**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**INTERNATIONAL CONSULTANT FOR THE TERMINAL EVALUATION OF THE**

**CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF GLOBALLY IMPORTANT AGRO-BIODIVERSITY**

**PROJECT (PIMS 5482)**

**Services/Work Description:** UNDP/GEF Project Terminal Evaluation

**Project/Programme Title:** Conservation and sustainable use of globally important agro-biodiversity

**Consultancy Title:** International Terminal Evaluation Consultant

**Duration:** 15 June – 31 August 2022, Total working: 6 weeks (40 days)

**Location**: Home based (potential 1-week mission to Azerbaijan depending on Covid-19 situation/restrictions)

**Format of the terminal evaluation:** Format of the evaluation depends on the Covid-19 situation/restrictions in the country. In case of Covid-19 restrictions the entire evaluation will be virtual, and the National Consultant will support TE in field missions, translation and etc. If COVID-19 protocols allow, the consultant should conduct a 1-week mission in Azerbaijan.

**Expected start date: June 15, 2022**

1. **BACKGROUND**

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| **Introduction**  In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full- and medium-sized UNDP- supported GEF-financed projects are required to undergo a Terminal Evaluation (TE) at the end of the project. This Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the expectations for the TE of the Conservation and sustainable use of globally important agro-biodiversity project titled PIMS 5482implemented through the UNDP and Ministry of Agriculture of the Azerbaijan Republic. The project document signed on the 13 December 2016 and actually started on the 01 November 2017 and is in its final year of implementation. The TE process must follow the guidance outlined in the document ‘[Guidance For Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf)’.  In general, the wild relatives of cultivated crops in Azerbaijan are genetically diverse, locally adapted and represent a potential source of genes and alleles for adapting crops to the ever-changing environmental conditions and human needs of the country.  The project seeks to: (i) improve the protection of viable populations of indigenous wild relatives of crops and local landraces in their natural habitats; (ii) augment the conservation of indigenous wild relatives of crops and local landraces in plant gene banks to ensure an adequate source of genetic resources for plant breeding; and (iii) increase the production, and extent of use, of local landraces in agricultural small holdings and commercial farms.  The project is implemented in three regions of Azerbaijan - Sheki, Goranboy and Goychay. Within these three regions, the project will further focus on selected crop wild relatives, cultivated native species and cultivated landraces of wheat, vegetable and forage crops.  The project has been structured into three complementary components.  The first component seeks to expand the state of knowledge of agro-biodiversity, enhance the conservation of this agro-biodiversity and increase the intensity and extent of use native crops in the agricultural sector in the three project regions. Work under this component will be focused around four key areas of project support, as follows: (i) Improve the knowledge base of crop wild relatives (CWRs) and local crop landraces (Output 1.1); (ii) Establish and manage a network of conserved areas for CWRs (Output 1.2); (iii) Establish and maintain field gene banks for crop landraces (Output 1.3); and (iv) Increase the production, storage and distribution of native crop seeds (Output 1.4).  The second component seeks to build the capacities of, and improve the collaboration and cooperation between, agricultural institutions and small farmers in order to improve agricultural productivity and reduce land degradation using native crops (i.e. the targeted crop species) in the three project regions. Work under this component will be focused around three key areas of project support: (i) Build the capacity of agricultural institutions (Output 2.1); (ii) Support the development of local farmer organisations (Output 2.2); and (iii) Improve the knowledge and skills of local farmers (Output 2.3).  The third component seeks to strengthen incentives that encourage the planting of, and improve access to commercial markets for agricultural products derived from, the targeted native crop species across the three rayons. Work under this component will be focused around two key areas of project support: (i) Strengthen the agricultural incentives toolbox for farmers (Output 3.1); and (ii) Improve access to markets for local farmers (Output 3.2). |

1. **SCOPE OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED WORK**

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| 1. **OBJECTIVES OF TERMINAL EVALUATION**   The TE report will assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved, draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The TE report promotes accountability and transparency and assesses the extent of project accomplishments.  The overall objective of the Terminal Evaluation is to review the achievements made to deliver the specified objectives and outcomes of the “Conservation and sustainable use of globally important agro-biodiversity" Project (PIMS 5482).  The TE will establish the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, performance and success of the project, including the sustainability of results and the project exit strategies. The evaluation will also collate and analyze specific lessons and best practices pertaining to the strategies employed, and implementation arrangements, which may be utilized to inform future programming.  The International Consultant (IC) will be responsible for the preparation of a high quality report and timely submission.   1. **TE APPROACH & METHODOLOGY**   The TE report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.  The TE team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP) the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation. The TE team will review the baseline and midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at the CEO endorsement and midterm stages and the terminal Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the TE field mission begins.  The TE team is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), Implementing Partners, the UNDP Country Office(s), the Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders.  Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful TE. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to:  - Ministry of Agriculture of the Azerbaijan Republic  - Genetic Resource Institute under ANAS  - UNDP Program Advisor  - Project Staff  - Project key experts and consultants  - Farmers  Additionally, the TE team is expected to conduct field missions to Azerbaijan, including the following project sites Sheki, Goychay, Goranboy.In case of a quarantine and travel restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic interviews should be conducted online. The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP has updated the [COVID-19 evaluation guidance](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/covid19.shtml), issued in June 2020, supporting evaluation planning and implementation during COVID-19.  The specific design and methodology for the TE should emerge from consultations between the TE team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the TE purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The TE team must use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the TE report.  The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation must be clearly outlined in the TE Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders, and the TE consultant.  The final report must describe the full TE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the evaluation.  *In case of a quarantine and travel restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic, the TE consultant will have to conduct the review using virtual and remote methods. An independent National Consultant will support TE in field missions, translation etc. If Covid-19 protocols allow, the international consultant should undertake a 1-week mission in Azerbaijan.*  The TE consultant will be responsible for the design of the evaluation methodology. The consultant must conduct the following:   1. Desk review of project documents, outputs, monitoring reports, mid-term evaluation report. The project manager will ensure that the TE consultant receives all relevant documentation to enable a thorough desk review. The project team will arrange translation of select project documentation (in some cases, summaries of the documents could be sufficient), as discussed with the TE consultant and project manager. 2. Review of specific products including datasets, management and action plans, publications and other material and reports 3. Interviews with farmers. The questionnaire will be prepared and sent in advance by the TE consultant and translated to Azerbaijani (translation shall be arranged by the project team) in order to reach more beneficiaries. 4. Interviews with staff and stakeholders of the projectwill take place offline or in case of COVID-19 restrictions via phone, skype, zoom etc. The project manager will provide the list with contact details. The project team will arrange the service of an independent interpreter to support the TE consultant during the interviews.   The Inception Report should be produced before the virtual interviews are undertaken to ensure that methods are aligned with the GEF guidelines for final evaluation. The Inception Report will outline the proposed approach to the assignment and will include, but not be limited to, a detailed work plan of activities, and methodologies of approach. It is anticipated that the Consultant will look at the entire evaluation and its activities in a holistic manner to maximizes efficiencies.  The project manager will provide support and further explanation to the evaluation consultant as needed.  The final report must describe the full TE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the evaluation.   1. **DETAILED SCOPE OF THE TE**   The TE will assess project performance against expectations set out in the project’s Logical Framework/Results Framework. The TE will assess results according to the criteria outlined in the [Guidance for TEs of UNDP-supported GEF-financed Projects](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf).  The Findings section of the TE report will cover the topics listed below.  The asterisk “(\*)” indicates criteria for which a rating is required.  Findings   * 1. Project Design/Formulation * National priorities and country driven-ness * Theory of Change * Gender equality and women’s empowerment * Social and Environmental Safeguards * Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators * Assumptions and Risks * Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g. same focal area) incorporated into project design * Planned stakeholder participation * Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector * Management arrangements   1. Project Implementation * Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation) * Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements * Project Finance and Co-finance * Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry (\*), implementation (\*), and overall assessment of M&E (\*) * Implementing Agency (UNDP) (\*) and Executing Agency (\*), overall project oversight/implementation and execution (\*) * Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards   1. Project Results * Assess the achievement of outcomes against indicators by reporting on the level of progress for each objective and outcome indicator at the time of the TE and noting final achievements * Relevance (\*), Effectiveness (\*), Efficiency (\*) and overall project outcome (\*) * Sustainability: financial (\*), socio-political (\*), institutional framework and governance (\*), environmental (\*), overall likelihood of sustainability (\*) * Country ownership * Gender equality and women’s empowerment * Cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, improved governance, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster prevention and recovery, human rights, capacity development, South-South cooperation, knowledge management, volunteerism, etc., as relevant) * GEF Additionality * Catalytic Role / Replication Effect * Progress to impact   Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned   * The TE team will include a summary of the main findings of the TE report. Findings should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data. * The section on conclusions will be written in light of the findings. Conclusions should be comprehensive and balanced statements that are well substantiated by evidence and logically connected to the TE findings. They should highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project, respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to project beneficiaries, UNDP and the GEF, including issues in relation to gender equality and women’s empowerment. * Recommendations should provide concrete, practical, feasible and targeted recommendations directed to the intended users of the evaluation about what actions to take and decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation. * The TE report should also include lessons that can be taken from the evaluation, including best practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success that can provide knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (programmatic and evaluation methods used, partnerships, financial leveraging, etc.) that are applicable to other GEF and UNDP interventions. When possible, the TE team should include examples of good practices in project design and implementation. * It is important for the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of the TE report to incorporate gender equality and empowerment of women.   The TE report will include an Evaluation Ratings Table, as shown below:  **ToR Table 1. Evaluations Ratings Table for Conservation and sustainable use of globally important agro-biodiversity**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) | Rating | | M&E design at entry |  | | M&E Plan Implementation |  | | Overall Quality of M&E |  | | Implementation & Execution | Rating | | Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight |  | | Quality of Implementing Partner Execution |  | | Overall quality of Implementation/Execution |  | | Assessment of Outcomes | Rating | | Relevance |  | | Effectiveness |  | | Assessment of Outcomes | Rating | | Relevance |  | | Effectiveness |  | | Efficiency |  | | Overall Project Outcome Rating |  | | Sustainability | Rating | | Financial resources |  | | Socio-political/economic |  | | Institutional framework and governance |  | | Environmental |  | | Overall Likelihood of Sustainability |  | |

1. **Expected Outputs and deliverables**

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| **TIMEFRAME**  The total duration of the TE will be approximately 6 weeks starting from June 15, 2022. The TE timeframe is as follows:  The tentative TE timeframe is as follows:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Timeframe | Activity | | By 11 April 2022 | Application closes | | By 22 April 2022 | Selection of TE team | | By 15 June 2022 | Preparation period for TE team (handover of documentation) | | By 23 June 2022 | Document review and preparation of TE Inception Report | | By 26 June 2022 | Finalization and Validation of TE Inception Report; latest start of TE mission | | By 10 July 2022  (1 week) | TE mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits, etc. | | By 15 July 2022 | Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings | | By 15 August 2022 | Preparation of draft TE report | | By 20 August 2022 | Circulation of draft TE report for comments | | By 31 August 2022 | Comments incorporated and Final Report ready | | By 25 August 2022 | Preparation and Issuance of Management Response | | By 15 September 2022 | Finalize the report and ready for submission | | By 30 September 2022 | Management response finalized and posted to ERC site |   Options for site visits should be provided in the TE Inception Report. |

1. **Institutional arrangements/reporting lines**

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| The principal responsibility for managing the TE resides with the UNDP Azerbaijan Country Office. All reports shall be reviewed and endorsed by the Ecosystems and Biodiversity Team and the Regional Technical Advisor.  **Table. TE Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for “Conservation and sustainable use of globally important agro-biodiversity” Project.**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Measure** | **TE Rating** | **Achievement Description** | | **Project Strategy** | N/A |  | | **Progress Towards Results** | Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) |  | | Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) |  | | Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) |  | | Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale) |  | | Etc. |  | | **Project Implementation & Adaptive Management** | (rate 6 pt. scale) |  | | **Sustainability** | (rate 4 pt. scale) |  |   \*The final TE report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.  \*All final TE reports will be quality assessed by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). Details of the IEO’s quality assessment of decentralized evaluations can be found in Section 6 of the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. |

1. **Experience and qualifications**

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| An international consultant shall be hired as the evaluator to prepare the Terminal Evaluation Report and other outputs as specified in the TOR.  The International Consultant should have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities  Academic Qualifications:   * Master’s degree in agricultural economics or other related fields: agriculture; environmental sciences; agrobiodiversity, environment and natural resources management, or any related course   II. Years of experience:   * Recent experience (minimum 10 years) with result-based management evaluation methodologies and applying SMART indicators, reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios; * Work experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years (sustainable management of agriculture; biodiversity conservation or productive systems); * Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system; * Experience working with the GEF-UNDP Project evaluations; * Demonstrated direct experience in relevant field in Southern Caucasus; * Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management will be considered as an asset; * Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and agriculture experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis will be considered as an asset. * Demonstrable analytical skills   III. Language:   * Excellent communication skills in English (written and spoken)   IV. Competencies:   * Demonstrate commitment to UNDP’s mission, vision and values; * Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability |

1. **Payment Modality**

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| 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.   * 20% of payment upon approval of the TE Inception Report * 40% upon submission of the draft TE Report * 40% upon finalization of the TE Report |