Project evaluation:

Building e-Governance in Moldova

2011
Terms of Reference

I. Background
The purpose of the evaluation exercise is to analyse and summarise the experience of UNDP Moldova projects and activities Moldova that aimed at strengthened use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in public administration institutions at fostering more efficient and transparent operations and functions. The Evaluation is expected to shed light on the underlying factors that impact outputs and outcomes, capture good and bad practices as well as lessons learned, including unintended consequences, with the objective of assisting UNDP in improving design and implementation of future UNDP-supported interventions in this area. Accordingly, the Country Office intends to make use of the exercise as a learning opportunity not only for the office but also for key partners and stakeholders in the country, in inclusive fashion.

II. Brief national context
In spite of the progress achieved in citizen's access to ICTs (33% of households have computers, 42% of population use computers) and Internet (penetration rate 38%) Moldova is still lagging behind the global average and far behind the EU average. Although the growth in the use of mobile technologies is impressive, it also lags behind most European countries. In addition, little content and few applications and public services are available on-line and a range of ICT projects are not implemented because of lack of sufficient government funding. The actual implementation of the digital signature (monopolistic approach used) has become a barrier to the acceleration in the development of e-business and e-commerce applications, due to the monopolistic approach taken in this regard. And the implementation of ICTs in public administration is centered more on control/monitoring functions than on putting citizens at the center of the equation.

Despite efforts undertaken so far, ICT academic education is not yet in line with standard modern requirements and, according to private sector views; Universities graduates do not match the specific needs of businesses across the board.

The oversight on the development of the information society in the country is the responsibility of the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications (MITC). MITC also leads on state policies related to the effective introduction of ICTs in society, building and supporting cooperation in the field of telecommunications, coordinating the design of information and communication systems and networks through its subordinated enterprises, organizations and institutions, and supporting the development of the national ICT sector.

The Government has also created a e-Government Centre (eGC) to serve as the implementing arm in the introduction of ICTs in public administration by providing better access to information, ensuring a smoother running of government processes and promoting more effective service delivery. eGC is responsible for the development and implementation of the e-Government agenda, which aims at supporting national sustainable development. The World Bank has furnished a 5-year loan for the amount of 20 million USD to support eGC.

eGC aims also at reforming the public sector by enhancing the efficiency of authorities, increasing the transparency of state institutions, simplifying access to information, and promoting e-services.
III. Brief description of the project to be evaluated


Through this project UNDP Moldova has been assisting the Government of Moldova in the implementation of the e-Governance component, which is an integral part of the “e-Moldova” National Strategy. With the overarching goal of strengthening democratic governance in the country, the Project's objective was to improve basic service delivery and foster more transparent decision-making processes by deploying ICT applications and solutions within the public sector. Four main areas of intervention, as follows:

i) Policy support,
ii) Development of electronic public services,
iii) Training/Capacity building
iv) e-democracy and public awareness.

The main project deliverables that were envisaged included:
- Online electronic tax collection fully operational;
- On-line statistical reporting launched;
- Open standards software in public administration applications to make services more affordable tested;
- Distance learning tools for the Academy of Public Administration to expand the possibility of training public servants in ICTs and other areas developed;
- Broad awareness campaign to showcase the benefits of e-services that stimulate access of citizen and businesses to public on-line services implemented

The project intended to build capacity of public servants to promote citizen-centric government on-line services and fulfill the right of citizens to:

i) Access basic public information;
ii) Participate in decision-making;
iii) Transparent and efficient public service delivery.

IV. Evaluation Objectives

The overall objectives of the evaluation are the following:

1. Provide a full and independent assessment of the achievements and results, failures and constraints of the project, as well as an analysis of its performance, management, impact, relevance and sustainability of the interventions.
2. Generate lessons learned and good practices from each of respective outputs established in the project since its inception in 2007 to inform current and future programming at the country level
3. Assess whether the results achieved are relevant for the current e-governance environment in the country and provide solid basis for UNDP and other players for future programming
4. Provide sharp and forward-looking recommendations that can guide UNDP and partners in developing realistic strategies in this area of work
The evaluation should be comprehensive and cover the outcome, outputs, activities and inputs of the project. The results of the evaluation will be used for re-focusing the interventions and guiding future programming. In this context, the evaluation will:

(i) Extract lessons for future interventions in the sector;
(ii) Propose improvement of the coordination between donor-supported interventions in meeting national requirements;
(iii) Outline main areas of focus for future UNDP projects.

V. General Terms of the Evaluation

Scope: The scope of the evaluation should incorporate the following categories of analysis:

Relevance: the degree to which the overall purpose of the project remains valid and pertinent in the current context and can provide basis for further e-governance development in the country

Efficiency: the productivity of the implementation process - how good and cost effective the process of transforming inputs into outputs and outcomes was

Effectiveness: a measure of the extent to which the project results have contributed to the national context.

Capacity development: as a key to development effectiveness, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable local development.

ICT policies and deployment: an assessment of the ICT policies recommended and the applications and solutions used in the various outputs defined by the project to determine their relevance, scalability and replication throughout the country.

The evaluation is expected to address the following issues:

Outcome status:

Outcome Analysis – what and how much progress has been made towards the achievement of the outcome (including contributing factors and constraints) to which the project was contributing\(^1\):

- Determine whether or not the outcome has been achieved and, if not, whether there has been progress made towards its achievement.
- List innovative approaches tried and innovative ICTs used, d and capacities developed through UNDP assistance.
- Assess the relevance of UNDP outputs to the outcome.
- Ascertain the progress made in relation to the outputs.
- List factors (positive and negative) that affect output completion.

Underlying factors: Analyze the underlying factors beyond UNDP’s control that influenced the outcome. Distinguish the substantive design issues from the key implementation and/or management capacities and issues including the timeliness of outputs, the degree of stakeholders and partners’ involvement in the completion of outputs, the changing political environment and how processes were managed/ carried out.

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1 See [www.undp.md](http://www.undp.md) for the Country Programme Action Plan and Project Results Framework
**Outputs status:**

**Output Analysis:**

Were the outputs relevant to the outcome? Were the outputs achieved? What are the factors (positive and negative) that affect the accomplishment of the outputs?

**Activities status:**

**Analysis of activities - Were the activities to achieve the outputs effective and efficient?**

How well the activities were planned and implemented? Were key methodologies and approaches that facilitate the success of the initiative, particularly regarding participation and empowerment, gender balance, and delivery of necessary inputs appropriate?

**Inputs status:**

**Inputs Analysis - what contribution UNDP and other UN Agencies have made to the progress towards the implementation of activities and achievement of the output and outcome.**

How appropriate were the inputs? Were the inputs sufficient to achieve the results? How cost effective they were?

**Partnership strategy:** Ascertain whether UNDP’s partnership strategy has been appropriate and effective. What partnerships has been formed? What was the role of UNDP? How did the partnership contribute to the achievement of the outcome? What was the level of stakeholders’ participation? Examine the partnership among UN Agencies and other donor organizations in the relevant field.

**ICT Issues:** assess whether the applications and solutions where appropriate for the local context and local capacities, how were they selected and deployed and how sustainable are in the medium and long term in terms of cost, maintenance and user capacity

**Crosscutting issues: Sustainability:** an assessment of the likelihood that the projects results will endure after the active involvement of UNDP has ended. To what extent the changes (and benefits) brought by the projects can be expected to last after projects completion. The evaluation team will be requested to provide recommendations for potential follow-up interventions in a larger context of other development partners current and planned ‘interventions, i.e. how feasible the follow-up actions would be, what alternatives can be identified and/or what components can be added to it, what knowledge products could be developed.

**VI. Proposed Methodology**

An overall guidance on evaluation methodology can be found in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results and the UNDP Guidelines for Outcome Evaluators. The evaluators should come up with a suitable methodology for the evaluation of this intervention based on the guidance given in these two documents.
UNDP has also developed a methodology that specifically targets e-governance programmes centered on e-service delivery and stakeholder participation. The methodology is being refined at the moment but will be available to the consulting team.

During the evaluation, the evaluators are expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis:

- Desk review of relevant documents (project documents with amendments made, review reports - midterm/final, donor-specific, etc.);
- Discussions with the Senior Management and programme staff of UNDP Country Office;
- Briefing and debriefing sessions with UNDP and the Government, as well as with other donors and partners;
- Interviews with partners and stakeholders (including gathering the information on what the partners have achieved with regard to the outcome and what strategies they have used);
- Field visits to selected project sites and discussions with project teams, project beneficiaries;
- Consultation meetings.

VII. Composition and qualification of the evaluation team

Members of the mission must not have been associated with the project's formulation, implementation or monitoring. It is proposed that the evaluation team be composed of a senior team leader (international), assisted by an additional national consultant.

The Team Leader should have an advanced university degree and at least eight years of work experience in the field of ICT, specifically e-Governance, governance development, participatory planning for sustainable development, including participatory monitoring and evaluation, sound knowledge about results-based management (especially results-oriented monitoring and evaluation). The team leader will take the overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the evaluation reports to the UNDP Country Office.

Specifically, the team leader will perform the following tasks:

- Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
- Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology (including the methods for data collection and analysis) for the report;
- Decide the division of labor within the evaluation team;
- Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above) for the report;
- Draft related parts of the evaluation reports; and
- Finalize the whole evaluation report.

VIII. Proposed Time frame

It is expected that the outcome evaluation be conducted during the period November - December 2011, over a period of 20 working days.
### IX. Expected deliverables

1. The key product expected from this evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, as a minimum, include the following contents:

   - Executive summary;
   - Introduction;
   - Description of the evaluation methodology;
   - Analysis of the situation with regard to the outcome, the outputs and the partnership strategy;
   - Analysis of opportunities to provide guidance for the future programming;
   - Key findings (including best practices and lessons learned)
   - Conclusions and recommendations
   - Annexes: ToRs, field visits, people interviewed, documents reviewed, etc.

2. An outline for the future UNDP intervention in support of e-Governance covering areas like (e-services, policy related and others) based on the recommendations of the mission is to be produced. Opportunities to engage other UN agencies in future work to be considered.

3. A completed e-governance assessment methodology finalized in consultation with UNDP. The methodology should factor in the particular role that ICTs can play in public institutions, in particular their potential to be catalysts for both transformation and inclusion of people in decision-making processes.

### X. Reference materials

The evaluators should study the following documents:

1. UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results
2. UNDP Results-Based Management: Technical Note
5. Projects Document and relevant reports
6. UNDP National Human Development Reports for Moldova
8. Other documents and materials related to the outcome to be evaluated (from the government, donors, etc.)

Background documentation is available on [www.undp.md](http://www.undp.md)