

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Country:	Tajikistan
Description of Assignment:	International Consultant for conduction of Final evaluation of the 'Empowering youth for a peaceful Tajikistan'
Period of assignment/services:	November - March 2021 (37 working days)
Duty station:	Home-based with 1 week mission to Tajikistan
Type of Contract:	Individual Consultant (IC)

=1. Background and context

Risks of violent extremism remains a concerning issue for policy makers in Tajikistan¹. These risks are nourished by an interplay of two sets of factors: 'push factors' - structural conditions that make the overall socio-economic environment more conducive, and individuals more vulnerable to violent extremism, and 'pull factors' - catalyst factors that exploit and interact with structural conditions to draw people into violent extremism. 'Push' factors are related to the persistent political, social, and economic exclusion experienced by specific groups of young men and women and their immediate communities and beyond. Rising inequality, shrinking civic space for engagement, and lack of inclusive development contribute to these inclusion – exclusion dynamics.

These 'push factors' create an exclusionary environment where youth at risk can be 'pulled' by the offerings from violent groups. For example, local grievances can be manipulated into violent extremism by domestic and foreign recruiters through various communication methods with financial incentives as well as the offer of a sense of belonging to a group and other psycho-emotional benefits.² This strategy works particularly well where institutions and public services to address the grievances and improve living conditions of the vulnerable groups do not work effectively. Perpetrators of violent extremism use ideology and religion to justify their actions, even when they are motivated by global, political, context-specific or personal issues.

According to the report on "The Missing Peace"³, most young people, even in the face of strong social, and economic grievances, remain peaceful. Identifying 'extremism' as the problem, relying on securitized approaches and narrowing social, economic and civic spaces for young people does not provide sustainable solutions and might be counterproductive. This project relies on identifying the social, economic and gender-based exclusion, with a view to expanding alternative pathways available to young people. An analysis on the inclusion-exclusion dynamics has provided the results presented below.

Socio-economic situation, dynamics of socio-economic inequality and exclusion:

The population in Tajikistan reached 9 million at the end of May 2018, and it remains the fastest growing (and youngest) country in Central Asia, with an average annual growth of 2.1%. Despite economic gains in recent years (average 5.7% GDP growth between 2009 and 2016),⁴ Tajikistan continues to be one of the poorest countries in Central Asia⁵. According to official statistics, 29.7% continue to live below the official poverty line, and 14% live in extreme poverty. 53% of the workforce is in the agricultural sector, dominated by low-pay/low-productivity and informal employment. It is worth reiterating that, while extreme poverty

¹ E.g. the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy of Tajikistan. Materials of the Dushanbe PVE conference in 2016 and 2018.

² E.g. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899d40f0b64974000192/Drivers_of_Radicalisation_Literature_Review.pdf "Religion and ethnicity have been recognised as powerful expressions of individual and group identity. There is robust evidence that radicalisation is a social process and that identity is a key factor in why individuals become involved in violent movements.

³ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

⁴ United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018 Report, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/WESP2018_Full_Web-1.pdf. The Government of Tajikistan reports about an average 7% growth annually in recent years.

⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan> (retrieved on 7 June 2019).

is not directly linked to violent extremism, it increases risks of economic exclusion, and systematically addressing the exclusion is the best way to prevent violence, including violent extremism.⁶

Tajikistan's potential workforce is growing fast—faster than many of its neighbors in Europe and Central Asia. However, there are some structural features that shape the job challenges in Tajikistan: a) Tajikistan is a mountainous and landlocked country; b) Tajikistan is an agrarian country where almost 3 out of 4 still live in rural areas; c) A fast growing and young population; d) The legacy of transition and slow-paced structural reforms. Due to these factors, the Tajik economy today is not able to create enough jobs, informal sector represents a large and growing source of jobs, several jobs are seasonal or temporary and there are major inequalities in terms of labor market outcomes.

These statistics indicate a particularly bleak picture of economic and social exclusion and inequality for young people, and especially young women throughout the country. Young people make 66% of the population of Tajikistan, and every year around 150,000 young people enter the labour market, but labor underutilization among youth remains at 20.5%, while the official youth unemployment rate amounts to 10.6 % (twice higher than among those who were aged 30-75 years and more than 1.5 times exceeded the national average)⁷. Furthermore, almost 30% (29.3) of young people of 15-24 years old were not in job, education, or training (NEET), and about 90% of these NEET youth consisted of young women. Moreover, the NEET rate for female youth is considerably higher than for male youth. Almost a third of employed young people are in unpaid (informal) jobs compared to 15 percent of adults. Youth are also significantly less likely to be self-employed (5 percent compared to 11 percent among adults).

Furthermore, young people and adolescents, especially girls, have limited access to education, knowledge, and skills that could lead to their social and economic advancement and bring them financial and personal security. Girls aged 11-17 are approximately twice as likely as boys to be deprived in school attainment and attendance. The gap between what education system is providing in terms of learning achievements and skills, and what children, young people, communities and economies need is growing. In addition to immediate risks, the harsh economic situation creates long-term fragility risks for the country, especially with the considerable 'youth bulge', and contributes to the migration and "brain-drain" of the most skillful workforce (females make up approximately 18% of the migrants). It is important to note that economic conditions and societal norms exclude a large portion of women from the economy, especially those living outside major urban areas. Moreover, children and young people in Tajikistan have limited access to health services, including mental health and psychological services, that are tailored to their needs.

Parents play an important role in the life of young people and can sometimes be the ones creating obstacles for their active participation. FGDs conducted by UNICEF in 2018 showed that some parents believe that young people cannot take independent decision on issues concerning their lives until they reach the age of 35. This widespread belief is an integral element of limiting environment for youth participation in the life of society. Moreover, most recent Demographic and Health Survey (2018) indicates that 67 percent of children of age up to 14 face violence. Adolescent Baseline Study 2018 showed that 47 percent of adolescents of age 10-19 face violence in schools. Hence, positive parenting interventions are necessary.

Shift in identity and social cohesion dynamics:

Beyond economic and social exclusion and inequalities, the collapse of Soviet Union and civil war have led to the quest for new identities and belonging. The relationship between secular and religious spheres in the country are still being shaped; and may impact the future of the national project and social contract. While the increasing presence in religion in society is not a concern, as the UN – World Bank study Pathways for Peace also suggests, young people's desire for a social community and belonging⁸ lead to their challenging of existing norms that facilitate social cohesion, leading to intergenerational clashes, in a society where religion is defining identities of younger generations more than the older. If combined with socio-economic exclusion, more radical external ideologies might attract some young people in such an environment.

⁶ Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Progress_Study_on_Youth_Peace_Security_A-72-761_S-2018-86_ENGLISH.pdf

⁷ It should be noted that the registered unemployment in Tajikistan amounts to 0.5%.

⁸ UN – WB Pathways for Peace study

Gender equality and economic empowerment:

The annual “Global Report on the Gender Gap 2018” ranks Tajikistan 123th out of 149 countries assessed⁹ (worst from those ranked in Europe and CIS countries), and the country’s position has been worsening over years. Women’s and girls’ political, economic and social exclusion is widespread in Tajikistan, with a trend towards re-traditionalization reinforcing traditional gender roles that are detrimental to women’s empowerment and gender equality. This creates new economic dependencies, exacerbates existing gender stereotypes, increases violence against women and excludes women from the political and socio-economic sphere.

Young women find it difficult to be included in the political life of Tajikistan. They make only 19% of the Tajik Parliament members (12 out of 63 MPs). Women are unequally represented in civil service (22%), especially in managerial civil service positions (18.7%). Women make only 7% of high-ranking government officials, and as little as 16% of lowest administrative tiers’ representative bodies (in settlements and villages). Women face also structural exclusion in the economic sphere. Women earn less than men, women-headed small and medium enterprises (SMEs) make less than 1% of all SMEs in the country (only around 2000 enterprises). There is limited investment in women’s vocational education, and most women are employed in low-paid labour industries, such as agriculture, education and healthcare. Many economic indicators of women position in the economy are worsening over years, underlining the increasing gap between men and women in the country. For instance, between 2003 and 2013, the disparity between male and female employment rates increased from 21 to 35 percentage points.

At the social level, social norms and traditions contribute to the women’s vulnerability. Although there is no official data, most experts¹⁰ agree about existing practices of early, unregistered, polygamous marriages in Tajikistan, which deprive women of legal protection of their rights, and contribute to the exclusion from education, and other life opportunities. Other social phenomena, like massive migration gives rise to the problem of abandoned women, who – without education, employment and capital – often found in poverty and hopelessness.

2. Description of the project

The project has been realized despite significant delays of 9 months in implementation of the project timeline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis and the competing priorities of the Government as a result of the pandemic. Consequently, the work plan, including project timeframe could not be agreed until 29 September 2020. This was the main reason for requesting a six-month no-cost extension of the project from June–December 2021.

Despite these initial challenges, a preparatory phase was completed successfully, with implementing partners identified, project staff recruited and redesigning of the project within the context of the post-COVID-19 realities. To accelerate the implementation of the project, overcome challenges posed by the pandemic, and the fact that the two districts are remote, Recipient UN Organisations (RUNOs) applied using digital tools and streamlining business processes.

The project aimed to find a new consensus between the government and communities, particularly of young men and women, on how to promote sustainable and inclusive solutions to socio-economic exclusion, allow young people to inform and take part in policy discussions towards this end, and empower young people to identify their own issues and find solutions. A space should be created for youth to be able to express their views and thoughts on various issues, including religion. It is equally important to support the Government of Tajikistan in identifying the problems and root causes that might lead to violent extremism and help it towards taking action in this area.

⁹ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf. The report notes: “Tajikistan takes this year’s bottom spot in the region, slipping 28 places due to a widening Economic Participation and Opportunity gender gap, driven by updated data availability regarding women’s share of legislators, senior officials, and managers as well as labour force participation and estimated earned income” (page 22)

¹⁰E.g. <https://www.bhr.tj/sites/default/files/articles/2018-01/ngo-report-icpr-2013.pdf>;

<http://www.notabene.tj/Doc/Kaz/compl/RU-Domestic-violence-in-Taj-March-2017.pdf>; recent press article:

<https://news.tj/ru/node/269638>

The timeliness of the project is strengthened by the political situation favorable for PBF programming, in which prevention of violent extremism is one of the highest priorities of Tajikistan, which adopted and implements the new National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2021-2025 but is lacking resources and innovations to achieve all goals. Such windows of opportunity are not frequent in Tajikistan. This entry point is critical for the PBF to step in to develop and catalyze models and solutions of inclusive and comprehensive youth involvement that can be used by the government and other development partners and create entry points for the UN in peacebuilding.

The project responds fully to the national priorities and is closely aligned with the UN engagement in the country. Prevention of violent extremism is already an important priority of the government of Tajikistan. The government in 2021 adopted and started implementation of the new National Strategy of Countering Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism 2021-2025. Towards that end, the Government has established a coordination platform for the Strategy's implementation and adopted an Action Plan which lists activities to achieve the Strategy's goals.

The Strategy and the Action Plan includes among others the following objectives/activities:

- Eliminating the socio-economic prerequisites of extremism and violent extremism (the relevant chapter of the strategy mentions e.g. "Reducing the level of socio-economic marginalization of the population necessitates socio-economic policies directed on the increase of living standards and culture of the population, building motivation to constructive, healthy lifestyle, providing opportunities to the socially vulnerable groups of population to adapt and participate in public life, analysis and eliminating the causes of social marginalization and so on").
- Prevention of extremism and violent extremism among minors and young people (the relevant chapter of the strategy refers among other to the improvement of education and "ensuring the possibility of boys and girls getting an education that meets the present-day requirements for the level of knowledge, allowing to understand political processes, mechanisms of the emergence of public and religious conflicts..."). It also mentions that "An important condition for the prevention of radicalism and extremism among youth is the mobilization of youth itself to preventive work with their peers"
- Addressing gender specific issues, indicating that "the state policy in ensuring gender equality should be focused on yet more strengthening of issues related to the creation of equal opportunities for self-fulfillment in all social spheres, regardless of her sexual identity, enhancing social activity and the role of women in public life, as well as ensuring equality between men and women in marital relations."

The project helped to connect the Strategy and the Action Plan to the implementation of the youth policy in Tajikistan, enabling inclusive and comprehensive approaches to the prevention of violent extremism. The State Programme on Social Development of Youth of Tajikistan 2019-2021 sets priorities of participation of young people in political, social, and economic life; effective employment and economic independence of youth. This includes empowering women as agents of change in building community resilience as well as combating discrimination of women in society, as well as broader efforts towards gender equality.

Addressing violent extremism envisages addressing socio-economic roots of the risk, thereby has direct relevance to SDG implementation in the country. UN MAPS mission conducted in December 2016 recommended to the Government of Tajikistan to focus on youth engagement and empowerment as a key accelerator for achievement of nationalized SDG goals. There is an opportunity for the government to prioritize youth much more in its policies, especially those related to private sector and job creation. Only through meaningful youth participation and specific attention to young people in the implementation of the SDGs, the risk of leaving them behind can be turned into an opportunity: a catalyst for change, that contributes to peace and development in the country.

The national vision for youth social engagement and economic empowerment is in line with SDG goals and targets, and particularly with SDG 3, 5, 8, 10 and 16 and supported with national efforts to ensure proper data collection, monitoring of development, and ensuring effective financing of youth programming in the framework of SDG 17.

Several UN Agencies are supporting the government through programmatic efforts, including capacity building initiatives through projects and programmes (UNDP, IOM, UN Women, UNODC, UNICEF etc.).

UNDP has extensive experience on implementing activities aimed at preventing violent extremism in several districts. Particularly, Strengthening Community Resilience and Cooperation for Prevention of Violent extremism (PVE) in Central Asia, the regional UNDP project funded by the Government of Japan, with Tajikistan's budget around 639,000.00 USD. The Project priority was to address social and economic exclusion experienced among at-risk youth of the target areas by providing specific groups of women and men with tailored 'decent' employment/entrepreneurship support and on-demand skills development activities. Activities related to the entrepreneurial skills development services for youth, provision of apprenticeship places, youth involvement in the provision of community-level social and economic services have been envisaged within the project, which were synergetic with 1 and 2 Component of the project.

Since 2015 **UNICEF** in Tajikistan, building on its institutional comparative advantages on violence prevention, skills-building and adolescent empowerment, has been implementing a comprehensive peacebuilding programme with a focus on making young boys and girls less susceptible to extremist and nationalist narratives that fuel conflict, and more actively tolerant of other ethnic groups. UNICEF peacebuilding programme has been supported with grants from CSSF/DFID and its involvement in PBF funded multiagency and multi-country programme "Cross-border Cooperation for Sustainable Peace and Development" in contested border areas between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, UNICEF, within its dedicated Adolescent and youth development programme, support the Government of Tajikistan in development and implementation of youth policies as well as youth participation at local government and national levels.

UN WOMEN (*in Tajikistan and in Central Asia*) has extensive expertise and experience working at community level in building and sustaining peace, targeting women and youth as well as the implementation of projects funded by the PBF and other donors. In this project, UN Women will enjoy partnership with local NGOs (NGO "Gender & Development" as one of its responsible partners) and will engage youth (Y-Peer Volunteers' network) and sport federations (National Federation of Taekwondo and Kickboxing of RT)

Other projects of international organizations working in the area of prevention of violent extremism

This project is complementary to on-going projects, by leveraging mandates of three Agencies in the same initiative to address multiple problems at the same time. It builds and deepens the experience of the regional project implemented by UNDP, as well as prior work of UNICEF and UN Women by focusing its attention on both pull and push factors, as well as introducing the interregional social cohesion perspective to implementation.

The joint UN project "Empowering Youth for a peaceful Tajikistan" funded by UN Peacebuilding Fund has been implemented by three UN Agencies - UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women and aimed to promote the resilience of Tajikistan's young people to violent narratives in areas where risks of violent extremism are exacerbated by vulnerability to extreme poverty and outward migration dynamics, through endowing them with capacities, skills, and competencies that open socio-economic opportunities, enable them to participate in political life, and enhance their community participation, sense of belonging and confidence in the government.

The Project was implemented in close partnership with the state Committee for Youth Affairs and Sports, Committee for Women and Family Affairs, General Prosecutor's Office and Ministry of Education and Science of the RT, authorities in the sub-national government in Kulob, Isfara, Khorog, Baljuvon and Shahrinav districts of Tajikistan targeting youth between the ages of 14 - 30 with specific aims to build resilience among them through:

1. Improving socio-economic opportunities for youth adapted for the labor market, which requires new sets of skills and competencies suitable for innovative sectors of the economy;
2. Building trust and opportunities for youth to engage and empower themselves and their communities;
3. Deploying tailor-made initiatives for groups of youth that face particular exclusion dynamics, and social norms related to gender equality, and women and girls' empowerment.

The abovementioned goal has been achieved through implementation of the following key Outputs:

Output 1. Adolescents and young people have better competencies and skills that foster their opportunities in social and economic life.

The output aimed to build skills and competencies that allow people to be competitive and better placed in political and economic life, expand their livelihood options, and open new avenues for employment, self-realization, and participation. This output addressed push factors related to the lack of perspectives of young people for self-fulfillment, inadequacy of the education and skills to the modern labor market requirements, and lack of skills that enable to identify extremism propaganda and counteract it. As a result of the output implementation, the young people have been equipped with critical competencies and relevant employable skills corresponding to market demands and thus were able to diversify their livelihood options. The skill development approach was based on the results of the sensemaking exercise to define the existing demand of the domestic labor market but also to assess potential for promoting new professional and soft skills, in the social, economic spheres and jobs that were more attractive for the young people. Skills development has been promoted through the mix of proven and innovative solutions, including use of the modern technologies and tools.

Output 2. Adolescents and young people have more opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making and peacebuilding processes to strengthen non-violence values and action.

The output, on the one hand, aimed to empower youth to identify their own priorities and generate solutions, feel the power of helping others and agency of changing the community around them. On the other hand, the output capacitated the government staff to support youth development and participation with a view of safeguarding their rights as well as developing and implementing youth-friendly policies and programmes. In this way, the output addressed pull factors that relate to the feeling of not being heard, lack of confidence, sense of purpose, justice and belonging. As the first project output supported young people as receivers of capacity building, this output supported young people as agents of change and promote their actions for the community good. The activities under both outputs were closely interconnected with referral chain created to ensure that activities complement and leverage the effect by providing complex and integrated package of trainings, capacity building and advocacy for the same group of beneficiaries and stakeholders.

As the project is going to end on 31st December 2021, UNDP and RUNOS have planned to commission an final evaluation to identify and document the achievements of project interventions, challenges, lessons learned and best practices. The findings of the evaluation will provide guidance for the way forward for future course of action. Thus, the evaluation report is expected to include specific recommendations for future programming/interventions.

The project information is summarized in below table.

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Project title	Empowering Youth for a Peaceful Tajikistan (EYPT) Project
Atlas ID	00116488
Country	Tajikistan
Region	Central Asia
Date project document signed	29 September 2020
Project dates	Start Valid period September 2020 31 December 2021
Project budget	USD 2 million

Project expenditure at the time of evaluation	USD
Funding source	UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund
Implementing party	UNDP, UNICEF, UN WOMEN
Working district/city	Shahrinav, Baljuvon, Kulob, Isfara, Khorog

3. Evaluation purpose objectives and scope.

Purpose

The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the achieved results of the project within two output areas mentioned above. The final evaluation should assess the project's performance and achievements vis-à-vis the project's overall objectives on the various sub-national level beneficiaries. Moreover, the evaluation should document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories, and challenges within the project (what worked, and what didn't work and why), as well as strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices. Based on the findings and conclusions from the assessment of the project's achievements, the evaluation should also provide specific and actionable recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered in further Peacebuilding Portfolio, including interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact.

It should also include actionable recommendations on how to improve project management and maximize ownership by national partners, as well as to inform the future work of participating UN agencies on empowering young people from marginalized communities and their contributing role in peacebuilding and community development.

Objectives

Specifically, the objectives are:

- Ascertain the achievements of the project and its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact including synergies with other UN support efforts (coherence)
- Assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project in terms of: 1) addressing key drivers of conflict and the most relevant peacebuilding issues; 2) alignment with National Peacebuilding Policy and national priorities of country; 3) whether the project capitalized on the UN's added value in country; and 4) the degree to which the project addressed cross-cutting issues such as conflict and gender-sensitivity in Tajikistan;
- Assess the effectiveness of the activities aimed at empowering young people, both men and women, to participate equally in political, social, and economic life and making young people more resilient to radicalistic and violent narratives
- Analyze how human rights and gender equality principles are integrated in the programme implementation
- Assess to what extent the intervention and its results made a concrete contribution to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals in particular SDG 16;
- Assess the opportunities for meaningful participation in decision making provided under the intervention aimed at strengthening non-violence values and action
- Review and assess the risks and opportunities (in terms of resource mobilization, synergy and areas of interventions) for youth related PVE projects in future.

- Assess whether the support provided by the PBF has promoted the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS), allowed a specific focus on women's participation in peacebuilding processes, and whether it was accountable to gender equality;
- To assess engagement of the municipal and districts stakeholders in the project, and their understanding, including financial and other commitment for sustainability of activities
- Identify and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories and challenges within the project, to inform future work of participating UN agencies in the frameworks of adolescents and young men and women empowerment;
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices;
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women's work on youth empowering role and contribution to community development and peacebuilding interventions.
- Evaluate the project's efficiency, including its implementation strategy, institutional arrangements as well as its management and operational systems and value for money;

Scope of Work:

The final evaluation of the project will be conducted at the end of project implementation and will cover the entire duration of the project from September 29, 2020 to December 31, 2021. The evaluation is scheduled between November and March 2022. The evaluation shall cover all aspects of the project.

The evaluation should assess the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency and intended sustainability of the project interventions in five working cities/districts (Isfara, Kulob, Shahrinav, Baljuvon, Khorog) between September 2020 and December 2021. In addition, the evaluation should indicate if the produced results are in the right direction towards contributing to empowering young people, making them more resilient to violent narratives and promoting youth participation in decision-making through strengthening social entrepreneurship and innovative youth employment opportunities and involvement in local governance and community development jointly with local authorities. Particularly, the evaluation should cover but not limited to the following areas:

- Relevance of the project: review the progress against its purpose, objectives, outputs and indicators, as per the project documents and its components, such as the Theory of Change, Results and Resources Framework, M&E framework, and ascertain whether assumptions and risks remain valid
- Effectiveness and efficiency of implementation approaches: review project's technical as well as operational approaches and deliverables, quality of results and their impact, alignment with national priorities and responding to the needs of the stakeholders;
- Review the project's approaches, in general and with regards to youth empowerment, mainstreaming of gender equality and social inclusion, with particular focus on youth marginalized groups;
- Review and assess the risks and opportunities (in terms of resource mobilization, synergy and areas of interventions) related to future interventions;
- Review external factors beyond the control of the project that have affected it negatively or positively;
- Review planning, management and quality assurance mechanisms for the delivery of the project interventions;
- Review coordination and communication processes and mechanisms with the stakeholders.

The evaluation envisions an onsite data collection mission in 5 project sites in Tajikistan. However, depending on the COVID-19 epidemiological situation in the country and potential travel restriction, online data collection will be considered as an alternative. Two consultants for conducting the evaluation process will be recruited, including:

TEAM LEADER: one International Consultant to lead, coordinate the process and division of labour (with the Team Member), conduct desk review of background documentation, produce inception report, develop

the methodology and instruments, prepare workplan, collect data, prepare analytical framework and draft and final evaluation reports

TEAM MEMBER: one national consultant (based in Tajikistan) under the overall guidance of International Consultant to contribute to desk review of background documentation, provide translation services if needed, to conduct all field missions (given the COVID-19 situation), collect information and data, plan

4. Evaluation criteria and key questions

As indicated below, the evaluation will follow the OECD-DAC's revised evaluation criteria including: Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Conflict sensitivity. Partnership, Gender Empowerment and Social Inclusion and Human Rights will be added as cross-cutting criteria. The guiding questions outlined below should be further refined by the consultant and agreed with the evaluation management group integrated by RUNOs designated officers.

Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs? • How relevant were the overall design and approaches of the project? • To what extent the project was able to address the needs of the target groups in the changed context? • To what extent are the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) and its theory of change logical and coherent? Does the project contribute to the outcome and output of the CPD? • To what extent has the project been able to adapt to the needs of the different target groups (including tackling the gender equality and social inclusion aspects) in terms of creating enable environment for inclusive, affordable and people-centered reconstruction policies and actions? • How do beneficiaries perceive the relevance of the project and how have the activities implemented improved their lives? Are there any stories of change?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the key results and changes attained for young men, women and vulnerable groups? • In which areas has the project had greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements? • To what extent the project activities were delivered effectively in terms of quality, quantity, and timing? • What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs? • What were the lessons and how were feedback/learning incorporated in the subsequent process of planning and implementation? • How effective has the project been in enhancing the capacity of the communities and local governments to create enabling environment for inclusive youth economic empowerment and promotion of innovative development?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How efficiently were the resources including human, material, and financial resources used to achieve the above results in a timely manner? • To what extent the project contributed to participation of adolescent and young girls and boys in decision-making of issues concerning them and

	<p>enabled them to contribute to the development of their communities (including social cohesion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the project could empower the adolescent girls and boys to believe that non-violent means are the best approach to address differences and conflicts in targeted areas. • To what extent the project contributed to socio-economic empowerment of young men and women in targeted areas. • To what extent was the existing project management structure appropriate and efficient in generating the expected results? • To what extent has the project implementation strategy and its execution been efficient and cost-effective? • To what extent were the resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular? • Was the project financially and/or programmatically catalytic? • Has PBF funding been used to scale-up other peacebuilding work and/or has it helped to create broader platforms for peacebuilding?
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well the intervention fit in changed context? • To what extent the intervention is coherent with Government's policies • To what extent the intervention addressed the synergies and interlinkages with other interventions carried out by UNDP or Government of Tajikistan (internal coherence) • To what extent the intervention was consistent with other actors' interventions in the same context or adding value to avoid duplication of the efforts (external coherence)
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the project interventions contribute towards sustaining the results achieved by the project? • What are the plans or approaches of the local authorities and beneficiary communities to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project ends? • What could be potential new areas of work and innovative measures for sustaining the results? • To what extent have lessons learned been documented by the project on a continual basis to inform the project for needful change? • What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability of the project? • How has the project worked with local partners to increase their capacity in a sustainable way? • What are the risks facing sustainability of project Outputs and Outcomes?
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the partnerships affected in the project achievement, and how might this be built upon in the future? • Have the ways of working with the partner and the support to the partner been effective and did they contribute to the project's achievements? • How does partnership with municipality government work? Does it create synergies or difficulties? What type of partnership building mechanism is necessary for future partnership?
Human rights and gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have rural young people, NEET, physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the work of the project and with what impact?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the project approach was effective in promoting gender equality and social inclusion - particularly focusing on the marginalized and the poor through knowledge transfer, livelihood action, planning and training? • To what extent has the project promoted positive changes of young men and women and marginalized group? Were there any unintended effects?
Conflict sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the Project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity? • Were RUNOs internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach? • Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts? • Was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established?

5. Methodology:

The evaluation will be a transparent and participatory process involving relevant RUNOs' stakeholders and partners in Tajikistan. The evaluation is a final programme evaluation and both a summative approach focusing on capturing the lessons learned during the implementation and assessing the achievement of the results at output and outcome levels, as well as a formative, forward-looking approach assessing the applicability of the results will be employed. The evaluation methodology will furthermore follow a Theory of Change approach and employ mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. Methods may include but are not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documents and data such as project and programme documents, progress reports, financial records, meeting minutes and monitoring reports, results of the baseline assessment, and secondary data or studies relating to the country context and situation
- Online or offline consultations and discussions with the senior management, programme and project management staff of the three participating agencies
- Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys with direct and indirect beneficiaries, implementing partners, donor and other stakeholders
- Offline (field visits) or online session for observation at selected project sites
- Briefing and debriefing sessions with UNDP and RUNOs as well as with other partners. The consultant should ensure triangulation of the various data sources to maximize the validity and reliability of data.

The process/steps mentioned above should ensure that the most appropriate and relevant data are gathered for the above-mentioned objectives. Based on the analysis and findings, the recommendations should be provided for future direction of the initiatives.

The consultant will have to submit the final full report in English. The structure and content of the report should meet the requirements of the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standard for evaluation in the UN system. The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits, evaluation matrix and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed with RUNOs and shared with PBSO for review and approval.

6. Evaluation timeframe and products (key deliverables)

The evaluation is expected to start in November 2021 for an estimated duration of 40 days. This will include desk reviews, primary information collection, field work, and report writing.

Task	Tentative timeframe	Tentative # of days international consultant	Est no of days national consultant
Inception phase November - December 2021			
Desk review of background documentation	TBD	2	2
Inception meeting with EMG and ERG	TBD	1	1
Inception report	TBD	6	2
Data collection phase end of December 2021-January 2022			
Documents review, (online) interviews, interviews, visits to project sites (online/offline)	TBD	12	14
Analysis and reporting phase January – February 2021			
Drafting and presentation of preliminary findings (including one round of revision)	TBD	3	1
Preparation and submission of draft report (including two rounds of revision)	TBD	10	2
Review and submission of final report and communication products (PPT and a brief)	TBD	3	1
Total		37	23

The consultant should submit the following deliverables as described below:

DELIVERABLES	TIME-FRAME (tentative)
An inception report: The evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions and indicators, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan. A first draft report will be shared with the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) and, based upon the comments received the evaluation team will revise the draft. The revised draft will be shared with the ERG for feedback. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the final inception report. The Inception report will also need to be reviewed and approved by PBSO.	End of December 2021
Presentation of preliminary findings: A PowerPoint presentation detailing the emerging findings of the evaluation will be shared with the Evaluation Management Group for feedback. The revised presentation will be delivered to the ERG for comments and validation. The evaluation team will consider the feedback received when producing the draft report.	End of January 2022
A draft evaluation report: A first draft report will be shared with the EMG and PBSO for initial feedback. The second draft report will incorporate EMG feedback and will be shared with the ERG for	End of February 2022

<p>identification of factual errors, errors of omission and/or misinterpretation of information. The third draft report will incorporate this feedback and then be shared with the ERG for final validation. The evaluation team will maintain an audit trail of the comments received and provide a response on how the comments were addressed in the revised drafts. The draft report will need to be reviewed and approved by PBSO.</p>	
<p>The final evaluation report: The final report will be shared with the EMG and PBSO for their review. The final report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological approach and any analytical products developed during the evaluation. The structure of the report will be defined in the inception report. Evaluation team is also responsible for translating final evaluation report to Russian/or Tajik. The final report will need to be reviewed and approved by PBSO.</p>	End of March 2022
<p>Evaluation communication products: Online presentation of the preliminary findings at the closing event of the project in March 2022 (date TBD), a PowerPoint/Prezi presentation of the final key evaluation findings and recommendations, and a 2-pager/infographics on the final key findings, lessons learned and recommendations in a format preferably adjustable for individual project sites both in English and Russian.</p>	End of March 2022

7. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

The evaluation will be carried out by an international evaluation consultant with possible involvement of one additional national consultant. The person involved in any way in the design, management or implementation or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation will not be qualified. The lead evaluator and national consultants will be selected by UNDP CO.

International Consultant

Competencies

- Sensitivity and adaptability to culture, gender, religion, nationality and age
- Strong analytical, writing and reporting abilities
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, ability to lead a team and negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders
- Commitment to quality products and deadlines
- Demonstrated facilitation and communications skills, experience in participatory approaches and ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders
- Ability to produce well-written analytical reports

Qualifications and experience

- At least a master's degree in peacebuilding, social sciences, international relations, migration studies, gender studies or a related area
- At least 7 years of relevant experience conducting evaluations of strategies, policies and/or development programmes and projects
- Proven experience of designing and leading or participating in gender-responsive and human rights-based evaluations utilising participatory approaches and methodologies
- Demonstrated knowledge on areas related to social cohesion, peacebuilding, youth development and PVE;
- Demonstrated experience in the fields of gender equality, youth policies and human rights issues;
- Previous work experience of countries in transition.
- Previous experience working in Central Asia will be considered a strong asset
- Excellent command in different data collection methods including FGDs, KIIs and Social Surveys
- Experience with the United Nations system will be considered an asset
- Fluency in English. Knowledge of Russian or Tajik will be considered an asset

Duty Station: Home based with 1-week travel mission to Tajikistan.

Working days: 37

8. Evaluation ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultants must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The 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 without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

9. Management and implementation arrangements

Evaluation management

The evaluation will be a consultative, inclusive, and participatory process and will include a twofold management structure. An Evaluation Management Group (EMG) comprising evaluation officers and focal points and programme managers from each participating agency will be established to oversee the evaluation management, make key decisions and quality assure the different deliverables throughout the evaluation process.

The evaluation management structure will also include an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) that will include civil society organizations and relevant programme partners will be an integral part of the evaluation management structure. The purpose of the ERG will be to facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders in the design and scope of the evaluation, raising awareness of the different information needs, quality assurance throughout the process and in disseminating the evaluation results.

Under the guidance of the EMG, the evaluation will be carried out by an external evaluation team comprising of an international and a national expert.

The evaluation will remain fully independent. A mission wrap-up meeting during which comments from participants will be noted for incorporation in the final report.

Evaluation purpose, users and intended use

A final external evaluation of the *Empowering Youth for a Peaceful Tajikistan* project is conducted with a special focus on lessons learnt both from programmatic and coordination perspectives. The main purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the programmatic progress and performance of the above described intervention, including from the point of view of *relevance* of the programme objectives, strategy and approach at the local and national levels for empowerment of girls and women affected by migration towards achieving project results; *coherence* with international agreements and conventions as well as synergies and coordination with other initiatives; *effectiveness* of the project in achieving its objectives; organizational *efficiency* and coordination mechanisms in progressing towards the achievement of the project results; and *sustainability* of the results and the *impact* of the intervention in advancing GEWE and participation in community development and peacebuilding initiatives in the target group. The evaluation will also integrate attention to the use of a *human rights*-based approach and *gender equality* principles. In addition, evaluation will contribute to overall accountability and learning processes.

Targeted users of the evaluation are the personnel of the participating UN agencies in Tajikistan, UN Peacebuilding Fund and responsible parties, and the government counterparts at local and national levels, CSOs, and other UN agencies, donor community and development partners present in Tajikistan, and the programme beneficiaries.

The evaluation should identify, and document lessons learned, good practices and innovations, success stories, and challenges within the project (what worked, and what didn't work and why), as well as strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices.

The evaluation should also provide specific and actionable recommendations as to the priority areas that should be considered in further Peacebuilding Portfolio, including interventions that require continued support, successful interventions for expansion, and recommendations on prioritizing interventions to maximize impact. It should also include actionable recommendations on how to improve project management and maximize ownership by national partners, as well as to inform the future work of participating UN agencies on empowering young people from marginalized communities and their contributing role in peacebuilding and community development.

The findings of the evaluation will contribute to effective programming, refining the approaches of participating UN agencies to youth empowerment, learning, capacity building and ability to participate in community development and peacebuilding. It will also be a key input to knowledge management on joint programmes and programmes for youth empowerment. The findings of the evaluation will moreover be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate and promote the role and contribution of young people for inclusive local development with a particular focus on peacebuilding.

10. Submission of application/expression of interest

Documents to submit as a part of the application should include:

- The CV of the individual evaluator;
- Expression of interest;
- The proposal outlining the proposed methodology for the evaluation, including data collection and analysis techniques, and quality control measures;
- The detailed budget proposal (all-inclusive, including consultancy fees, travel, accommodation, subsistence, data collection and analysis costs, etc.)
- A sample of previous work.

References

Standards for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/22

Norms for Evaluation in the UN System: www.uneval.org/document/detail/21

Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – towards UNEG Guidance: www.uneval.org/document/detail/980

UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender into Evaluation: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator: www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452

UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports: www.uneval.org/document/detail/607

UNEG Ethical Guidelines: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102

UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100