## Terms of reference

**Provincial Government Strengthening Program**

**Mid-term Evaluation**

**Terms of Reference (TOR)**

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| ACTIVITY TITLE: | Mid-term Evaluation |
| AGENCY/PROJECT NAME: | UNCDF/UNDP/MPGIS |
| DURATION:  COUNTRY OF ASSIGNMENT: | 25 days, ASAP July - August 2011  Solomon Islands |
| CONTRACT TYPE : | Individual Consultant |

1. **Overview**

As indicated in the project document of the Provincial Governance Strengthening Programme (PGSP) a mid-term evaluation will be undertaken 24 months after project start-up. The mid-term evaluation serves to assess overall project progress to date, to document lessons learnt and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. As such, the report of the mid-term evaluation will be disseminated for review to the implementing agency, implementation partners and other stakeholders of the project. The Joint Oversight Committee (JOC) meeting will be held to discuss the mid-term evaluation findings. Therefore, three (3) individual consultants are required to conduct PGSP mid-term evaluation.

1. **Project Background**

PGSP is an institutional strengthening program aiming to develop the capacity of the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS) and the nine Provincial Governments (PGs) to fulfil their mandates in service delivery. PGSP is implemented by the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS), with UNCDF and UNDP providing support for the implementation of the program as participating UN agencies. UNDP has been delegated the role and responsibility as the Administrative Agent of the Joint Program.

The total joint program budget is 18.9 million USD. It is financed by the Government of Australia through the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), the European Union (EU), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) who contribute 14.6 million USD. The Solomon Island Government (SIG) has committed 3.5 USD million USD with the Provincial Governments[[1]](#footnote-1) contributing between 10 to 15% minimum as counterpart.

The first phase of PGSP focuses on basic capacity for public expenditure management (PEM) and will develop in all nine Provinces a level of capacity characterized by the ability to program, produce and execute credible budgets, through appropriate participatory and transparent procedures. To provide incentives for the adoption of improved governance and administration practices, PGSP has set up “Provincial Capacity Development Fund” (PCDF) as a provincial budget support facility for discretionary development spending.

The program builds the capacity of the central administration (particularly the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening and Ministry of Finance and Treasury) to effectively support and supervise the performance of the Provincial Governments. PGSP other critical partner ministries are the Ministry of Development and Aid Coordination (MDPAC), Ministry of Public Service (MPS) and Prime Minister’s Office.

The overarching goal of the PGSP is poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Solomon Islands. The intermediate outcome for the program is improved provincial governance for development, more specifically, an expanded, more effective and more efficient role of Provincial Governments in the promotion and management of local development and in service delivery. Key project activities are organized against four (4) major Components which will aim to:

* **Output 1:** The responsibilities of Provincial Governments are clarified and expanded. The first output of PGSP is concerned with clarification and expansion of the PG responsibilities for delivery of both administrative and developmental services, either as devolved functions or as functions delegated to them by line ministries under agency agreement as per Art. 29 of the Provincial Government Act.
* **Output 2:** The resources of the Provincial Governments are commensurate to their responsibilities; the second output of PGSP is concerned with the alignment of the financial resources and fiscal powers of the Provincial Governments with their developmental mandate. PGSP aims to immediately improve the current system of Provincial Grants, to ensure a more transparent allocation, a differentiation between purpose-specific and general-purpose (discretionary) grants and an increased allocation of the latter to development spending. PGSP will also review the legal framework and current practices for provincial own-source revenue mobilization and broader central-provincial revenue transfers, developing options for reform of the current fiscal and non-fiscal revenue instruments of the provincial governments.
* **Output** *The local development management capacity of the Provincial Governments is developed. .* The third output of the PGSP is concerned with building system-wide capacity for effective local-level governance and development. It will improve governance capacity of Provincial Assemblies (PA) and Provincial Executives (PE). The Local Development Management capacity of Provincial Governments is enhanced through an improved PEM cycle and service delivery – infrastructure service delivery (IDS), local economic development (LED) and natural resource management (NRM). MPGIS capacities are strengthened for an effective system of central support and supervision of PGs.
* **Output 4:** *PGSP monitoring and evaluation.* This Component is concerned with having an effective M & E system in place focusing on institutional mechanisms for policy director of the project, develop and implement the M & E/MIS System and support to MDPAC.

Illustrated below is the PGSP Logic.



In relation to its intermediate outcome, in the strengthening the capacity of provincial governance structures, the PGSP will address the needs of four sets of actors:

* Provincial Executives (Provincial Premier and Ministers), strengthening their capacity to formulate and oversee the implementation of local development policies and programmes;
* Provincial Assemblies, strengthening their capacity to represent their constituents, pass ordinances, and oversee the implementation of local development policies and programmes by the provincial executive;
* Provincial Administrations (“posted”, “line ministry” and “directly employed” staff), strengthening their capacity to implement such policies and programmes; and
* Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening, strengthening its capacity to: a) represent and advocate provincial development issues with the central Government; and b) support, supervise and monitor the performance of Provincial Governments.

The project document was signed in April 2008 for duration of 5 years (2008-2012), which represents phase I of PGSP. Following the project inception phase, PGSP project activities commenced in July 2008 with provincial consultation on Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF) manual. This phase is planned to end in December 2012 as per the project document and agreement with the donors.

1. **Project Status**

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| **Outputs** | **Summary of current project status** |
| * **Output 1:** The responsibilities of Provincial Governments are clarified and expanded. | Since 2010, functional assignment consultations are being held with targeted line ministries, donors and Provincial governments (PGs) to reach “Agency agreements” regulating devolution of more responsibilities and resources to PGs in 2011. In addition, PGSP is considering introducing a new facility to enhance the involvement of PGs in Climate change adaptation, the Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) facility. |
| * **Output 2:** The resources of the Provincial Governments are commensurate to their responsibilities. | The Project has established the Provincial Capacity Development Fund as performance-based grant to provide PGs with predictable resources for capital investments as a seed grant as well as an incentive for PGs to embark on Public Expenditure Management and Financial Management reforms with the aim of fostering fiscal decentralization. |
| * **Output 3:** The local development management capacity of the Provincial Governments is developed. | 2009 to 2011 has been a dedicated to capacity building activities for PGs. After adopting the International Public Service Accounting Standard (IPSAS), PGSP has organized trainings accordingly for PGs treasurers and planners. A new standard format for planning and budgeting has been adopted by the Ministry for all PGs to align planning and budgeting and ensure fiscal discipline. PGs payroll has been computerized and specific software purchased and customized for PGs: the MYOB. Additional trainings are organized for PGs in the areas of Leadership. |
| * **Output 4:** PGSP monitoring and evaluation. | In 2010, the baselines study was completed and the M&E framework designed. Next steps include the design of the M&E manual and the training of MPGIS staff for implementation. |

1. **Objective**

As indicated in the project document[[2]](#footnote-2), there is a need to conduct a mid-term evaluation (MTE):

* To assess overall project progress to date.
* To evaluate the procedures for local level planning, programming, budgeting, and implementation extended by the PGSP to provincial governments.
* To evaluate the effectiveness of the PCDF as a pilot fiscal transfer system and as an incentive to improve performance of the provincial governments in revenue and expenditure management; and
* TO examine project management and institutional arrangements to ensure that they are adequate for and consistent with the attainment of expected PGSP results and the implementation of agreed project activities.

In addition to the above, the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening expects the MTE specifically:

* To assess PGSP strategy and approaches with regard to progress toward achieving its outputs.
* To evaluate capacity development challenges faced by the project.
* To help project partners and stakeholders formulate general direction and broad outline for the next phase of the project (to start in 2013) and the extension of the current project phase with regard to the initial start up delay.

Further objectives of mid-term evaluation are:

* To assist the MPGIS, UNDP, UNCDF, donors and beneficiaries to understand relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and likely sustainability of results of the project.
* To assess the level of satisfaction of project stakeholders and beneficiaries with the project and its results.
* To assess whether implementing agency and partners are effectively positioned to achieve results,
* To assess relevance of project management arrangements, identify advantages, bottlenecks and lessons learned with regard to project management arrangements.
* To collate and analyze lessons learned and best practices which will contribute to project partners’ learning and be taken into consideration during the remaining project implementation period.
* To assess the quality and timeliness of inputs, reporting and monitoring system and extent to which these have been effective.
* To recommend modifications to increase the likelihood of success of the project and the monitoring system that guides these findings.

1. **Scope of Work**

The mid-term evaluation will assess project’s performance and achievements according to the following basic evaluation questions and sub-questions. Please note that the sub-questions may, at the request of the reference group, be subject to change during the inception phase of the evaluation:

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| **Question** | **Corresponding UN Evaluation Criteria** |
| **Question 1: To what extent is the project relevant and well-designed?**   * To review and asses project design relevance to the national development objectives and to the needs of project clients and beneficiaries * To assess how well/to what degree project integrates cross-cutting issues - gender, principle of equality and inclusive development in the design, implementation and outcome; whether the project has advocated for, and has contributed to empowering and addressing the needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable populations in the Solomon Islands. * To assess the level of public involvement in the project and whether the scope of public involvement has been appropriate given the broader goals and objectives of the project. | Relevance |
| **Question 2: To what extent has the project contributed to increased capacities and improved systems at local and national government level?**   * To evaluate the procedures for local level planning, programming, budgeting, and implementation extended by the PGSP to provincial governments * To assess the extent to which the project contributed increased human and institutional capacity in provincial governments. * To assess the extent to which the project contributed to improved PEM cycle in the provincial governments. | Efficiency and Effectiveness |
| **Question 3: To what extent has the project contributed to the improved planning of local development?**   * To assess to what extent the project contributed to improved development plan formulation by provincial governments and community participation. | Efficiency and Effectiveness |
| **Question 4: To what extent has Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF) -funded investments contributed to enhancing opportunities for local economic and socio-economic development?**  To evaluate the effectiveness of the PCDF (i) as a pilot fiscal transfer system, (ii) as an incentive to improve performance of the provincial governments in revenue and expenditure management and (iii) as leverage tool for provincial government further financing | Effectiveness |
| **Question 5: To what extent are project results likely to be sustainable in the longer-term?**   * To assess the likelihood of continuation of project outcomes/benefits, identify gaps and recommend sustainability mechanisms – MPGIS, PCDF projects and policy initiatives and others. | Sustainability |
| **Question 6: How effective has implementation and management of the project been at the national and local levels?**   * To examine project management and institutional arrangements, how adequate, efficient and effective they are for and the attainment of expected PGSP results and the implementation of agreed project activities. * To review the clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the various positions, agencies and institution**s** and the level of coordination with relevant players. * To evaluate the effectiveness of governmental learning activities and didactic processes employed by the project and suggest improvements/changes if necessary. * To assess the M&E system of the project and make recommendations for its improvement. * To assess the monitoring and quality control of project implementation, knowledge management and the effectiveness of technical advisory services provided in the ministry and provincial governments. | Efficiency |
| **Question 7: To what extent did piloted approaches lead to up-scaling and replication as well as to policy developments?**   * To assess the initiatives on the policy support to the Solomon Island Government/MPGIS for the Provincial Governments particularly in the relevant areas. * To assess to what extent the piloted approaches have been conducive to policy change and increased flow on resources at national and/or provincial levels. | Effectiveness |
| **Question 8: To what extent did the project enhance the partnership with the government and other donors at national and regional level?**   * To evaluate the partnership arrangements for project implementation with special regards to the level of ownership by the government. * To assess the extent to which the representatives of the participating country are actively involved in project implementation. * To assess whether the government and associated implementation partners have maintained financial commitments to the project. | Effectiveness |

Mid-term evaluation will also:

* Make recommendations how to improve project performance in terms of effectiveness and efficiency in achieving impact on institutional and capacity development.
* Identify and propose suggestions/solutions to any problems affecting the implementation of the recommendations of earlier review and evaluations (Annual Joint Supervision Mission and the EU Results Oriented Monitoring (reports available on demand).
* Assess the underlying factors that are beyond project’s immediate control that may influence its outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project’s management strategies for these factors.
* Describe the main lessons applicable to the project and the lessons that may be of value more broadly in terms of: a) strengthening national ownership and stakeholder’s participation; b) institutional strengthening and capacity building; c) application of adaptive management strategies; d) efforts to ensure sustainability; e) knowledge transfer and knowledge management, and; f) role and use of M&E in project implementation.

1. **Evaluation Team**

The Evaluation Team (ET) is composed of: (i) a team leader (international consultant), (ii) two team members (one international and one local).

* 1. **The Team leader will:**
* Lead the planning of the mission’s activities, discussions at the national level and liaise with the implementing agency and partner agencies
* Ensure timely preparation of the deliverables outlined in this Terms of Reference
* Assign the tasks of contributing to the various parts of the evaluation and the report to the team members. Lead the pre-wrap up meeting to MPGIS and PGSP staff to develop the agreed actions on the preliminary findings and recommendations. The output of this consultation should be a draft Evaluation follow-up matrix.
* Lead the preparation of the Stakeholders Consultation Workshop including the wrap-up meeting where the Summary of key Findings and Recommendations will be presented.
* Furthermore, he/she will be in-charge of coordinating with other team members on the progress on preparations for the relevant policy dialogues.
* Conduct of debriefing to UNDP sub-office and UNCDF regional office.
  1. **The team members will:**
* Assess implementation progress based on their respective sector expertise and other areas agreed upon.
* Be individually responsible on contributing for the review of the status of compliance in the programme management systems, institutional arrangements for coordination and policy direction programme planning, and monitoring, financial reporting and management systems, and procurement procedures.
* Contribute to the presentation of the evaluation findings and recommendations
* Contribute to the drafting and finalization of the evaluation report.

1. **The Reference Group**

The Evaluation Team will be supported by a Reference Group (RG) composed the representatives of (i) MPGIS, RG Leader, (ii) UNDP, (iii) UNCDF, (iv) RAMSI, (v) EU, (vi) MoFT and (vii) MDPAC.

The Reference Group will work closely with the Evaluation Team to guide the evaluation process, provide necessary documents and information, facilitate contacts and ensure logistical support.

1. **Methodology**

The evaluation team will undertake **the desk review and analysis** of the key primary and secondary documentation, including project documents, work plans, progress reports, analytical reports, national policies/laws etc.

The desk work will be followed by in-country work. This will include **individual interviews, group consultations, focus groups and facilitated kick-off and wrap-up workshops with the key stakeholders**, including the members of the JOC. They may include but are not limited to: (i) MPGIS; (ii) Provincial Governments; (iii) PGSP technical and operational staff; (iv) Ministry of Finance and Treasury; e) Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination; (v) Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs; (vi) Ministry of Public Service; (vii) Ministry of Environment and climate change, (viii) Ministry of Health, (ix) Ministry of Education, (x) Ministry of Finance and Treasury including the Office of the Auditor general, (xi) Office of the Prime Minister and the National Parliament, xii) UNCDF, xiii) UNDP, xiv) AusAID/RAMSI and xv) EU, The team will also conduct **individual interviews, group consultations and/or focus groups with the project beneficiaries and service users.**

The evaluation team will also undertake **field visits** to at least four provinces, which will be representative enough of the program. The provinces are to be selected by the evaluation team in consultation with the stakeholders. The following criteria should be considered: a) Size of the province (territory and population); b) Challenges faced by the province; c) Travel accessibility of the province and implications for the mission travel.

The consultants will comply with the UNDP Evaluation Policy and the norms and standard for evaluation in the UN system.[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. **Mid-term Evaluation Plan**

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| Time Table | Activities |
| INCEPTION PHASE | |
| Day 1 -2 | Desk work – review and analysis of the key primary and secondary documents  Briefings and preliminary consultation with project partners and Reference Group |
| Day 3 | Start up workshop  Conducted by the Team Leader and the evaluation team to Reference Group and stakeholders  To present and validate evaluation design, plan and methodology |
| Day 4 | Finalization of evaluation design, plan and methodology and submission of Inception Report |
| CONSULTATIONS and FIELDWORK PHASE | |
| Day 5-8 | Consultations, interviews, focus groups with stakeholders in the capital Honiara (national line ministries and other state agencies, donors and international organizations, NGOs, and so on) |
| Day 9 - 17 | Field Visits - consultations, interviews, focus groups with stakeholders, clients and beneficiaries in 3 provinces (provincial governments, communities, NGOs) |
| Day 18 | Preparationof the Aide Memoire |
| **DE-BRIEFING PHASE** | |
| Day 19 | Presentation of the Aide Memoire to Reference Group and feed-back |
| Day 20 | National de-briefing workshop: The Team Leader presents the Aide Memoire to stakeholders |
| Day 21-23 | Draft evaluation report |
| Day 24 -25 | Submission of the final report by the Team Leader |

1. **Reporting arrangements and administrative/logistical support**

The evaluation team reports to the UNDP Deputy resident representative who will ensure that all necessary administrative and logistical support to arrange and carry out the evaluation will be provided**[[4]](#footnote-4)**.

1. **Deliverables**

Under the supervision of the Team Leader, the evaluation team will submit the following deliverables:

**Inception report**. It will include a brief summary of the key outputs and outcomes of the project as understood by the evaluation team, detailed evaluation design, methodology, sources of data and a plan of tasks, activities together with designated team members.

**Aide Memoire/Presentation** on main findings and recommendations. It will include summary of findings and recommendations and will be submitted and presented to the stakeholders at national de-briefing.

**Draft evaluation report**. It will include, but not be limited to, the executive summary, key findings, good practices, lessons learned and recommendations and will be submitted to reference group for their comments.

**Final evaluation report** following the suggested outline in Annex 1, which may be refined in consultation with the stakeholders. The report should not exceed to 50 pages excluding annexes.

1. **Remuneration**

Payment for this consultancy will be a daily lump sum based on the UNDP international and local consultancy fee rates and payable upon submission and acceptance of deliverables.

This will be exclusive of the DSA payable to the contractor on the basis of his/her travel from home country to Solomon Islands and from Solomon Islands to home country.

The costs of provincial travel (travel tickets) will be paid separately.

1. **Payment Schedule**

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| **Deliverable** | **Possible activities** | **Payment** |
| Inception report | * Conduct desk review and analysis of project documentation * Hold briefings and start-up workshop | 25% payment after receipt of inception report to team leader and team members |
| Draft Evaluation Report | * Report writing, any clarifications * Share draft for feedback | 75% to team members and 25% to team leader |
| Final Evaluation Report | * Incorporate feedback * Finalize the report and submit * Approval of the final report | 50% to team leader (payment after approval of final report) |

1. **Qualifications**

8.1*. International Evaluation Team Leader.* (25 person-days). The qualifications are the following:

* + 1. Education: Master’s Degree, in Public Administration, Social science, Political Science, Public policy, Public administration, Development studies or any other relevant field.
    2. Work experience.
* At least 15 years of experience with strong comparative experience infield of decentralization and local development; fiscal decentralization; decentralized infrastructure and service delivery;
* With local government capacity building for decentralized public expenditure management and operationalization of decentralized systems of planning and budgeting, policy, legal and regulatory reform related to decentralization including rural development experience preferred;
* At least 8 years of experience in leading evaluations of decentralization and local development programme, including experience using a range of qualitative evaluation methodologies to assess programme results at the institutional, sector and policy level.
* Appreciation of performance measures desirable.
  + 1. Others:
       - Thorough understanding of key elements of results-based programme management.
       - Demonstrated capacity for strategic thinking, and excellent analytical and writing skills.
       - Strong task management and team leading competencies.
       - Regional experience relative to the programme to be evaluated an advantage.
       - Experience in UNDP/UNCDF Evaluation preferred.
  1. *International Service Delivery Specialist* (20 person days). The qualification are the following:
  2. Education: Master’s Degree in rural development and related field.
  3. Work Experience.
     + - At least 15 years of experience in decentralized financing (or fiscal transfers) to improve service delivery - Small-scale infrastructure, natural resource management and local economic development. With experience in small scale infrastructure preferred in order to asses of technical quality and cost effectiveness.
       - Experience in promoting fiduciary management at local government focusing on the appropriateness and quality of procurement processes with experience in community contracting highly desirable.
       - Experience in providing technical assistance in project proposal, project appraisal and project cycle strategy (from social preparation to operations and maintenance).
       - At least 8 years of experience in evaluations of decentralization and local development.
       - With experience in gender mainstreaming in the implementation of projects by local government institutions.
       - Appreciation of performance measurement desirable.
  4. Others
     + - Thorough understanding of key elements of results-based programme management
       - Demonstrated capacity for strategic thinking, and excellent analytical and writing skills.
       - Regional experience relative to the programme to be evaluated is an advantage.
       - Experience in UNDP/UNCDF evaluation.
  5. (National) *Local Governance Specialist* (20 person days). The Local Governance Specialist, providing knowledge of the local context, will have the following qualifications:

1. Education: Master Degree in Finance and administration or other related fields but with at least a total of 12 years of experience or Master’s Degree with relevant qualification and 8 years of experience.
2. Work Experience:

* With at least 7 years management/advisory experience in the public sector with at least 3 years experience of working with MPGIS and Provincial Governments.
* Knowledge of Provincial Government act, Financial Management Ordinance and other quasi-regulatory laws related to Provincial Governments.
* At least 2 years experience in reviewing PG programmes in the government sector funded by donor agencies.
* Experience in results-based management and UNDP evaluation is highly desirable.
* With knowledge on gender issues of the Solomon Islands.
* Knowledge of performance measurement linked with capacity building and public reform is an added plus.

1. To the PCDF funds and excluding non-cash contribution. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. PGSP Joint Programme Document, p. 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. UNDP Evaluation Policy http://www.undp.org/evaluation/policy.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Although the final report must be cleared and accepted by UNDP before being made public, the evaluation function should be structurally independent from operational management and decision-making functions in the organization. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)