Annex 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE

EVALUATION OF THE RBEC REGIONAL PROGRAMME 2006-2010

A. EVALUATION OVERVIEW

The Regional Programme 2006-2010 for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was approved by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Executive Board at its first regular session in 2006. It is an instrument for realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set out in the Millennium Declaration. By promoting regional programmes to sustain human development in the region, the regional programme acts as a bridge between the global and country programming conducted in the countries managed by UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC). It provides a framework for the provision of policy and knowledge-based advisory services to UNDP country offices, governments and civil society organizations, and helps the region exploit its opportunities in the global economy.

Evaluation Rationale and Purpose: The 2006 UNDP Evaluation Policy[74] states that (a) the Evaluation Office should undertake evaluations of all regional programmes, and (b) that these should be financed by the programme itself. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to:

■ Provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board

■ Facilitate learning to inform current and future programming at the regional and corporate levels, specifically the new RBEC regional programme to be approved in 2010 and to start in 2011.

■ Provide stakeholders in regional programme countries and among international development partners with an objective assessment of the development contributions that have been achieved through UNDP support and partnerships with other key actors through the regional programme during a given multi-year period.

Scope of the Evaluation: At the core of the evaluation is the regional programme itself as approved by the UNDP Executive Board in 2006. It is, however, extremely difficult to disengage the programme from other activities undertaken by RBEC Bratislava Regional Centre (BRC) with regional impact. For example, the advisors financed by the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) are fully integrated into the regional programme and an attempt to evaluate the regional programme in isolation would be impossible.

Objectives of the Evaluation:

■ Provide an independent account and assessment of UNDP contribution to development results at the regional level in partnership with other development actors beginning in 2006.

■ Present key findings, analysis and conclusions in relation to the factors that influenced the degree of contribution.

■ Provide a set of clear and forward-looking options for UNDP management to make adjustments in the current strategy and the next RBEC regional programme.

Overall Approach. The Evaluation Office has no specific guidelines for evaluating regional programmes but will draw on the guidelines for

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Assessment of Development Results (ADRs) and the methodology manuals being developed by the Evaluation Office for its programmatic and thematic evaluations. All Evaluation Office work is guided by the UNDP Evaluation Policy and the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards.[75] The overall approach is to identify and pose a series of evaluation questions reflecting the issues around which we want to make judgements about the programme and at the same time learn from it. Based on these questions it is possible to develop an evaluation plan that examines how each question can be answered. To do so, the evaluation plan sets out the various sources of data that already exist and then identifies the most appropriate methods of data collection. Once collected the data (factual findings) will be analysed allowing conclusions to be made leading to recommendations for the future.

B. THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

The region covered by the RBEC regional programme includes the former Soviet Union and countries of Central and Eastern Europe.[76] These countries recorded major development successes during 2001 and 2005. By the start of the Regional Programme 2006-2010, Human Development Index rankings in the region were uniformly better than they were in 2001. Economic growth had been strong across much of the region and countries in the Western Balkans and Central Asia continued to recover from the conflicts of the 1990s. The May 2004 accession of 10 countries to the European Union (EU) changed the shape of the region.

These hopeful trends were offset, however, by troubling tendencies. The relatively high development levels in the region, combined with its improving economic picture, deflected attention from the global development agenda articulated in the Millennium Declaration and the MDG. The rapid economic growth of 2001-2004 was often accompanied by less robust progress —and sometimes regression—in poverty alleviation. Progress in extending the benefits of globalization and democratization to all of the region's citizens remained uneven, with women, children, and ethnic minorities too often victims of poverty and social exclusion. Ensuring high standards of democratic governance remained a challenge for many countries.

Rapid economic growth continued across the region following the start of the regional programme with half a dozen countries in the region reaching double digit GDP growth. The recent onset of the global financial crisis, however, looks set to wipe out recent gains in many RBEC countries. Among the developing countries, those in Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS, are the most integrated in the global financial structure—with high levels of foreign exchange borrowing—and thus were the first to be hit by the 2008 collapse of the financial and banking system.

Virtually all countries have been affected ranging from the relatively wealthy new EU member states, to the poor Central Asian countries like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Much of the progress in poverty reduction made over the previous decade is at risk, which could complicate ongoing political processes, such as the consolidation of peace and stability in the Western Balkans.[77]

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[74] http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=22
http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=21

[76] Central and Eastern Europe includes Cyprus, Malta and Turkey. Although geographically outside the Central and Eastern Europe/CIS region, RBEC also covers St. Helena.

[77] This paragraph draws on http://www.undp.org/economic_crisis/europe_cis.shtml.

C. THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME 2006-2010

Although this section is focused on the BRC and the RBEC regional programme, it is necessary to establish the corporate context within which they sit. The RBEC Regional Programme 2006-2010 overlaps with two UNDP corporate strategies, the second Multi-Year Financing Framework (2004-2007)[78] and the Strategic Plan (2008-2011). Therefore the regional programme has had to take into account changing corporate priorities and approaches. In addition the regional programme has also been implemented during an ongoing regionalization process. In February 2008 the Administrator released the policy paper 'Functional Alignment of and Implementation Arrangements for Regional Service Centres (RSCs).'[79] This document has served as the basis for the current regionalization efforts of UNDP.

Working under a mandate issued by the United Nations Secretary-General, RBEC, formerly the Directorate for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, began the process of establishing offices and programmes in the region in 1992. RBEC now serves 29 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union through its 24 country offices. A full list of countries is provided in Annex 2. In light of the region's characteristics, RBEC has a long-term mission to help Europe and CIS countries develop socio-economic structures and governance systems that ensure sustainable, inclusive, equitable (particularly in terms of access to services), high and growing human development. The RBEC Strategy[80] makes the clear distinction between the work of RBEC in New York and at the BRC:

■ RBEC-NY will remain (a) predominantly organized geographically and by country office, and (b) oriented towards policy/strategy and monitoring/oversight.

■ The BRC will focus on thematic work, acting in partnership with central UNDP Bureaux.

The BRC was established in 1999 to serve the RBEC region but its structure has evolved over time. Originally it housed both the ECIS Subregional Resource Facility (SURF) managed by BDP and the RBEC regional programme, but a July 2003 decision of the Strategic Management Team led to a merging of the two in 2004. Subsequently a matrix management system where practice managers would report to both RBEC and BDP was then introduced. In April 2008, in line with the regionalization policy, a decision was made to add a Deputy Regional Director of RBEC to the BRC as Director of the Centre. The current organizational structure of the centre is aligned with corporate practice architecture as set out in the table below:

Table 1. Corporate Practice Architecture		
Core Practice Areas	**Cross-cutting areas**	**Other areas**
• Poverty • Energy and environment • Democratic governance • HIV	• Gender • Capacity development • Conflict prevention and recovery	• Knowledge • Management practice

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[78] MYFF paragraphs 72-74 cover regional support and introduce the concept of matrix management for regional service centres.

[79] The section on Regionalization Policy is taken from the April 2009 'Review of the Functional alinment of the Regional Resource Centres' prepared by the UNDP Operataions Support Group.

[80] A strategy for RBEC from 2008-2011 (updated January 2009).

The programme set out two broad areas of interventions:

- **Regional Programming:** Regional programming will help consolidate nascent communities of practice and will continue to identify, codify and disseminate best practices and development successes across the region and globally. It covers the areas of:

  - poverty reduction and economic development

  - democratic governance

  - sustainable energy and environmental practices

  - cross-cutting themes of gender, HIV/AIDS, conflict prevention and recovery, and information and communication technology

- **Subregional programming:** Central Asia, the Caucasus, etc.

D. METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation criteria define the areas where the evaluation will make judgements about the programme. Within each criterion will be one or more evaluation questions. The questions are not the ones that will be directly asked to stakeholders. Rather they are questions the evaluation team will answer through the evaluation process. It should also be noted that the process of answering the evaluation questions should examine the factors explaining the answer. Moreover the evaluation process is forward looking and will result in recommendations; it is therefore unnecessary to have specific questions referring to recommendations. The key evaluation questions are:

- Relevance: How relevant is the regional programme to regional priority development needs and UNDP corporate strategies?

- Responsiveness: How has the regional programme responded to the changing context within which it works?

- Partnerships: How has the regional programme used partnership to increase the effectiveness of its support?

- Effectiveness: How effective has the regional programme been in achieving its objectives?

- Efficiency: Has it used its financial, human and other resources efficiently?

- Sustainability: Are the results to which the regional programme contributes sustainable?

The need to be cost effective while at the same time ensuring rigour in terms of data collection and analysis. As noted above there are two main sources of data: documentation and stakeholders.

- **Documentation:** The documentation described above is an initial overview and further efforts need to be made before the evaluation team can start to collect, map and analyse documents including using the corporate self-assessment systems.

- Stakeholders: In practical data collection terms, stakeholders can be divided into three groups:

  - Headquarters (RBEC and partner units)

  - BRC

  - Programme countries (county offices, government, civil society, development partners)

For Headquarters and BRC a combination of individual and group interviews will be undertaken. Interviews will be semi-structured. Given the number of programme countries in the region (29 with 24 country offices) it will be impossible to have an in-depth examination of each. Rather a two pronged approach is suggested:

- **Detailed case studies:** These provide an opportunity to learn from a sample of programme countries and/or interventions. While case studies do present a problem of generalization, they can be used to identify and highlight issues that can be further investigated across the regional programme.

- **Interviews with remaining programme countries:** In addition to case studies, telephone interviews will be conducted with remaining programme countries. Semi-structured telephone interviews are preferable to structured surveys since they allow a larger degree of flexibility and engagement with the interviewee.

For all types of interviews an interview protocol will be prepared. The protocol will guide the semi-structured interview.

E. PROCESS, ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The evaluation should take between six and nine months from initiation to completion of the ADR report. The deadline will be set by the need (a) to upload the fully edited and designed evaluation report six weeks in advance of the June 2010 Executive Board meeting and (b) to submit the Board Summary to the Executive Board Secretariat 16 weeks before the Executive Board meeting.

The evaluation will also attempt to be as cost effective as possible, not at the expense of rigour, but through use of information technology and limiting the travel costs of consultants and staff involved.

1. Management arrangements

UNDP Evaluation Office: The UNDP Evaluation Office Task Manager will manage the evaluation and ensure coordination and liaison with RBEC at headquarters, other concerned units at headquarters level and the BRC. The Task Manager will be supported by a Programme Assistant responsible for logistical and administrative matters.

The Bratislava Resource Centre: The BRC will take a lead role in supporting the evaluation team in liaison with the key partners, and make available to the team all necessary information regarding UNDP activities in the region. A substantive focal point will be identified to liaise with the Evaluation Office and the evaluation team. The office will also be requested to provide additional logistical support to the evaluation team as required and identify a logistical focal point to coordinate with the Evaluation Office and the evaluation team.

The BRC will meet all costs directly related to the conduct of the evaluation (from the budget of the regional programme itself). These will include costs related to participation of the Team Leader, international and national consultants, as well as the preliminary research and the issuance of the final evaluation report. The BRC will also cover costs of any stakeholder workshops as part of the evaluation.

The Evaluation Team: The evaluation team will consist of:

- Consultant Team Leader, with overall responsibility for providing guidance and leadership, and coordinating the draft and final report;
- Consultant Team Specialist, who will provide the expertise in the core subject areas of the evaluation, and be responsible for drafting key parts of the report.

The Team Leader must have a demonstrated capacity in strategic thinking and policy advice and in the evaluation of complex programmes in the field. All team members should have in-depth knowledge of development issues in the Europe and CIS region. The Evaluation Office tries to ensure gender and regional balance in its consultants. To facilitate regional balance relevant networks can be utilized to identify professional evaluators (for example, the International Program Evaluation Network,[81] which covers Russia and the Newly Independent States).

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[81]   International Program Evaluation Network www.eval-net.org

Table 2. Division of Labour Among Evaluation Team	
Data Collection	**Team Member**
BRC interviews (BRC is base)	Team Leader (TL)/Team Specialist (TS)
NY interviews	TL
Country case studies	TS and TL divide between the countries between them, but both work on pilot. Each will also work with a local counterpart evaluator
Project case study	TS will undertake and will have been selected for expertise in the area of the project.
Telephone interviews	TS and TL divide but use the same protocol

The evaluation team will be supported by a Research Assistant based in the New York Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office Task Manager will support the team in designing the evaluation, will participate in the case study pilot mission and provide ongoing feedback for quality assurance during the preparation of the inception report and the final report.

The evaluation team will orient its work by UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation and will adhere to the ethical Code of Conduct.[82]

2. **Evaluation process**

The ADR process will also follow ADR Guidelines, according to which the process can be divided into three phases, each including several steps.

Phase 1: Preparation

- **Document Collection and Mapping:** Initially carried out by the Evaluation Office (identification, collection and mapping of relevant documentation and other data) and continued by the evaluation team. This will include general development related documentation related to the specific country as well as a comprehensive UNDP programme overview for the period being examined.

- **Initial Scoping mission to BRC:** A mission to BRC in order to:

  - Identify and collect further documentation.

  - Get BRC perspectives on key issues that should be examined.

  - Ensure country offices and key stakeholders understand ADR objectives, methodology and process.

- **Draft Inception Report:**

  - Address logistical issues related to the main mission including timing.

  - Identify the appropriate set of data collection and analysis methods.

  - Validate the mapping of the country programmes.

  - Address management issues related to the rest of the evaluation process including division of labour among the team members.

Phase 2: Inception

Following agreement on the basis design and approach to the evaluation a team leader will be recruited.

Inception Meetings: Interviews and discussions in UNDP Headquarters with the Evaluation Office (process and methodology), RBEC (regional context and programme), as well as with other relevant bureaux (including BDP and BCPR).

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82   The UN Evaluation Group Guidelines (UNEG) 'Norms for Evaluation in the UN System' and 'Standards for Evaluation in the UN System' (April 2005).

Finalize Inception Report: The development of a short inception report including the final evaluation design and plan, background to the evaluation, key evaluation questions, detailed methodology, information sources and instruments and plan for data collection, design for data analysis, and format for reporting.

Phase 3: Data Collection

- **BRC Mission:** A three-day mission to interview BRC staff.

- **Case Study Missions:** The pilot and four other case study mission.

- **Telephone Interviews:** Telephone interviews from home base.

- **Team Meeting in the BRC:** After completion of the case studies to undertake analysis. The Evaluation Office task manager is to join the meeting.

Phase 4: Analysis and Reporting

- **Analysis and reporting:** The information collected will be analysed in the draft ADR report by the evaluation team within three weeks after completion of the main mission.

- **Review:** The draft will be subject to a series of reviews as part of Evaluation Office quality assurance mechanism:

  (a) The first draft will be subject to an internal review by the Evaluation Office and two external advisors. The external advisors will be development experts with a deep knowledge of the region and development assistance.

  (b) A second draft will be developed that incorporates the reviewers' comments and corrections. RBEC Headquarters and the BRC will then be invited to identify factual corrections, errors of omission and errors of interpretation.

(c) The Evaluation Office will prepare an audit trail to show how these comments were taken in to account. The Team Leader, in close cooperation with the Evaluation Office Task Manager, shall finalize the ADR report based on these final reviews.

- **Stakeholder meeting:** A meeting will be held to discuss the report with RBEC Headquarters, the BRC and the supervisory board and other stakeholders as appropriate. If possible the meeting will coincide with a regional cluster meeting, regional Resident Representative meeting or similar.

Phase 5: Follow-up

Management response: The UNDP Associate Administrator will request RBEC to prepare a management response to the ADR, which will be uploaded to the UNDP Evaluation Resource Centre.[83] As the unit exercising oversight of the regional programme, RBEC will be responsible for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of follow-up actions in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Communication: The ADR report and brief will be widely distributed in both hard and electronic versions in the Europe and CIS region and at UNDP Headquarters. Copies will also be sent to evaluation units of other international organizations, evaluation societies and research institutions in the region. Furthermore, the evaluation report and the management response will be published on the UNDP website[84] and made available to the public. Its availability should be announced on relevant UNDP and external networks.

Presentation to the Executive Board: The evaluation report will be presented to the UNDP Executive Board at its June 2010 meeting together with the new regional programme document for Europe and the CIS.

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[83] http://erc.undp.org/

[84] http://www.undp.org/eo/

Tentative Implementation Timetable

The following represents a summary of the implementation of the evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative Implementation Timetable	
Phase	**Estimated Timing**
1. Preparation	April
2. Inception	May
3. Data collection and analysis	June/July
4. Reporting	August
5. Follow-up	September

3. PRODUCTS

The expected outputs from the evaluation team are:

- an inception report (maximum 20 pages without annexes)

- a comprehensive final report on the 'Evaluation of the RBEC Regional Programme (2006-2010)' (maximum 50 pages plus annexes)

- a two-page evaluation brief[85]

- a presentation for the Executive Board

The final report of the regional programme evaluation to be produced by the evaluation team will follow the following format:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Regional Context

Chapter 3: UNDP in the Region and the Regional Programme

Chapter 4: UNDPs Contribution to National Development Results

Chapter 5: Strategic Positioning of the UNDP RBEC Regional Programme

Chapter 6: Conclusions, Lessons and Recommendations

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[85] A detailed outline for the evaluation brief will be provided to the evaluation team by the Task Manager.

ANNEX 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE