**GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF YEM JOINT PROGRAMMES**

**General Context: The MDGF and the Youth Employment and Migration (YEM) Thematic Window**

In December 2006, the UNDP and the Government of Spain signed a major partnership agreement for the amount of €528 million, with the aim of contributing to progress on the MDGs and other development goals through the United Nations System. In addition, on 24 September 2008 Spain pledged €90 million towards the launch of a thematic window on Childhood and Nutrition. The MDG Achievement Fund (MDGF) supports countries in their progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals by funding innovative programmes that have an impact on the population and potential for duplication.

The MDGF operates through the UN teams in each country, promoting increased coherence and effectiveness in development interventions through collaboration among UN agencies. The Fund uses a joint programme mode of intervention and has currently approved 128 joint programmes in 49 countries. These reflect eight thematic windows that contribute in various ways towards progress on the MDGs.

The Youth Employment and Migration thematic window aims to contribute to a reduction in poverty and vulnerability in eligible countries by supporting interventions that promote sustainable productive employment and decent work for young people either at the national or local level, including through a better management of the (negative and positive) effects of migration and by enhancing local capacities to develop, implement and monitor effective policies and programmes in this domain.

The Window includes 14 joint programmes that encompass a wide range of subjects and results. Nevertheless, certain similar underlying characteristics can be identified across most of these joint programmes. The majority of the programmes in the window seek to contribute to increase employment opportunities for young people and/or migrants; and strengthen the national and/or local government’s capacity to act in favor of youth employment, notably through strengthening existing or new government action plans. Most outcomes in this window aim to improve young people’s employment opportunities, both from a “top-down” approach, in which the government enacts policies in favor of youth employment, and from a “bottom-up” approach, in which young people are given the ability and encouraged to find employment or create their own enterprise.

Improving the situation of migrants is also an important outcome in this window, often pursued in conjunction with the employment opportunity outcome.

The beneficiaries of the YEM Joint Programmes are diverse. Virtually all joint programs involve supporting the government, at the national and/or local levels. Related to the importance of increasing employment opportunities for young people, most programs also directly target the youth, either directly (e.g. trainings) or indirectly (e.g. employment services offered to them). In addition, some programs benefit local business communities, through public-private partnerships in favor of youth and migrants employment, while some benefit schools for their ability to transfer skills necessary for employment.

**Joint Programme Support to the National Efforts to promote Youth Employment and Management of Migration**

**Duration**

30 months, from 11/05/2009 until 11/11/2011

**PURPOSE**

YEMsupports national and local institutions to implement policies in order to increase youth employment in Serbia and reduce the negative impact of return and irregular migration.

**TARGET GROUPS AND AREAS**

The Joint Programme (JP) helps disadvantaged youth in over 50 municipalities in five regions including the South Backa, Belgrade, Pcinjski, Nisavski and Pomoravski regions.

**Programme Goals**

YEM activities focus on policies, institutions and programmes to:

* include youth employment and migration policy objectives into national development strategies to increase youth employment;
* strengthen the capacity of national institutions to develop integrated labour market and social services and enhance youth employability and employment chances; and
* implement a package of programmes on employment and social services such as the Youth Employment Fund (YEF) to provide young people with training and employment.

**Implementing Partners**

International Organizations: ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF

National Partners: Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Ministry of Youth and Sport, National Employment Service, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Republic Statistical Office, Centers for Social Work, Workers’ and Employers’ organizations

**Current State of Implementation**

The work on the policy level has focussed mainly on improving data collection and monitoring of youth employment and internal movement, and to establish coordination mechanisms in order to define indicators on labour migration and social protection. In addition to this, YEM has contracted a consortium of youth NGOs to identify from a Civil Society perspective the key issues in youth employment and migration that Government needs to address, and promote their inclusion into national policies and action plans. As a result of YEM year 1, the Serbian Government can now define new employment strategies and policies, based on better and more detailed data and indicators on youth employment. As a next step, YEM supports Government with drafting of the new national employment strategy in the areas of youth employment and labour migration.

The work on the level of institucional capacity building has resulted in enabling public institutions to provide more efficient and individualized services to disadvantaged youth, to better understand their problems and needs, to integrate youth employment in municipal targets, and to build consensus and a solid base for piloting integrated service delivery. YEM year 1 work concentrated on the Centers for Social Work, the National Employment Service, the municipal youth offices, and the local employment councils. In this area, YEM has finalized the first phase of capacity building for the centers for social work, the youth offices, and the local councils for employment. The focus of phase one was on introducing the case management approach in the CSWs, enabling youth offices to better understand and reach out to disadvantaged youth, and to enable employment councils to include youth employment targets into youth employment interventions. YEM has established the inter-ministerial coordination group on integrated service delivery and facilitated monthly meetings. Two surveys on international and regional best practice in integrated services have been completed and discussed with the group. Integrated service delivery pilots are due to start after the summer. The integrated service delivery working group provided input to the new law on Social Protection (expected to be adopted after the summer) to ensure firm cooperation between NES.

The Youth Employment Fund (Programme Level) has fully started in the beginning of this year. As of to date, the fund has 340 beneficiaries in contract.

**2. OVERALL GOAL OF THE EVALUATION**

One of the roles of the Secretariat is to monitor and evaluate the MDGF. This role is fulfilled in line with the instructions contained in the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy and the Implementation Guide for Joint Programmes under the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund. These documents stipulate that all joint programmes lasting longer than two years will be subject to a mid-term evaluation.

Mid-term evaluations are formative in nature and seek **to generate knowledge, identifying best practices and lessons learned and improve implementation of the programmes during their remaining implementation**. As a result, the conclusions and recommendations generated by this evaluation will be addressed to its main users: the Programme Management Committee, the National Steering Committee and the Secretariat of the Fund.

**3. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION AND SPECIFIC GOALS**

The mid-term evaluation will use an expedited process to carry out a systematic, fast-paced analysis of the design, process and results or results trends of the **joint programme**, based on the scope and criteria included in these terms of reference. This will enable conclusions and recommendations for the joint programme to be formed within a period of approximately three months.

**The unit of analysis or object of study for this mid-term evaluation is the joint programme,** understood to be the set of components, outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs that were detailed in the joint programme document and in associated modifications made during implementation.

This mid-term evaluation has the following **specific objectives**:

1. To discover the programme’s **design quality and internal coherence** (needs and problems it seeks to solve) and its external coherence with the UNDAF, the National Development Strategies and the **Millennium Development Goals**, and find out the degree of national ownership as defined by the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action.
2. To understand how the joint programme **operates** and assess the **efficiency of its management model** in planning, coordinating, managing and executing resources allocated for its implementation, through an analysis of its procedures and institutional mechanisms. This analysis will seek to uncover the factors for success and limitations in inter-agency tasks within the **One UN** framework.
3. To identify the programme’s **degree of effectiveness** among its participants, its contribution to the objectives of the Youth Employment and Migration **thematic window,** and the Millennium Development Goals at the local and/or country level.

**4. EVALUATION QUESTIONS, LEVELS AND CRITERIA**

**The main users of the evaluation represented in the evaluation reference group (Section 8 of the TOR), and specifically the coordination and implementation unit of the joint programme, are responsible for contributing to this section. Evaluation questions and criteria may be added or modified up to a reasonable limit, bearing in mind the viability and the limitations (resources, time, etc.) of a quick interim evaluation exercise.**

The evaluation questions define the information that must be generated as a result of the evaluation process. The questions are grouped according to the criteria to be used in assessing and answering them. These criteria are, in turn, grouped according to the three levels of the programme.

**Design level**

* **Relevance: The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the needs and interest of the people, the needs of the country, the Millennium Development Goals and the policies of associates and donors.**

1. Is the identification of the problems, inequalities and gaps, with their respective causes, clear in the joint programme?
2. Does the Joint Programme take into account the particularities and specific interests of women, minorities and ethnic groups in the areas of intervention?
3. To what extent has the intervention strategy been adapted to the areas of intervention in which it is being implemented? What actions does the programme envisage, to respond to obstacles that may arise from the political and socio-cultural context?
4. Are the monitoring indicators relevant and do they meet the quality needed to measure the outputs and outcomes of the joint programme?
5. To what extent has the MDG-F Secretariat contributed to raising the quality of the design of the joint programmes?

* **Ownership in the design: national social actors’ effective exercise of leadership in the development interventions**

1. To what extent do the intervention objectives and strategies of the Joint Programme respond to national and regional plans?
2. To what extent have the country’s national and local authorities and social stakeholders been taken into consideration, participated, or have become involved, at the design stage of the development intervention?

**Process level**

**- Efficiency: The extent to which the resources/inputs (funds, time etc.) have been turned into results**

1. How well does the joint programme’s management model – that is, its tools, financial resources, human resources, technical resources, organizational structure, information flows and management decision-making – contribute to generating the expected outputs and outcomes?
2. To what extent are the participating agencies coordinating with each other and with the government and civil society? Is there a methodology underpinning the work and internal communications that contributes to the joint implementation?
3. Are there efficient mechanisms for coordination that prevent counterparts and beneficiaries from becoming overloaded?
4. Does the pace of implementing programme outputs ensure the completeness of the joint programme’s results? How do the different components of the joint programme interrelate?
5. Are work methodologies, financial tools etc. shared among agencies and among joint programmes?
6. Have more efficient (sensitive) and appropriate measures been adopted to respond to the political and socio-cultural context identified?
7. How conducive are current UN agency procedures to joint programming? How can existing bottlenecks be overcome and procedures further harmonized?

**- Ownership in the process: National social actors’ effective exercise of leadership in the development interventions**

1. To what extent have the target population and the participants taken ownership of the programme, assuming an active role in it?
2. To what extent have national public/private resources and/or counterparts been mobilized to contribute to the programme’s goals and impacts?

**Results level**

**- Efficacy: Extent to which the objectives of the development intervention have been met or are expected to be met, taking into account their relative importance.**

1. Is the programme making progress towards achieving the stipulated results?
   1. To what extent and in what ways is the joint programme contributing to the Millennium Development Goals at the local and national levels?
   2. To what extent is the programme contributing to the goals set by the thematic window, and in what ways?
2. Is the stipulated timeline of outputs being met? What factors are contributing to progress or delay in the achievement of the outputs and outcomes?
3. Do the outputs produced meet the required high quality?
4. Does the programme have follow-up mechanisms (to verify the quality of the products, punctuality of delivery, etc.) to measure progress in the achievement of the envisaged results?
5. Does the programme have follow-up mechanisms (to verify the quality of the products, punctuality of delivery, etc.) to measure progress in the achievement of the envisaged results? – same question as m)
6. Is the programme providing coverage to beneficiaries as planned?
7. In what way has the programme come up with innovative measures for problem-solving?
8. Have any good practices, success stories, or transferable examples been identified?
9. In what ways has the joint programme contributed to the issue of fair youth employment?
10. In what ways has the joint programme contributed to the issue of internal and/or external migration?
11. What types of differentiated effects are resulting from the joint programme in accordance with the sex, race, ethnic group, rural or urban setting of the beneficiary population, and to what extent?

**Sustainability: The probability that the benefits of the intervention will continue in the long term.**

1. Are the necessary premises occurring to ensure the sustainability of the impacts of the joint programme?

At local and national level:

* + 1. Is the programme supported by national and/or local institutions?
    2. Are these institutions showing technical capacity and leadership commitment to keep working with the programme and to repeat it?
    3. Have operating capacities been created and/or reinforced in national and local partners?
    4. Do the partners have sufficient financial capacity to keep up the benefits produced by the programme?
    5. Is the duration of the programme sufficient to ensure a cycle that will ensure the sustainability of the interventions?
    6. have networks or network institutions been created or strengthened to carry out the roles that the joint programme is performing?

1. To what extent are the visions and actions of partners consistent with or different from those of the joint programme?
2. In what ways can governance of the joint programme be improved so as to increase the chances of achieving sustainability in the future?

**Country level**

1. During the analysis of the evaluation, what lessons have been learned, and what best practices can be transferred to other programmes or countries?
2. To what extent and in what way is the joint programme contributing to progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in the country?
3. To what extent and in which ways are the joint programmes helping make progress towards United Nations reform? One UN
4. How have the principles for aid effectiveness (ownership, alignment, managing for development results and mutual accountability) been developed in the joint programmes?
5. To what extent is the joint programme helping to influence the country’s public policy framework?

**5. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The mid-term evaluation will use an international consultant, appointed by MDG-F, as the Evaluator to conduct the evaluation and a locally hired consultant who will support the Evaluator by providing information about local context such as institutions, protocol, traditions, etc. and assist with translation of key meetings/ interviews during the mission as needed. It is the sole responsibility of the Evaluator to deliver the inception, draft final and final reports.

The Evaluator will use methodologies and techniques as determined by the specific needs for information, the questions set out in the TOR, the availability of resources and the priorities of stakeholders. In all cases, the Evaluator is expected to analyse all relevant information sources, such as annual reports, programme documents, internal review reports, programme files, strategic country development documents and any other documents that may provide evidence on which to form opinions. The Evaluator is also expected to use interviews as a means to collect relevant data for the evaluation.

The methodology and techniques to be used in the evaluation should be described in detail in the inception report and the final evaluation report, and should contain, at a minimum, information on the instruments used for data collection and analysis, whether these be documents, interviews, field visits, questionnaires or participatory techniques.

**6. EVALUATION DELIVERABLES**

The Evaluator is responsible for submitting the following deliverables to the Secretariat of the MDGF:

**Inception Report** (to be submitted within seven days of the submission of all programme documentation to the Evaluator)

This report will be 5 to 10 pages in length and will propose the methods, sources and procedures to be used for data collection. It will also include a proposed timeline of activities and submission of deliverables. The inception report will propose an initial theory of change to the joint programme that will be used for comparative purposes during the evaluation and will serve as an initial point of agreement and understanding between the Evaluator and the evaluation managers. The Evaluator will also share the inception report with the evaluation reference group to seek their comments and suggestions.

**Draft Final Report** (to be submitted within 10 days of completion of the field visit)

The draft final report will contain the same sections as the final report (described in the next paragraph) and will be 20 to 30 pages in length. This report will be shared among the evaluation reference group. It will also contain an executive report of no more than 5 pages that includes a brief description of the joint programme, its context and current situation, the purpose of the evaluation, its methodology and its main findings, conclusions and recommendations. The MDGF Secretariat will share the draft final report with the evaluation reference group to seek their comments and suggestions.

**Final Evaluation Report** (to be submitted within seven days of receipt of the draft final report with comments)

The final report will be 20 to 30 pages in length. It will also contain an executive report of no more than 5 pages that includes a brief description of the joint programme, its context and current situation, the purpose of the evaluation, its methodology and its major findings, conclusions and recommendations. The MDGF Secretariat will send the final report to the evaluation reference group. This report will contain the following sections at a minimum:

1. Cover Page

2. Introduction

* + Background, goal and methodological approach
  + Purpose of the evaluation
  + Methodology used in the evaluation
  + Constraints and limitations on the study conducted

3. Description of interventions carried out

* + - Initial concept
  + - Detailed description of its development: description of the hypothesis of change in the programme.

4. Levels of Analysis: Evaluation criteria and questions

5. Conclusions and lessons learned (prioritized, structured and clear)

6. Recommendations

7. Annexes

**7. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PREMISES OF THE EVALUATION**

The mid-term evaluation of the joint programme is to be carried out according to ethical principles and standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

• **Anonymity and confidentiality**. The evaluation must respect the rights of individuals who provide information, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality.

• **Responsibility**. The report must mention any dispute or difference of opinion that may have arisen among the consultants or between the Evaluator and the reference group of the Joint Programme in connection with the findings and/or recommendations. The Evaluator must corroborate all assertions, and note any disagreement with them.

• **Integrity.** The Evaluator will be responsible for highlighting issues not specifically mentioned in the TOR, if this is needed to obtain a more complete analysis of the intervention.

• **Independence**. The Evaluator should ensure his or her independence from the intervention under review, and he or she must not be associated with its management or any element thereof.

• **Incidents**. If problems arise during the fieldwork, or at any other stage of the evaluation, the Evaluator must report these immediately to the Secretariat of the MDGF. If this is not done, the existence of such problems may in no case be used by the Evaluator to justify the failure to obtain the results stipulated by the Secretariat of the MDGF in these terms of reference.

• **Validation of information.** The Evaluator will be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information collected while preparing the reports and will be ultimately responsible for the information presented in the evaluation report.

• **Intellectual property.** In handling information sources, the Evaluator shall respect the intellectual property rights of the institutions and communities that are under review.

• **Delivery of reports.** If delivery of the reports is delayed, or in the event that the quality of the reports delivered is clearly lower than what was agreed, the penalties stipulated in these terms of reference will be applicable.

**8. ROLES OF ACTORS IN THE EVALUATION**

The main actors in the mid-term evaluation are the Secretariat of the MDGF, the Programme Management Office of the joint programme and the Programme Management Committee. The Programme Management Office, PMC Co-Chairs, and RC Office will serve as the evaluation reference group. The role of the evaluation reference group will extend to all phases of the evaluation, including:

* Facilitating the participation of those involved in the evaluation design.
* Identifying information needs, defining objectives and delimiting the scope of the evaluation.
* Providing input on the evaluation planning documents (Work Plan and Communication, Dissemination and Improvement Plan).
* Providing input and participating in the drafting of the Terms of Reference.
* Facilitating the evaluation team’s access to all information and documentation relevant to the intervention, as well as to key actors and informants who should participate in interviews, focus groups or other information-gathering methods.
* Monitoring the quality of the process and the documents and reports that are generated, so as to enrich these with their input and ensure that they address their interests and needs for information about the intervention.
* Disseminating the results of the evaluation, especially among the organizations and entities within their interest group.

The Secretariat of the MDGF shall manage the mid-term evaluation in its role as proponent of the evaluation, fulfilling the mandate to conduct and finance the mid-term evaluation. As manager of the mid-term evaluation, the Secretariat will be responsible for ensuring that the evaluation process is conducted as stipulated; promoting and leading the evaluation design; coordinating and monitoring progress and development in the evaluation study and the quality of the process. It shall also support the country in the main task of disseminating evaluation findings and recommendations.

**9. TIMELINE FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

1. **Design phase (15 days total)**
2. The Secretariat shall send the generic TOR for mid-term evaluation of China’s CCPF to the reference group. The reference group is then to adapt these to the concrete situation of the joint programme in China, using the lowest common denominator that is shared by all, for purposes of data aggregation and the provision of evidence for the rest of the MDGF levels of analysis (country, thematic window and MDGF).

This activity requires a dialogue between the Secretariat and the reference group of the evaluation. This dialogue should be aimed at rounding out and modifying some of the questions and dimensions of the study that the generic TOR do not cover, or which are inadequate or irrelevant to the joint programme.

1. The MDGF Secretariat will send the finalized, contextualized TOR to the Evaluator it has chosen .
2. From this point on, the Portfolio Manager is responsible for managing the execution of the evaluation, with three main functions: to facilitate the work of the Evaluator, to serve as interlocutor between the parties (Evaluator, reference group in the country, etc.), and to review the deliverables that are produced.
3. **Execution phase of the evaluation study (55-58 days total)**

**Desk study (15 days total)**

1. The Portfolio Manager will brief the Evaluator **(1 day).** He/she will hand over a checklist of activities and documents to review, and explain the evaluation process. Discussion will take place over what the evaluation should entail.
2. The Evaluator will review the documents according to the standard list (see TOR annexes; programme document, financial, monitoring reports etc.).
3. The Evaluator will submit the inception report to the MDGF Secretariat; the report will include the findings from the document review and will specify how the evaluation will be conducted. The Evaluator will share the inception report with the evaluation reference group for comments and suggestions (within **seven days of delivery of all programme documentation to the consultant**).
4. The focal points for the evaluation (PMC Co-Chairs) and the Evaluator will prepare an agenda to conduct the field visit of the evaluation. (Interview with programme participants, stakeholders, focus groups, etc) (Within **seven days of delivery of the desk study report**).

**Field visit (9-12 days)**

1. In-country, the Evaluator will observe and contrast the preliminary conclusions reached through the study of the document review. The planned agenda will be carried out. To accomplish this, the Secretariat’s Portfolio Manager may need to facilitate the Evaluator’s visit by means of phone calls and emails to the reference group.
2. The Evaluator will be responsible for conducting a debriefing with the key actors he or she has interacted with.

**Final Report (31 days total)**

1. The Evaluator will deliver a draft final report, which the Secretariat’s Portfolio Manager shall be responsible for sharing with the evaluation reference group **(within 10 days of the completion of the field visit).**
2. The evaluation reference group may ask that data or facts that it believes are incorrect be changed, as long as it provides data or evidence that supports its request. The Evaluator will have the final say over whether to accept or reject such changes. For the sake of evaluation quality, the Secretariat’s Portfolio Manager can and should intervene so that erroneous data, and opinions based on erroneous data or not based on evidence, are changed **(within 14 days of delivery of the draft final report).**

The evaluation reference group may also comment on the value judgements contained in the report, but these do not affect the Evaluator’s freedom to express the conclusions and recommendations he or she deems appropriate, based on the evidence and criteria established.

1. The Secretariat’s Portfolio Manager shall assess the quality of the final version of the evaluation report presented, using the criteria stipulated in the annex to this TOR **(within seven days of delivery of the draft final report).**
2. Upon receipt of input from the reference group, the Evaluator shall decide which input to incorporate and which to omit. The Secretariat’s Portfolio Manager shall review the final copy of the report, and this phase will conclude with the delivery of this report by the MDGF Secretariat to the evaluation reference group **(within seven days of delivery of the draft final report with comments).**
3. **Phase of incorporating recommendations and improvement plan (within 21 days of delivery of the final report):**
4. The Secretariat’s Portfolio Manager, as representative of the Secretariat, shall engage in a dialogue with the reference group to establish an improvement plan that includes recommendations from the evaluation.
5. The Secretariat’s Portfolio Manager will hold a dialogue with the reference group to develop a simple plan to disseminate and report the results to the various interested parties.

**10. ANNEXES**

**a) Document Review**

MDG-F Context

* MDGF Framework Document
* Summary of the M&E frameworks and common indicators
* YEM Thematic Window TORs
* General thematic indicators
* M&E strategy
* Communication and Advocacy Strategy
* MDG-F Joint Implementation Guidelines

Specific Documents for Joint Programme

See Annex: List of YEM publications and products

Other in-country documents or information

* Evaluations, assessments or internal reports conducted by the joint programme
* Relevant documents or reports on the Millennium Development Goals at the local and national levels
* Relevant documents or reports on the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action in the country
* Relevant documents or reports on One UN, Delivering as One

**b) File for the Joint Programme Improvement Plan**

After the interim evaluation is complete, the phase of incorporating its recommendations shall begin. This file is to be used as the basis for establishing an improvement plan for the joint programme, which will bring together all the recommendations, actions to be carried out by programme management.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Recommendation No. 1** | | | | |
| **Response from the Joint Programme Management** | | | | |
| **Key actions** | **Time frame** | **Person responsible** | **Follow-up** | |
| 1.1 |  |  | **Comments** | **Status** |
| 1.2 |  |  |  |  |
| 1.3 |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation No. 2** | | | | |
| **Response from the Joint Programme Management** | | | | |
| Key actions | Time frame | Person responsible | **Follow-up** | |
| 2.1 |  |  | Comments | Status |
| 2.2 |  |  |  |  |
| 2.3 |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation Recommendation No. 3** | | | | |
| **Response from the Joint Programme Management** | | | | |
| Key actions | Time frame | Person responsible | **Follow-up** | |
| 3.1 |  |  | Comments | Status |
| 3.2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3.3 |  |  |  |  |