



The Joint Programme "Support to Strategic Policy Formulation, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Republic of Moldova"

Terms of Reference

International Expert for Evaluation of the Joint Programme "Support to Strategic Policy Formulation, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Republic of Moldova"

FINAL, Thursday, July 26, 2007

Purpose of the evaluation

1. The purpose of evaluation is to provide holistic, impartial and trustworthy evaluation of the overall Joint Programme „Support to Strategic Policy Formulation, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Republic of Moldova” (hereinafter JPPM) relevance, performance and results.

Programme and Its Context

2. Following a decade of economic decline and fragmented institutional development, Moldova has since 2001 enjoyed relative political stability and sustained economic recovery, with average annual GDP growth of 6.9%. In June 2005, Moldova published its first national Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report¹. After more than a decade of transition, human development lags behind recent economic growth. At 0.671, the 2003 Human Development Index for Moldova was still lower than its 1990 level of 0.739. From almost 70% in 2000, poverty has decreased to around 27% in 2004, but inequality remains relatively high with consumption Gini of 0.38; poverty is greatest in small towns and rural areas.

3. Recognizing the need to focus on the priorities of poverty reduction and social-economic development, the Government developed in consultation with various international organizations and civil society and approved in June 2004 the Economic Growth and Poverty reduction Strategy (EGPRS) and Moldova's Action Plan with the European Union. This mid-term strategic framework aimed to constitute a qualitative shift in the process of policy-making in Moldova, through coordinating sectorial interventions and linking them to common/national medium and long-term objectives, linking the policy-elaboration process to the annual and medium-term budgeting processes, introducing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms linked to clear indicators and promoting participatory processes. The strategy also envisaged a strengthened role for statistics and better use of statistics and statistical analysis in formulating evidence-based policies. The challenge was to narrow priorities, link strategic planning to budgeting in

¹ available at http://www.un.md/key_pub_documents

practice, establish a single monitoring and evaluation system, and build policy-making capacities. As the EGPRS expiring in 2007, in the late 2006 the Government initiated development of new National Development Plan to cover period 2008-2011 and aimed on achievement of long-term development goals (MDGs).

4. The Joint Programme „Support to Strategic Policy Formulation, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Republic of Moldova” (JPPM) was designed to assist the Government of the Republic of Moldova in strategic long-term planning for achieving nationalized MDGs, as well as in the effective monitoring and evaluation of the Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy targets, Millennium Development Goals and the objectives of the European Union – Republic of Moldova Action Plan. The purpose of the Joint Programme was strengthening national capacities in evidence-based and participatory formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and Programmes. The Programme started in late 2004 and covers period till the end 2007. The Programme represents joint effort of Government of Moldova, UNDP, UNICEF, and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

5. The expected outcome of Programme was formulated in the following way “The capacity of selected government organizations to collect, compile, analyze and interpret data and to use information for decision-making is improved.” Programme include two outputs²–“Increased Government capacity to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate national policies” and “Consolidated participatory process to develop and implement national policies”. These outputs to be achieved through five activities–“Strengthening central government capacity to develop evidence-based and coordinated national policies”, “Strengthening line ministries’ capacity to formulate, coordinate and implement sectoral policies”, “Strengthening government capacity to implement national policies at the regional and local levels”, “Strengthening social partnership at national, regional and local levels to develop and implement national policies”, and “Ensuring effective project management”.

6. During Programme implementation context changed significantly. First, Central Public Administration Reform initiated in mid-2005 shifted put more emphasis on governance institutions reform than on capacity building of existing staff. Second, staff turnover in ministries was high during the whole period of programme implementation, with problem significantly aggravated after announcement of Central Public Administration Reform in mid-2005. Last but not least, Programme experienced constant

² The Programme underwent revision and restructuring in mid-2006 as a part of introduction of new RBM User Guide in UNDP. Initially programme foreseen two outcomes and seven outputs (in old terminology):

Expected Outcome(s):

1. A sound institutional framework for the participatory formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and trends in place.
2. Increased capacity of government employees at both central and local levels to plan and prioritize development projects and programmes as well as manage resources to ensure the achievement of EGPRSP/ MDGs targets.

Expected Output(s):

1. Evidence-based policy development strengthened;
2. Institutional framework to manage/coordinate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national policies strengthened in the Ministry of Economy;
3. Mechanisms to implement/develop, monitor and evaluate national policy strengthened in line ministries (e.g. Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Ministry of Education, etc.);
4. Mechanisms to support implementation, monitoring and evaluation are strengthened at the regional and local level;
5. Government and civil society work in partnership at local, regional and national level to formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate national policy;
6. Information and communication mechanisms are developed to support policy dialogue at central, regional and local levels;
7. Effective project management ensured.

changes in national counterparts—it changed four National Programme Coordinators during three years of its implementation. Moreover, programme experienced constant changes in Project Managers, functioning long periods even without Manager.

Evaluation objectives and scope

7. The general objective is to provide evaluation of the overall Programme relevance, performance and results. The evaluation should review and assess project experience and present conclusions. Results of programme evaluation will be considered by the Steering Committee and to derive lessons learnt and to propose ways for future work in the area. The specific objective of the evaluation is to provide answer on the following questions:

- Programme relevance and design: Was the programme relevant, appropriate and strategic to national goals and the UNDP, SDC, and UNICEF mandate? Is the programme outcome still relevant and require further assistance? Were the selected approaches and actions to achieve the programme outputs and outcomes effective and efficient?
- Outcome status: Determine whether or not the programme outcome has been achieved and, if not, whether there has been progress made towards its achievement. This should specifically focus on: (i) to what extent programme team was able to transfer the knowledge and skills to staff in the MoET and the line ministries; (ii) to what extent capacities created are relevant and used within the relevant institutions on different levels; (iii) whether or not improvement in the national pro-poor policy designing, monitoring and implementation is operational; (iv) to what extent support to the Participation Council Secretariat improved quality of the participation process in development, implementation, and monitoring/evaluation of policies, more specifically in monitoring of the EGPRS and NDP consultative process.
- Programme Implementation and Management. Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of Programme Management, role and activity of Steering Committee, efficiency of programme management arrangements, roles of National Coordinator³ and Programme Manager. In which extend Results Based Approach was introduced in programme activities targeted on capacity building? Taking into account the Joint modality of Programme, assess the cooperation and communication between participation agencies—UNDP, SDC and UNICEF.
- Partnership strategy: Ascertain whether programme partnership strategy has been appropriate and effective. What were the partnerships formed? How did partnerships arise? How did the partnership contribute to the achievement of the outcome? How did they function and sustain? What was the level of stakeholders' participation? Examine the partnership among UN Agencies and other donor organizations in the relevant field.
- Underlying factors: Analyze the underlying factors beyond Programme control that influenced the outcome. What were the key assumptions made? Distinguish the substantive design issues from the key implementation and/or management capacities and issues including the timeliness of outputs, the degree of stakeholders and partners involvement in the completion of outputs, and how processes were managed/carried out. Taking into account fast changing context

³ Programme started in November 2004 with *M.Lupu*, Minister of Economy and Trade as National Programme Coordinator. In February—June 2005 Mr. *I.Mamaliga*, Vice-minister of Economy and Trade played role of national coordinator, followed by *V.Lazar*, Minister of Economy and Trade in July 2005—September 2006 and *I.Dodon*, Minister of Economy and Trade in September 2006—July 2007. In 2007 Management arrangements were simplified to make them more operational and *N.Catrinescu*, Head of Macroeconomic and Development Programmes Department of the Ministry of Economy, became new, the fifth during 3 years of implementation, National Programme Coordinator.

evaluation should pay specific attentions to external context of programme implementation, on risks and their influence on project implementation, on risks management, and on issues raised during programme implementation.

- **Lessons learnt.** How might we do things better in the future? Which findings may have relevance for future programming?

Evaluation Approach

8. An overall guidance on outcome evaluation methodology can be found in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results⁴. The evaluators should study the document very carefully before they come up with the concrete methodology for the programme evaluation. The evaluation team has certain flexibility to adapt the evaluation methodology to better suit the purposes of the evaluation exercise. Specifically, during the programme evaluation, the evaluators are expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis:

- (i) desk review of existing documents and materials;
- (ii) interviews with partners and stakeholders (including gathering the information on what the partners have achieved with regard to the outcome and what strategies they have used);
- (iii) field visits to selected sites; and
- (iv) briefing and debriefing sessions with UNDP and the Government, as well as with other donors and partners.

Results

9. The key product expected from this programme evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, at least, include the following contents:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Description of the evaluation methodology
- Programme Relevance
- Programme Results: Progress toward Programme Outcome
- Programme Efficiency and Effectiveness
 - § Internal programme efficiency
 - § Partnership strategy
 - § Changes in context and outside of programme control
 - § Sustainability of results
- Key findings (including best practices and lessons learned)
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- Annexes: ToRs, field visits, people interviewed, documents reviewed, etc.⁵

10. Apart from the above, based on the recommendations of the mission, an outline for the future assistance in the respective area (if still deemed relevant) is to be produced.

Evaluation Team

11. The evaluation team will consist of two independent evaluators with absolutely no connection to the design, formulation and implementation of the programme in question. The evaluation team will consist of one international (leading) consultant, and one national consultant.

⁴ Available on-line <http://www.undp.org/eo/methodologies.htm>

⁵ See the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results, available on-line <http://www.undp.org/eo/methodologies.htm>

Tasks and responsibilities

12. Specifically, international consultant will undertake the following tasks:

- Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
- Design the detailed evaluation methodology (including the methods for data collection and analysis);
- Data review through desk study of relevant documents and visiting the beneficiaries and stakeholders including but not limited to:
 - § EGPRSP coordination body (MoET) and its subdivisions;
 - § Policy Coordination Units within 7 line ministries;
 - § Participation Council;
 - § Former National Project Coordinators;
 - § Donors agencies, including those financing the project (UNDP, UNICEF, SDC), and those working in the area (WB, SIDA, DFID, etc)
- Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs, programme management and partnership strategy, as well as the cross-cutting issues (as per the objective and scope of the evaluation described above);
- Draft related parts of the evaluation report;
- Present and discuss initial findings of the evaluation with project sponsors and national counterparts; and
- Finalize the whole evaluation report and submit it to UNDP.

Qualification requirements

13. The international consultant should have an advanced university degree in development studies, economics, or other relevant area, technical knowledge and at least 7 years of work experience in the field of capacity building for policy making, sound knowledge about results-based management, especially results-oriented monitoring and evaluation (The Evaluation Team Leader needs to know how to establish a link between the progress of UNDP's assistance and the role it plays in bringing about development change). The leading national consultant will take the overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the evaluation report in English.

Implementation Arrangements

14. Evaluation team (the international and the national consultants) will work directly with National Programme Coordinator⁶ and UNDP Portfolio Manager⁷. Programme Management Team⁸ will ensure logistics for the evaluation as well as participation of partners and stakeholders.

15. Both National and consultants will be hired and start their activity in September 2007. An initial note reflecting substantive and logistical issues, including the evaluation methodology that would have to be addressed in order to complete the evaluation successfully will be prepared and submitted by the Leading National Consultant to UNDP Moldova. The Assistant National Consultant will conduct documents collection and their initial review in September 2007. Evaluation mission to Moldova will take place in second half of September 2007 or begging of October 2007. Draft evaluation report comprising all the above described components will be made available 3 working days prior to the scheduled completion date of the evaluation mission. A plenary meeting with partners and stakeholders to validate findings, lessons learned and recommendations will be held 1

⁶ *Natalia Catrinescu*, Head of Macroeconomic and Development Programmes Department of the Ministry of Economy

⁷ *Mihail Peleah*, UNDP Moldova Programme Associate

⁸ Programme Assistants/managers *Diana Zaharia* and *Lucia Martinenco*

working day prior to the scheduled completion date of the evaluation mission. The Evaluation Team Leader will forward the Final Report of the Evaluation to the UNDP Moldova within two weeks after the completion date of the evaluation mission. The Final Evaluation Report should be accepted by the Programme Steering Committee.

16. The required inputs are 15 working days of leading national consultant (5 days desk review, 7 days – evaluation mission, 3 days report finalization) and 25 working days of assistant national consultant (15 days documents collection and desk review, 7 days – evaluation mission, 3 days report finalization).

17. Payments should be provided in two tranches – advance payment (up to 15%) and final tranche upon completion of all works. Payments will be provided only in case of presentation of qualitative materials. Non-qualitative materials will be returned for revision. All materials prepared under current assignment are belong to UNDP.