**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF JOINT PROGRAMMES ON ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**General Context: The MDGF Environment and Climate Change 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 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 50 countries. These reflect eight thematic windows that contribute in various ways towards progress on the MDGs.

The Environment and Climate Change thematic window aims to contribute to a reduction in poverty and vulnerability in eligible countries by supporting interventions that improve environmental management and service provision at the national and local levels, as well as increasing access to new funding mechanisms and expanding the ability to adapt to climate change.

The Window includes 17 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 three types of result: making the environment, natural resource management and action against climate change a mainstream focus in all public policy; improving national capacities to plan and implement concrete actions in favour of the environment; and assessing and improving national capacities to adapt to climate change.

The joint programmes within this thematic window serve a variety of participants[[1]](#footnote-1), ranging from national governments to local populations. All joint programmes include a support component directed at national and local governments. Other beneficiaries include civil society, communities and citizens.

**The following points should be provided by the joint programme team**

* Describe the joint programme, programme name and goals; include when it started, what outputs and outcomes are sought, its contribution to the MDGs at the local and national levels, its duration and current stage of implementation.
* Summarize the joint programme’s scale of complexity, including its components, targeted participants (direct and indirect), geographical scope (regions) and the socio-economic context in which it operates.
* It is also useful to describe the human and financial resources that the joint programme has at its disposal, the number of programme implementation partners (UN, national and local governments and other stakeholders in programme implementation).
* Changes noted in the programme since implementation began, and how the programme fits in with the priorities of the UNDAF and the National Development Strategies.

**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 an mid-term evaluation.

Mid-term evaluations are highly formative in nature and seek **improved implementation of the programmes during their second phase of implementation**. **They also seek and generate knowledge, identifying best practices and lessons learned** that could be transferred to other programmes. 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 Environment and Climate Change 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 problem and its causes in the joint programme being addressed? (Environmental and human)
2. Does the joint programme address the problem’s most salient, urgent and prioritized causes? Does it address the environmental and socio-economic needs of the population in the areas of involvement? Does it reflect the role of the Programme in solving problems and meeting identified needs?
3. Is the strategy adapted to the socio-cultural context to which it is applied?
4. Are the monitoring indicators relevant? Are they of sufficient quality to measure the joint programme’s outputs and outcomes?
5. To what extent has the MDGF Secretariat contributed to improving the quality of the formulation of joint programmes?

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

1. To what extent do the joint programme’s goals and lines of action reflect national and regional plans and programmes, identified needs (environmental and human) and the operational context of national policy?
2. To what degree have national and local authorities and social actors been taken into consideration in designing 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?
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?
5. Are work methodologies, financial tools etc. shared among agencies and among joint programmes?
6. Have the most efficient measures for the context been adopted to solve the environmental issue?

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

1. To what extent have the target 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?
3. Do the outputs produced meet the required quality?
4. Is the programme providing coverage to participants as planned?
5. What factors are contributing to progress or delay in achieving outputs and outcomes?
6. To what extent has the programme contributed innovative measures towards solving the problems?
7. Have any success stories been identified, or examples that could be transferred to other contexts?
8. To what extent have the behaviours causing the environmental problem been transformed?
9. To what extent has the joint programme contributed to putting environmental problems on the country's policy agenda?
10. What differential impacts and types of effect is the joint programme producing among population groups, such as youth, children, and adolescents, the elderly, indigenous communities and rural populations?

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

1. Are the necessary preconditions being created to ensure the sustainability of the impacts of the joint programme?
   * 1. At the local level: are local knowledge, experiences, resources and local networks being adopted?
     2. At the country level: have networks or network institutions been created or strengthened to carry out the roles that the joint programme is performing?
     3. Is the joint programme’s duration sufficient to ensure a cycle that will project the sustainability of the interventions into the future?
2. To what extent are the visions and actions of partners consistent with or different from those of the joint programme?
3. 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 evaluations 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, consultants are 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. Consultants are 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 desk study 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 consultant 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 consultant)

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 desk study 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 consultant and the evaluation managers.

**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 paragrap) 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 final report will be shared with 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 final report will be sent 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 consultant and the heads of the Joint Programme in connection with the findings and/or recommendations. The team must corroborate all assertions, or disagreement with them noted.

• **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 consultant 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, they must be reported immediately to the Secretariat of the MDGF. If this is not done, the existence of such problems may in no case be used to justify the failure to obtain the results stipulated by the Secretariat of the MDGF in these terms of reference.

• **Validation of information.** The consultant 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 consultant 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 interim evaluation process are the Secretariat of the MDGF, the management team of the joint programme and the Programme Management Committee that could be expanded to accommodate additional relevant stakeholders. This group of institutions and individuals 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 promote and manage Joint Programme mid-term evaluation in its role as proponent of the evaluation, fulfilling the mandate to conduct and finance the joint programme evaluation. As manager of the 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. Each of the Secretariat's portfolios managers shall send the generic TOR for the window in question to the specific country where the evaluation take place. These are then to be adapted to the concrete situation of the joint programme in that country, 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 (the body that comments on and reviews but does not interfere with the independent evaluation process). 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 TOR will be sent to the MDG-F Secretariat consultant.
2. From this point on, each programme officer is responsible for managing the execution of the evaluation, with three main functions: to facilitate the work of the consultant, to serve as interlocutor between the parties (consultant, joint programme team 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. Briefing with the consultant **(1 day).** A checklist of activities and documents to review will be submitted, and the evaluation process will be explained. Discussion will take place over what the evaluation should entail.
2. Review of documents according to the standard list (see TOR annexes; programme document, financial, monitoring reports etc.).
3. Submission of the inception report including the findings from the document review specifying how the evaluation will be conducted. The inception report is sent and shared with the evaluation reference group for comments and suggestions (within **seven days of delivery of all programme documentation to the consultant**).
4. The focal person for the evaluation (joint programme coordinator, resident coordinator office, etc) and the consultant prepare and 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. The consultant will travel to the country to observe and contrast the preliminary conclusions reached through the study of the document revision. The planned agenda will be carried out. To accomplish this, the Secretariat’s programme officer may need to facilitate the consultant’s visit by means of phone calls and emails, making sure there is a focal person in the country who is his/her natural interlocutor by default.
2. The consultant will be responsible for conducting a debriefing with the key actors he or she has interacted with.

**Final Report (31 days total)**

1. The consultant will deliver a draft final report, which the Secretariat’s programme officer 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 programme officer can and should intervene so that erroneous data, and opinions based on erroneous data or not based on evidence, are changed **(within seven days of delivery of the draft final report).**

The evaluation reference group may also comment on the value judgements contained in the evaluation, but these may 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 programme officer shall assess the quality of the evaluation reports presented using the criteria stipulated in the annex to this evaluation strategy **(within seven days of delivery of the draft final report).**
2. On the completion of input from the reference group, the evaluator shall decide which input to incorporate and which to omit. The Secretariat’s programme officer shall review the final copy of the report, and this phase will conclude with the delivery of this report to the evaluation reference group in the country **(within seven days of delivery of the draft final report with comments).**
3. **Phase of incorporating recommendations and improvement plan (within seven days of delivery of the final report):**
4. The Secretariat’s programme officer, as representative of the Secretariat, shall engage in a dialogue with the joint programme managers to establish an improvement plan that includes recommendations from the evaluation.
5. The Secretariat’s programme officer will hold a dialogue with the point person for the evaluation to develop a simple plan to disseminate and report the results to the various interested parties.

**10. ANNEXES**

**a) Document Review**

**This section must be completed and specified by the other users of the evaluation but mainly by the management team of the joint programme and by the Programme Management Committee. A minimum of documents that must be reviewed before the field trip shall be established; in general terms the Secretariat estimates that these shall include, as a minimum:**

MDG-F Context

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

Specific Joint Programme Documents

* Joint Programme Document: results framework and monitoring and evaluation framework
* Mission reports from the Secretariat
* Quarterly reports
* Mini-monitoring reports
* Biannual monitoring reports
* Annual reports
* Annual work plan
* Financial information (MDTF)

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

**c) 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 |  |  |  |  |

**b) Evaluation timeline**

1. It refers to what previously was refereed as beneficiaries [↑](#footnote-ref-1)