Evaluation of UNDP Romania Country Programme 2010-2012

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Executive Summary

The evaluation concludes that the 2010-12 country programme has been highly relevant in terms of support to national strategic priorities and exhibits examples of true partnerships based on collaboration and understanding of respective roles at individual project output level. Activities and outputs are moving towards achievement of the strategic objective - Pioneering a new Partnership on multilateralism and official development assistance – BUT achieving nationwide cohesion and a strategic perspective to guide Romanian Official Development Assistance is still work-in-progress, which requires consolidation with support from external partners in order to ensure sustainability of a Romanian drive to become a recognized actor on development cooperation.

This evaluation exercise is the response to two separate but interlinked issues. Firstly, UNDP Evaluation Guidelines stipulates the need to carry out independent assessments of its programmes for accountability and learning purposes. Secondly, the “Country Programme Document for Romania (2010-12)”, approved by the UNDP Executive Board in September 2009 states in para. 21 that “a more comprehensive programme review, conducted by the Government and UNDP, will be finalized in 2012…The continued benefit of the UNDP country programme and feasibility…of the partnership between UNDP and this European Union member State will be assessed…UNDP support to resident coordinator system requirements, and the continued partnership of UNDP with Romania through its regional and global operations, leading to an extension of the partnership to 2015.

Consequently, the evaluation lends its rationale and methodology from the “Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results” (UNDP 2009), taking into account various specifics derived from country realities such as the fact that many programme outputs and results are in the process or still to be reached throughout 2012-13 and some even into 2014. Furthermore, the evaluation is requested to be forward-looking in assessing the relevance and feasibility of the “new Partnership Model” currently being discussed between the host government and UNDP to replace the 2010-12 Country Programme. This means that results, conclusions and recommendations are more tentative, qualitative and “soft” in terms of assessing development impact than is usual in an evaluation exercise of this nature. Likewise, the ongoing nature of the country programme means that interviews and dialogue have been an essential source for the findings of the evaluation. Methodologically, the evaluation has focused on relevance, efficiency, national ownership and UNDP value-addition in its assessment of the 2010-12 country programme.
The development context within which the country programme operates has suffered important changes due to Romania’s accession as an EU member state in 2007. In this respect the current country programme is the first ever in a EU member state, requested by Romania. This also has meant that UNDP cannot provide funding from its core resources neither for programme nor for country presence and consequently requires a financial commitment from the host country to assume such commitment. It is the opinion of the mission that Romania has complied with its commitments even in spite of reductions in ODA and unfinished institutional strengthening in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The current programme exhibits a high level of relevance through its support to national strategic priorities such as anti-corruption, social inclusion and sustainable development which also has been inserted into important regional initiatives – transition to democracy, environment and climate change initiatives – in which Romania has shown national ownership, particularly at the individual project level while coordination and operational prowess mostly at the level of MFA have been less notable and still requires considerable external support. Besides the above challenges, it is obvious that financial constraints – exacerbated by non-access to future GEF-funding – as well as limited human resource availability will constitute serious challenges to the successful transition into a “new Partnership Model”. Another lesson learned from the Romania experience is that reliance on non-core funding from EU structural funds such as ESF comes at a price of high operational costs and consequent pressure on the very limited human resources of a small country office.

The completion of the residual programme – activities and outputs already foreseen and included in the current programme – requires continued delegation of authority and attribution of priority to these activities. In the short run a continued local UNDP presence is required – not to be understood as a UNDP representative but as an operative and knowledge presence – while a gradual and deliberate change of control and coordination towards national institutions is seen to be essential. This means that sustainable sources of funding towards local UNDP presence need to be identified and ensured.

The evaluation finds that the elements of a “new partnership model” between Romania and UNDP to replace the ongoing country programme are in place to allow Romania to transit from a recipient towards a donor role in development cooperation. UNDP’s present and future role is acknowledged not only by the local partners but also by the EU Commission. The relevance and potential of the “new partnership model” is illustrated amply in initiatives such as Romanian ODA funding
in 2011 of a partnership with Egypt and Tunesia around election management in a
democratic transition environment. This initiative was just recently extended by the
Romanian authorities referring to continued UNDP facilitation deemed critical by the
partners for its success.

It is, however, also the considered opinion that a successful transition faces a series
of challenges: ensure political will and ownership and capacity in the MFA to reach
sustainability of a nationally-controlled ODA-policy by 2015; create a triangular
governance structure – host government/UNDP regional centre/UNDP local
presence – to drive and guide Romania’s ODA policy, and for UNDP to ensure
adequate capacity to support Romania’s ODA drive.

Finally, the evaluation recommends that the Romania experience be given high
visibility locally to build political and public understanding of and support to
Romania’s ODA policy. The same visibility should be used also in UNDP’s corporate
policy towards building new partnerships with partner countries graduating out of a
recipient status. The pioneering case of Romania as the first EU member state
having requested and implementing a UNDP supported country programme and
transiting it towards a new partnership around Romania’s role as an ODA donor also
should inform UNDP’s discussions with its Executive Board, its traditional donors
and the EU.

Allow us also here to acknowledge the constructive contributions provided by a host
of counterparts, project staff and particularly the staff of UNDP ROM. Without their
insights it would not have been possible to complete our assignment while eventual
errors or misinterpretations are the responsibility of the mission.
1. Introduction

a. Justification for this evaluation

The Romania Country Programme Document (CPD) was approved by the UNDP Executive Board in September, 2009 for the period 2010-12. As such, it reflects a number of singular features:

- In a pioneering effort the Government of Romania submitted and received approval of the current UNDP supported Country Programme (CP) for an EU member state. This CP still represents the first and only realization of UNDP support to an EU member state and should as such receive particular attention in terms of lessons learned both for UNDP as an organization and the EU.
- The approval of the Country Programme Document (CPD) was contingent upon UNDP not allocating core financial resources for neither programme costs nor administrative costs. This has resulted in a CP funded principally from Government resources supplemented by other non-core resources.
- The 2010-12 CP was designed to be the final full-fledged CP for Romania to be replaced by a partnership arrangement to be determined in agreement among the parties.

These features constitute the justification for the current evaluation exercise, which was also foreseen in paragraph 21 of the CPD, “A comprehensive programme review ... will be finalized in 2012... The continued benefit of the UNDP country programme and feasibility of the partnership between UNDP and this European Union member state will be assessed”.

Principally, the evaluation serves to account for progress towards both the CP outcomes as well as the strategic objective reflected in the CPD (see below for details of CPD). This accountability process is seen to be even further warranted since the host Government has committed to bear all financial costs related to the implementation of the 2010-12 CP, which could not be funded from non-core resources. Furthermore, as noted above, the pioneering nature of implementing this CP in an EU member state calls for special attention to lessons learned beyond the specificities of the Romania CP.

Just as important as the retrospective analysis, the current evaluation seeks to assess the relevance of the successor Partnership Model (PM) under consideration
to replace the CP at its completion by end 2012. In particular, the solidity of the premises and principles on which the PM is to be built will be examined. This forward-looking or prospective exercise will assess both the programmatic priorities and the partnership platform on which the PM will be built.

**b. Audience for the Evaluation**

Both the Government of Romania and UNDP will be informed of the conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation. In this way it will serve as input towards a forward-looking successor arrangement. Additionally, it will serve as an assessment of progress towards established CP objectives in terms of relevance towards national development priorities, “value-for-money;” and role and contribution of UNDP.

It is hoped that the evaluation will also serve to allow the Government of Romania to present the results of its pioneering partnership with UNDP as an EU member state for the benefit of other countries in similar transition from donor to partner status.

This exercise should serve several interrelated purposes for UNDP:

- It will comply with a commitment assumed as an integral part of the approval of the 2010-12 CPD.
- It will inform the ongoing corporate drive towards innovative partnership arrangements with long-standing programme countries transitioning towards a qualitatively different relation with UNDP - i.e. a partnership relation as an embodiment of the Administrator’s recently launched “Agenda for Organizational Change”.
- It is expected that this forward-looking exercise will be particularly relevant for UNDP programmes in EU accession countries, including the role of the Bratislava Regional Center (BRC) in supporting the partnership and programmatic contents of future successor arrangements.
2. Scope of the Evaluation

The Terms of Reference (TOR) for the current evaluation are defined in accordance with the evaluation framework set out in the “Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results” (UNDP, 2009).

This assessment is defined as a decentralized outcome evaluation originating in the stipulations of the 2010-12 CPD - to carry out an analysis of achievements of results from the CP prior to its completion by end 2012. The TOR are a result of consultations between the host government and the UNDP Country Office placing focusing on outcomes both in terms of the three CP objectives as well as the overarching strategic objective.

a. Timeframe for the Evaluation

The timeframe for the evaluation was agreed to focus exclusively on the period 2010-12, coinciding with the duration of the CP. This was decided in view of the radical reorientation of the current CP compared to the previous cycle due to Romania’s new status as an EU member state and the focus of the new CP towards laying the grounds for Romania’s transition from recipient to donor in the development cooperation architecture and consequently a transformation of UNDP’s relation to Romania from that of donor to that of partner. In practical terms, this means that as of end 2012 no new initiatives will be initiated at the project level within the framework of the 2010-12 CPD. This also applies to not supplying additional funding to the current CPD.

Given the short timeframe and the fact that a number of project-level initiatives are still being implemented throughout 2013 and some even into 2014, the evaluation exercise cannot be considered final in terms of achievements of outcome. Instead, it will necessarily have elements of a process evaluation or perhaps rather an assessment of achieved results complemented by an analysis of ongoing activities towards the intended outcomes.

Therefore, it should be noted that the conclusions and recommendations necessarily are provisional and open for change. The objective of this evaluation should ideally contribute to the continuous process of review and adjustment, which is a salient feature of any successful implementation process to guide the collaborative nature of a CP supported by UNDP.
b. Users of the Evaluation

The overall objective of any UNDP evaluation is to support programme improvements; build knowledge for generalizability and wider-application/lessons learned, and support accountability. Therefore, the conclusions and recommendations of this review have multiple audiences:

- **Host Government**: As the government authorities are the principal beneficiaries of the support provided through the CP, it is of obvious interest to learn of the degree to which CP objectives have been met and what should be improved. Furthermore, in this case the host government has committed itself to providing the bulk of the necessary financial resources – for programme and UNDP support alike – in which case there is a legitimate interest in assuring “value for money”. Ultimately, the Government of Romania should be able to share - on an evidence-based platform - its pioneering experience as the first EU member state to have implemented a CP supported by UNDP. Finally, the evaluation should provide inputs in defining the directions of a new “Partnership Model” to guide Romania’s transition from recipient to donor on the development cooperation stage.

- **UNDP**: Any evaluation should serve to inform and improve UNDP’s performance on all levels – local, regional, corporate. In this particular case, the UNDP Country Office (CO) can use the conclusions and recommendations to guide the final phase - the residual programme – towards effective achievement of the CP outcomes. The UNDP CO can also use them to inform discussions with the host government of the framework, minimum conditions and success indicators for the future “Partnership Model”. For the Regional Bureau, this evaluation could serve as input and inspiration for defining parameters of its collaboration with other EU member states and accession countries in the region. Furthermore, it might have some implications for the configuration and priorities of the Bratislava Regional Centre (BRC) in terms of new partnership arrangements in the region. For corporate UNDP, the Romania experience could inform the organization-wide efforts towards a definition of new partnership models with countries that are transiting out of the traditional programme relationship with UNDP. Obviously the scale is small and the framework is specific to EU member states, but the documentation of this experience could be added to the corporate toolkit.
- **Donors and external partners:** This evaluation could bring evidence based input into the ongoing dialogue with traditional donors and other partners on UNDP’s transitioning out of the traditional dichotomy between recipients and donors both in terms of funding and country presence of UNDP led activities.

c. **Objectives for the Evaluation**

In accordance with the TOR and subsequent clarifications from the Resident Representative a.i. and the CO-staff, the mission will concentrate its efforts on analyzing and arriving at conclusions/recommendations on the following 2 objectives:

- **Assessment of the 2010-12 Romania CP:**
  - Including observations on direction, outputs and process where achievement of CP outcome is still “underway”.
  - “Value-for-Money” in the implementation of the 2010-12 CP.
  - Emphasis on lessons learned and observations in support of an effective delivery of the “Residual Programme”, i.e. the outstanding outputs stipulated in the CP.

- **Principles for a new “Partnership Model” framing Romania’s future relations with UNDP with a focus on:**
  - Contents and strategy
  - Institutional framework
  - Minimum capacities (Government of Romania and UNDP)
  - Governance structure.

d. **Evaluation Criteria**

In order to arrive at conclusions on the evaluation objectives as described above, the mission agreed with the RR a.i. and the CO-staff on the following evaluation criteria:

- **Relevance:** To what extent have the results obtained been relevant to attaining the CP objectives and contributing to achieving the strategic objective.

- **Ownership:** To what extent have the project activities been chosen and implemented with the leadership of the national counterparts. To what degree have the national authorities assumed a coordinating role, ensuring cohesion towards CP objectives and ultimately alignment with national strategic objectives of the 2010-12 CP.
- **Efficiency/effectiveness:** To what extent have results been obtained in an efficient manner, ensuring “value-for-money” which for the current evaluation gains particular importance since the host government is funding the majority of costs incurred during the 2010-12 CP. Also, development effectiveness should be assessed in terms of sustainability and not least contribution to national capacity development.

- **UNDP value addition:** What has been the principle input from UNDP in pursuit of the CP objectives and how effectively have they been deployed.

In conclusion, the scope of the evaluation should ensure that the principal stakeholders will count with an assessment of the state of the ongoing CP in terms of achievement of its objectives (backward looking) while it provides inputs towards the implementation of the remedial programme delivering towards the remnant of the 2010-12 CP. Also the scope should allow for inputs towards the new Partnership Model between the Government of Romania and UNDP to replace the current CP (forward-looking).
3. Development Context and Programme Background

This chapter will provide the context for the below evaluation findings both in terms of Romania’s overall economic, political position as well as a brief description of the CPD with some overall considerations around its relevance to addressing the strategic objective of the CPD.

a. Development Context

The Romania CPD 2010-2012 adopted by the UNDP Executive Board in September 2009 was a specific response to the structural transition processes as a consequence of completing its accession process and becoming a new member state in the EU at the beginning of 2007 engulfed in a number of reforms at the national level aimed at reducing the structural gap existing between Romania and the other EU member states and also to fulfill the commitments brought by this new status. Also the 2010-12 CPD has to be understood within the adverse effects of the global financial crisis. After significant progress in the economy after 2001, one of the most significant contractions was registered in 2009 when the GDP experienced negative growth of 7.1% (GEA Report).

Under these adverse circumstances Romania signed an agreement with its international financers led by the IMF with a loan and assistance package totaling EUR 19.95 billion while introducing structural reforms to address the macroeconomic imbalances. Nevertheless, in 2009-10 an increase in the unemployment rate was registered together with a decrease in salaries. In short, the austerity measures threatened to affect the initial progresses in reducing poverty and addressing the vulnerable categories of population.

The EU membership fundamentally redefined the nature of UNDP support to Romania based on the UN Development Cooperation Framework for Romania (in lieu of UNDAF) 2010-2012 after extensive consultations between the UN and the Government of Romania. This proved the express interest of the Government of Romania in maintaining an important UN and UNDP presence in the country providing knowledge, experience and operational capacity development in the fields of peace and stability, economic development and promotion of democracy and human rights.

Furthermore, the 2010-12 CPD introduced a new challenge determined by the need to provide CP funding and local cost of the UNDP CO at a minimum estimated at USD 10,000,000, since Romania as an EU member state no longer could benefit from UNDP core resources, so the financial resources were to be identified locally.

The CP was developed with the overall objective of laying the foundation for a "new partnership". After extensive consultations with the Romanian Government, the civil
society, private sectors and other partners, the targets of the new CPD were aligned to the UN Cooperation Framework 2010-2012 and other strategic documents such as the National Development Framework 2007-2013. Further on a Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2012, was finalized and approved as an implementing tool of the CPD.

During the current programme period, Romania has applied strict fiscal consolidation measures that have led to a drastic decrease of purchasing power for the majority of the population by reducing wages and social benefits while increasing VAT. Increased unemployment rates were registered and estimates show that 24% of population live in poverty in Romania in 2012 (Eurostat, 2011, using relative poverty measured as those below 60% of median income. This figure has hovered around 16-17 % until 2011).

b. The Strategic Objective of the Programme

The current partnership between the Government of Romania and UNDP is in line with applicable European Union policies on multilateralism and official development assistance, and its strategic goal is the advancement of Romania’s role in international development cooperation in accordance with its geopolitical and strategic position as an active and responsible member of the European Union and the international community. An integral part of this role means that Romania is expected to promote UN system world-wide reform efforts through support to collaboration between UN organizations.

The CPD document defines the three major components to be articulated for the programme at national, regional and international level. In order to support the overall strategic objective, the three components were translated into three major interlinked outcomes that are supposed to increase Romania’s capacity to contribute to inclusive globalization in a sustainable manner.

c. CP Outcomes

**Outcome 1: Capacity Development for Romania’s International Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness.**

CP Outcome 1 aims to pursue the double purpose of strengthening Romania’s capacity to grant official development assistance, along with acquiring experience in the development cooperation field - with particular focus on MDGs.

Nominally, Romania became an ODA donor as a direct consequence of its EU accession in January 2007, assuming the EU directions for EU providers of development cooperation. Although Romania was and still is in transition from being
a recipient of international aid to becoming a donor country, the government decided to give strategic priority to increasing its role amongst the New Member States in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In this respect the partnership with UNDP during 2005-2009 played an important role and consequently it was agreed that the new UNDP CP for Romania should include this component as its strategic objective with emphasis on setting up the institutional, legal and financial systems by 2012, which are meant to lay the grounds for a subsequent “new partnership model” of development cooperation.

**Outcome 2: Capacity Development for Romania to contribute to the promotion and protection of global and regional public goods.**

This CP outcome aiming at supporting the capacity development of Romania to contribute to the promotion and protection of public goods was initially seen as the core or strategic objective in promoting the country as a strategic leader in the region. As it was designed to be interlinked with CP objective 1, the outcome should also be measured against its contribution to the “new model of development cooperation”.

The individual initiatives or projects focused on such fields as biodiversity, climate change, mitigation mechanisms respecting the UNDP principle of “shared solutions to shared problems”. At the same time they should use the European financing instruments aimed at cross-border cooperation in a new manner.

Furthermore, the CP objective was to support improved environmental governance through strengthening national institutional capacities, legislative and administrative frameworks, while also addressing the energy efficiency in low income communities.

**Outcome 3: Capacity development for social inclusion, economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice.**

This CP objective aims at enhancing the capacity of the line ministries to accelerate the implementation of innovative programmes for social inclusion, economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practices.

The actions carried out at national level were supposed to sustain Romanian policies to reduce socio-economic disparities and to focus on measures aimed at promoting inclusive growth, gender equality and MDG achievement, also fostering
inclusive participation. These initiatives again should focus on their potential to be adapted to the needs of Romanian official development assistance priority countries.

UNDP was to support national authorities and civil society to formulate and implement projects with funding made available to Romania through EU funded operational programs such as the “European Social Fund” (ESF) in order to simultaneously provide substantive support towards the reduction of social disparities and to help speed up the implementation rate for such funds.

d. Outputs at Project level

The output projects were designed to contribute to the achievement of the above outcomes. For Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 the identification of individual projects took place during the definition of the CPAP. The definition of individual projects for Outcome 1 were subsequently defined with a focus on “Fostering inclusive globalization” and sketched interventions that involved both the governmental level represented by MFA and the civil society in an attempt to achieve a flexible and diverse action platform. During the CP implementation, new projects were continuously included, addressing a number of opportunities and urgent issues.

e. Partnerships and host country ownership

The shape and direction of the CP involved the cooperation from different stakeholders such as the Romanian government, the civil society, private sectors and external partners. At the level of the 3 CP outcomes the strategic partners and other key stakeholders were identified according to fields of intervention.

The lead strategic partner for CP outcome 1 was considered to be the MFA, taking into consideration its role as coordinator of the national policies for development cooperation while another important player was represented by the partnership with the civil society representatives, such as FOND.

For Outcome 2, the MFA played only the role of a facilitator both at the national level and particularly in order to ensure a common understanding among relevant partner countries in and outside of the region, while the Ministry of Development and Tourism was the key national authority for defining and implementing the CBC projects.

In the case of Outcome 3, a lead role was expected for the management authorities for the EU structural funds. However, during the CPAP formulation it became clear that the largely contractual roles assumed by the managing authorities of EU structural funds made it impossible for UNDP to consolidate a strategic partnership
with them. Instead efforts focused on the individual governmental and non-governmental actors as partners to jointly design and implement social inclusion projects while democratic practices were supported directly through the line ministries and agencies without specific arrangements of relevance to the Structural Funds.

The UNDP CP for 2010-2012 represents on the one hand an excellent example of host country ownership since Romania has driven both the approval process as well as assumed a substantial responsibility for the funding of the CP. Host country ownership is vested primarily with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as UNDP Coordinating Agency, which facilitated UNDP’s partnerships with national implementing partners under the provisions of the Standard Basic Agreement (SBA). On the other hand it is obvious that financial shortfalls and delayed institutional strengthening threaten the achievement of the strategic objective.

Thus the realization of the Country Program’s strategic objective by aggregating the totality of the Country Program experience and by leveraging Romania’s transition experience and its financial resources for international development cooperation under a “new Partnership Model” has progressed impressively over the period 2010-12, but requires further consolidation of the institutional capacity and strategic leadership. Delays in the institutional strengthening and capacity build-up has led to a situation where Romania at this juncture meets some of the conditions for a “new Partnership Model” but conditions are still not fully in place for Romania to lead a development cooperation programme funded from its own ODA resources. Consequently, external support or partnering continues to be warranted to accompany this very promising process. UNDP continues to be well placed through its regional center in Bratislava combined with a local presence in Bucharest to provide such a partnership.

f. Funding base

Romania’s EU membership fundamentally redefined the nature of UNDP support to the country since the approval of the CPD became contingent upon UNDP not allocating core financial resources neither for programme nor administrative cost. The funding base of the CP for the three year implementation period was established at USD 14,000,000 out of which USD 10,000,000 was to be provided through local resources. Under this arrangement, the Government assumes all CO costs and UNDP continues to maintain its Country Representation in Romania and installed capacity to coordinate the Programme. Non–core resources from various funding schemes such as GEF and EU financial instruments – ESF - have been supplementing the Government contribution, supplying approximately 30% of the resources. Entering into the first year this “NCC-like arrangement” where the CO financing was to be ensured by the government. Budgetary cuts applied as of 2010
as a consequence of the financial crisis have created a particular challenge for the initiation of the 2010-12 CP, adding an additional volatility to the CP. While at the level of Coordinating Agency (MFA) government contributions to CO costs have been reliable, they too have suffered from unpredictability in terms of exchange rate fluctuations and deposits made only months into the financial year. At the output – project level approvals have been further delayed with the financial crises impacting capacities of line ministries to contribute and to lead UNDP supported programs. Although the allocation made at the level of the program is a multi-annual one, the yearly budget allocation system generates a number of gaps as far as the management of the CP financial flows is concerned. To such challenges might be added also the pressure generated by the fact that a significant part of the CP financial resources are supported from structural funds such as the ESF, not least from the fact that the disbursement period may last several months in some cases, thus creating major cash flow problems which forced UNDP to develop several unconventional financial mechanisms to compensate.

g. Relevance of the Country Programme

The CP structure is relevant to the achievement of the strategic objective, and the three components play a key and interlinked role in supporting Romanian’s ODA drive in various ways.

The economic and political environment in which the CP operates has changed considerably since its approval and on balance there is a real possibility that it will remain as challenging as it is now. These changes are across the board but highly visible in terms of reduced funding levels for the CP as well as overall priority settings for the Romanian ODA policy moving from emphasis on public goods and sustainability to electoral support and anti-corruption. As a consequence the relative balance of the CP components has shifted during implementation but without giving up the focus inherent in the strategic objective.

The overall stakeholder appreciation of the CP relevance emphasizes the quality of the UNDP support, combining technical expertise with sound development experience. Also, stakeholders have commented that UNDP’s presence has contributed to increased collaboration amongst institutional partners. The experience acquired by the local players following the collaboration with UNDP contributed to a large extent to the development of a network of local specialists that can increasingly share their experience and ensure the transfer of knowledge and good practices to other countries in similar situations, especially in transition countries or accession countries.
In sum, the achievements of the CP as well as its pending activities has proved to be relevant in facilitating the process towards fulfilling the commitments made by Romania as a EU member state, in becoming a provider of international assistance for development as well as a legitimate player in the cross-border collaboration towards environmental protection and support towards reducing social inequalities in Romania.
4. Evaluation Methodology

The UNDP “Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results” stipulate that evaluation methods should be selected for their rigor in producing empirically based evidence to respond to the evaluation criteria selected.

In terms of the current evaluation a number of specific circumstances shape the evaluation methodology. The ongoing nature of the CP means that a number of initiatives and subsequently results are still to be implemented and reached and consequently will influence a complete assessment of the CP. Secondly, the timeframe for the current CP is unusually short – 3 years – and will further make it difficult to measure achievements towards the CP objectives, not to speak of longer term impact on national development priorities. Finally, the evaluation will focus on the programme outcome level and thus only descend to the project output level for illustrations due to the priorities set jointly by the host government and UNDP in the TOR for the evaluation mission.

For the current evaluation this means addressing the following methodological issues:

- **Source of evidence.** The analysis will rely on a mix of primary and secondary data. Due to the above considerations framing the analysis - particularly the short timeframe and the still ongoing activities - greater emphasis and weight will have to be given to interviews with stakeholders and even so to appreciations and assessment of tendencies and impressions. This obviously does not mean that a critical analysis of outputs reported is not being done - quite to the contrary. Particularly the backward-looking or retrospective part of the evaluation will be based on a systematic analysis of existing documentation in responding to the evaluation questions or assessment parameters – relevance, ownership, effectiveness and UNDP role – in addition to primary data from interviews. This methodology is even so more pronounced in addressing the forward-looking or prospective part of the analysis – nature, contents and governance of a “New Partnership Model” for Romania’s future relationship with UNDP during the period 2013-15. In order to ensure sufficient rigor from a necessarily dynamic process of conducting an interview, the mission developed a series of questions to guide the interview in terms of the above-mentioned 4 assessment parameters (see annex 5).

i. **Data sources.** Types, quality. Stakeholder involvement. The evaluators combined various sources of information for data collection – interviews of principal players; document review as well as
review of earlier assessments - in order to address the different and complex angles of CP performance: CP achievements compared to the original design, but also CP implementation, including activities still pending within the CP framework.

The evaluators used the following sources of information to conduct the evaluation:

- **Documents review**: It was carried out online and during the meetings with programme and project staff. The documents consulted were put at the evaluators’ disposal by UNDP CO (CPD, policy papers, the County Office ROAR, the UN Cooperation Framework, Evaluation Reports of the output projects, evaluation report for previous country programme, Outcome Board meeting minutes, etc). Also official documents and statistical data were taken into account.

- **Field visits**: A 5-day mission was conducted at UNDP CO Romania (see the Meeting agenda in Annex 2) where discussions with the staff responsible for the CP were carried out and three Outcome Board meetings were held, one for each CP outcome. The field visit included meetings with the directors and coordinators of the individual projects under implementation. Dedicated bilateral discussions were held with representatives of MFA.

- **Interviews**: 2 telephone interviews were conducted with the representatives of the EU DG/DevCO and staff at the BRC/UNDP in Bratislava responsible for “new partnership models” in the RBEC region.

The field visit was well-organized and comprehensive to ensure collection of data and observations from key stakeholders (see Annex 3). On the basis of the information gathered from the structured checklist that guided the evaluation (see Annex 4), the evaluators extracted opinions related to the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the CP.

**ii. Performance standards.** The performance of the CP was measured on the basis of the CPD framework and the CP achievements. Therefore, the assessment of the programme was done against the standards set by the Annex 3 in the “Handbook on Evaluation and Monitoring” and in accordance with the ROAR, by assessing the performance of the programme against the progress of the strategic objective as well as the three CP outcomes, and the management arrangements set for the programme implementation, taking into consideration internal and external risks, including the assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness. The applied qualitative rating scale for the achievement of outcomes referring to change was: change/unchanged and for the
indicators were: achieved, partially achieved and not achieved against the targets set by CPD. The overall success was reviewed against the overall objective and the general context with the aim to set up a new model of partnership for development.

iii. **Limitations.** The principal limiting factors for this evaluation have already been mentioned – short timeframe and ongoing activities as well as more than normal reliance on interviews and perceptions. These factors all combine to make conclusions less absolute and final. Also recommendations become more reliant on tendencies and perceptions. Both limitations obviously make lessons learned less scientific and prescriptive. In general terms, however, the mission feels that the collected data, including interviews point so decisively in the same direction and support each other that we conclude that the limitations do not negatively affect our conclusions or recommendation and consequently underpin the conclusions/lessons learned/recommendations as described below.

iv. **Ethical considerations.** The current evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the UNEG “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation”, including evaluation ethics and procedures to safeguard the rights and confidentiality of the information providers.

v. **Background on the evaluation team.** Jakob Simonsen, team leader and international consultant. Mr. Simonsen is former staff member of UNDP with extensive senior management experience in- and outside RBEC and has worked intensively with transition issues in accession countries and EU member states as well as the transformation of traditional donor- and programme based cooperation with UNDP towards new partnership models. Irina Pascu, local consultant. Ms. Pascu has vast experience and involvement in EU and WB technical assistance projects in the field of social development, through evaluation of project proposals, monitoring of projects and evaluation of project and programmes or policy formulation.
5. Evaluation findings

This chapter will describe the findings of the mission both towards the retrospective and the prospective aspects of the Romanian CP 2010-12. As was indicated above, the central evaluation questions - relevance, ownership, efficiency and value addition – will guide the findings particularly in terms of the degree to which the 3 CP objectives are being achieved. In terms of the successor arrangement to replace the current CP at the end of 2012, the findings will be more prescriptive due to the forward-looking nature.

Outcome 1: Capacity Development for Romania’s International Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness

Achievements/Shortcomings

The relative weight of the 3 CP objectives as agreed in 2009 was seriously altered by the unforeseen economic and political developments in 2009-10 and this impacted adversely both the volume of ODA and delays in the institutional strengthening as well as human capacity building in the MFA. The financial crisis influenced Romania’s budget as austerity measures were put in place. This resulted in a decrease of the ODA budget to the extent that the projected level of 0.3 % GNI allocated for ODA activities before 2015 as per applicable EU guidelines will not be reached. The 0.07% GNI level in 2010 reflected a decrease compared to 2009 when the amount was 0.1% GNI. Furthermore, the level of 0.17% announced as target for 2010 was not reached and is still not reached at the moment of evaluation. It is feared that this tendency may be maintained in an unstable economic and financial context for the foreseeable future. Thus, the indicator « official development assistance as percentage of GNI » is not being met and might not be so in the foreseeable future.

The output level projects targeting the achievement of Outcome 1 offer support to build the implementation capacity of ODA for MFA but also of the Romanian NGOs involved in the ODA implementation. The analysis of the project fiches and the events carried out during the past 2 years prove that the project objectives fit those of MDGs, since they addressed topics such as sustainable development, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery.

The international participants at the events organized in the framework of this CP outcome appreciated the quality of the initiatives and underlined the importance of the Romanian development aid for the beneficiary countries.
The South-South cooperation initiative in 2011 - a project aimed at exchanging experience between Romania and the Arab Spring countries (Egypt and Tunisia) on the subject of transition to democracy and democratic elections - represented an important opportunity to this end. The UNDP support ensured a neutral, and therefore, credible support to all these and other projects that led to confidence building and visibility for Romania as provider of development cooperation.

The outcome indicator targeting the promotion of the MDG is considered achieved through the projects carried out. However, projects dedicated to gender equality were not identified, although such topics were included on the agenda of some events.

Also, the indicator referring to setting up a knowledge-hub for development can be considered to be achieved taking into account the budgetary, institutional and legal restrictions. The Romanian government funded ODA activities, developed a Multiannual National Strategy on Multilateral Official Development Assistance 2011-2015 and approved the multiannual budget for ODA commitments. All have been concluded recently, which represents a significant commitment towards the transition to become a donor. It should again be emphasized, however, that this transition process is not complete and will continue to need political will from the authorities - not least in accelerating the institutional and capacity building aspects as well as providing proactive support and stimulation through local dialogue from UNDP to complete the transition process by 2015.

The focus on targeted intervention and direction for its development cooperation is a must for Romania, since it is important to create a national brand or identity in order to be identified as a preferred provider or partner for a certain expertise.

This process is in motion and to this end MFA considers the support of UNDP extremely important, taking into account the accumulated expertise and experience of this organization in ODA implementation. At the same time, UNDP continues its long-term partnership with the governmental institutions in Romania and the civil society towards their capacity build-up and continuing its efforts to identify the best solutions to the problems within its area of competence.

**Implementation arrangements**

The output-level projects were implemented under NIM and NEX arrangements with allocated budgets for the components established at USD 887,361 and despite the
budgetary austerity conditions, Romania has delivered on its targets and has achieved important results of this outcome in provision of ODA funded initiatives. With fewer than foreseen resources, critical contributions were made to advocacy, democratic mobilization and trust-building in a number of fields and partner countries.

Although the priorities for ODA assistance from Romania were not particularly and still insufficiently focused, UNDP support has ensured a continued institutional support to the MFA to meet its commitments for ODA delivery.

It should, however, be considered a critical shortcoming that it has not been possible for the MFA to set up a dedicated ODA structure as a General Directorate as foreseen during 2010 - 2012 but only a unit with insufficient integration into the mainstream of MFA and thus insufficient capacity to make ODA policies an integral part of Romania’s foreign policy profile. This is in spite of the fact that the conditions for setting up an ODA unit in 2010 existed because of the interventions from the previous CP cycle. As a consequence, the UNDP support towards implementation continued to be essential and indispensable during the current CP to an extent and in a way not foreseen.

UNDP’s intervention is low in terms of initiative to build capacity of the national NGOs to deliver ODA, taking into account the capacity of the Implementation Partner “the Romanian Platform of Non-governmental Organization for Development “FOND”. An illustration of this predominantly administrative role is that UNDP is assigned to allocate ODA funds to FOND designated as Implementing Partner, as MFA has constraints to allocate funds to NGOs for ODA activities from Romania. Although FOND wants MFA to become more active in ODA delivery, the role and support granted by UNDP by means of the programme 2010 - 2012 is unanimously acknowledged and it is considered essential in the short run.

Lessons learned

Sustainability through local institutional strength and capacity. Although the UNDP interventions over at least 2 CP cycles have focused on the implementation of creating minimal conditions for Romania’s transition from recipient to provider of ODA resources, a critical component in achieving sustainability is still not reached: namely the creation of a dedicated professional ODA structure at the Directorate level in the MFA. This incomplete task is perhaps more than a reduction in ODA budgets a condition sine qua non for the completion of Romania’s transition towards an ODA provider. The ongoing dialogue with UNDP towards a “new partnership
model” is a positive indication of commitment to this task and can in and by itself provide decisive support to its success. At the moment and for the foreseeable future a “new partnership model” stands to benefit from UNDP support – at technical and strategic level - in the implementation of ODA policies.

Building on strength of presence and problem-solving capacity. UNDP has been collaborating with Romanian governmental institutions since the early 90s, which positions UNDP as a preferred partner for the country’s transition into its new role as ODA provider and an important collaborator with both governmental institutions, civil society, public administration or other relevant players that are involved in ODA delivery. Through its local presence, UNDP has shown the ability to manage projects and deliver funds. Furthermore, the capacity of UNDP to create platforms for neutral and disinterested discussions and partnerships has been a strength. It also generated solutions to problems identified in project implementation, promoted initiatives, strategies or measures and provided the expertise. UNDP’s interventions are seen to have maintained a so-called democracy perspective or as stated by one of the stakeholders,” UNDP taught us democracy”.

Human resources capacity. UNDP is seen to have access to an impressive knowledge network, highly specialized in development cooperation. It combines technical expertise with sound development experience, which has proved essential in generating innovative solutions. Furthermore, UNDP is highly appreciated for its managerial capacity in project implementation.

Recommendations

- The ODA related activities under the 2010 – 2012 CP should be given higher visibility by narrating its success stories like the electoral support to Egypt and Tunisia. A broader circulation and thus knowledge of Romania’s transition towards becoming a provider of ODA is essential for the understanding in political and bureaucratic circles that set the financial and political ODA framework. This story should be told by the beneficiaries inside and outside of the country to lend it credibility. Also, it will be an important input into internal EU discussions on how to operationalize its own directives on new member states becoming providers of development cooperation. Finally, it will be important for UNDP both in its dialogue with other partner countries in similar transition processes and in its political dialogue in the Executive Board on a qualitative new role for the organization in the MICs and transition economies where a traditional donor role is no longer needed nor appropriate.
- Support to MFA to identify the ODA areas of intervention in order to focus its ODA assistance and create a national ODA brand, i.e. niche interventions
such as support to transition to the democratic and election process, anti-corruption or energy efficiency.

- On an interim basis, Romania should consider **partnerships with other likeminded donors** to achieve sufficient critical mass for societal impact at the minimum until the country has increased its volume and capacity to carry out free-standing ODA programmes.

- Support to MFA to set up a **functional dedicated ODA Directorate** in the MFA with specialized staff who could take over in a short span of time the responsibilities incurred by ODA implementation from UNDP. Such staff would be different from traditional diplomatic staff who have a broad generic competency base, but no specialized knowledge of or experience in delivering development cooperation.

- The value of Romanian experts involved in ODA projects should be optimized and strengthened. This should be made possible through creation of professional **networks** and up-to-date **databases**, which would enable Romania to profile itself through its participation in larger-scale UN or EU programmes.

### Outcome 2: Capacity Development for Romania to contribute to the promotion and protection of global and regional public goods.

#### Achievements/Shortcomings

Progress of projects under Outcome 2 formed the basis from which the strategic objective of the CPD originally was pursued in the direction of setting up of a sub-regional Center for environmental partnerships. The environment and the energy thematic area was considered as the most suitable topic in terms of Romanian institutional capacity, national ownership and regional relevance, where Romania can mobilize EU funds and form regional partnerships with focus on the transition towards low carbon, climate resilient economies, ecosystems and communities, especially in the eastern neighborhood countries. The purpose of this Center or facility is to help formulate and implement development cooperation activities in ODA priority or recipient countries whereby UNDP will facilitate project development in such countries through the experience and expertise of the sub regional facility based in Bucharest, as essentially an outpost of the Bratislava Regional Centre Environment Practice. The funding for such projects and programs will be provided through access to funds, e.g. EU, CBC etc. as well as GEF in the priority countries.
Between 2010 and 2011, UNDP projects enabled the formulation of such a partnership. Shared environmental problems in the Black Sea, Danube Basin and the Carpathian areas provided the developmental, substantive basis to support Romania’s national priority to strengthen its development cooperation with ENPI and ODA Priority countries e.g. Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The successes of the UNDP Romania’s GEF portfolio were emphasized by the external partners to provide the substantive and partnership basis for such a Sub-regional facility for Environmental Partnership. However, in December 2011, overall political and diplomatic considerations led to the abandonment of an environmentally focused Bratislava Regional Centre outpost facility in Bucharest in favor of a more loosely and broadly defined ODA support program (see below under successor arrangements).

The outputs produced under Outcome 2 are thus limited to creating impact domestically and generating capacity in the teams and partners linked to the projects. Sharing this impact and national capacities systematically and institutionally with the regional partners in the format established for Romanian ODA funding and with technical support from UNDP was as explained above not pursued any further.

The CP constantly registered progress in achieving the results under Outcome 2, especially in terms of the national level interventions: strengthening the capacity of Romania to promote and protect public goods such as biodiversity, climate stability and development of knowledge. Two projects were finalized and achieved the proposed objectives and at least two others are to be finalized before 2015. Output projects with more explicit regional partnerships, multi-country implementation for shared solutions to shared problems were prepared under the Country Program. However, in the absence of a regional facility to base operational activities, as well as managerial and administrative incompatibilities of the available EU instruments with multi-country, regional programs, UNDP has not assumed any implementation role for any of the projects it has helped establish (e.g. Danube Biosphere Reserve).

The partners unanimously appreciate the projects for creating excellent expertise in fields like environment, climate change, sustainable development and biodiversity - all complex domains with a very important impact for national and regional the present and the future. The initiatives have succeeded in strengthening the legislative framework as well as building the institutional and individual capacities of management authorities or local stakeholders, which are now better trained, more motivated and ready to share their experience and identify new approaches to the
problems of sustainability. An illustrative example of this is the current attempt at involving private investors in promoting the protected areas. Overall, the achievements in this CP Outcome lead to the conclusion that **the outcome has registered a positive change**.

The **efficiency** of UNDP intervention is illustrated by the capacity to mobilize resources and relevant players, to identify activities that enhance the knowledge in this area and to facilitate policy development as in the case of the national biodiversity strategy. The types of projects that are identified and implemented are suitable for achieving the CP outcome related to strengthening stakeholder capacity in topics such as environment and promotion of energy efficiency. To ensure sustainability of the results achieved on the protection of biodiversity, or the functioning of ISFD (Institutional Mechanism for Sustainable Development), the partners all underline the need to identify funds to ensure the implementation of the strategy for biodiversity and ensure the functioning of ISFD, which constitutes a major challenge given the fact that the GEF funding can no longer be accessed by Romania.

**Implementation Arrangements**

The implementation of the project level initiatives under CP Outcome 2 are mainly under NIM, involving various partners such the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the National Forestry Administration, the Ministry of Development and Tourism as well as universities or associations. The institution in charge acts as Implementing Partner (IP) which is accountable to the Government and UNDP for the project outputs, the implementation of the activities and the budget management. A National Project Manager is appointed in consultation with the partners and a project team is formed at the level of the executing agency. Also a national Steering Committee or a Project Oversight Committee is established to advise and guide the project implementation. The UNDP Country Office is responsible for overseeing project budget and expenditures, recruiting expert services and staff and organizing evaluations.

UNDP and its partners managed to develop activities that attract important funds such as GEF. The expertise of the CO in project preparation, identification of funding and provision of technical expertise on specialized issues are considered irreplaceable by the stakeholders. UNDP provided access to a global expert network of specialists in climate change adaptation and mitigation, ecosystem based management approach, sustainable development open to share their experience to the national experts but also to the regional partners of Romania, helping them to identify windows of opportunities and to build cross border collaborations.
During implementation, the project level initiatives have suffered from frequent government reshuffle and high turn-over of central public officials which at times has forced UNDP to provide continuity and be the institutional memory – roles which should be assumed by the national authorities in order to ensure sustainability.

Lessons learned

- **UNDP as the catalyst.** Joint efforts to approach the complex problems in fields that promote protection and promotion of public goods need a catalyst and UNDP has proved to be an active player thanks to the experience and the position taken in relation to the promotion of the MDG objectives. It is obvious, however, that sustainability of outputs becomes a critical issue in an environment of financial and institutional volatility even in a context where the involvement and commitment from government counterparts as well as project-level partners has been impeccable. In particular there is a need to strengthen the coordinating level ensuring cross-sectorial and cross-border impact.

- **Public goods and sustainability.** The approach to promoting public goods generates output exceeding the framework related exclusively to biodiversity, climate change etc. as it is illustrated in the projects that link energy efficiency with the protection of vulnerable groups (e.g.” Improving Energy efficiency in low income households” , “Integrated urban development for the rehabilitation and modernization of Boresc, BaieHerculane and Sulina” or “The return of former convicts to the labour market and their reintegration in society”).

- **Visibility.** As a result of implementing the current CP, Romania has become more visible in the region, sharing experience with other countries in the field of environment and sustainable development.

- **Speed and flexibility.** UNDP support allows swift interventions compared to other donors or financing instruments.

Recommendations

- Ensure support to the implementation of the residual programme, i.e. the project level activities that still need to be implemented beyond the period of the present CPD.

- Under the residual program, ensure dedicated support to the partners to identify the financial support in order to ensure the sustainability of outputs.

- Identify niche initiatives in the field of climate change and biodiversity that address specific but important needs - some even urgent - taking into account the EU policies and conventions that Romania adheres to.
• In the immediate future, the UNDP should focus on niche initiatives such as mainstreaming environment and energy, thus capitalizing on its core competencies – sustainable development - and supporting Romania to fulfill its commitments. (Rio convention).

Outcome 3: Capacity development for social inclusion, empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice with emphasis on initiatives with relevance to Romanian official development assistance.

Achievements/shortcomings

As an EU member state, Romania has access to different financial instruments for addressing social inclusion and protection of vulnerable groups. These instruments require creation of institutional structures and screening mechanisms for project proposals in these fields, which in the short term has led to slow-downs in approvals and implementation. The impact of such delays has been exacerbated by the fact that Romania’s poverty rates have actually increased to up to 24% with almost a third of its population at risk of poverty and with large vulnerable groups such as the Roma. When defining the 2010-12 CP, it became clear that a possible “triple win” role for UNDP could be designed. On the one hand, the UNDP Executive Board approves a UNDP CP for Romania with the proviso that no UNDP regular resources be deployed against the CP 2010-12. On the other hand, a number of new EU member states suffer from extremely low absorption rates in their access to EU financial instruments. Finally, the majority of interventions towards reducing social exclusion are clearly in line with a number of poverty eradication interventions supported by UNDP in traditional MDG frameworks deployed in other more traditional UNDP partner countries.

The combination of resource availability, UNDP implementation support and global knowledge on poverty reduction constitute the “triple win” proposition behind CP outcome 3. Consequently, UNDP played a convening role around which entities at government level, local level and civil society representatives may join together aggregate in order to approach issues that request a joint effort. This convening role became a useful tool aimed at reducing social exclusion through access to the EU Social Funds (ESF) while at the same time applying democratic and inclusive practices for protecting the rights of vulnerable groups.
The flexibility of the CP allowed the inclusion of project level initiatives that have proven relevant for CP outcome 3. These projects proved that the UNDP could be a credible interlocutor of the governmental institutions and this facilitated a swift reaction from the authorities and progress of activities in important areas such as anticorruption, democratic elections, penitentiary reform and initiatives towards inclusion of Roma. In this way, UNDP had a tool box for the authorities when confronted with an urgent issue that has to be dealt with in a swift and efficient way.

Even if UNDP’s role in the projects implemented under this modality was significantly modified since UNDP had to renounce on a role of Lead Implementing Partner/ Beneficiary due to incompatibilities of the Lead Partner obligations with UNDP’s legal framework and to a certain extent due to a stated commitment to national ownership and leadership of project activities. In addition to output projects where UNDP has been directly involved in the implementation of ESF funded projects, initiatives benefitting vulnerable groups (e.g. Romas) have been initiated in partnership with local authorities and through them accessing ESF. Similarly, enterprises and administrators of the Business Incubators received support to also associate and position themselves as recipients of applicable EU funds. The latter type of interventions promise to be a better approach for reaching the CP outcome target. However, at the time of evaluation, the Cluj initiative had not yet even begun formal implementation and there was only circumstantial evidence to the Business Incubators capacities to associate and utilize EU funds. As a consequence, the results indicator of accelerating the absorption rate to the level of 80% is not even close to be reached. Still this approach registers positive change even at low values which at the time of the evaluation reached only 18.6%.

Nevertheless, the CP still manages to address the Outcome 3 with projects that contribute to its achievement while the output indicators are partially achieved with a perspective that additional results will be achieved at the time when the implementation period will end which for the vast majority has as its deadline in 2014. It is, however, noteworthy that the probability of delivering further on the CP outcome 3 will to a large extent depend on a continued local UNDP presence.

Implementing arrangements
During the first year when the CP and CO financing was to be ensured by the Government, the budgetary cuts applied beginning with 2010. In this context, also should be noted that European Social Funds actually constitute up to 80% of the available budgetary resources for activities in the social, human development fields of relevance to UNDP. In addition, even as early as 2009, increasing absorption was highly relevant national political objective. These factors, combined, created
additional pressure on the CP whereby EU funds had to be identified as the principal financing source for UNDP for its social inclusion activities under Outcome 3. This in turn has introduced a series of additional challenges to the CP 2010-12. Firstly, UNDP’s partnership in the context of the national ESF contracting structure has presented a set of managerial and administrative challenges, resulting in delayed inception of the 4 projects benefiting from ESF resources. Further, recurring limited capacities of the national managerial authorities have led to recurring changes to implementation procedures and delays in ESF funding which means that the 4 ESF funded projects will end only beyond 2012. Moreover, in order to accelerate project implementation UNDP has had to advance funding to ensure cash flow even when the reimbursement periods from ESF were extended up to 4 months. This was even more critical for UNDP without access to regular resources from the organization. Secondly, the complex funding mechanism has caused a major burden on a small CO-operation relaying on host country funding. Notwithstanding, UNDP support have proven to be, in time, a successful model for the implementation of the structural funds, and the ESF in particular even accelerating absorption rates.

The output project-level initiatives are executed under NIM/NGO Implementation arrangements with a strong UNDP involvement with the implementing partners. The UNDP support can vary from specialized/niche technical assistance to identification of opportunities and application writing, assistance for harmonization and interpretation of the financing procedures, networking of actors with similar interests, project monitoring support, financing support for partners to ensure cash flow when reimbursements are late.

The UNDP program has proven its efficiency if we take into consideration the implementation of the projects that have been developed with financing granted from both European funds as well as from the Government, while its important role was recognized as such by all the interlocutors and projects partners.

Lessons learned

- Role in implementation of ESF. UNDP’s capacity in mobilizing resources and partners was considered to be of primary importance by all stakeholders. It is, however, important to review whether the opportunity cost from managing complex funding modalities represents a net benefit to a CO close to minimal critical mass both in terms of staffing and access to regular UNDP resources.

- UNDP as convening and coordinating partner. The structure of the ESF addressing the vulnerable groups neglects the need for cohesion and synergy. UNDP has been able to play that role of convening and
coordinating partner which in the medium terms has to be assumed by national authorities.

- Absorption rate. UNDP support has meant an acceleration in spending from EU financial instruments in Romania. The opportunity cost to CO Romania is, however, very high and an argument could be made that if minimal financial resources had been forthcoming from the host country UNDP, CO might have provided more value-addition through policy oriented interventions than through support to ESF-funding.

- Substantively, ESF (in social sectors particularly) pre-identifies sets of social inclusion, labor activation measures and requests organizations to deliver them. The only way for UNDP to exercise its mandate and to elicit policy level developmental change in social inclusion has been to tasking project staff to deliver substance as well as “implementation support” beyond the stated targets of the ESF project agreements.

- The ESF in Romania is focused very much on labor market activation measures and critically omits instruments for local capacity development to provide social inclusion and social services to most vulnerable groups as a first step towards labor market entry. UNDP has leveraged the resources of the country office to pursue the totality of its mandate (e.g. anti-corruption, electoral processes, women in politics, bio diversity, climate change). Delivering solely on the ESF outputs would critically position UNDP in the role of “service provider” which is not UNDP’s intended role as a purveyor of development knowledge and a network organization.

Recommendations

- Ensure the support for the project-level initiatives for the residual programme at staffing level similar to the current in order to continue the good practices applied until today.
- Discontinue funding through EU financial instrument as a funding source for the “new partnership model” due to its high transaction cost which is incompatible with the future UNDP presence in Romania.

Successor Arrangements

This section of the evaluation is forward-looking or prospective and as such will even more so inform itself from impressions and opinions of stakeholders obtained through the extensive interviews carried out during the mission. Obviously it will also avail itself of the conclusions obtained on all 3 CP objectives and particularly objective 1: Capacity Development for Romania’s International Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness. This also means that this chapter becomes more openly prescriptive
while weighing pros and cons since it comments on the possibilities and limitations of a future successor arrangement to replace the current CPD.

Since becoming an EU member state in 2007, Romania has worked diligently on complying with its new domestic and international responsibilities in the realm of development cooperation. This has meant to pursue a process of transition from recipient to becoming a provider of international development cooperation by 2015. This ambitious task has led to review of and changes in in government policies, legislation, funding, capacity and institution building and partnerships.

In terms of development cooperation policies, Romania has developed the relevant instruments - policies, strategies and bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks. An examination of these indicate that they are solidly based on EU guidelines, OECD principles and poverty eradication priorities framed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The policy framework seems to be comprehensive and provides sufficient basis for priority - and strategy setting for Romania’s Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The policy framework also clearly spells out roles and responsibilities for handling the country’s ODA. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) assumes the coordinating function in consultation with relevant public authorities and civil society through the “Federation of Development Non-governmental Organizations” (FOND). This framework seems relevant and adequate, not least in its intention to include civil society into a structured consultation process, thus allowing for an open and transparent dialogue on intentions as well as results of the Romanian ODA. Furthermore, it allows for a parallel process of capacity development inviting NGOs to accompany and even increasingly implement parts of the ODA. Such a process should also open up for valuable alliances with civil society organizations in neighboring countries as well as with NGOs further to the East and to the South, opening for the strengthening of democratic practices and broad participation.

The funding framework for Romanian ODA takes its point of departure in the stipulations for EU member states’ ODA: Achievement of an ODA-level of 0.33% of GNI by 2015. Also, priorities for distribution of ODA have been well defined in terms of bilateral, humanitarian and multilateral beneficiaries. It should be noted, however, that targets have been systematically reduced over time not least due to the adverse financial context both domestically and internationally of the last 4-5 years. As a consequence, Romania faces a major challenge in reversing this trend and even more so in reaching the intended 0.33% by 2015.
Institutional and capacity enhancement constitutes crucial parameters for Romania’s transition from recipient to provider of ODA. Based on findings from interviews of stakeholders – MFA-staff, civil society partners, EU-staff and local UNDP-staff - it seems fair to comment that neither institutional nor capacity development has progressed according to plans and intentions. It has not been possible to create a dedicated ODA-department within the institutional structure of the MFA. However, senior policy makers in the MFA insist that the creation of such an ODA department has priority and should be in place within the next 2-3 years.

In that respect it is equally important to point to the need to systematically select, train and deploy MFA-staff with core competencies on development cooperation. Such staff should obviously be part of the future ODA-department but should also be deployed to the Romanian embassies in countries with which Romania wants to build special partnerships. Furthermore, it is important to systematically identify proven thematic specialists in- and outside of the government which can be offered or deployed in the implementation of Romanian bilateral ODA or as a resource for multilateral endeavors either in an EU, or UN context. The target for such systematic capacity development is initially relatively modest - 5-10 staff - due to the limited volume of ODA but it is crucial that this process be initiated shortly in order to reach the goal of a dedicated ODA department before 2015. In a broader sense, it will obviously be important also to integrate development studies into national university curricula since that will contribute to create a development cooperation community in Romania for transparent and participatory ODA discussions. Finally and crucially, senior decision makers point to importance for Romania to continue its close links with the UN and UNDP, attributing political as well as strategic reasons to this policy.

In terms of partner perceptions it is important to note that the EU Commission attributes great importance to Romania’s transition from recipient to provider of development cooperation in line with established policies for the new EU member states and points to institutional strengthening of the MFA in that respect as a necessary condition for this transition as well as the need to focus its ODA initiatives both thematically and in terms to partner countries. A representative from DG-DEVCO noted that in the initial phase interventions had become too disperse thus reducing their effects and sustainability. It was recommended that Romania seeks active partnerships with other ODA providers to ensure such sustainability while at the same time learning-by-doing and building its own capacity. Also, it was commented that UNDP support had been instrumental in the initial phase of this transition process due to its experience, country presence in potential partner countries for Romanian ODA and knowledge of the development cooperation instruments.
Likewise, the leading civil society alliance – FOND – indicates the urgent need for a strengthened MFA as the coordinating entity behind a Romanian ODA drive. It is apparent that FOND benefits from a strong MFA both in its current phase of implementing Romanian ODA identification of projects, local presence in prospective partner countries and source of funding. Furthermore, a more concerted and sustained national drive towards higher visibility for Romania in the development cooperation field will derive both opportunities and competence building for the national civil society organizations.

As can be seen from the findings on the CP objective related to development cooperation, the mission considers that the role of UNDP has been overall positive in supporting and in different ways accelerating or even guiding strategically important initiatives such as electoral support to Tunisia and Egypt as well as anti-corruption initiatives with countries sharing transition issues.

At the local level this has meant that UNDP was and is perceived as an important partner to Romania in its transition process. At the regional level, this role sits very well with the RBEC overall strategy for Middle Income Countries (MIC) and new EU member states, which constitutes a growing number of partner countries supported by RBEC. Finally, at the corporate level the Romania-case should be included into the corporate toolbox as an example of a partnership model with countries graduating from recipient to provider status in terms of development cooperation.

Common to all 3 levels of UNDP is that a successor arrangement complies with at least the following 3 criteria:

- An active host government demand. Romania has not only as the first EU member state requested continued UNDP support but has turned a high visibility in the development cooperation field into a high government priority.
- Financial sustainability. The government has committed to a continued flow of ODA resources to sustain its drive towards ODA donor status. This also includes funding for UNDP partnership as part of a successor arrangement.
- Developmental value addition goes beyond the host country. Romania’s development cooperation strategy identifies both themes and partner countries to be pursued as part of a successor arrangement with UNDP.

In summary, Romania meets the minimum criteria for UNDP to enter into a new partnership model once the current CPD comes to an end.
It is, however, important to underline a series of considerations or premises that have to materialize for this partnership to prosper. Firstly, the host government has to accelerate the completion of an institutional arrangement in which a dedicated ODA department become integrated into the overall organogram of the MFA. Also, it is essential to embark on a systematic training of MFA-staff to assume the coordinating role of Romania’s development cooperation drive both at home and abroad. Secondly, clear and transparent multiannual funding arrangements need to be put into place both in terms of ODA and funding of an extended UNDP-role. It does not seem to be possible nor recommendable to fund continued UNDP-support from ESF or other EU-instruments since they seem to demand extraordinary transaction costs which are incompatible with the limited local UNDP-presence in the future. Thirdly, UNDP-support to a successor arrangement with Romania in the shape proposed will demand an adequate level of attention and capacity from the RBEC Regional Service Centre (BRC) not only in interfacing with the prospective partner countries acting as local intelligence or seeing-eye dogs to identify possibilities for deploying Romanian ODA resources but also to ensure minimal managerial support for the actual initiatives. This requires, in the opinion of the mission a continued presence of UNDP in Romania not as a representation but as a locally available companion and facilitator both of the necessary capacity/institutional strengthening of the MFA as well as the specific ODA initiatives. Such presence should obviously be temporary but possibly required until 2015. In this respect it will be crucial to elaborate a commonly accepted governance structure - triangular in shape: host government, local UNDP presence, Bratislava RSC - to provide guidance and deliver inputs towards the implementation of this new partnership model.

Recommendations

- Continue the efforts to design a new partnership model between Romania and UNDP based on Romania’s political commitment to become a visible and significant provider of ODA based international development cooperation.
- Document achievements during the current CPD, particularly in the field of international outreach to tell the success story of the first and still only EU member state to have insisted on a continued and now qualitatively different partnership with UNDP.
- Complete the ongoing efforts towards strengthening Romania’s capacity to coordinate and lead the country’s development cooperation drive. This includes the sustained drive for a significant however modest ODA with an upward trend.
• Ensure UNDP capacity both at the regional level (BRC) and a continued country presence to provide support to Romania becoming able to manage its ODA.
• Disengage funding for continued UNDP support from ESF or other EU financial instruments.
• Establish a transparent governance structure for the new partnership, engaging BERA at the corporate level, RBEC/BRC at the regional level and a limited but sustained local UNDP presence.
• Systematically engage the EU as a partner in the drive towards making Romania a visible and significant provider of international development cooperation. This will also create a positive input into the corporate EU-UNDP relations.
6. Conclusions

Based on the above analysis and assessments, the mission arrives at a series of conclusions:

The mission finds that the individual project-level activities and outputs all contribute positively towards the attainment of the respective CP objectives and are in line with the overarching strategic objective.

Also, the host government is showing an ownership of the CP, particularly in its inception and funding. It should be commended and even seen as an exemplary case that the government of Romania insisted and argued for a continuation of its partnership with UNDP even as an EU member state due to the special contributions UNDP was perceived to be able to provide to the country's strategic development challenges in the field of environment, social inclusion, democratic deepening and transition from recipient to donor status in development cooperation. This is the first and until today only such case and cannot be overvalued. Furthermore, and along the same line Romania accepted and has followed through on the commitment to fund not only the majority of the CP – around 70% - but also has absorbed the full cost of UNDP’s local presence in terms of salaries, general operating expenses and office venue, leaving UNDP to provide only its international presence.

The mission also found at the individual project level a true partnership relation between counterparts and UNDP staff based on collaboration, continuity and an above normal understanding of what partners can bring to the table as illustrated by the work carried out around anti-corruption, electoral support to Egypt/Tunisia and sustainable development.

It is finally significant that the host government links its compliance with EU-commitments to Official Development Assistance (ODA) to a continued partnership with UNDP, insisting that it will need UNDP's knowledge and global network in a successful transition towards donor-status.

The mission found, however, a number of challenges which need to be addressed both for a successful completion of the CP (residual programme) and the creation of a successor arrangement around a “New Partnership Model”.
Firstly, there is a need for a consolidation and continuity of the chosen strategically important activities. This means that counterparts and UNDP staff are given the necessary minimal conditions – resources, decision-making capacity and access to expertise – to carry through agreed initiatives and outputs.

Secondly, coordination and priority-setting needs continued attention from the coordinating bodies in the MFA and UNDP to increase impact through the attainment of necessary critical mass behind the respective CP outcomes. Finally, this means that the host government needs to ensure adequate financial and human resources to finalize both the residual programme and laying the basis for a successful New Partnership Model with UNDP. In other words, it is critical that the authorities continue to fund the CP and the Partnership Model, including replenishment of its ODA-contribution and it is of concern that the mission observes a significant reduction in ODA-contribution with almost 50%.

For the successor arrangement, the mission recommends that dialogue continues along the thematic lines already laid out – support to Romania’s transition from recipient to provider of international development cooperation - as well as deploying a funding model based on resources provided by the host government.

It should be noted though that several risks and pre-conditions have to be considered:

- Sustained funding from the host government.
- Sustained ODA funding.
- Strengthened institutional framework in place for ODA-implementation in the MFA with commensurate specialized human resources deployed both in Bucharest and in the partner embassies being targeted for Romanian ODA.
- Capacity and attention at corporate, regional and local levels to provide the necessary support to the Romanian “new partnership model”.
7. Recommendations

The mission has arrived at a series of recommendations throughout its work. Most of these were already shared verbally during the debriefing with MFA and later with the CO Romania:

Completion of CP 2010-12 (Residual Programme).

- End representational presence of UNDP in Romania by end 2012.
- Ensure minimal critical presence in CO Romania to ensure monitoring, trouble-shooting and direct line of communication to corporate UNDP (BERA, RBEC/BRC).
- Increase visibility of CP in Romania by telling the success stories through beneficiaries to nurture national interest in and demand for international development cooperation as well as facilitate dialogue with the EU and traditional donors on possible “new partnership models”.
- Complete legal framework for completion of residual programme
- Increase national ownership and coordination to ensure impact and sustainability of the CP. Ensure coordination with and among national implementing partners.

Successor arrangements:

- Ensure political will and ownership/capacity in the MFA to reach sustainability of a national ODA structure by 2015.
- Ensure a targeted and focused approach to Romanian development cooperation, going from simple to complex in consonance with the gradually strengthened capacity build-up in the MFA and other relevant institutions.
- Ensure capacity and attention in RBEC/BRC to support Romania in its transition from recipient to provider of ODA.
- Continue a minimal UNDP presence in Romania to ensure proactive support and dialogue with national authorities in charge of development cooperation.
- Create a triangular governance structure for the “new partnership model: host government-local UNDP presence- corporate UNDP (BERA/RBEC).
Annex 1

Terms of Reference for a Team of two Evaluation Experts

(national and international) for the

Evaluation of

UNDP Romania Country Programme 2010-2012

BACKGROUND

Romania joined the European Union (EU) on 1 January 2007 following a pre-accession period which saw fundamental reforms towards deepening democratic and market economy practices. Following accession, the country qualified for access to substantial EU structural and cohesion funds, including for social inclusion, regional development, environmental infrastructure and administrative capacity development. Despite significant advancements in social development and reduction of poverty, development disparities persist especially in less developed regions and in the rural sector and among vulnerable social groups.

The UNDP Country Program Document for the period 2010-2012 is the United Nations Development Programme’s unique response to the issue of the UN presence in Middle Income Countries (MIC) in general and in an EU members state in particular. It pioneers a new partnership between the Government of Romania and the United Nations, in line with applicable European Union policies on multilateralism and official development assistance, supported by UNDP and the United Nations country team.

The result will be an innovative, multi-actor knowledge and an international network for contributions by Romania to internationally-agreed development goals, drawing on the transition and development experience of the country. In particular, knowledge accumulation will come from: (i) Governmental and non-governmental organizations via systematic compilation and codification of the capacities of civil society, local authorities and a network of national authorities for the benefit of development cooperation on a global scale; and (ii) Extending the official development assistance focus, from three priority countries at present, to broader coverage of other regions in line with foreign policy objectives and persisting developmental shortcomings of potential Romanian official development assistance recipient countries (e.g. in Central Asia and the Middle East). This will derive from, among other things, an ongoing role in promoting East-East cooperation by Romania”. The CPD focuses on three program objectives: (i) Capacity Development for Romania’s International Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness; (ii) Capacity Development for Romania to contribute to the promotion and protection of global and regional public goods; and, (iii) Capacity development for social inclusion,
economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice.

The strategic goal underpinning Romania’s partnership with the UN is the advancement of Romania’s role in international development cooperation in accordance with Romania’s geopolitical and strategic position and profile as an active and responsible member of the European Union and the international community. At the end of the programming period, the Government of Romania will have at its disposal, a Romania-UNDP partnership model which will produce innovative and multi-actor knowledge and international networking base for Romania’s contribution to internationally agreed development goals.

The Government of Romania and UNDP will achieve this through the three mutually interlinked country program components (mentioned above), entailing projects and activities that will increase Romania’s capacity to contribute to inclusive globalization in a sustainable manner while enabling by the end of 2012 better utilization by national actors of the programming and policy instruments available to Romania as an EU member state.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation exercise is commissioned according to the Evaluation Plan of the UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (2010-2012) in Romania and covers the CPD/CPAP Outcome Evaluation with particular focus on

1. Assessment of the extent to which, through the delivery of the totality of outputs, the programme is advancing on achieving the CPD’s strategic objective i.e. Romania-UNDP partnership model which will produce innovative and multi-actor knowledge and international networking base for Romania’s contribution to internationally agreed development goals

2. Generation of substantive evidence based knowledge by identifying best practices and lessons learned that could be of interest especially to other UNDP offices in accession countries (esp. Croatia) that are exploring future partnership models or be replicated in other development interventions at national (scale up) and international level.
SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

UNDP’s Country Programme responds to the explicitly stated interest of the Government of Romania to become a responsible and proactive actor in multilateral and bilateral international assistance. At the end of the programming period, the Government of Romania will have at its disposal, a Romania-UN(DP) cooperation model which will be the knowledge and international networking base for Romania’s contribution to internationally agreed development goals. The Country Programme will achieve this through three mutually inter-linked country programme outcomes that will increase its aid management capacity and contribute to inclusive globalization in a sustainable manner. The programme objectives constitute UNDP’s support to Romania to overcome its development challenges for the country to meet its accession commitments and its commitments as a donor country.

The scope of this evaluation is to:
- Assess progress towards the strategic objective of the Country Programme through its outcomes namely (i) Capacity development for social inclusion, economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice (ii) Capacity development for Romania to contribute to the promotion and protection of global and regional public goods (iii) Capacity development for international cooperation and aid effectiveness of Romania. The evaluation will take full consideration of the unique and complex national context of UN presence in an EU member state and will assess the progress towards the CP’s strategic objective, with a view of generating lessons learned for other EU accession countries.
- Assess the progress towards the Country Programme’s Strategic Objective that is an “innovative, multi-actor knowledge and an international network for contributions by Romania to internationally-agreed development goals, drawing on the transition and development experience of the country”.

Each Outcome of the Country Programme was designed to advance towards the Strategic Objective and with special emphasis on initiatives with the potential to be adapted to the needs of Romania Official Development assistance priority countries (e.g. post EU accession experience in supporting anti corruption initiatives). The scope of the evaluation includes recommendations to senior managers for corrections as appropriate in order to accelerate progress towards achieving the strategic objective of the country programme.

This evaluation has the following specific objectives:

1. Assess the extent to which the current progress towards the outcomes namely: social inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups, promotion and protection of global and regional public goods, Capacity Development for Romania’s
International Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness, are supportive of the CP’s strategic objective

2. Package the lessons and knowledge from the evaluation process in the form of a knowledge product that can be widely shared with stakeholders and other UNDP offices especially from EU accession countries and increase the impact of the evaluation process to meet the needs of a wider audience.

The Evaluation will focus on the following aspects:

Country Programme design and the relevance of its strategic objective in relation to:

a) National and international development priorities of Romania;

b) Stakeholders – whether the stakeholders of the country program and of its outcomes are selected correctly and are responsive to the strategic objective of the Country Program;

c) Country ownership / drivenness – whether the strategic objective of the country program enjoys commitment of national governmental and non governmental partners and whether the ownership of program outcomes translates into overall ownership of its strategic objective;

d) Whether the unique nature of the country program and its strategic objective are conducive for UNDP to promote its mission for sustainable human development (SHD) through capacity development

Performance - look at the progress that has been made by the programme with regard to the achievement of its objective and outcomes;

a) Effectiveness - extent to which the programme has achieved its Strategic Objective through progress towards outcomes and contribution to national strategic priorities;

b) Efficiency - assess efficiency against overall impact of the programme for better projection of achievements and benefits resulting from country office resources, including an assessment of the different implementation modalities and the cost effectiveness of the utilisation of the resources and actual co-financing for the achievement of programme results;

c) Timeliness of results,

Management arrangements focused on programme/ projects implementation:

a) General implementation and management - evaluate the adequacy of the implementation structure, including the effectiveness of the UNDP Country Office, the partnership strategies and stakeholder involvement from the aspect of compliance to UNDP requirements and also from the perspective of “good (or bad) practice model” that could be used for replication / learning useful lessons.

b) Financial accountability – extent to which the sound financial management has been an integral part of achieving the programme results so far, with particular reference to adequate reporting, identification of problems and adjustment of activities, budgets and inputs.

c) Monitoring and evaluation on programme level – assess the adoption of the monitoring and evaluation system during the implementation, focusing on
relevance of the performance indicators, that are:
- Specific: The system captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to achieving an objective and only that objective.
- Measurable: The monitoring system and indicators are unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what it covers and there are practical ways to measure it.
- Achievable and Attributable: The system identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the result(s) are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted developmental issue can be linked to the intervention.
- Relevant and Realistic: The system establishes levels of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner, and that reflect the expectations of stakeholders.
- Time-bound, Timely, Trackable and Targeted: The system allows progress to be tracked in a cost-effective manner at desired frequency for a set period, with clear identification of particular stakeholders group to be impacted by the project.

Overall success of the programme with regard to the progress towards achieving the Strategic Objective of the Country Programme:

a) Contribution to capacity development - extent to which the programme has empowered target groups and have made possible for the government and local institutions (municipalities) to use the positive experiences; ownership of results;

b) Replication – analysis of replication potential of the project positive results in country and in the region, outlining of possible funding sources;

c) Synergies with other similar projects or programmes, funded by the government or other donors.

The Evaluation Report will present recommendations and lessons of broader applicability for follow-up and future support of UNDP and/or the Government, highlighting the “do’s” and “don’ts” practices in addressing issues relating to the scope of the evaluation.

**DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT AND DUTY STATION**

The assignment is estimated to take place between April-May 2012. The expected number of working days per consultant is 30 days for the International Consultant and 25 days for the National Consultant.

The consultants will coordinate all the activities with the responsible staff member(s) of UNDP Romania Country Office and the Senior Management. International and national travel will be planned and organized with the assistance of UNDP Romania.
METHODOLOGY

Overall guidance on the evaluation methodology is provided in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results. Based on this guiding document, and in consultation with UNDP Romania, the evaluators should develop a suitable methodology for this outcome evaluation.

During the outcome 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, deliverables, etc);
- In-country mission: 5 days
- Discussions with the Senior Management and programme staff of UNDP Country Office;
- Interviews with partners and stakeholders (including gathering the information on what the partners have achieved with regard to the programme outcomes and what strategies they have used);

Further highlights on methodology and means of verification

A suggested outline of the evaluation report is provided in the ANNEX, however the evaluation team is responsible for revising the evaluation approach and outline as necessary. Any changes should be in-line with international criteria and professional norms and standards cleared by UNDP CO.

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

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

The consultants are expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the government counterparts, UNDP CO, Steering Committee and key stakeholders.

The consultants are expected to consult all relevant sources of information, such as the CP and CPAP, UNDP Strategic Plan, UNDP Agenda for Organizational Change, Detail Assignment s Paper with the UNDP Brussels (esp. relevant for anti-corruption initiatives) project documents – incl. Annual Reports, Strategic Notes national strategic and legal documents.

The consultants are expected to use interviews as a mean of collecting data on the relevance, performance and success of the project.
The methodology to be used should be presented in the report in detail. It shall include information on:

- Documentation reviewed;
- Interviews;
- Field visits;
- Questionnaires;
- Participatory techniques and other approaches for the gathering and analysis of data.

**Ethical considerations:**

The Evaluation Team should respect the dignity and diversity of evaluation participants when planning, carrying out and reporting on evaluations, in part by using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting. Furthermore, evaluation participants should be treated as autonomous, be given the time and information to decide whether or not they wish to participate, and be able to make an independent decision without any pressure.

**EVALUATION DELIVERABLES**

The International Consultant will be the Team Leader. The Team Leader, in close collaboration with the National Consultant, will have the overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the deliverables. Specifically, the team of consultants is responsible for submitting the following deliverables to the UNDP:

- Draft detailed workplan reflecting the work of the international and national consultants: to be submitted within 3 days of the signing of the contracts.
- Draft Evaluation Report
- Final Evaluation Report: to be submitted within 3 days after reception of the draft final report with comments.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

**Required qualification and skills for the International Consultant/Team Leader:**

- Advanced university degree in public administration, economics, international development or related field
- Leadership, time management, problem solving and strong analytical skills
- Fluency in English
Required Competencies and Work Experience:

- At least five years of work experience in development work, including in monitoring and evaluation of programs
- The International Consultant must have programme and project evaluation experiences within United Nations system
- Proven experience with result-based management (RBM) evaluation methodologies, in applying participatory monitoring approaches and SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Recent knowledge of UNDP’s results-based evaluation policies and procedures
- Competencies in Adaptive Management, as applied to development projects;
- It is desirable that the International Evaluation Consultant has expertise in the evaluation of similar projects in the Central and Eastern Europe and CIS region;
- It is desirable that the International Evaluation Consultant have Knowledge/understanding of Romanian/EU policies and legislation

Specifically, the International Consultant/ 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 labour within the evaluation team;
- Conduct an analysis of the programme and outcomes (as per the scope of the evaluation described above) for the report;
- Draft related parts of the evaluation reports; and
- Finalize the evaluation report.

The team leader will take the overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the evaluation reports to the UNDP Country Office.

Required qualification and skills for the National Consultant:

- Advanced university degrees in the area of in public administration, economics, international development or related field;
- Time management, problem solving and strong analytical skills
- Excellent writing skills
- Fluency in English

Required Competencies and Work Experience

- At least four years work experience in development work (poverty reduction, democratic governance, energy and environment, etc)Sound knowledge and understanding of the development challenges in Romania and prior experience in conducting evaluations of projects and programmes.
• Previous work experience in related areas with UNDP is an advantage
• Fluency in English and Romanian languages is mandatory

The national consultant will perform the following tasks:

• Review documents
• Participate in the design of the evaluation methodology;
• Data collection
• Actively participate in conducting the analysis of the outcome, outputs and targets (as per the scope of the evaluation described above), as agreed with the international consultant
• Draft related parts of the evaluation report; and,
• Assist Team leader in finalizing document through incorporating suggestions received on draft related to his/her assigned sections.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

To facilitate the outcome evaluation process, the UNDP will set up an Evaluation Focal Team (EFT). The EFT will assist in connecting the evaluation team with the senior management, and key stakeholders. In addition, the EFT will assist in developing a detailed evaluation plan and assist the evaluators in conducting field visits; will support the organization of the meetings. During the evaluation, the EFT will help identify key partners for interviews.

TENTATIVE MISSION SCHEDULE  (may be subject to modifications)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Type of work</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draft detailed workplan</td>
<td>1-2 April 2012</td>
<td>Home-based work</td>
<td>International consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk review</td>
<td>3-5 April 2012</td>
<td>Home-based work</td>
<td>International consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions with the Senior Management and programme staff of UNDP and interviews with partners and stakeholders</td>
<td>9-13 April 2012</td>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>International consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft Final Report</td>
<td>15 May 2012</td>
<td>Home-based work</td>
<td>International consultant National Consultant</td>
</tr>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final report (with feedback incorporated)</td>
<td>30 May 2012</td>
<td>Home-based work</td>
<td>International consultant National Consultant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS:**

The selection of the successful candidates will be based on a competitive process taking into account:

- qualifications and experience of the candidate;
- financial offer

A cumulative analysis will be utilized in evaluating the candidates, through a two-stage procedure. In the first stage, based on P11 forms and letters of intention, qualifications and working experience of candidates will be evaluated in view of responsiveness to the Terms of Reference (ToR). A technically qualified and responsive candidate will be considered the one passing the minimum technical score of 49 points (70%) of the maximum obtainable technical score of 70 points.
### For the International Consultant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work experience</th>
<th>Related knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least 5 years of work experience in development work (areas of democratic</td>
<td>Previous experience in monitoring and evaluations of projects and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>governance, poverty reduction, energy and environment, etc.)</td>
<td>(at least 5 previous assignments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Minimum points will be obtained for 5 years, plus 1 point/every 1 additional</td>
<td><strong>Minimum points will be obtained for 5 assignments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>year of experience (max 27 points)</td>
<td>plus 1 point/every additional assignment (max 28 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Min points</strong> 20</td>
<td><strong>Max points</strong> 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Max points</strong> 27</td>
<td><strong>Score</strong> 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum points will be obtained for a Master degree: 10 points and maximum 15 points for a PhD degree in above mentioned areas.
For the National Consultant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work experience</th>
<th>Related knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least four years of work experience in development work (areas of democratic governance, poverty reduction, energy and environment, etc.)&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Minimum points will be obtained for 4 years plus 1 point/ every 1 additional year of experience (max 27 points)</td>
<td>Previous experience in monitoring and evaluations of projects and programs (at least 2 previous assignments)&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Minimum points will be obtained for 2 assignments plus 1 point/ every additional assignment (max 28 points)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Min points | 20 | 20 | 9 |
| Max points | 27 | 28 | 15 |
| Score | | | |

In the second stage, the financial offers of the technically qualified candidates (those passing the minimum 49 points) will be reviewed. A maximum of 30 points will be assigned to the lowest price offer. All other price offers will receive points in inverse proportion, using the formula:

Financial score offer \( X = 30 \times \frac{\text{lowest price}}{\text{price offer} \times X} \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Technical score</th>
<th>Financial score</th>
<th>Final score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The candidate obtaining the highest cumulative score (technical + financial) will be considered as offering best value for money. Reference checks on the successful
candidate will be performed by UNDP as mandatory process prior to the award of the contract.

The applications in English, consisting of letter of intention, P11 form and financial offer must be sent by e-mail to procurement.ro@undp.org. All envisaged costs related to the consultancy must be included in the financial offer.

The deadline for submitting applications is 25 March 2012.


Incomplete applications and/or applications received after the deadline shall not be taken into consideration. Applications that are not submitted via procurement.ro@undp.org will not be taken into account.
Annex 2

Itinerary and list of the persons interviewed

Agenda for in-country mission (7-11 May 2012):
List of participants/ interviews
### 1. Monday, May 7, 2012

Country Programme Evaluation in-country mission agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MEETING</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Briefing meeting with UNDP RR a.i. Ms Yesim Oruc</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:00</td>
<td>Brief participation to the “Regional Workshop on Preventing and Combating Electoral Fraud” and bilateral discussions with electoral management body actors as key UNDP partners in identifying/codifying relevant development experience in electoral processes and responding to the demand for the transfer of Romanian transitional experiences to ODA priority countries and regions (e.g. North Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe)</td>
<td>Palace of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:30</td>
<td>Briefing meeting with UNDP RR a.i. Ms Yesim Oruc</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00-14:30</td>
<td>Meeting with the Coordinating Agency (MFA) representatives : Mr Traian FilipDirector, Directorate for UN, UN specialized agencies and Francophonie</td>
<td>Location near MFA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00-16:30</td>
<td>Presentation of the Country Programme by programme managers</td>
<td>UNDP conference room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Anca Stoica - Head of Democratic Governance Programs UNDP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Monica Moldovan- Head of Environment and Energy Programs UNDP</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mircea Mocanu - Head of Socio-Economic Office UNDP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Tuesday, May 8, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>MEETING</th>
<th>VENUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Meeting with the General Director of the National Forestry Administration-Mr. Valerian Solovastru</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-12:30</td>
<td><strong>Outcome2: Enhanced national capacity for promotion and protection of local, regional and global public goods such as biodiversity, climate stability, culture and practice of tolerance and peace and development knowledge</strong></td>
<td>UNDP conference room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Board Meeting (i) presentation of the progress since the previous board meeting (ii) current work (iii) strategic direction and possible risks and
Participants on behalf of national stakeholders/partners:
- Mr. Flavio Pironea, First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ms. Ioana Stoica, First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. Narcis Jeler, National Focal Point UNFCCC, Ministry of Environment and Forests
- Ms. Ramona Cherascu, Deputy Director Biodiversity, Ministry of Environment and Forests
- Ms. Amelia Turtureanu, Adviser Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment and Forests
- Mr. Dragos Mihai, Project manager, Head of Protected Areas Compartment, National Forest Administration Rom silica
- Mr. Vladimir Rojanschi, Prof. Ecologic University Bucharest
- Ms. Rodica Stefanescu, Project Manager, Ecologic University Bucharest
- Mr. Dorin Pop, Project Assistant, Ecologic University Bucharest

UNDP Romania:
- Ms. Yesim Oruc, Resident Representative
- Ms. Monica Moldovan, Programme Manager Head of Environment and Energy Programs UNDP
- Mr. Doru Irimie, Programme Assistant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14:30-15:30</td>
<td>Meeting with General Director- Tourism Department (Mr. Octavian Arsene)</td>
<td>Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Canceled due to change of Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>16:00-16:30</td>
<td>Skype conference call with Ms. Sharon Zarb (DG-DEVCO)</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
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4. Wednesday, May 9, 2012

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30</td>
<td>Meeting at the National Penitentiary Administration with Deputy General Director Mr. Dorin Muresan</td>
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<td>Dr. Iona Bala: Director General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-11:00</td>
<td>Skype conference with BRC- Daniel Hanspach and Dmitry Mariyasin – the New Development Partnership Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00-13:00</td>
<td>Outcome 1: Capacity development for social inclusion, economic and political</td>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Either UNDP conf room or</td>
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</table>
empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice with special emphasis on initiatives with the potential to be adapted to the needs of Romanian ODA priority countries.

Board Meeting (the meeting will be broken down into two round tables (i) social inclusion and ii(democratic deepening) suggested meeting agenda: (i) presentation of the progress since the previous board meeting (ii) current work (iii) strategic direction and possible risks and bottlenecks; followed by discussions, Q&A)

- **Social inclusion**
  - Catalin Luca (Asociatia Alternative Sociale – lead applicant under the Social Economy for Romania project)
  - Bogdan Lazarescu (Centrul de Analiza si Dezvoltare Institutionala CADI – lead applicant under the Social Economy in Roma communities project)
  - Petronela Radu (Asociatia Nationala a Exportatorilor si Importatorilor din Romania – lead applicant under the CSR project)
  - Alina Paraiala (Agentia Nationala pentru IMM-uri – partner in the Establishment and Development of Business Incubators in Romania project)

- **Democratic deepening**
  - Anca Stoica Tamas, Director, International Relations Department, MoJ
  - Anca Chelaru, Department for Anti-Corruption and Asset Recovery, MoJ
  - Madalina Manolache, International Relations Department, MoJ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11:00-12:00</th>
<th>one of national partners’ premises</th>
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<tr>
<td>12:00-13:00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Outcome 3:</strong> Aid effectiveness and relevance of Romania’s international development cooperation programme, including ODA strengthened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 - 12:00</td>
<td>Board Meeting (suggested meeting agenda: (i) presentation of the progress since the previous board meeting (ii) current work (iii) strategic direction and possible risks and bottlenecks; followed by discussions, Q&amp;A )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcome Board members: Doina Doroftei, Head of ODA Unit, MFA; Olivia Baciu, Vali Burada Vice-President of FOND (Federation of Development NGOs in Romania), Marian Muhulet Vice-president PEA, Alexandra Ionescu MFA</td>
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<td>19:00</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Debriefing meeting at MFA with Mr Traian Filip, Director, Directorate for UN, UN specialized agencies and Francophonie and Doina Doroftei, Head of ODA Unit (related to ODA broader strategic focus)</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:30:30</td>
<td>Debriefing meeting with Mr Mihnea Constantinescu diplomat, M5 Andreea Pastarnac, Director General Globalisation Department, Mr Traian Filip, Director and Doina Doroftei, Head of ODA Unit (focused on the political leadership and ownership of the successor arrangements)</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3

Summary of the field visits
### OUTCOME 1

**Capacity Development for International Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness of Romania.**

#### RELEVANCE

The program structure is relevant to the achievement of the strategic objective, and the component that aims at fostering inclusive globalization plays a key role in supporting international cooperation programs for development in Romania, namely for developing Romania’s capacity to provide official development assistance.

The program outcomes are well translated into Strategic Objective overall ownership.

The component is aligned with Romania’s responsibilities in providing development assistance, undertaken post 2007 as a consequence of its EU integration, and bringing its contribution in supporting an inclusive globalization as well as in identifying the role of Romania as an important actor in the region in the field of official development assistance.

The environment within which the UNDP Program is operating has changed since the definition and approval of CPD and, on mid-term, there is the possibility to stay as challenging as it is now. From this point of view the relative balance of the program’s components, affecting the ODA, has been revised during implementation, the focus now being on strong support to MFA for creating a structure dedicated to ODA, that should be able to identify needs, area interventions and manage the development assistance.

Romania’s intervention in providing ODA in the region is highly appreciated by the Republic of Moldova as well as by representatives of other countries in the region that took part in events organized by Romania within the UNDP program. The presence of UNDP in ODA actions was rated as important for the credibility of this organization and by the warranted impartiality of its intervention.

The assistance granted by Romania to countries that have suffered from
important changes as a consequence of the Arab Spring – such as Egypt and Tunisia – benefited from a great appreciation. Flexibility of the UNDP intervention contributed to the fast coagulation of efforts and strengthens the ODA intervention project.

UNDP capacity to identify and involve specialists with high level of expertise in areas where UNDP benefits from an international acknowledged position – namely democratic governance, environment and energy, crisis prevention and recovery, proved to be relevant to the development of the Program.

UNDP can deploy easily resources to promote activities with worldwide impact – and this is recognized by partners and collaborators

EFFECTIVENESS

Through implementing the UNDP actions, a network of Romanian specialists in different fields, such as environment protection, anti-corruption, election process, social inclusion, rule of law - was created; these specialists may be later on involved in ODA projects.

UNDP was highly appreciated for the proved human resource capacity, an impressive network, highly specialized in development aid.

The support provided to MFA for providing development assistance was crucial, as it substituted the lack of expertise in the field of the MFA staff involved in ODA actions, having at present only a diplomatic background. MFA considers that structuring a ODA unit should take into consideration the establishment of an internal pool of ODA specialists, exclusively dedicated to this activity.

As the result of implementing the current Program, Romania is more visible in the region, sharing experience with other countries in the field of democratic transitions, electoral fraud prevention, post conflict recovery, public safety, sustainable development or democratic governance.

Projects carried out within component 1 of the Program were based on a series of agreements Phase I, Phase II, Phase III ; at present Phase IV agreement is about to be signed and is planned to be carried out in 2012-, this demarche introduced a stop-go element in planning the ODA interventions, related in part to the annualized
nature of ODA budgeting and awarding and in part to the persisting need for institutional capacity consolidation also through a more concerted a capacity focused partnership with UNDP. At MFA level priorities regarding the intervention areas as well as areas of expertise that Romania considers to be important in ODA actions were not clearly defined.

EFFICIENCY

The UNDP intervention was highly noticed for its technical support provided to MFA during the implementation of ODA interventions. Within projects implemented within the Program, component 1, that aimed at providing support for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to develop its capacity in implementing ODA projects, UNDP acted as Responsible Party, ensuring the project implementation, given the fact that MFA was unable to fully staff its relevant divisions.

Legal and budgetary arrangements have been made at the Romanian Government level in order to ensure provision of ODA, the new National Strategy concerning the policy of international cooperation for development 2011-2015, having regard to the commitments that Romania has to fulfill as EU Member State.

The Government enacted new legislative provisions establishing ODA institutional framework and redefined extended priority areas and the priority countries/regions.

Romania delivered its targeted assistance despite fiscal consolidation, however, it is estimated that the overseen level of the 0,33% allocation of the GNI by 2015 will not be reached, being a similar situation to other countries in the region. Current estimations show a possible allocation of up to 0,17% of GNI for Romania by the end of 2012.

The important results of the UNDP Program in the ODA field were achieved with few resources but with critical amount of advocacy, mobilization and trust.

A low visibility of the UNDP Program interventions was noticed even if several initiatives were given extremely high attention in the national media they were not necessarily seen to support the national ODA drive; therefore actions for promoting the Program’s results were requested, through organizing activities with the involvement of relevant mass media at national level as well as with the
involvement of representative stakeholders in the field.

ADDITIONALITY

The experience acquired by the local actors following the collaboration with UNDP contributed to a large extent to the development of a network of local specialists that can, in their turn, share their experience and ensure the transfer of knowledge and good practices to other countries in similar situations, especially in transition countries or accession countries.

UNDP’s intervention facilitated the creation of a network of specialists at local level whose interventions will produce a disseminating effect at national or regional level.

Supporting the MFA intervention, civil society and Romanian Electoral Management Body in sharing the experience of transition to democracy and in the election process to Arab Spring Countries.

OUTCOME 2

Capacity Development for Romania to contribute to the Promotion and Protection of Global and Regional Public Goods

RELEVANCE
UNDP’s track record in Romania recommends UNDP as reference partner, important collaborator of both governmental institutions, civil society, public administration or other relevant actors that are interested to identify suitable solutions to problems in the area of promoting and protection of public goods.

Highly qualified expertise, UNDP’s specialists combine technical expertise with sound development experience, and this proved to be essential in generating innovative solutions to the activities they were involved in, identifying financing for such initiatives.

Following the implementation of projects developed in partnership with UNDP, the Romanian specialists gained a global vision in approaching the activities, identified areas of specialization that can further offer to the regional partners (e.g. identification and promotion of protected areas, biosphere reserves).

The UNDP programme contributed essentially to the design of the Sustainable Development Framework, and the UNDP intervention was seen as necessary to support the implementation of the provisions stipulated by the conventions where Romania is committed to contribute to address global issues (Rio Convention).

**EFFECTIVENESS**

The structure of the UNDP Programme (addressing both regional and national level) supports the promotion of the public goods and manages to ensure a basic level of knowledge and the necessary experience for future progress in what concerns the activities related to biodiversity, climate stability, that are so much needed at local level but can be also used to the benefit of other countries in the region also.

UNDP proved as a reservoir of an impressive expert network of specialists in climate change adaptation and mitigation, ecosystem based management approach, sustainable development open to share their experience to the national experts but also to the regional partners of Romania, helping them to
identify windows of opportunities and to build the cross border collaborations.

The contribution to the achievement of the Biodiversity Strategy is considered by the Programme’s partners as an important step to set the action frame however there’s still need of support from UNDP to continue the efforts and to identify how to put this in place.

It is known that Romania is efficient when it comes to strategies elaboration; however many of them were not subsequently implemented.

As a result of implementing the current Programme Romania is more visible in the region, sharing experience with other countries in the field of environment

**EFFICIENCY**

UNDP’s partners (governmental institutions, universities etc) managed to develop activities attracting important funds. The COs expertise in the project preparation, identification of the financing and the technical expertise on specialised issues are considered irreplaceable by the projects’ stakeholders.

The creativity of the activities carried out within the Programme was backed up by a sound expertise which allowed the identification of approaches with a multiplier effect, that can be applied in various domains. E.g. the project carried out under the 3rd Objective of the programme (aiming at the integration on the labour market of former convicts) proposes their reinsertion into ecologic occupations, following specific training. Improving Energy efficiency in low income households and communities in Romania is also a project meant to link up the measures to promote efficient energy with the support measures for vulnerable groups.

Leverage effect for the elaboration of strategies in biodiversity and ecosystems, with minimum resources but important benefits worldwide.

Flexibility of the UNDP programme allows swift interventions as compared to other donors or financing instruments. Setting outcomes with broader scope enables the identification of interventions in various domains/niche problems,
and for a quality that other partnerships cannot provide

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ADDITIONALITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP managed to support sustainable interventions by strengthening the institutional capacity, national evaluations and analysis, and transfer of knowledge.</td>
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</table>

UNDP managed to mobilise and involve various stakeholders to support the topics related to climate change, to challenge them to discover concepts, to propose measures to address the climate change mitigation, green economy or sustainable development, by means of multilevel focused actions: policy dialog, project base learning roles in Rio Convention or energy efficiency

UNDP identifies solutions to strengthen the necessary capacity to implement strategies (elaborated and approved at national level) which cannot be funded by EU funding lines
### OUTCOME 3

**Capacity Development for Social Inclusion, economic and Political Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups and for Deepening democratic Practice.**

#### RELEVANCE

UNDP is generally recognized for its convening role around which forces at government level, at local level, civil society representatives may aggregate in order to approach issues that request a joint effort. At the same time, the prestige is benefitting from brings it in a position to act as a credible and important actor for proposals or topics in the field of inclusion policies and deepening democratic practices.

Including the component regarding the support for implementing projects that address to vulnerable groups is relevant from the point of view of the achieved experience in supporting programs in the field in countries where Romanian ODA projects are implemented.

At the same time Component 3 was crucial in ensuring financing through the UNDP Program, taking into consideration that Romania, as an EU member state was not allowed anymore to benefit from financial assistance for supporting the partnership between the Romanian Government and UN/UNDP. Estimating a financial support of over 10 mil USD through accessing the Structural Funds represented a strong argument for building a partnership model for the 2010-2012 period.

Construction of the 2010-2012 Program, although relied on the possibility of having a large usage of the European funds in order to achieve the already established UNDP objectives, set as an output indicator “80% absorption rate of structural funds focused on funds allocated for social inclusion of vulnerable groups and advanced of women”. While it has not set an UNDP crucial interventions that should have an impact in increasing the absorption capacity, the absorption rate of the previous programming period in the New Member States represented a reference for the target indicator.
EFFECTIVENESS

Implementation of ESF projects in partnership with UNDP showed a potential success model for the absorption of European funds allocated for social inclusion and equal opportunities. Expertise of the staff involved in the implementation phase, the support provided by the CO project partners and last but not least the financial capacities to support the project contribution as well as the implementation expenditures till their reimbursement, all these had a great contribution.

The flexibility of the program allowed Outcome 3 relevant projects to be included after the CPD construction, such as the Support to the Permanent Electoral Authority project initiative, which were appreciated by the project beneficiaries.

Highly qualified expertise, UNDP’s specialists combine technical expertise with sound development experience, and this proved to be essential in generating innovative solutions to the activities they were involved in. UNDP’s intervention always ensures a so-called democracy perspective, one of the core values of the institution. UNDP’s human resources capacity, meaning thereby an impressive expert network, highly specialized in development aid.

A number of challenges have marked the project development within the ESF-supported interventions. Not acknowledging the UNDP status to participate as Lead Partner was a first situation, therefore UNDP acted only as Partner, succeeding however in providing support through its expertise and implementation capacity and therefore facilitates the development of projects. Bureaucratic obstacles, complicated procedures or various interpretations of regulations applied in carrying out projects, requested constant basis effort which was realized eventually; therefore the implementation of contracted projects is according to the already established schedule.

The analysis of the Outcome 3 program indicator, namely achieving “80%
absorption rate of structural funds focused on funds allocated for social inclusion of vulnerable groups and advanced of women” annual, is far from being achieved. The program indicator shows the ESF absorption rate in principle and at national level; however, the possible intervention level of UNDP in influencing the absorption rate at national level is limited, taking into account the 15.000.000 USD project portfolio.

**EFFICIENCY**

**Efficient delivery**, hence assisting the Government to meet the co-financing requirements, was mentioned by all as the **great added value of UNDP**.

Easy procedure, less bureaucracy, which facilitates implementation of the project plan.

Regional spread of experience, appreciated for example in fields like election, anticorruption.

Flexible intervention, able to identify funds for niche or urgent initiatives which could not find any financial support for implementation or couldn’t quickly satisfy the identified needs.

**ADDITIONALITY**

The support provided by UNDP in implementing ESF projects is regarded by partners as crucial in carrying out activities and achieving the already established objectives, through its ability to provide high level expertise and to identify ways of adapting to the sometimes extremely lengthy and restrictive procedures and rules established by the financer.

UNDP is a credible interlocutor of the governmental institutions and this facilitates swift reaction of the authorities and progress of activities in important areas such as: anticorruption, environment.

UNDP is a tool box for the authorities confronting with an urgent matter that has to be dealt with in a swift and efficient way.
At the level of projects implemented in 2010-2012, the UNDP contribution in supporting the partners co-financing of 2% of the total value of the project
Annex 4

List of documents reviewed

1. TOR
2. Handbook of evaluation and Monitoring for Results – UNDP Evaluation Office

Background Documents (1)

1. CPD / CPAP
2. UNDP in MICs and AOC
   a. Discussion paper UNDP/RBEC in new donor countries
   b. Final turning vision into action (summary of discussions from the Global Management Meeting June 2011)
   c. Evaluation of RP_RBEC_Europe
   d. RBEC rolling strategy
   e. Regional Programme Document RBEC 2011-2013
   f. Agenda of Change
   g. UNDP Annual Business Plan 2012

3. Draft Reports of Assessment of UNDP in EU accession countries

Background Documents (2)

2. National Strategies for Roma Inclusion
3. National Social Inclusion Strategies
4. Romania and the EU 2020 Strategy – the 6th GEA Report on Romania and Lisbon Agenda
5. Mechanism for Coordination and Verification Reports for Romania (relevance for UNDP’s governance work especially on anti-corruption)
6. ODA Strategy
7. National Sustainable Development Strategy
8. Others

Background Documents (3)

1. ESF related background
2. List of output projects (2010-2012 per Outcome)
3. Project Documents for Output Projects under:
   a. Outcome 1 – National Social Inclusion and Democratic Deepening
   b. Outcome 2 – Regional public goods protection and promotion
   c. Outcome 3 – International development cooperation

Evaluations and Progress Monitoring

1. ROAR 2010
2- ROAR 2011
3- Annual Progress Reports for Output Projects (2010 and 2011)
   a. Outcome 1 – National Social Inclusion and Democratic Deepening
   b. Outcome 2 – Regional public goods protection and promotion
   c. Outcome 3- International development cooperation
4- Project Evaluations
5- Outcome Reviews (2010)
6- Outcome Reviews (2011, pending for conclusion during May 2012)

Progress towards Strategic Objective
1- Sub regional Environmental Partnerships Facility – draft documents, minutes and final email communication re proposal
2- New Partnerships Project Draft

Other sources:
Annex 5

Questions for guiding the meetings with the stakeholders

Relevance

- What are the main points of particular relevance to the evaluation of UNDP intervention
- What is the interviewee’s overall impression of the strategic importance of the UNDP mission in Romania (related to the particular field of intervention)
- What are the key related achievement from a regional perspective that were identified by the interviewee
- Has UNDP been the optimal partner for the various dimensions of the CP?
- What type of UNDP support has been appreciated as most relevant for Romania

Effectiveness

- What has changed as a result of implementing the current programme/ In which direction the change has occurred
- What are the views expressed by the interviewee regarding the quality of the expertise provided by UNDP
- What were the principal challenges faced in implementing the actual Programme

Efficiency

- What are the key outcomes identified by the interviewee regarding the implementation of the actual Programme
- What are the views on how to improve the efficiency of the intervention
- What are the benefits resulted from the utilization of UNDP support
- How is the appreciation of the overall implementation of each of the 3 Objectives of the Programme? What are the views on how the progress of the Programme was recorded up to now?

Future partnership

- What types of future support will national authorities expect from UNDP as of 2013 related to national and international priorities of Romania?
- What is considered the best options for establishing a fully financed programme (ESF, Government, other). Any differences relative to the 3 objectives?
- What are Future key ODA challenges – financial and policy - for Romania?
Annex 6

Summary of the results

Objectives 1: Capacity Development for Romania’s International Cooperation and Aid Effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUTS</th>
<th>OUTPUT PROJECTS</th>
<th>ACHIEVED INDICATORS AND TARGETS</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>- Actual approval on 22/2/2013: 807,361 USD</td>
<td>- Governmental fund</td>
<td>- Official development assistance targeted at promoting international development goals, Millennium Development Goals and advancement of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>- Ministry of Foreign Affairs to lead strategic vision for implementation of this goal</td>
<td>- NGO/DI implementing partnership with civil society organizations, - governmental actors, - experts from European and international bodies, - partner countries, - media and the academic community</td>
<td>- Aid effectiveness and relevance of international development cooperation programmes of Romania, including official development assistance, strengthened</td>
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<td>- 2011: - Training addressed to water officials from R Moldova</td>
<td>- Training in Central Asia on protection and management of the river resource in transboundary areas</td>
<td>- Indicators: Official development assistance in percentage of gross national income</td>
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<td>- Training specialists in the EEC/Can region on drinking water supply, wastewater, urban waste water treatment and integrated waste management</td>
<td>- Improving the practices of the countries along the EEC from the EEC in order to Public and Solid Waste Management</td>
<td>- Target: 0.1% per cent of gross national income in 2011 = positive change in line</td>
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<td>- Workshop on Democratic Transformations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Electoral processes (Arab Spring): 11 electoral and democratic systems in Egypt and Tunisia</td>
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<td>- Black Sea Regional Training on Planning and Combating Environmental Crime</td>
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<td>- Capacity Development of the Romanian NGOs for implementing ODA projects and programmes, Phase I and II</td>
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<td>- The Romanian-German Civil Society Cooperation Initiative</td>
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<td>- The Romanian-Development Camp</td>
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<td>- Civil Society Networks Romania - R. Moldova</td>
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Assumptions:
- 0.3% of GNI until 2015
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is expected to establish Romania’s ODA agency, although the final institutional set up is not to be determined. At that stage, it is expected that the CVF’s primary programme of partnership is also expected to support this agency through knowledge products and the CVF’s technical assistance to development countries.

External factors:
- Fluctuations of personnel, cut off budgets, MFA unable to fully staff ODA, changes in missions at the MFA.
Objective 2: Capacity Development, for Romania to contribute to the promotion and protection of global and regional public goods

Assumptions: Romania is seen as a strong regional promoter of global public goods, supporting its efforts to develop and implement creative cross-sectoral cooperation programmes that leverage the country’s development capacity and structural basis to protect and preserve GPGs.

External factors: Require feedbacks of personal, civil society, and decision to slow down the setup of sub-regional facility for Environment.

Budget:
- COP indicative budget: 6,175,000 USD, actual approved: 12,000,000 USD
- Other funding: 2,700 USD

Outcomes:
- National level: Supporting Energy Efficiency in Low Income Households and Communities in Romania
- Regional level: Regional programme and practice for the timely phasing-out of major infrastructure
- Sub-national level: Sub-national facility for Environmental Partnership (established)

Outputs:
- Indicators achieved
- Output indicator: Number of new localised regional cooperation and climate change projects
- National level: At least one regional programme or cooperation project developed
- Regional level: At least one regional programme or cooperation project developed

Outputs and outcomes:
- Indicators partially achieved: Regional sub-facility proposed
- Indicators achieved: (1) Project

Achieved indicators and targets:
- National level: Number of new localised regional cooperation and climate change projects
- Regional level: Regional programme and practice for the timely phasing-out of major infrastructure
- Sub-national level: Sub-national facility for Environmental Partnership (established)
Objective 3. Capacity development for social inclusion, economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice.

**Social inclusion of vulnerable groups**
- A Social Economy Model for Inclusion (Development of Social Economy Model for Romania)
- Social Economy - a solution for the development of a social commercial entrepreneurism.
- The return of former minors to the labor market and their integration in society.
- Proprietary Model: Market Project: making the most of EU Funds for Sustainable Housing and
- Inclusion of socially-excluded homes in warm, but not electricity-exposed in Cluj Napoca area.

**Protest sector and entrepreneurship**
- Strengthening the capacity of Romanian companies to develop social partnerships through Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Establishment and Development of Business Incubators in Romania.

**Democratic deepening**
- Support to the Ministry of Justice to implement the recommendations of the EC under the CPM.
- Support to the Ministry of Justice in the development of the anti-corruption strategy 2011-2015.
- Support to the Permanent Electronic Authority (PEA) and local public administration in Romania to implement best practices in electronic procurement management.

**Budget**
- CPDP Indirect Budget: 13,783,893
- INS: annual approval 2011: 6,800,422 USD
- Government funds
- Other funding (in a EUR)

**Outputs**

- **Input Projects**
- Achieved Indicators and Targets
- Outcome

**Achieved Indicators and Targets**
- **Output indicator:** Number of UNDP projects and activities implemented in the scope of the Strengthening of the Social Economy Model for Romania (Grey Paper for Roma):
  - Target: 2
  - Indicator: Socially-excluded homes
  - Indicator: Number of UNDP-supported Business Incubators that can be shared with public libraries of the Database for Business Incubation.

**Outcome**
- **Output indicator:** Number of UNDP-supported Business Incubators that can be shared with public libraries of the Database for Business Incubation.

**Capacity development**
- for social inclusion, economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice:
- Strengthening the capacity of Romanian companies to develop social partnerships through Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Establishment and Development of Business Incubators in Romania.

**Assumptions**
- Government funds can provide important financial support for conducting UNDP Programmes.
- Absorption of EU funds in Romania will follow the trend of countries in the region reached in the previous programming period.

**External Factors**
- Request for extension of projects in Management Authorities.
- Limited capacity of the Management Authorities.

**Capacity development**
- for social inclusion, economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice:
- Strengthening the capacity of Romanian companies to develop social partnerships through Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Establishment and Development of Business Incubators in Romania.

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**Outputs**
- **Input Projects**
- Achieved Indicators and Targets
- Outcome

**Achieved Indicators and Targets**
- **Output indicator:** Number of UNDP-supported Business Incubators that can be shared with public libraries of the Database for Business Incubation.

**Outcome**
- **Output indicator:** Number of UNDP-supported Business Incubators that can be shared with public libraries of the Database for Business Incubation.

**Capacity development**
- for social inclusion, economic and political empowerment of vulnerable groups and for deepening democratic practice:
- Strengthening the capacity of Romanian companies to develop social partnerships through Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Establishment and Development of Business Incubators in Romania.

**Assumptions**
- Government funds can provide important financial support for conducting UNDP Programmes.
- Absorption of EU funds in Romania will follow the trend of countries in the region reached in the previous programming period.

**Outputs**
- **Input Projects**
- Achieved Indicators and Targets
- Outcome

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Annex 7

List of ACRONYMS

CPD - Country Programme Document
CPAP - Country Programme Action Plan
ESF – European Social Fund
FOND – Federation of Non-govermental Organisations for Development in Romania
GEF – Global Environmental Facility
MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MDG - Millenium Development Goals
MIC – Middle Income Countries
NEX – National Execution
NMC – Non Member Country
NGO- Non-govermental organisation
ODA - Official Development Assistance
ROAR – Result Oriented Annual Report
UNCF - United Nations Country Framework
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UN RBEC – UN Regional Center Bratislava
USD – United States Dollar