cost sharing, especially regarding five duty trips taken to Georgia.

Eventually, the project managed the COVID-19 pandemic very well, substituting a cancelled activity (a study trip of the local partners to Czechia) by alternative activities, highly appreciated by the beneficiaries.

3.3. Efficiency

The efficiency proved to be “excellent”, reaching 3.6 points out of four according to the interviews. The respondents found the project funding, schedule, and human resources organization and project management and communication highly efficient. The responses involved the project itself and the CUP secondment modality.

EFFICIENCY

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2	sub.3	sub.4
1	The extent to which funds have been turned strategically into results	4	3	3	4
2	The extent to which time has been turned strategically into results	4	4	4	2
3	The extent to which human resources have been turned strategically into results	4	4	4	
average		4	3.667	3.667	3
TOTAL result					3.583

The CUP project management appreciated the proportionate staff salaries (of the Czech implementers and local partners) together with the low difference among them. They highlighted the Czech Development Aid objective of project scaling-up potential (in some cases based on a previous feasibility study) explaining the low volume of funding and the small flexible solutions application. (The value for money is one the key aspects for project assessment and approval.) This mode of the CUP implementation is also preferred by the project donor, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (MFA).

3.4. Impact

The project impact was not quantified by most of the respondents who rather gave narrative responses. Only one subject assigned four points (“excellent”) to the impact. Hence, the quantitative part of the impact assessment is not relevant.

IMPACT

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2	sub.3	sub.4
1	To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the project implementation, impact, and the potential for a follow-up				4
TOTAL result					4

However, the narrative part compensated the data wealth. According to the interlocutors, the project was communicated very well to the general public through a website, mobile phone communication, public meetings, online TV, and especially social networks. Most of all, the local partners saw the impact in the development of the action group which continues the work. The project triggered community mobilization and endorsed improvement of linkages among various sectors of society (government, citizens, NGOs etc.) The communication between the municipality and village representatives has been established.

Nesehnuti considers the very well developed local partnership as one of major factors driving the project impact, supported also by the UNDP CO. The local partners (Abchazintercont) plan follow-up activities in future, making effort to get a new funding to implement the planned activities which will steer up tourism and the overall economic development in the region.

The project outputs (the community development plans) have been published at the community websites³⁸ and in the community planning guide. The two-days training for facilitators was also highly appreciated as well by the local facilitators.

According to the CUP monitoring report, the number of initiatives implemented (in the upcoming months and years) as a result of community planning in communities can serve as a long-term indicator of the project impact. The project Final Report describes the expected impact as improved quality of municipality actions and more transparent, inclusive, and democratic decision-making processes stemming from the active participation of local citizens in local governance which will reflect the needs of the citizens ideally in future. Further, the Final Report mentions the Abkhazintercont's note on future job creation based on the development planned.

In addition, the project impact is enhanced by the project visibility, supported by an article about the project published online at Okriba News and the interview of Jaromir Nemec (Nesehnuti) published at the CUP website.³⁹

Finally, inclusion and gender considerations are analyzed as a part of the project impact. In this area, the project was very successful. Nesehnuti is intensively engaged in gender equality promotion. The ratio of wo/men in the project reached 50:50 as well as among the final beneficiaries (citizens) among whom women were very active. According to the local partners, women empowerment was increased as female participants engagement in family decision-making role because of the project outputs. The local partners make effort to empower women and sexual minorities in business and community and they also deal with GBV. Also, a social inclusion centre was established by the UNDP CO in Ambrolauri.⁴⁰ The project developed inclusion by engagement of the community and triggering the cooperation with the local government. The quantitative analysis of the interviews reflects the support expressed by the interlocutors' narration, with the gender endorsement reaching 3.8 points out of four (rating "excellent").

GENDER

Question no. and description		sub. 1	sub. 2	sub. 3	sub.4
1	To what extent the gender considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation	4	4	4	3
2	How effectively the gender issues and constraints were managed	4		4	3
3	The extent to which the project generated gender equality and women empowerment				4
average		4	4	4	3.333
					3.83
TOTAL result					3

³⁸ Ambrolauri (2021): *Local Economic Development Plan*, online http://ambrolauri.gov.ge/eng_version.pdf.
 Tkibuli (2021): *Local Economic Development Plan*, online https://tkibuli.gov.ge/sites/default/files/ledp_tkibuli_eng_official_2.pdf.

³⁹ The CUP: www.undp.cz.

⁴⁰ UNDP CO Georgia, (2021) :*The Future is Inclusive*, online <https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscentre/pressreleases/2021/people-with-disabilities.html>

3.5. Sustainability

The sustainability was evaluated as “excellent” (3.8 points), based on the interviews’ data, indicating positive prospect for project outcomes after the project end together with a scale up potential in knowledge transfer and capacity building in Georgia.

SUSTAINABILITY

Question no. and description		sub. 1	sub. 2	sub. 3	sub. 4
1	The extent to which the Project outputs/results are likely to be sustainable after the project’s closing	4	3		4
2	Long-term sustainability of the project’s achievements and further sharing knowledge and expertise		3		3
3	The extent to which the project enhanced the development of national capacity in partner and donor countries		4	4	4
average		4	3.333	4	3.667
TOTAL result					3.75

The local partners and facilitators keep the initiative ongoing after the project closing by coordination of ten-member group of activists besides a Facebook group with 50 members, aimed at new grant proposals. Although the communities are highly motivated, an additional support is needed from the local government together with the funding from grants aimed at the implementation of the development plans. Nesehnuti continues to monitor the situation, providing for ad-hoc consultations. The local partners obtained an office space from the municipality and the PC and internet connection from the CUP. Abkhazintercont and other local freelance facilitators appreciate the received knowledge and expertise on the project content and management (proposal writing, budgeting, project management). Their physical presence in Ambrolauri/Tkibuli municipality is an invaluable asset. Nesehnuti continues its work on other projects in Georgia, being somehow available in case of need.

Further, sustainability was endorsed by the interest of the UNDP CO supporting other projects in synergy, e.g. Mayors for Inclusive Growth initiative.

According to the project Final Report, the project design includes measures on long-term sustainability enhancement, e.g. the publication of the guide on community development including a summary of the lessons-learned for free use of other communities/municipalities, giving them a chance to inspire and follow the path. Abkhazintercont plans to use the gained know-how in future work. Another value-added asset is the low cost of the community planning techniques.

4. Overview of strengths and weaknesses of the project implementation

4.1. Strengths

As the most positive aspects of the project were mentioned the following: pre-analysis of the local context and relevance, village and community before the project start, including the village archive search bringing to light an interesting and inspiring information on the village life at beginning of the 20th century, good information campaign, communication, and dissemination, good methodology, trainings provided by Nesehnuti as the facilitators' training or training on (social) entrepreneurship, and the expertise transferred, limited but sufficient for the case.

Another strong point was the local partner (as recommended by the UNDP) with a good knowledge of the environment and contacts, the establishment of the community meeting place (and its alternative outside of the building during the pandemic), enhancing active communication, deliberation of goals, activities, tourism support. Further, the local partners appreciated the provision of the PC and internet, materials on community planning by Nesehnuti, good practice sharing, and the project output – a strong action plan, attracting the citizen engagement since they perceive the social capital development as problematic in the villages currently. The support and motivation of the citizens was also viewed as indispensable.

Finally, the communication with the CUP project management was praised together with the flexibility of the CUP organization (a possibility of the project prolongation during the pandemic).

4.2. Weaknesses

The local facilitators stipulated the need of a longer facilitating period as in their view, two-day facilitating is not enough to mobilize community. Moreover, they invested much more unpaid time than paid (two days) into the project work. The facilitators would appreciate to have paid more working days, although they were more than willing to volunteer as they find the project meaningful.

Another weak factors in the project were the poor internet access in the location (preventing the community from using social networks for communication), and the pandemic causing the cancellation of the study trips to Czechia which would be very much appreciated. Further, the Nesehnuti's project management deliverables are loosely organized and quite limited in scope although all obligatory information is involved. Visibility of the project is average, without a presentation in Czechia which could bring more interest of the general public and potential donors.

5. Lessons learned

Among the lessons learned of the project, as articulated by the CUP project management, Nesehnuti, and the local partners, is the necessity of a larger promotion and visibility of the project, particularly in Czechia, more comprehensive reporting, and better visibility of the MFA behind the CUP as only the Nesehnuti's project coordinator (except for the CUP project management) knew the donor was the MFA. From the rest of the respondents, two thought the donor was the UNDP and one did not know.

The Czech implementers and the local partners would also appreciate budget for follow-up (micro) projects or long-term projects for two – three years.

6. Summary

The project *Public involvement into the process of regional development via community planning in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli in Georgia* was successfully delivered without substantial deficiencies in the content but showing some space for improvement in the formal project management. However, the project was very successful (with regard to the early evaluation just after the project's closing) in all areas - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and it was highly appreciated by all stakeholders.

The final beneficiaries of the project outputs, represented by the local partners of Nesehnuti, living in the project location, praised the project outputs and the method of implementation. They feel highly motivated by the project for the follow-up which is ongoing and implemented by local citizens (coordinated by the project facilitators) and for future projects.

The municipalities Ambrolauri and Tkibuli, and specifically the villages Tsesi and Tsutskhvati which used to be on the periphery of social and economic development, got new insights on community planning. Not only accepted they the idea of the possibility of active citizen participation in the community development but they also received precise knowledge and expertise to take over the ownership of their development strategy and implementation. The project inclusively engaged women, traditionally left behind in public affairs, who became very active and empowered.

In short, life in Tsesi and Tsutskhvati has changed. The project triggered a process which is in the centre of interest of surrounding municipalities in Ambrolauri and Tkibuli and it has a great potential to further extend to other regions. Nesehnuti proved to be an excellent project implementer and it can be recommended for future projects, particularly in Georgia where it is well established, working on a number of development projects. The CUP's contribution was essential for the project implementation as the small-scale projects are not sponsored by the UNDP CO and by donors in general. The cooperation with the CUP was perceived with enthusiasm as very constructive and supportive.

7. Recommendations

The recommendations are general, stemming from the analysis of the subject case but not necessarily reflecting the project deficiencies in all regards. Rather, they show a way for further improvement to be considered by the CUP project management, and they are mostly applicable to other projects as well.

To Nesehnuti:

- Project objectives, and results (outputs or deliverables) should be explicitly mentioned in all plans and progress / final reports. The project objectives should be explicitly linked to the project outputs (and outcomes).
- SMART method is recommended for setting project objectives, outputs, and for the indicators in the area of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability.
- The project management deliverables should be organized and extended in depth and scope.
- The project's visibility should cover Czechia.

Annex 1: The sample questionnaire:

C. Warm up questions and demographic data.

D. Main questions:

13. How did the project start?
14. What was your role in the project?
15. How did you learn about the project?
16. What is the project about?
17. Why the project took place?
18. How do you use the results?
19. How do you like the results?
20. Is there something you do not like about the project and its results?
21. Is there some improvement you would suggest?
22. Can you mention one biggest advantage and one biggest mistake in the project?
23. Do you think it makes sense to implement such projects in future?
24. Do you know the project donors?

Annex 15: Case study 3: Youth Community Centre in Mongu (Zambia)

**Youth Community Centre in Mongu, Zambia
A case study**



Karolina Svobodova, Ph.D.
13/11/2021

The Case Study No. 3: Youth Community Centre in Mongu, Zambia

8. The case study design

The purpose of this case study is to analyze the case of the project *Youth Community Centre in Mongu, Zambia* to evaluate its performance, and to recommend possible improvements for future projects. The case study is one of three studies elaborated as a part of the Czech UNDP Partnership for Sustainable Development Goals (CUP) Mid-Term Review.

The methodology of the case studies is the same as the method of the whole Mid-Term Review, i.e. a mixed-method using quantitative and qualitative analytical tools. In particular, two online interviews have been conducted with the project implementers, one focus group meeting was conducted with the CUP project management (three respondents), and the inputs from two focus group discussions with the implementers and a local partner in Zambia were used. Each interview consisted of regular semi-structured questionnaires used by the whole project and of specialized semi-structured questionnaires with additional open questions, used only for the case studies. These questions were organized chronologically to simulate a spontaneous narration about the case, with ad-hoc auxiliary questions posed when necessary.⁴¹ The examiner took notes during the interview to get a highly corresponding content transcription. The interviews were not recorded regarding the personal data protection. Further, project materials as progress reports, plans, and the project contract, were used. Thus, triangulation of different data sources is ensured by cross-check of diverse interlocutors' statements and the mentioned written materials. Altogether, the data were collected from eight interlocutors. The subject case has been selected randomly with regards to the other case study location in order to choose projects from different countries.

The analysis of the collected data consists of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the project benchmarks (planned deliverables compared with achievements as described in the Project Documentation) and of a simple quantitative analysis of the data collected through the standard questionnaires, aimed at evaluation of the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability. These criteria together with lessons learned (as set by the UNDP) and achievement of the planned outputs, objectives, and outcomes serve as independent variables while the overall project performance is considered as the dependent variable. This method is the most appropriate regarding the simplicity, homogeneity, and the low volume of data collected. Specifically, the questions related to each criterion were responded by the interlocutors in the range of excellent / good / modest / poor / do not know, N/A. To quantify the answers, they were nominally indicated by points (4 – excellent, 3 – good, 2 – modest, 1 – poor, 0 – do not know / N/A). Due to the nature of the data, a simple average value was calculated for each variable without using median values.

⁴¹See Annex 1.

The collected data were categorized according to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, and lessons learned which are analyzed and presented in this case study together with the best strengths and weaknesses of the case project.

The qualitative analysis of the collected data shows the project performance in a deep detail, using the narrative part of the questionnaires, particularly regarding the additional specialized questionnaire. The Prince2 methodology is used for a basic project management assessment.

9. Overview of the case

The project *Youth Community Centre in Mongu, Zambia* was implemented by Czech NGO Skate World Better, founded in Denmark in 2019. Skate World Better implemented several projects in Africa except for the skate park in Mongu which is the capital of the Western Province in Zambia, the headquarters of Mongu District, and home to one of fastest growing skateboarding scenes in Africa. This project was carried out in collaboration with the local partner NGOs We Skate Mongu, Skateboarding Association of Zambia, and volunteering organizations from all over the world (Wonders Around the World, Alis Streetwear, Donate for Skate).⁴²

The purpose of the project as of the other projects of Skate World Better is social and physical (health) development of the youth which counts for one half of population in developing African countries as Zambia. According to Skate World Better, skateboarding serves as a tool to bring people together in a safe space where children can learn, sport, play, and socialize. It is presented as an unstructured activity fostering joint effort and mutual respect rather than competitiveness, appropriate for people of all body types, ages, genders, and backgrounds. Skateboarding is a sport discipline demanding lot of learning and overcoming one-self as one success is preceded by many failures (and even falls). Moreover, it has a potential to empower girls. The idea of using skateboarding as a method of youth development has been resonating the skating scene since 2014 when first community skate park has been built in India.

The project team involved 25 volunteers working on the skate park construction. Once built, the community centre Lukaba Hande (Happy End) was handed over to the NGO We Skate Mongu, aimed at child development. In addition, 120 skates were donated by Skate World Better to be lent to the clients of the centre (for free). There was also a significant skill transfer during the project when the local community learned how to build a skate park using concrete, how to skate, and many other soft skills as communication and tolerance of differences in age, ethnicity, gender, race, etc.

10. Overview of the project performance

According to the Project Documentation, the project objectives are articulated as following:

“To build a skatepark with facilities that can be used as a youth community centre within a very reasonable budget, to be run by our local partners organized under the flag of We Skate Mongu NGO. It should be further used by other local grassroot organizations for activities beyond

⁴²Skate World Better <https://www.skateworldbetter.org/zambia/>. The involved countries were the USA, Denmark, Czechia, Belgium, and the United Kingdom.

skateboarding.“ The definition of the project objectives is clear and in accordance with the SMART method.

Among the deliverables set by the project contract are preparatory works, elaboration of construction plans of the skate park, obtaining the required permissions for the construction, and the construction of the skate park with an adjacent youth centre. All the deliverables have been delivered, i.e. the construction is built, permissions obtained, and the skate park is in use by the local community, offering a range of educational and leisure activities including trainings for girls, boys, and young women led by local female/male trainers trained by Skate World Better, lessons of dance, yoga, art, craft (by Mumwa Craft Association) languages, lessons on life issues as HIV (by professionals from Lewanika General Hospital), gender equality, financial literacy (organized by We Skate Mongu and affiliated social workers), and cultural events as art exhibitions, theatre, and movie projections (as the centre includes a movie wall and a sound system). The main assumption of the project is that development can be achieved through education.

The project objective has been fulfilled by establishment of a high quality, safe playground connected to water and electricity (incl. night lighting), secured by local guards, surrounded by nature and with an adjacent building serving as a classroom / youth centre where sport equipment is stored.

Further, the project has already had a large social impact during its implementation when the local community was involved in the skate park construction, learning new skills and getting a sense of ownership. Most of the budget was spent in the region on services and materials bought from local retailers. In addition, social networking was achieved between ethnic groups from different cities despite the prevailing regionalism. Joint play and focus on skateboarding improve and strengthen social relations and inclusion among men and women, younger and older, different tribes and ethnic groups. Besides that, sport has a natural positive impact on physical and mental health.

The project output (a skate park) attracted many families from the city and nearby areas together with representatives of the government and the kingdom of Barotseland. At the beginning, the number of kids and youths coming to the centre exceeded the capacity of the playground and the numbers have been growing exponentially. Hence, more activities have been incorporated into a regular weekly / monthly scheme.

According to the project Final Report, the project outcome is “an attitude to the youth bulge phenomenon and the SDG no. 10 (reduced inequalities) and 17 (partnerships for the goals)”. This definition is vague as it is not stating what specific attitude is going to be taken. Thus, the achievement of the project outcome is difficult to exactly evaluate but based on the project objectives, assumptions, and outputs, it can be summarized that the overall outcome of attracting the youth to the project output while reducing inequalities and creating partnerships has been achieved. However, the link between the project objectives, outputs, and outcomes is not explicitly stated and remains vague.

The project objectives are further assessed as reflected by the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

10.1. Relevance

The criterion of relevance was assessed quantitatively as “excellent” (3,46 points out of four).

RELEVANCE

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	Relevance of the project objectives to the needs of the partner countries and their social and economic development	4	4
2	Alignment of the project with the national development priorities in the partner countries and SDG 17?	4	3
3	Responsiveness and adaptability of the project to the changing environment in country at national and subnational levels	0	3
4	Appropriateness of methods of delivery to the development context	3	3
average		3.6667	3.25
TOTAL result			3.46

In the narration of the respondents, the project is beneficial to the whole town, connecting the community, the youth, and the elderly bringing children. The project is aimed at the new generation which brings progress, particularly in Africa with a high youth ratio. The progress is not only material but also social including social inclusion, gender, peace, etc., contributing to the SDG no. 17 (partnerships for the goals). According to the Czech implementers, Skate World Better assessed the relevance of the project during the pre-project phase when selecting an appropriate (African and later Zambian) location, based on the already ongoing efforts in the area of community and youth development.

The implementers took into account the local customs and culture during the knowledge transfer which was tailor-made to the actual local conditions and contexts (“we gave them support to do it in local ways”). Hence, the final beneficiaries (the community) did not have perception of being donated something strange and external but they developed a sense of ownership leading to sustainability.

The project is very relevant also in view of the CUP project management. While agriculture and irrigation is the main Czech development priority in Zambia, the local development is an important goal as well, particularly in this case with a high potential for a scale-up.

10.2. Effectiveness

The effectiveness was assessed by both respondents as “excellent” (four points) as the project was delivered and the skate park was built.

EFFECTIVENESS

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	The extent to which the Project activities are implemented and the project results and objectives achieved	4	4
average		4	4
TOTAL result			4

Also the formal evaluation of the project by the CUP project management assigned in all aspects the value “fully met expectations” except for communication where “partially met expectations” value was reached due to small delays in the communication and visibility where the planning showed a small space for improvement.⁴³ Otherwise, the project was evaluated as highly effective despite the pandemic. Moreover, the project achieved outstanding results in know-how South-South exchange.

10.3. Efficiency

The efficiency proved to be “excellent”, reaching 3.8 points out of four according to the interviews.

EFFICIENCY			
Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	The extent to which funds have been turned strategically into results	4	3
2	The extent to which time has been turned strategically into results	4	4
3	The extent to which human resources have been turned strategically into results	4	4
average		4	3.667
TOTAL result			3.83

The Czech implementers stipulated the many volunteers involved and the community helped in various tasks including provisions of running water and electricity to the construction site, and also with the construction which led to the project awareness dissemination, creation of the sense of ownership, and expertise transfer. While the small help of local community was often paid (to compensate resources), most of the international volunteers had been provided only with food and accommodation (but not the flight tickets). Almost the whole budget was spent on the project outputs with no salaries paid that is highly admirable on the one side but not too practical nor efficient in the long term for Skate World Better and their volunteering co-workers. The NGO is run by the Czech implementers as their “leisure” activity while they keep paid jobs. This strategy is very useful for the public (CUP) budget but doubtful for future activities of Skate World Better. In other words, if they had paid the salaries, the project would have been less competitive and it is not recommendable to continue sponsoring projects with their own money⁴⁴ (risking total exhaustion, resource depletion, and final termination of the initiative in future).

The implementers also highlighted the issue with cash-flow as the CUP payments of the individual installments were not corresponding with the expenditures spent in real time, resulting in the necessity of taking a loan to cover the costs incurred before the installments could have been authorized.⁴⁵ This issue was caused by the unusual structure of the project budget and time-line where the majority of costs were of capital nature, incurring at the

⁴³ The CUP (2021) :Supplier Evaluation Performance Sheet, in: Project Documentation.

⁴⁴Only 60% of the project finance was provided by the CUP; the rest was from other donors and Skate World Better members’ personal savings.

⁴⁵This issue threatened the whole project as according to Skate World Better, without the loan they could not have implemented it.

beginning of the project (purchase of materials and arrival to the project site), which continued with a minimum of running costs as no personnel costs incurred. Hereby, a space for improvement can be seen in more experienced project management (at Skate World Better) as regards project and budget planning, and also more flexibility for unusually structured projects on the side of the CUP.

The CUP project management also highlighted the Czech Development Aid objective of project scaling-up potential (in some cases based on a previous feasibility study) explaining the low volume of funding and the small flexible solutions application. (The value for money is one the key aspects for project assessment and approval.) This mode of the CUP implementation is also preferred by the project donor, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (MFA).

Another issue which might be systemic is the need of visa prolongation as the tourist visa are time-limited in many countries (usually to three months) and it is difficult to get another type of visa without an actual labor relation in the partner country. Since the projects under the Challenge Fund last up to one year, the visa prolongation can be an issue for more of them.

The implementing team was viewed as very solid and professional by Skate World Better noting the different people management of the volunteers (than of paid workers, in regular case). The managerial structure had to be adjusted to this circumstance to allow a kind of loose control and friendly environment, however, at expense of work efficiency.

The organization of the CUP team and the communication with them was highly appreciated by the implementers which took the project approval as a surprise given the “skating” character of the project and the “conservative” nature of the UNDP (as seen by the youth). This stance might reflect a need for a generational adjustment in the UNDP PR as the developing countries suffer from the youth bulge and the youth can have very differing views, approaches, and priorities regarding the SDGs than the national elites. In other words, the PR is probably not fully reflecting the youth, their lifestyle and needs.

10.4. Impact

The project impact was quantified only by one the respondents – as “excellent” (four points). The responses were rather narrative.

IMPACT

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	To what extent are key stakeholders/final beneficiaries satisfied with the project implementation, impact, and the potential for a follow-up	4	0

TOTAL result

4

According to the Czech implementers and also the local partners, the project impact is very high as there was no community social and cultural space for leisure activities in Mongu before, and now, the skating lessons, dance sessions, and other community events are already in place. The amount of time and effort put into the project by local volunteers from We Skate Mongu guaranteed a good reception of the project in the local community. The community development was already visible shortly after the project’s end, and the skate park is a durable real estate, supposed to serve without need for a fix for the next 50 years. The popularity of the centre is

huge, and the community cooperates on its maintenance (e.g. none of the skates or other retable equipment has been stolen yet).

The project dissemination was conducted through social media having the highest impact on youth, and also through a TV broadcast (an interview on Zambian national TV), through the Czech Press Office,⁴⁶ an international magazine Forever Playground,⁴⁷ Czech online news server aktualne.cz,⁴⁸ the CUP website,⁴⁹ and in Czech newspaper Hospodarskenoviny (an interview).

In addition, inclusion and gender considerations are analyzed as a part of the project impact. In this area, the project was very successful. According to the CUP project management, the UN commitment “leave no one behind” reached high levels of fulfillment in the project.

According to the interlocutors, the gender equality dimension achieved 3.6 points out of four, identifying its level as “excellent”. The motto of the Skate World Better is “skateboarding knows no gender”.

GENDER

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	To what extent the gender considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation	4	3
2	How effectively the gender issues and constraints were managed	4	4
3	The extent to which the project generated gender equality and women empowerment	4	3
average		4	3.333
TOTAL result			3.67

There were seven women in the implementation team together with local girls and women engaged in the implementation. The trainings are for girls and boys, with girls’ numbers prevailing. The trainers are male and female (40%). The skate park welcomes everybody – all races, genders, and ages as there is also a sitting place for the elderly. The inclusion has been largely endorsed by Skate World Better in the local community where the implementers found no gender constraint and women have been very active. While boys sometimes do not want to obey female trainers, the local partners of We Skate Mongu teach them to do that. Hence, the

⁴⁶CTK (13/5/2021): *Organizace Skate World Better staví projekt v Zambii*, online https://www.protext.cz/zprava.php?id=36262&fbclid=IwAR3rjCToZZuDLbKn-k01m_IyBTsi01jSyC4xa0OzrSO_CCt0rfWy_IeiTiA

⁴⁷Louzecky, M. :*From Mozambique to Zambia, the road is paved with concrete. A Skate World Better history*, Forever Playground (14/6/2021), online https://foreverplayground.org/from-mozambique-to-zambia.html?fbclid=IwAR3rjCToZZuDLbKn-k01m_IyBTsi01jSyC4xa0OzrSO_CCt0rfWy_IeiTiA.

⁴⁸Aktualne.cz (2021):*Cesipostavili park pro skejtky v Zambii*, online https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/cesi-postavili-park-pro-skejtky-v-zambii-v-zemi-kde-polovina-r-0cf68a76c2bf11eba4560cc47ab5f122/?fbclid=IwAR3rjCToZZuDLbKn-k01m_IyBTsi01jSyC4xa0OzrSO_CCt0rfWy_IeiTiA.

⁴⁹The CUP (2021): <https://undp.cz/challenge-fund-czech-and-zambian-skateboarders-teamed-up-to-build-a-state-of-the-art-skatepark-in-mongu/?fbclid=IwAR0ClgCG8hKHjewC8b9v1UoNP0c4OhkG5FCmsLgk1dMcbaoKwoHnURub3Y>.

project substantially contributed to the SDG no. 10 (reduced inequalities) as skating is still perceived as male activity by the general public in the West, and especially in Africa.

10.5. Sustainability

The sustainability was assessed as “excellent” (3.8 points out of four) by the interlocutors, based on the durability of the concrete construction and the expected growing popularity trend of skating in Mongu which already has shown a great potential for a scale-up.

SUSTAINABILITY

Question no. and description		sub.1	sub.2
1	The extent to which the Project outputs/results are likely to be sustainable after the project's closing	4	4
2	Long-term sustainability of the project's achievements and further sharing knowledge and expertise	4	4
3	The extent to which the project enhanced the development of national capacity in partner and donor countries	4	3

average 4 3.667

TOTAL result 3.83

The CUP project management is of the same view as they received the information on the park's popularity and high utilization rate. The high inclusion helps sustainability together with the interest of NGOs (e.g. Skateboarding Association of Zambia), political elites (as the Ministry of Youth, Sport, and Child Development), and the community who shows a big sense of ownership and engagement.

The local partners referred to the donations needed for paying the trainers⁵⁰ but also stipulated that people can learn skating themselves, and there is a range of other activities for the community for free.

Skate World Better and We Skate Mongu cooperate on planning future projects in Zambia but the main responsible party for the operation of the park and its activities, and a possible knowledge transfer for a future scale-up is We Skate Mongu. The Skateboarding Association of Zambia became a valuable contact for Skate World Better and We Skate Mongu during its implementation and after, contributing to the project's sustainability. The Ministry of Youth, Sport, and Child Development accepted the activities of We Skate Mongu within its curriculum that is a great achievement from the political perspective when the conflict between the central Zambian government and the Western Province is taken into account.

⁵⁰We Skate Mongu arranges the fundraising for the skate park now.

11. Overview of strengths and weaknesses of the project implementation

11.1. Strengths

Among the biggest project's strengths were named zero level of corruption, very friendly and helping local community in Zambia, and no bureaucracy, and very fast communication with the CUP. UNDP branding helped Skate World Better to overcome bureaucratic obstacles in Zambia.

From the evaluator's point of view, the project strengths are high relevance as the project is tailor-made and identification of the key development issue (youth development in developing countries).

11.2. Weaknesses

Among the project weaknesses, as mentioned by the implementers, was low level of local conditions knowledge, raising costs, COVID-19 pandemic, poor access to funds through ATM's in the region, lack of materials in the region, frequent thefts of materials and personal belongings, and poor communication with the contact point in Zambia who was not responding in 95% of cases, even when urgent and very important issues were to be solved. Similarly as the evaluator, the implementers noticed a space for improvement in project planning and management (very difficult in the harsh conditions).

In addition, the CUP legal subjectivity, structure, and synergies were not very clear to the implementers, lacking transparency there, resulting in issues in visibility. The cash-flow problems mentioned above were caused by receiving only 30% of the needed amount in the time of expenditure.

12. Lessons learned

Skate World Better found a number of valuable lessons to be learned in the project which is partially related to the specifics of Zambia as one of the least developed countries. Thus, they learned about the local culture, transport, prices of materials (and their automatic increase for foreigners), mistrust to the project which was foreign and strange by nature to many local suppliers. As the local conditions vary in each country and even region, the future plan is to organize a pre-trip in order to assess all the information ourselves and eliminate any possible factor of surprise.

The main challenge for the implementers was the cash-flow for which they plan to make better assessment for the future while appealing to the CUP to make the terms more flexible in this area. In addition, the implementers noted the lack transparency of the MFA behind the CUP as except for the CUP project management, none of the respondents knew the donor was the MFA, and the implementers experienced problems with correct naming of the CUP as a part of visibility activities.

Further, the implementers found, the larger the team was, the more invaluable new insights into the project emerged. They also made effort to be a good example for the local youth while

gaining a significant experience in construction. According to the Final Report, handling of the opening day proved to be an incredibly important moment for the future performance of the youth centre as surprisingly many of the local government officials arrived at the opening and it was important to welcome them warmly to secure their future support.

13. Summary

To sum up, the project *Youth Community Centre in Mongu, Zambia* was successfully delivered without substantial deficiencies in the content but showing some space for improvement in the formal project management. However, the project was very successful (with regard to the early evaluation just after the project's closing) in all areas – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, and it was highly appreciated by all stakeholders. The final beneficiaries of the project outputs, represented by the local partners of Skate World Better, living in the project location, praised the project outputs and the method of implementation. They feel a sense of ownership and are more than willing to sustain the project outputs in future.

Moreover, the project achieved a high performance, and particularly visibility in the UNDP and in media in Czechia and the partner country. The relevance was very high because of a thorough pre-analysis and particularly the project planning and implementation in collaboration with the local community. While it is laudable Skate World Better invested much personal effort, time, and money, it is not recommendable to continue sponsoring projects with their own finance. Rather, better project planning and using paid work is advisable in order to sustain the long-term prospects of the NGO. However, Skate World Better proved to be an excellent project implementer and it can be recommended for future projects, particularly in Africa where it is well established, working on several development projects.

The essential aspect of the project is the identification of its key assumption of the high percentage of the youth in Zambian population being a problem to be managed. This substantial issue of developing countries (together with the fertility still high) has serious negative economic, environmental, and eventually political and security impacts (steep demographic growth, poverty, resource depletion, fight for resources, criminality, civil wars, etc.). Without analyzing these elements of the demographical curve, it is obvious the young generation creates future, just as Skate World Better stipulates. As the global development increasingly speeds-up, the generational gap widens in qualitative terms as the young generation has already started living in a very different way compared to the generations born before 2000. Should this progress not be reflected, the generational gap can substantially broaden in the near future also in quantitative way (when the ratio of people born after 2000 multiplies). In other words, the needs, interests, and lifestyle of the youth population should be taken increasingly more into account and incorporated into the development policies. The practical application of this idea by the project contributed to its overall success and visibility.

14. Recommendations

The recommendations are general, stemming from the analysis of the subject case but not necessarily reflecting the project deficiencies in all regards. Rather, they show a way for further improvement to be considered by the CUP project management, and they are mostly applicable to other projects as well.

To the UNDP:

- A need for a generational adjustment in the UNDP / SDG PR and in the development policies.

To the CUP:

- A policy on visa prolongation assistance to be set-up.

To Skate World Better:

- The project objectives should be explicitly linked to the project outputs (and outcomes).
- SMART method is recommended for setting project objectives, outputs, and for the indicators in the area of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability.
- A better project planning and using paid work is recommended to ensure long-term sustainability of the initiative.

Annex 1: The sample questionnaire:

E. Warm up questions and demographic data.

F. Main questions:

25. How did the project start?
26. What was your role in the project?
27. How did you learn about the project?
28. What is the project about?
29. Why the project took place?
30. How do you use the results?
31. How do you like the results?
32. Is there something you do not like about the project and its results?
33. Is there some improvement you would suggest?
34. Can you mention one biggest advantage and one biggest mistake in the project?
35. Do you think it makes sense to implement such projects in future?
36. Do you know the project donors?