



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Terms of Reference for ICs and RLAs through /GPN ExpRes

Services/Work Description: Final Evaluation of the Government of Germany-funded Component of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) Project

Project/Programme Title: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) Project

Consultancy Title: Final Evaluation of the Government of Germany-funded Component of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network (BES-Net) Project

Duty Station: Home based

Duration: 40 days spread between May and July 2022

Expected start date: 15 May 2020

1. BACKGROUND

[The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Network \(BES-Net\)](#) is a capacity sharing “network of networks” that promotes dialogue among science, policy and practice for effective management of biodiversity and ecosystems services, contributing to long-term human well-being and sustainable development. The first phase of BES-Net (BES-Net I) commenced in 2016 and has since been managed by the Nairobi-based Global Policy Centre on Resilient Ecosystems and Desertification (GC-RED), which is one of UNDP’s Global Policy Centers, in partnership with the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

The total budget of the BES-Net Phase I is about US\$ 4.95 million, which is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) with the contribution of approximately US\$ 4.65 million through the International Climate Initiative (IKI), and SwedBio at the Stockholm Resilience Centre with the contribution of approximately US\$ 300,000. The SwedBio-supported component of BES-Net I was completed on 31 December 2020, while the duration of the BMUV-supported component was extended from 2020 to 30 June 2022 given the delay in implementation in the face of COVID-19.

The overall objective of BES-Net I is to support selected developing countries to address policy questions highlighted through the [Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services \(IPBES\)](#) and strengthen national and regional science-policy-practice platforms to contribute to, and benefit from IPBES. In particular, the first phase of the BES-Net initiative, or BES-Net I (2016-2022), has been committed to facilitating and promoting dialogue on topics linked to IPBES thematic assessments through three interlinked areas of work, or work programme (WP):

- [Face-to-face capacity building support through Regional Trialogues](#): Trialogues have brought together BES-Net’s three target communities of science, policy and practice for face-to-face dialogues around the themes of the completed IPBES Thematic Assessments, particularly on pollinators/pollination and land degradation/restoration. Fostering mutual learning, inter-cultural understanding and interinstitutional coordination on specific policy-relevant questions at the national and regional levels, Trialogues strengthen the interface between these communities and enhance national capacity to integrate scientific findings of the IPBES assessments into policy,

decision-making and on-the-ground practices. As per the regional capacity needs, the special geographic focus was placed on Eastern Europe (2017), the Caribbean (2018), Anglophone Africa (2019) and Central Asia (2019). In the face of the long postponement of the fifth regional Trialogue due to COVID-19, virtual pre-Trialogue consultation sessions were held targeting the practice and science sectors in Francophone Africa in 2020. This WP was coordinated by UNDP.

- [National Ecosystem Assessments \(NEA\)](#): BES-Net has supported the development of the national capacity to conduct NEAs in four target countries, namely Cameroon, Colombia, Ethiopia and Viet Nam, complementing the global assessment being undertaken by IPBES. Leveraging the expertise of the Sub-Global Assessment Network (SGAN), the NEA process encompasses not only the production of national assessment reports but also the development of a set of policy support tools to integrate assessment findings into decision-making. This WP was coordinated by UNEP-WCMC.
- [Online platform for global networking](#): The BES-Net web portal has been providing a comprehensive knowledge resource library on biodiversity and ecosystems services, and a rich database of organizations and experts working on the IPBES thematic assessment areas. The latest news and updates from BES-Net and its over 120 network partners are circulated via social media channels and disseminated through bi-monthly e-newsletters. This WP was coordinated by UNDP.

Please note that the second phase of BES-Net (BES-Net II) commenced in January 2020, building on the achievements of BES-Net I, and is going to run up to December 2028 with the continuous financial support of BMUV/IKI and SwedBio.

2. SCOPE OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED WORK

This final evaluation is being conducted in accordance with the project proposals and the agreements with the project donors, and in line with the 2022 GC-RED Evaluation Plan submitted to the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre, UNDP Strategic Plan, Evaluation Policy (2016) and Evaluation Guidelines (2019), among other resources, which set out a number of guiding principles, norms and standards for evaluation within UNDP. In compliance with the overall UNDP Evaluation Policy, the evaluation exercise must be independent, impartial, credible and designed with utility in mind. The evaluation should generate relevant and useful information to support evidence-based decision making.

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

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

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

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

The evaluation findings will be utilized and the recommendations are applied by the BES-Net project team in order to improve the implementation of BES-Net II in both technical and operational terms. The results will also be utilized for the consultation with BMUV/IKI and other existing/potential donors on the possible continuous/new collaborations in support of BES-Net II.

3. Expected Outputs and deliverables

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

Relevance

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

Effectiveness

- To what extent was BES-Net I successful in achieving the expected results?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?

- What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the results, and how effective have BES-Net partnerships been in contributing to achieving the planned results?
- To what extent have the targeted stakeholders and beneficiaries benefitted from the project? Are there any other beneficiaries, besides the targeted, who have benefitted from the project?
- To what extent are the current results benefitting women and men equally?
- To what extent are the project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards the achievement of the BES-Net I objectives?

Efficiency

- To what extent are funding, staff, and other resources used to achieve the expected results of BES-Net I? Was there economic use of resources?
- Were the strategies utilized adequately? How have they contributed to the maximum intervention efficiency?
- To what extent was the project implementation (e.g. procurement, recruitment) guided by effectiveness principles such as accountability, fairness and value for money?
- To what extent were quality outputs delivered on time?
- Were there any unanticipated events (e.g. COVID 19), opportunities or constraints that contributed to or hindered the delivery of the interventions in a timely manner?

Sustainability

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

Potential Impact

- Did BES-Net I have the intended impact within the project lifespan and/or is the project likely to beyond its lifespan?
- What specific contribution did the project make to the anticipated beneficiaries at global, regional and/or national levels? What specific part of this difference can be attributed to the project?

Gender equality

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

IV. Methodology

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

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

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

The UNDP GC-RED, in support of the final project evaluation, will:

- Provide all relevant background documents to the consultant;
- Provide an overall briefing on BES-Net I (and II) and the BMUV/IKI-supported component;
- Avail of any necessary follow-up support for online/email-based consultations and interviews; and
- Provide any additional information and support, as required.

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

V. Evaluation Products (Key Deliverables)

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

Inception report: An inception report shall be submitted within 10 business days of commencing the consultancy, based on a desk review and preliminary analysis of the available information supplied and the initial meetings with the UNDP GC-RED/BES-Net project team. The report should contain an evaluation matrix (See Annex) that displays for each of the evaluation criteria, the questions and sub-questions that the evaluation will answer, and for each question, the data that will be collected to inform that question and the methods that will be used to collect that data (all based on the evaluation criteria outlined). It should also include a proposed schedule of tasks/activities and deliverables and a table of contents for the final evaluation report (See Annex). The methodology should be robust enough to ensure high quality, triangulation of data sources, and verifiability of information.

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

as the relevant partners/stakeholders.

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

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

VI. Evaluation Ethics

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866>. The evaluator must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing the collection of data and reporting on it. The evaluator must also ensure the security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

VII. Management and Implementation Arrangement

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

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

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

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

VIII. Evaluation Timeframe and Payment Schedule

This consultancy is envisioned to be completed in 40 (forty) working days spread over the period of two (2) months between May and July 2022.

IX. Evaluation Team Composition and Required Skills and Experience

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

- Planning, conducting and reporting on the evaluation including providing guidance to the other evaluator(s), if any
- Reviewing documentation
- Organizing the collection of the relevant data and inputs to the reports/deliverables
- Supervising the evaluation and ensuring timelines are met
- Applying best practice evaluation methodologies in conducting the evaluation
- Drafting and finalizing the inception report for the final evaluation
- Leading presentation of the draft evaluation findings and recommendations in-country
- Conducting the de-briefing for the UNDP GC-RED/BES-Net project team and other partners/stakeholders
- Drafting and finalizing the final evaluation report

The evaluator should have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with UNDP projects is an advantage.

4. Institutional arrangements/reporting lines

The consultant will be under the direction of the BES-Net Project Manager/Coordinator and working closely with the Monitoring and Evaluation focal points

5. Experience and qualifications

I. Academic Qualifications:

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

II. Years of experience:

- At least 8 years of professional experience in results-based management and participatory monitoring and evaluation;
- At least 3 years of relevant experience in the area of biodiversity and various BES-Net thematic fields;

- Solid understanding of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures and past project M&E experiences within the United Nations system; and
- Good communication and analytical, and visualization skills including gender-sensitive analysis.

III. Language:

- Fluency in written and spoken English (Prerequisite)

IV. Competencies:

Corporate Competencies:

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

Functional Competencies:

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

Development and Operational Effectiveness:

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

Management and Leadership:

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

6. Payment Modality

Payment to the individual contractor will be made based on the actual number of days worked, deliverables accepted and upon certification of satisfactory completion by the manager and in accordance with the table below;

Deliverables/Outputs	Payment	Target Due Date
Satisfactory submission of the inception report	15%	31 May 2022
Presentation of the Preliminary Findings	35%	30 June 2022
Satisfactory submission of the draft consolidated evaluation report	30%	20 July 2022
Satisfactory submission of the final consolidated evaluation report	20%	31 July 2022
Total	100%	31 July 2022