**Outcome Evaluation on UNDP’s Engagement with Civil Society Actors and Mechanisms, including Small Grants Schemes between 2008 and 2012**

**Terms of Reference**

**UNDP Maldives**

**1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The Maldives is a young democracy and the civil society members are key actors in the maturing process of the democracy. Since the country’s first democratic election in 2008, civil society organizations have flourished even more, following the Tsunami period, albeit capacity constraints remain, and to date over 1300 civil society organizations are registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs. The private sector – an important element of the civil society or non-state actors – has also been an important player in the economic development efforts of the country, with the tourism sector as the economic backbone.

Under the umbrella of UNDAF and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD 2008-2011 and 2011-2015,) UNDP Maldives has supported national development efforts through its four areas of work: Democratic Governance, Energy and Environment, Poverty Reduction and support to HIV/AIDS (Global Fund). In doing so, UNDP has worked closely with civil society actors, including non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, private sector, and women and youth groups, through its programme. Recently, in response to the rapidly changing democratic landscape in the country, growing tensions and need for dialogue, UNDP has reviewed its governance projects and consolidated into a coherent integrated governance programme. UNDP has also worked closely with civil society actors in its other areas of its work through capacity training efforts, small grants, awareness raising and dialogue: Energy and Environment, HIV/AIDS and poverty reduction.

In the “Environment and Energy” portfolio, there are two small grants schemes that are aimed at supporting local level solutions by local communities to environmental issues. These are: the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP) as part of a global programme, and the Mangrove for Future (MFF) Small Grant Facility (SGF) as part of the regional programme in collaboration with IUCN. The GEF-SGP and MFF-SGF schemes have been running since the years 2010 and 2008 with grants projects (completed and on-going) in the amount of 451860 USD and 178392 USD respectively. These small grants have completed and ongoing- projects with 24 grant projects implemented in 30 islands in 13 atolls and with 2 projects with a nationwide scope. Apart from these grants projects, UNDP works with communities and members on community-level initiatives, notably in the areas of waste and water management. Some enviontment projects have an explicit focus on working with the private sector (resorts) to achieve the objective of climate change adaptation. Built into some of the projects in the area of environment are livelihoods development grants which are implemented through civil society, and which are aimed at relieved anthropogenic pressures on the natural ecosystems. Therefore, while the portfolio does not target to directly contribute to the outcome on civil society development, it depends significantly on UNDP partnership with the private sector in achieving and sustaining development gains.

The Governance programme of UNDP is the unit working most directly on the engagement with civil society. The programme aims to contribute directly to a CPD outcome on “enabling environment created and strengthened for civil society to thrive and to engage in public dialogue”. UNDP aims to support social cohesion, and improve mechanisms for dialogue, and strengthen the enabling environment for civil society to thrive by improving public policy and capacity. Since June 2010, UNDP has implemented a small grants scheme under the Support to Civil Society project supported by AusAid, and supported civil society development under the Civic Engagement Project since August 2010which supported a Comprehensive Study of the Maldivian Civil Society and the formulation of the Associations Bill.

Under the Restoration of Livelihoods project (2005-2008) under the Tsunami Recovery Programme, UNDP worked with a number of local NGO, CBO’s through various grant schemes in improving the livelihoods and empowerment of women. The Poverty Reduction programme of UNDP has an explicit focus on working with local SMEs and cooperatives established in the communities and are working in linking them with the private sector through its work on partnership forum with the resorts.

Lastly, in the area of support to HIV/AIDS prevention, UNDP has been the principle recipient of the Global Fund. While it does not have a grant scheme, the programme worked extensively with civil society organizations working in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention and support and other marginalized/vulnerable groups. Therefore, some lessons can be drawn from this experience. Also, as the Programme came to and end in August 2012, lessons should be drawn to ensure sustainability of results achieved through mainstreaming of engagement in other UNDP projects and programmes.

The geographical makeup of the Maldives makes it challenging and disproportionately costly to work with civil society and organizations in the Maldives, particularly those based in islands far away from the capital city, Male. It is time consuming and costly to reach out to island communities, and often times, programme resources do not allow for monitoring visits that are adequate in terms of frequency and rigor. This is particularly a challenge when it comes to small grants work since many of groups we work with do not have sufficient capacity. UNDP Maldives has recently initiated a cross-unit initiative to streamline grants review and awarding processes across the programme, building on good practices, and also to ensure synergies and avoid duplications of efforts. It is still at an infant stag, and this evaluation can inform future work of the Country Office.

Annex 1 provides a list of UNDP Maldives past and ongoing projects working with civil society and supporting its development.

As UNDP Maldives is hoping and planning to strengthen its engagement with these key actors and scale up small grants schemes, UNDP Maldives would like to initiate an independent outcome evaluation to critically assess strengths and weakness of its past and ongoing engagements and mechanisms, and learn lessons for future. This outcome-level evaluation is part of UNDP Maldives CO’s Evaluation Plan for 2011-2015, and touches on projects and non-project interventions that support civil society development and require civil society engagement and mechanisms across all programme areas of the CPD.

**2. EVALUATION PURPOSE**

The purpose of the evaluation is to help UNDP Maldives to review its project and non-project work 1) as a direct contribution to the UNDP CPD outcome on civil society engagement and also 2) an indirect means (partnership strategy and engagement, and mechanisms – e.g. small grants) in achieving its overall development goals across the country programme of UNDP.

The evaluation will also provide UNDP management with conclusions and recommendations that are expected to assist in identifying strategies and operational approaches pertaining to UNDP partnership with civil society actors, in coordination with other development partners.

The evaluation will be primarily used by UNDP country office, but will be shared with key partners, including UN agencies working towards the same UNDAF outcome on civil society engagement, government counterparts, particularly the Ministry of Home Affairs, and key civil society organizations that UNDP has been working with.

**3. EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVEs**

The evaluation will cover period between 2008 (post tsunami and democratic transition period) to date.

* To assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of UNDP engagement strategy with civil society actors – non-profit organizations, including at the national and community levels, and private sector actors, including cooperative societies, and mechanisms (including small grants) in achieving its development goals as outlined in the UNDAF and CPDs for the past 4 years.
* To highlight shortcomings and strengths of UNDP engagement strategy with civil society actors and mechanisms (including small grants) and make forward-looking practical and substantive recommendations to help further strengthen UNDP’s contribution to this area and strategically position the organization as a critical partner in development in the Maldives.

**4. EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

***Relevance***

* Are intended outcome on civil society engagement and outputs relevant to national and community needs and priorities?
* Are UNDP’s partnership strategy and mechanisms relevant to national conditions and priorities?
* Is UNDP relevant to pursue these development results and work with civil society, as intended?

***Effectiveness***

* Is the progress made to date on achieving the stated outcome or outputs on civil society engagement and development on track?
* What progress toward that particular outcome has been made?
* What factors are contributing to achieving or not achieving intended outcome?
* Have the UNDP strategy for engagement with civil society organizations, actors and partnership strategy been effective in achieving the CPD outcomes and outputs that these activities and outputs are meant to contribute to?
* Has the Small Grants mechanism contributed effectively as a mechanism for engaging civil society and achieving the ultimate result (relevant CPD outcome)?
* Has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?
* What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
* To what extent have UNDP interventions mainstreamed to gender and contributed to gender equity?
* To what extent have UNDP interventions successfully target ‘vulnerable groups’ and met their needs through design and implementation?

***Efficiency***

* Have the means of UNDP’s engagement with civil society in achieving the intended outputs and contributing to outcomes been timely and cost-effective?
* To what extent is UNDP’s internal capacity and it’s structure equipped to deliver results efficiently?
* Coordination, complementarities and synergies amongst UNDP projects, units, UN agencies and other partners to enhance efficiency and effectiveness?
* To what extent UNDP’s monitoring (and evaluation) activities have been efficient and effective?

***Sustainability***

* To what extent are contributions to outcome and achievement of outputs sustainable within the existing capacity and structures of the country?
* Has UNDP deliberately designed interventions and engaged partners to build in sustainability in the project?

**5. METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation will use both primary and secondary data, but will primarily depend on secondary data from a number of past assessments (e.g. NGO assessment – see Annex 1), studies and review, including quarterly and annual project progress reports, ROAR and independent evaluations.

Field visits can also be arranged to ensure a good coverage of community and civil society organizations, primarily to validate secondary data collected from desk review and individual and group interviews – both open and semi-structured- conducted in the capital city Malé. Due to high costs associated with travelling domestically in the Maldives, the use of telephone and skype should be actively pursued to bring down the costs, while ensuring an adequate coverage. The selection of field visits site will be finalized during the inception stage of the evaluation, in close consultation with national stakeholders (see Annex 2 for stakeholder mapping). The evaluation team is expected to produce an inception report (see section 6 below).

**6. EVALUATION PRODUCTS (DELIVERABLES)**

* **Evaluation inception report**—An inception report should be prepared by the evaluators before going into the full fledged evaluation exercise. It should detail the evaluators’ understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods; proposed sources of data; and data collection procedures. The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables, designating a team member with the lead responsibility for each task or product. The inception report provides the programme unit and the evaluators with an opportunity to verify that they share the same understanding about the evaluation and clarify any misunderstanding at the outset. This should be completed during the first two days of the in-country mission.
* **Draft evaluation report**—The programme unit and key stakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report to ensure that the evaluation meets the required quality criteria (UNDP CO will provide the corporate quality criteria).
* **Final evaluation report.**

**7. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION AND REQUIRED COMPETENCIES**

The evaluation exercise will be led by an international evaluation consultant – team leader, who has a proven record of conducting complex evaluations. Experience in conducting evaluations of partnership and civil society engagement is preferable, and knowledge and experience of small-island states with challenges of geographical outreach, as is the case in the Maldives, and in young democracy where the role of civil society has a particular place, would be an asset.

The team leader will be supported by two local evaluation consultants. The evaluation team members must be independence from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation.[63](http://web.undp.org/eo/handbook/363)

Team Leader Expected Roles and Responsibilities

* Finalizes the evaluation methodology based on the inception report, and preliminary discussion with discussion and data mapping done by national consultants
* Oversees the main mission preparation, programme itinerary, in consultation with the national consultants and CO
* Leads the in-country mission, taking the responsibility of selected areas and strategic aspects
* Prepares and presents, together with the other mission members, the preliminary findings to the UNDP CO and Government Officials
* Drafts the main evaluation report in collaboration with the other team members
* Discusses and revises the draft evaluation report
* Revises the report taking into account comments from the UNDP CO and national stakeholders
* Finalises the report

Team Members Expected Roles and Responsibilities

* Conducts a preliminary analysis of the projects and activities sampled by the Evaluation, and leads stakeholder mapping, documentation mapping and secondary data collection in collaboration with the CO, including the reconstruction and validation of a theory of change
* Establishes contacts with the CO in order to facilitate the mission’s preparation with particular attention to finalising the stakeholders’ mapping to support desk review
* Cooperates with the Team Leader in finalizing the methodology and preparing the main mission
* Participates in the in country mission and takes responsibilities of key programme areas
* Contributes to the presentation of preliminary results to the CO and national partners
* Writes a working paper to be used for the preparation of the main report.
* Comments on the draft report and helps the team leader revise the same taking into account the comments received from key partners
* provide local information and context;
* support field visits and translation and collation of field information;

Requirements for the team

As a whole, the team is expected to cover the range of UNDP areas of intervention within the scope of the evaluation in the Maldives. All mission members are normally expected to hold an advanced university degree – or for local consultants, BA minimum - in social sciences or a related field relevant to the evaluation, and to have previous evaluation experience in development programmes or projects and in working under time constraints and respecting deadlines. At least one of the local team members will have private sector partnership evaluation or development background and is able to lead the work in this area.

The team leader will be an experienced international development evaluation specialist, with team leadership experience and substantive knowledge of one or more of the programmatic areas of UNDP work in the country and knowledge of the region. Demonstrated capacity for strategic thinking and policy advice are essential. Preference will be given to candidates with familiarity with UNDP or UN operations. The team leader must be committed to respecting deadlines for product delivery and key milestones.

**8. EVALUATION ETHICS**

Evaluations in UNDP will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’[64](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/Annex3.html#64) . Information collected through this evaluation exercise is strictly used and meant for the purpose of this evaluation only, and evaluators must ensure that interviewers know the safeguarding of confidentiality in this evaluation.

**9. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

The evaluation will be managed by UNDP Maldives Country Office, with the focal point being the officer in charge of civil society development in the Governance Unit and the Management Support Unit. However, since the subject of the evaluation cuts across various portfolios of the UNDP programme, there will be a small steering committee chaired by the Head of Programme to oversee the evaluation. This committee will be supported and joined by national partners such as representatives of the HRCM, LGA and Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Finance, as appropriate.

The evaluation team will work closely with the focal point in the Governance Unit, under close guidance from the Head of Programme, UNDP. Support required in ensuring success of the evaluation in terms of ensuring access to data and individuals will be provided by the focal point in the Governance Team while ensuring independence of the evaluation.

**10. TIME-FRAME FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

Key milestones of the evaluation will be as follows (TBC):

* Desk review (Oct 14-16) 3 days
* Briefings of evaluators (Oct 17)
* Finalizing the evaluation design and methods and preparing the detailed inception report (October 17)
* In-country evaluation mission (Oct 17- 31)
* Preparing the draft report (October 31-November 10: there will be several exchange with CO)
* Stakeholder meeting and review of the draft report (for quality assurance) November 15
* Incorporating comments and finalizing the evaluation report – November 20
* Preparation of the management response by CO and national partners – December

**11. COST**

The total budget of the evaluation is 30,000 USD