UN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK (UNDAF) SYRIA

MID-TERM REVIEW (MTR)

Terms of Reference

Background

While each of the UN agencies operating in Syria is pursuing its specific mandate, they all operate under the framework of the Resident Coordinator system and the UN Development Assistance Framework in Syria (UNDAF), covering the years 2007-2011, and designed on the basis of the diagnostic analysis of Syria as provided by the 2004 Common Country Assessment (CCA).

Based on priority areas highlighted in the CCA, the eight MDGs and the Government priorities, the UNDAF identifies the following five strategic areas for focused development cooperation by the UN, the Government and development partners over the five-year period 2007-2011: (1) Economic growth with equity, (2) Basic Social Services, with focus on disadvantaged areas, (3) Governance, (4) Environment, (5) Disaster management.

Although the Mid-Term Review (MTR) does not constitute a mandatory requirement, having reached the midpoint in the UNDAF implementation cycle, the UN Country Team has agreed to conduct a light midterm review as a ‘stepping stone’ to the final evaluation which is due to be completed in the penultimate year of the cycle, i.e. 2010, as well as the planning phase for the next CCA. **Expected Results and objectives of the MTR**

***The main objective of the light MTR is to review the current UNDAF achievements after two and a half years of programme implementation and changing national priorities, and to provide a strategic proposal for the next UNDAF. To this end, the review will take into account the activation of the two new thematic groups on “UP-Scaling MDGs: Community Development” and “Youth”. The MTR review will also identify and integrate the work of contributing non-resident agencies for Syria in UNDAF and the respective UNDAF outcomes and results matrix.***

The ***UNDAF achievements*** will be assessed by looking mainly at the following:

1. *Relevance of the current UNDAF towards Government priorities and MDGs’ achievement (based on conducted/on-going agency program/CPAP reviews, MTR of the National 10th 5 Year Plan, situation analysis of humanitarian programs including refugees and drought, UNDP MDGs Assessment, 3rd National MDGs Report, The State of Syria Population Report launched in 2009 under the patronage of His Excellency the Prime Minsiter):* 
   * Is the current UNDAF 2007-2011 still relevant to the national priorities?
   * Has the UNDAF contributed to the achievement of MDGs?
   * Has the UN recognized and effectively responded to urgent and emerging priorities which were not originally in the UNDAF?
   * Has the UNDAF followed both a human rights-based approach and a results-based approach? Are cross-cutting issues (including gender, decent work, and environmental sustainability) mainstreamed?

What needs to be done to streamline the current UNDAF process to achieve its goals?The 3 basic country level elements, namely **national ownership, core comparative advantages, and maximum effectiveness & accountabilit**y should be mentioned. In addition to the mentioned inter-related principles, namely 1) HRBA, 2) gender equality, 3) environmental sustainability, 4) results-based management, **the 5th element as per the UNDPA guidelines, which is national capacity development needs to be introduced as well**.

1. *Progress during the last two and half years of programme implementation against UNDAF outcomes:*
   * Have the agencies’ programmes contributed towards the achievement of UNDAF outcomes? To what extent was special emphasis placed on strengthening of national capacities, building partnerships, promoting innovations, and the realization of human rights and promoting gender equity and equality?

* Which are the main factors that contributed to the realization or non-realization of the outcomes? How were risks and assumptions addressed during the implementation of programmes and projects?
* Further to the assessment mission of the M & E Specialist, Mohammed Usmani Akram it was concluded that ‘Risks Assumptions analysis dates back to UNDAF formulation in 2006 and may no longer be valid or relevant’, and therefore the UNDAF Consultant can also be expected to identify a new set of risks and assumptions in order to reflect the notable changes in the development environment e.g. *the Government new & recently launched initiative named ‘100 poorest villages in Syria’ which embraces 7 governorates (including Latakia, Idleb, Aleppo and Homs in addition to the three eastern/our programme governorates, while the UNDAF and the UN respective programmes were designed and envisaged to address regional disparities related to access to and quality of health with a focus on the northern and north-eastern regions (with the main focus on Al-Hasakah, Der-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqah) or the presence of Iraqis with the total number of Iraqis varying from 700,000 to 1.5 million integrated into the Syrian society, and given the special setting where Iraqi refugees have equal access to government subsidized goods and services, has certain assumed impacts on the Government and UN development work and capacity support to both governmental and non-governmental partners, and needs to be taken into account (there can be a separate assumption in this respect as well).* 
  + To what extent and in what ways did UN support promote national execution of programmes and / or the use of national expertise and technologies?

1. *Coordination structures to support the implementation of UNDAF as well as UNDAF M&E:* 
   * How can the UNDAF Steering Committee and theme groups be made more effective, especially in communicating results and challenges to the national partners and ensuring continuous UN coordination?
   * To what extent and in what ways has UNDAF contributed to achieving better synergies among the programmes of UN agencies?
   * Has the UNDAF enhanced joint programming by agencies and /or resulted in specific joint programmes? Were the strategies employed by agencies complementary and synergistic?

Did UNDAF promote effective partnerships and strategic alliances around the main UNDAF outcome areas (e.g. national partners, International Financial Institutions and other external support agencies)?

* + The consultant can explore opportunities of securing realignment between UNDAF and the respective agencies CPAPs and thus, modifying/enhancing UNDAF M&E Matrix as well as M & E Calendar based on the CPAPs M&E (for instance, we refined our CPAP Planning & Tracking Tool indicators and targets and M & E Calendar in 2007 & 2008). It is especially essential to secure UNDAF M & E Calendar in light of the ongoing Household Income & Expenditure Survey, Household & Health Survey many other surveys and studies as means of verification in support of tracking progress by the end of this cycle of assistance. It is worth noting the recently launched State of Syria Population Report and National Report on ICPD at 15 can also serve as excellent sources of information for the UNDAF review process.

The ***strategic vision for the next UNDAF*** will be outlined by taking into account the progress review, national priorities and the creation of two thematic groups on “Community Development” and “Youth and Adolescence” as decided during the UNCT retreat of 2009, as well as an action plan for the UNDAF evaluation and next CCA.

Towards the ***activation of the said thematic groups***, the assignment will also contribute by defining the TOR and areas as well as priorities for joint programming based on the MTR findings. The consultant will also finalize the project document for the joint project titled “Integrated Community Development for Up Scaling the MDGs”.

***Capacity building for UN staff*** will be achieved through training sessions as needed.

**Deliverables**

Based on the above, the MTR report should include the following deliverables:

* 1. Draft review of the UNDAF achievements based on desk review that would include annual RC reports, agency and thematic reviews, national development plans and other documents as available;
  2. Final MTR report including the review of UNDAF achievements (I), and a strategic plan for the next UNDAF;
  3. Activation strategy for the two new thematic groups on “Community Development” and “Youth and Adolescence”,
  4. A brief analysis of coordination lessons learnt, best practices and challenges, useful for guiding the UNCT towards the UNDAF completion and in preparation for the new UNDAF cycle 2012 – 2016;

Throughout the process the consultant will finalize the review/analysis in consultation with UN agencies and obtain their feedback on the strategies identified for the future UNDAF.

# Management of the Mid-Term Review

The MTR will be conducted by external consultant(s) selected by mutual agreement by the UNCT.

Taking into account the broader concept of the MTR process the role of the consultant would be just to facilitate the review and management of the MTR by the UNCT & the Government.

The process will be led by UNICEF, and the consultant(s) will be working under the direct supervision of the UNICEF RR and the Resident Coordinator, and supported by the UNICEF DRR and Coordination Analyst.

**Methodology and Processes**

The UNDAF mid-term review will entail both an internal and external participatory process lead by the consultant(s), to ensure that the MTR exercise does not place additional burden on UN Country Teams or strain national capacities. It has been agreed to keep the UNDAF midterm review “light”, informative and forward looking.

The consultant(s) under leadership of UNICEF and coordination with the RC office will be responsible for:

* Drafting a detailed plan for the process developed in close collaboration with the UNDAF M&E Coordination Team (lead by UNICEF) and approved by the UNCT.
* Carrying out a thorough desk review of available progress reports from the RC’s office, and program reviews from agencies and thematic groups to map the overall achievements against UNDAF outcomes;
* Consulting with key informants, to share and validate the findings of the desk review, identify emerging issues and links between different programmes impacting on the UNDAF objectives and to obtain information on future strategies.
* In close coordination with UN Coordination Office, producing a first draft of the UNDAF Midterm Review;
* Producing a short analysis of UN coordination challenges and lessons learnt drawn from the UNDAF M&E Chairs and UNCT, which will be useful for the completion of this UNDAF cycle and in preparation to the next.
* Supporting the UN Coordination Office in organizing a joint mid-term review validation workshop to discuss the report, recommendations and implementation plan, to be organized with all partners, the Government and other stakeholders.
* Provide capacity building training to UN staff as requested.

**Timeline and Key Milestones of the Review**

* Participants into the UNDAF MTR and thematic groups identified; (July 2009)
* TOR for the thematic groups finalized, areas & priorities for joint programmes identified (July 2009)
* UNDAF MTR work plan finalized; (July 2009)
* Draft 1 of UNDAF MTR prepared and shared as relevant; (July-August 2009)
* Comments on Draft 1 UNDAF MTR incorporated; (August 2009)
* Final UNDAF MTR drafted (August 2009/September 2009)
* Final UNDAF MTR presented to all UN agencies (September 2009)
* Comments on the final draft incorporated into the report (September 2009/October 2009)
* MTR shared with the Government and other stakeholders (October 2009)

**Timeframe:** The UNDAF Midterm Review will commence by beginning of July 2009 and will be concluded before the end of 2009.

**Estimated Working Days and Budget for the Review**

Estimated Work Days: 5 months

Estimated Budget: TBD

**Qualifications**

* Experience must primarily relate to management of complex national level M&E frameworks and/or strategic plans involving multiple stakeholders;
* Ample understanding of the following principles: Human Rights-Based Approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, Results Based Management, and capacity development.
* Ability in compiling data and strong understanding of its quantitative and qualitative analysis within a logical framework;
* Deep knowledge of UN Reform, the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG);
* Ability to understand the implementation of UN joint Programmes and to reinforce strategic partnerships for the UNDAF implementation; familiarity with the UN system and the updated CCA/UNDAF guidelines and joint programming guidelines would be a strong asset;
* Ability to build and sustain effective partnerships with UN Agencies and main constituents, advocate effectively, communicate sensitively across different constituencies.