



### **UNDP/GEF Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Samoa**

Applications are invited for the following consultancy at the UNDP Multi-Country Office at Matautu-uta, Samoa.

#### **Terms of Reference for Mid-Term Evaluation**

**Title:** Consultancy for a UNDP/GEF Mid-Term Project Evaluation

**Duration of Contract:** 16 working days (spread over five weeks)

**Contract starting date:** 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011

**Duty station:** Samoa

**Mode of Application:** All candidates must apply through the UNDP Multi-Country Office in Samoa. Applications may be sent via email to [registry.ws@undp.org](mailto:registry.ws@undp.org). All applications should include an updated curriculum vitae or resume and a proposed fees assessment.

For all enquiries, please contact Mr. Meapelo Mai'ai at email [meapelo.mai'ai@undp.org](mailto:meapelo.mai'ai@undp.org) or Ms. Diana at [diana.roma@undp.org](mailto:diana.roma@undp.org).

**Application deadline:** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2010

#### **1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

##### **Standard UNDP/GEF M&E requirements**

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iii) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the

lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators - or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and independent evaluations.

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects in Samoa), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

#### **Project Background**

The extent of the land degradation problem in Samoa has not been ascertained in any detailed study. However, unsustainable agricultural practices and deforestation are identified in the Samoa's First National Report to UNCCD and the GEF-funded report under the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) programme for Samoa. The CDI report is an initial attempt by Samoa to conduct a preliminary assessment of land degradation and to identify potential causes.

**Deforestation** in the form of forest clearance to allow for agricultural expansion and logging has been identified as one of the two main forces behind the spread of degraded land areas. In addition, increased development of infrastructure and the strive for improved socio-economic statuses of individual families have lead to increased exploitation of land-based aggregate materials and/or mining activities of scoria materials for construction purposes.

At the beginning of the decade deforestation was identified as one of the key environment and development issues in the country (NEMS, 1993). Timber production and agriculture remained the main consideration for the utilization of the remaining indigenous rainforest and the development of exotic forest plantations at the beginning of the last decade. However, with the impact of cyclones and the rising public concern with the degrading consequences of forest clearance, this development focus was challenged and the direction of the Government's forest development programme was refined in order to reflect the dominating environmental considerations of the times. Towards the end of the decade, the focus of forest development shifted from reafforestation to watershed management, community forestry and sustainable indigenous forest utilization. The Government's reafforestation activities were closed down in all leased village lands (customary owned lands) except for the maintenance of established plantations on Government lands in Savaii and vegetative replanting on two of the country's major water catchments. At which time, a proposal was under consideration for a re-organisation of the Government's agencies with major responsibilities in forestry conservation and development in order to improve their coordination and optimize their use of available resources.

The rate of forest and woodland clearance for agricultural purposes including firewood collection and infrastructural development is alarming, with an estimated 4,000 ha per year of forest been cleared primarily for agriculture. The loss of indigenous forest has diverse impacts on the

cultural, natural resource ecosystems and endemic species. Deforestation also has notable severe impacts on water catchment areas, soil stability and sustainable livelihoods of rural communities. The main challenge in addressing forest clearance was dealing with the village communities, which controlled the remaining merchantable forest areas of the country.

**Unsustainable agriculture** is found on both main islands and the root causes are found primarily in the land tenure system and the marginal financial viability of agriculture. Eighty one (81%) percent of the landholdings are customarily owned and the uses of which cannot by law be brought under any significant control. The landholder naturally has the freedom by right and discretion to whatever type of uses and practices on his/her land. Almost all agricultural activities for sustenance are done on customary lands and by small farmers. Large tracts of customary lands are also leased to business locals for large scale commercial farms either livestock or crops (or mix). Lack of collateral security for customary lands leaves little incentive to invest in sustainable practices, especially major investments such as terracing and soil rehabilitation through structural mitigation of upland areas and steep lands. Socio-economic factors are also identified as having consequently inhibited the sustainable management of land in Samoa

Many of the root causes of land degradation were identified during a problem analysis exercise undertaken during a national NCSA stocktaking workshop held 21-23 September 2005. It was found that traditional methods of agriculture are highlighted as the key to sustainable agriculture over mechanical means and are therefore greatly encouraged. Annex H as attached provides detailed findings of the UNCCD technical working group discussions with regards to limited capacity as to the root causes of land degradation.

**Natural factors** are also largely involved in exacerbating the problem of land degradation. Climate variations in the form of constant changes in prevailing climatic conditions such as increased temperature and chronic rainfall deficit and droughts as well as to a minor extent key invasive species have all the same added severity to land degradation. Often this leads to the loss of soil fertility and the subsequent limits to land productivity. Long droughts make the land more susceptible to incidents of bush fires, which often destroyed forest areas particularly in Savai'i. Also increased frequency of intense weather incidents (e.g. cyclones, tropical storms, and intense rainfall) have caused erosion of coastal and flood prone areas throughout the country.

#### **Vulnerability to Climate Change and Variability Factors**

The islands can be extremely defenseless against the devastating onset of natural disasters, including cyclones, tidal waves, sea level rise and volcanic eruptions. Generating huge waves, torrential rains, and winds of up to 200km an hour, a big cyclone can wipe out an entire ecosystem in a few hours. The results of cyclone from the aftermath assessments show that many native trees underwent massive defoliation by strong winds, a significant number of forest trees uprooted and many forest birds have declined in number to the extent that some bird species have decimated.

The Agricultural and Forestry sectors are especially vulnerable to climate variability factors. Agriculture in Samoa had been subjected to seasonal climate variation that had been so unpredictable. Experience from the past decades, the key noticeable climate hazards that would

impose greater impact on Samoa's agricultural development are floods, drought, pest and diseases and tropical cyclones. There is little doubt that drought and tropical cyclones have had the largest impact at the grassroots level as evidenced by the reduced supply in local markets of the main produce during drought, and an overall shortage caused by widespread indiscriminant cyclone damages. Whereas cyclones often occur during the wet season, drought conditions generally come about during the dry season of the year, May to October, with the normally drier areas of the northwest of coasts of Savaii and Upolu moving to a heightened state of vulnerability at the onset of an event.

The Forest sector on the other hand also experience significant vulnerability to climate factors. Being that forests are natural regulators of amounts of carbon-dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere and acts as sinks as is they function to absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the air, a complete sweep of a forest ecosystem can be considered a great loss to reduction of emissions at the local scale and/or overall global warming. Droughts are also phenomenal in their role primarily as forest extinguishers by incidents of fire spread. The droughts in 1993 and 1998 brought extreme dryness to the already dry parts of the country, west region of Savaii and forest fires at the time in Asau, Savaii in both years. The recent forest fire of 2000 in Aopo Savaii cleared an area exceeding 100sq.km (MNRE 2003).

#### Project objectives

The main objective is to strengthen local and national capacity for Sustainable Land Management (SLM), including mainstreaming into national development strategies and policies, improving the quality of project design and implementation, and ensuring that all relevant stakeholder views are reflected and integrated into the process. Key activities will include completion of a National Action Plan (NAP) under the UNCCD, capacity building, strengthening legislative and policy frameworks and the development of a Medium Term Investment Plan and its Resource Mobilization.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

This Mid-term Evaluation will be coordinated by the UNDP Multi-Country Office in Samoa, the Project Management Support Unit with the support of the GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bangkok. The Mid-Term Evaluation will determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes and will identify course correction if needed. It will focus on the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation; will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions; and will present initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. Findings of this review will be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final half of the project's term.

The Mid-term Evaluation serves to document lessons learnt and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. Its main objectives are:

1. To monitor and, particularly, evaluate results and impacts as per the logical framework reflected in the project document;
2. To promote accountability for resources use as per approved workplan budget(s);
3. To document, provide feedback on and disseminate lessons learned; and
4. To provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements.

### 3. SCOPE OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring.

The scope of the evaluation will:

- Assess relevance and effectiveness of the project's strategy and approaches for the achievement of the project objectives;
- Assess performance of the project in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of producing the expected outputs;
- Assess the quality and timeliness of inputs, the reporting and monitoring system and extent to which these have been effective;
- Assess relevance of project management arrangements; identify advantages, bottlenecks and lessons learned with regard to the management arrangements; and
- Provide recommendations to key project stakeholders for follow-up activities.

The Mid-term Evaluation will cover the entire project: this includes GEF and other co-financing funds to the SLM Medium Size Project.

The following aspects will need to be addressed by the Consultant:

Progress towards Results

- *Changes in development conditions.* Assess the progress towards the following, with a focus on the perception of change amongst stakeholders:
  - cost effective and timely delivery of GEF resources to the target country;
  - enhancement of individual and institutional capacities for SLM;
  - systemic capacity building and mainstreaming of SLM principles into development planning;
  - the provision of enhanced technical support via the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and other relevant Government and Non-Government agencies.
- *Measurement of change:* Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before, during and after (so far) the project intervention. Progress can also be assessed by comparing conditions in the project area prior to the start of the project design process.
- *Project strategy:* How and why outcomes and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results:
  - Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective route towards results.
  - Will the outcomes really meet the project objective and is the strategy currently followed the best approach for achieving the project objective? Consider alternatives.

- Assess adequacy of the log frame and indicators in responding to the GEF strategic priorities and achieving project objective
- *Sustainability*: Based on project progress so far, the current prospects for longer-term impacts and using a combination of quantitative and qualitative feedback on project results to date, assess the extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example the prospects for: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of/access to financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the economy or community production activities, adequate follow-up support at the (sub-) regional level, etc. Provide tangible measures that can be undertaken to improve prospects of sustainability.
- *Gender perspective*: Extent to which the project accounts for gender differences when developing and applying project interventions. How are gender considerations mainstreamed into project interventions? Suggest measures to strengthen the project's gender approach.

#### Project's Adaptive Management Framework

##### (a) Monitoring Systems

- Assess if the monitoring tools currently being used generate adequate information for project evaluation:
  - Do they provide the necessary relevant information?
  - Do they involve key partners?
  - Are they efficient?
  - Are additional tools required?
- Assess the adequacy/relevance of baseline data. If reconstruction is required this should follow a participatory process.
- Ensure that the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements.
- Apply the GEF Tracking Tool (all elements) and provide a description of comparison with initial application of the tool. If the Tracking Tool has not been previously applied, provide a comparison against the estimated baseline.

##### (b) Risk Management

- Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIRs are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why. Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted
- Assess the project's risk identification and management systems:
  - Is the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System appropriately applied?
  - How can the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System be used to strengthen project management?

(c) Work Planning

- Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and suggest any changes required
  - Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP-GEF requirements in terms of format and content
  - What impact will the possible retro-fitting of impact indicators have on project management?
- Assess the use of routinely updated workplans.
- Assess the use of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities
- Are work planning processes result-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning.
- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Any irregularities must be noted.

(d) Reporting

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Underlying Factors

- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's management strategies for these factors.
- Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made
- Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project

UNDP Contribution

- Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. Consider:
  - Field visits
  - Project Executive Committee
  - Global Advisory Committee (TOR, follow-up and analysis)
  - PIR preparation and follow-up
  - GEF guidance
- Consider the new UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP User Guide, especially the Project Assurance role, and ensure they are incorporated into the project's adaptive management framework.
- Assess the contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination). Suggest measures to strengthen UNDP's soft assistance to the project management.

Partnership Strategy

- Assess how partners are involved in the project's adaptive management framework:
  - Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance
  - Using already existing data and statistics
  - Analysing progress towards results and determining project strategies.
- Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships between UNDP and other counterparts, with particular reference to:
  - Contracts and/or MoUs with relevant regional institutions
  - The development of partnerships with any other organizations
- Assess how stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary.
- Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms.

#### **4. PRODUCTS EXPECTED FROM THE EVALUATION AND DELIVERABLES**

The Consultant should review and assess the issues identified in the previous section. The Mid-Term evaluation report should include findings, assessment of performance, lessons learned, recommendations, description of best practices, and an "action list" in a certain area of particular importance for the project.

The following list is indicative of the products required, not an exhaustive list. The final outputs will be agreed between the Project Management Unit and the selected consultant during the first few days of the mission.

1. Undertake an in depth review of baseline information, inception report and all technical reports providing a technical evaluation on the relevance of these documents, highlighting their pertinent aspects and gaps in knowledge, and providing technical improvements to achieve objectives.
2. Review of Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs), Project Financial Reports (QFRs) and elaborate project activity status and present improvements needed for the working plan and reporting scheme.
3. Review the monitoring process and all project indicators appraising the relevance and applicability of each one.
4. Using the most appropriate indicators, measure the relevance and cost efficiency of each project activity providing clear analysis of the project progress toward set objectives, and if necessary provide the most effective route and activities towards results.
5. Update risk management table and provide risk management responses for the rest of the project implementation.
6. Assess project sustainability and how benefits will arise after it has come to an end.
7. Interview Project Steering Committee members, and other stakeholders and Technical Advisory Committee, to assess the partnership strategy and review the co-financing process giving recommendations that will help facilitating the implementation of the project.



## 5. DELIVERABLES

All deliverables of the mission will be produced in English and will be presented as follows:

1. A mission plan two days after the start of the mission
2. A draft evaluation report to be reviewed by UNDP and key stakeholders
3. A final evaluation report with Executive Summary (after UNDP comments) 7 days following the end of the mission.
4. Evaluation brief for UNDP Programme Staff including a power point presentation on the last day of the evaluation.

The structure and content of the report (see Annexe 3) should meet the requirements of the UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. The length of the Report should not exceed 30 pages in total (excluding the annexes).

## 6. METHODOLOGY OR EVALUATION APPROACH

A suggested outline of an evaluation approach is provided below; however it should be made clear That final decisions about the specific design and methods for the evaluation should emerge from consultations among the Programme Unit, the evaluators and key stakeholders about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives within the limitations of budget, time and extant data. Any changes should be in-line with international criteria and professional norms and standards. They must be also cleared by UNDP before being applied by the evaluation team.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be easily understood by project partners and applicable to the remaining period of project duration.

The evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The Evaluation will be carried out by the team through:

- (i) **Documentation review** (desk study); the list of documentation to be reviewed is included as an Annex to the TORs. All documents will be provided in advance by the UNDP and Project Management Unit.
- (ii) **Interviews** will be held with project representative (Steering Committee members, Technical Working Committee) from the following organizations and persons as a minimum:
  - **Aid Coordination Unit within the Ministry of Finance** (Coordinating Agency);
  - **Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment** (National Project Management Unit);
  - **UNDP Multi-Country Office in Samoa; and**

- **Others**

Additional interviews should be carried out with other project beneficiaries and stakeholders (a list of the project stakeholders is included in the Project Document).

(iii) **Field visits** must be made in Samoa.

## **7. EVALUATOR**

One international evaluator has been budgeted for this evaluation. The evaluator is required to combine international calibre evaluation expertise, the latest thinking in sustainable land management and Regional experience.

Evaluator Qualities should include:

- Recent experience with Result-Based Management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
- Experience applying objectively verifiable indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Recent knowledge of the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- Recent knowledge of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures;
- Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to natural resource management projects;
- Recognized and demonstrated expertise in SLM;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported land management projects; and
- Excellent English communication skills (oral, written and presentation).

The evaluator must be independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance. Therefore applications will not be considered from evaluator who has had any direct involvement with the design or implementation of the project. This may apply equally to an evaluator who is associated with organizations, universities or entities that are, or have been, involved in policy-making process and/or delivery of the project. Any previous association with the project or other partners/stakeholders must be disclosed in the application. This applies equally to firms as it does to individual evaluator.

If selected, failure to make the above disclosures will be considered just grounds for immediate contract termination, without recompense. In such circumstances, all notes, reports and other documentation produced by the evaluator will be retained by UNDP.

The evaluator will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. If a proposal is accepted from a consulting firm, the firm will be held responsible for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products and therefore has responsibility for team management arrangements.

## 8. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

### Management arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with the contracted individual or consultancy agency. The consultant in collaboration with UNDP is the main operational point for the evaluation responsible for liaising with the project team to set up the stakeholder interviews, arranges the field visits and co-ordinate with other counterparts. UNDP will contract the evaluator and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements for the evaluation team.

Although the final report must be cleared and accepted by UNDP before being made public, the UNDP/GEF Evaluation Policy is clear: the evaluation function should be structurally independent from operational management and decision-making functions in the organization. The evaluation team will be free from undue influence and has full authority to submit reports directly to appropriate levels of decision-making. UNDP management will not impose restrictions on the scope, content, comments and recommendations of evaluation reports. In the case of unresolved difference of opinions between any of the parties, UNDP may request the evaluation team to set out the differences in an annex to the final report.

### Time frame

The total duration of this assignment is 16 working days between the period of 24<sup>th</sup> January and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2011. The time of the evaluation will spread over a period of 5 weeks. With one week gap after the field visit and the preparation of a summary. The evaluator is expected to work five days a week. A schedule of activities is set out below.

### Resources, logistical support and deadlines

- **Desk Review home based (2 days):** the evaluator will need to (1) review documents, (i.e. Project document, Project Implementation Report (PIRs), progress reports, financial reports, Global Support Unit links), obtain necessary non-project background or supporting documents, (2) Design a detailed mission plan (including the methods for data collection and analysis).  
*Deliverable: Evaluation methodology and mission plan (deadline 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011)*
- **Mission in Samoa (9 days):** Will consist of (but not limited to): (1) arrange transportation and meetings/interviews in collaboration with UNDP MCO in Samoa and the Project Management Unit, (2) meeting and carrying out the required interviews with the various project stakeholders, (3) Visit project site in Samoa. (deadline 10<sup>th</sup> February 2011)
- **UNDP Office based (1 day):** elaborate a initial draft mid-term evaluation report and presentation on mission findings.  
*Deliverable: A draft mission report (deadline 11<sup>th</sup> February)*
- **UNDP Office based (1 day):** prepare a summary and analysis of collected data including recommendations to achieve project objectives more efficiently. (deadline 14<sup>th</sup> February 2011)

- **UNDP Office based: (3 days):** (1) Draft mid-term evaluation review by the Project Manager/ UNDP, (2) discuss and integrate Project Manager/UNDP comments into the MTE report, (3) finalise mid-term evaluation report  
*Deliverable: hard and soft copy of the final mid-term evaluation report (deadline: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2011)*