



**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**FOR THE**

**MID-TERM EVALUATION**

**OF THE**

**UNDP/GEF PROJECT: PIMS no. 4056**

**“Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System  
(DIKTAS)”**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Standard UNDP/GEF M&E requirements**

UNESCO-IHP wishes to contract an independent international consultant to carry out the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the GEF-UNDP-UNESCO regional project “Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Aquifer System (DIKTAS)” - PIMS no. 4056. The DIKTAS project is funded by the GEF, implemented by UNDP and executed by UNESCO-IHP. The evaluation will be carried out in line with the criteria of the project implementing agency – UNDP/GEF.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives:

- i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts;
- ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements;
- iii) to promote accountability for resource use;
- iv) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators -, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and independent evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all projects with long implementation periods are strongly encouraged to conduct mid-term evaluations. In addition to providing an independent in-depth review of implementation progress, this type of evaluation is responsive to GEF Council decisions on transparency and better access of information during implementation.

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

## **2. Objectives of the evaluation**

### **2.1. Purpose of the evaluation**

This project evaluation is being conducted at the request of the UNDP/GEF regional coordination unit in Bratislava and as per the project document evaluation plan. It ought to provide the information about the status of project implementation to ensure accountability of the expenditures to date and the delivery of outputs and so that managers can make midcourse corrections as appropriate.

The main objective of this Mid-Term Evaluation is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities in relation to the stated objective and to produce plausible recommendations on how to improve the project management practices during the remaining duration of the project (scheduled completion in July 2014). The Mid-term Evaluation serves as an agent of change and plays a critical role in supporting accountability.

Its main objectives are:

- to strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project;
- to ensure accountability for the achievement of the project and GEF objectives to improve understanding of transboundary groundwater resources of the Dinaric region and to facilitate their equitable and sustainable utilization, including the protection of unique karst groundwater dependent ecosystems.
- to create the basis of replication of successful project outcomes achieved so far.

Particular emphasis should be put on the current project results and the possibility of achieving all the objectives in the given timeframe, taking into consideration the speed, at which the project is proceeding.

More specifically, the evaluation should assess:

#### Project concept and design

EE should review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy, encompassing an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The executing modality and managerial arrangements should also be judged. The EE will revise the relevance of indicators and targets, review work plans, planned duration and budget of the project.

#### Implementation

The EE will assess the implementation of the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Also, the effectiveness of management as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping by all parties to the project should be evaluated. In particular the MTE is to assess the Project Management's use of adaptive management in project implementation.

#### Project outputs, outcomes, and impact

The External Evaluation (EE) will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. MTE should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the immediate objectives and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The EE should also assess the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. The EE will also examine if the project has had significant unexpected effects, whether of beneficial or detrimental character.

### **2.1. Evaluation criteria**

The following evaluation criteria should be regarded in order to focus on the evaluation objectives:

- relevance: extend to which a development initiative and its intended outputs and outcomes are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries
- effectiveness: extend to which the initiative's intended results have been achieved
- efficiency: measure how economically resources or inputs (such as funds, expertise and time) are converted to results
- sustainability: measures the extent to which benefits of initiatives continue after external development assistance has come to end. The evaluators may look at factors such as establishment of sustainable financial mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the broader development policies and sectoral plans and economies or community production
- impact: measures changes in human development and people's well-being that are brought about by development initiatives, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended

### **3. Scope of work**

An independent international consultant will conduct the mid-term evaluation. He/she will look at the following aspects:

#### **3.1. Project concept**

##### **3.1.1. Project relevance and strategy**

- How and why project outcomes and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results;
- Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective way towards results;
- Do the outcomes developed during the inception phase still represent the best project strategy for achieving the project objectives (in light of updated underlying factors)? Consider alternatives;
- Were the relevant country representatives, from government and civil society, involved in the project preparation?
- Do the recipient governments maintain their financial commitments to the project?

##### **3.1.2. Preparation and readiness**

- Are the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe?
- Were the capacities of executing institution and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?
- Were lessons from the previous phases of the project properly incorporated in the project design?
- Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?
- Were counterpart resources (funding, staff and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at the project entry?

### **3.1.3. Stakeholder participation during project preparation**

- Did the project involve the relevant stakeholders through information-sharing, consultation and by seeking their participation in the project design?

### **3.1.4. Underlying factors/Assumptions**

- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project management strategies for these factors;
- Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made;
- Assess the effect of any incorrect assumption made by the project

### **3.1.5. Project organization/management arrangements**

- Were the project roles properly assigned during the project design?
- Are the project roles in line with the UNDP and GEF programme guides?
- Can the management arrangement model suggested by the project be considered as an optimum model? If no, please come up with suggestions and recommendations
- Were the management arrangements suggested by the project document implemented and how efficient they are?

### **3.1.6. Project budget and duration**

- Assess if the project budget and duration were planned in a cost-effective way;

### **3.1.7. Design of Project Monitoring and Evaluation system**

- Examine whether or not the project has a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives;
- Examine whether or not the M&E plan includes a baselines (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results and adequate funding for M&E activities;
- Examine whether or not the time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs are specifies;

### **3.1.8. Sustainability and replication strategy**

- Assess if project sustainability and replicability strategy was developed during the project design and assess its relevance;

### **3.1.9. Gender perspective**

- Extent to which the project accounts for gender differences when developing project interventions;
- How gender considerations are mainstreamed into project interventions.

## **3.2. Project implementation**

### **3.2.1. Adaptive management in project implementation**

- Monitoring system. Assess the monitoring tools currently being used:

- ✓ Do they provide the necessary information?
  - ✓ Do they involve key partners?
  - ✓ Are they efficient?
  - ✓ Are additional tools required?
- Reconstruct baseline data if necessary<sup>1</sup>;
- Risk Management:
  - ✓ Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIRs are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why;
  - ✓ Describe any additional risks identified and suggest risk ratings and possible risk management strategies to be adopted;
  - ✓ Assess the project's risk identification and management systems. Is the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System appropriately applied?
- Work Planning:
  - ✓ Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it. Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP-GEF requirements in terms of format and content;
  - ✓ Assess the use of routinely updated work plans;
  - ✓ Are work-planning processes result-based<sup>2</sup>? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning;
- Financial management:
  - ✓ Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions;
  - ✓ Is there due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits?
  - ✓ Did promised co-financing materialize?
- Reporting:
  - ✓ Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management;
  - ✓ Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners;
- Delays:
  - ✓ Assess if there were delays in project implementation, if so, what were the reasons;
  - ✓ Did the delays affect the achievement of project's outcomes and/or sustainability and if so, then how?

### 3.2.2. UNDP Contribution

- Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. Consider:
  - ✓ Field visits;
  - ✓ Project reviews, PIR preparation and follow-up;
  - ✓ GEF guidance;
  - ✓ Operational support;

<sup>1</sup> See p.67 of "Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. United Nations Development Programme" NY, 2009; <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/Annex3.html>

<sup>2</sup> RBM Support documents are available at <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/methodologies.htm>

- Assess contribution to the project from UNDP “soft” assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination) and suggest measures to strengthen UNDP soft assistance to the project management;

### **3.2.3. UNESCO-IHP Contribution**

- Assess the role of UNESCO-IHP in project execution and implementation;
- Assess the UNESCO-IHP assistance in day-to-day project operation, guidance in procurement and financial management and monitoring. Suggest measures to strengthen UNESCO-IHP efficiency and responsiveness if necessary;

### **3.2.4. Stakeholder Participation, Partnership Strategy**

- Assess whether or not local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project and suggestions for improvement if necessary;
- Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms;
- Identify opportunities for stronger partnerships;

### **Products expected from the evaluation**

The key product expected from this final evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report. The report, together with the annexes, shall be written in English and shall be presented in electronic form in MS Word format. The Report of the Final Evaluation will be stand-alone document that substantiates its recommendations and conclusions. The report will have to provide to the GEF Secretariat complete and convincing evidence to support its findings/ratings. The Report will include a table of planned vs. actual project financial disbursements, and planned co-financing vs. actual co-financing in this project, according the table attached in [Annex 2](#) of this TOR.

- Draft mid-term evaluation report. It should be logically structured, contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations<sup>3</sup>. Prior to submission of the final report the draft version shall be circulated for comments to the UNDP-GEF team, UNESCO-IHP Paris, UNESCO Sarajevo office Project Coordination Unit (Trebinje), beneficiaries and other governmental and non-governmental counterpart (to be specified in the inception report);
- Final mid-term evaluation report. The final report will be submitted upon review and acceptance of the draft report and presented in a way that will make the information accessible and comprehensible in the English and Russian languages;
- Evaluation executive summary. The evaluation report should include comprehensive and information-rich executive summary. This summary will be used as a stand-alone product to enhance the readership of the evaluation, and should be understandable to non-technical readers

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<sup>3</sup> The evaluation report quality standards are provided in Annex 7 of the “Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results. United Nations Development Programme” NY, 2009; <http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/Annex3.html>



- Evaluation blurb. This is a one-paragraph description designed to increase the visibility of published content and announce the report publication on the webpage and via electronic announcements and list serves.

### **Indicative outline of the mid-term evaluation report**

The key product expected from this mid-term evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, at least, include the following contents:

- Executive summary (1-2 pages)
  - ✓ Brief description of the project
  - ✓ Context and purpose of the evaluation
  - ✓ Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned
- Introduction (2-3 pages)
  - ✓ Project background
  - ✓ Purpose of the evaluation
  - ✓ Key issues to be addressed
  - ✓ Methodology of the evaluation
  - ✓ Structure of the evaluation
- Project and its development context (3-4 pages)
  - ✓ Project start and its duration
  - ✓ Implementation status
  - ✓ Problems that the project seeks to address
  - ✓ Immediate and development objectives of the project
  - ✓ Main stakeholders
  - ✓ Results expected
- Findings and Conclusions (8-9 pages)
  - ✓ Project concept and formulation
    - Project relevance
    - Implementation approach
    - Countries ownership/Engagement
    - Stakeholders participation
    - Replication approach
    - Cost-effectiveness
    - UNDP comparative advantage
    - UNESCO comparative advantage
    - Linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector
    - Indicators
    - Management arrangements
  - ✓ Implementation
    - Financial management
    - Monitoring and evaluation
    - Execution and implementation modalities
    - Assistance by the UNDP (RCU and country offices)
    - Operational support by UNESCO
    - Coordination and operational issues by the PCU

- Role and contributions of partners
- Identification and management of risks (adaptive management)
- ✓ Results
  - Attainment of objectives
  - Prospects of sustainability
- ✓ Recommendations (4-6 pages)
  - Corrective actions for the design, duration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
  - Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
  - Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives
  - Suggestions for strengthening ownership, management of potential risks
- ✓ Lessons learned (3-5 pages)
  - Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success
- ✓ Annexes
  - ToR
  - Itinerary of evaluator, including summary of field visits
  - List and contacts of persons interviewed
  - List of documents reviewed
  - Questionnaires used and summary of results
  - Co-financing and Leveraged Resources (see Table 1 attached)

The length of the mid-term evaluation report shall not exceed 30 pages in total (not including annexes).

## **Evaluation methodology**

The mid-term 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 duration of the project.

The mid-term evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The methodology to be used by the mid-term evaluator should be provided in detail. It should include information on:

- Documentation review (desk study)
- Field visits to the project sites;
- Interviews and questionnaires should be held with but not limited to the following organizations and individuals: UNDP/GEF management unit from Bratislava, UNESCO-IHP Paris, UNESCO Antenna Office Sarajevo, UNDP Country Offices, Project Team, members of Steering Committee, members of governmental and non-governmental institutions cooperating with the project, educational and research institutions involved in and/or benefitting from the project results etc.

- Participatory techniques and other relevant approaches for the gathering and analysis of data.

The Mid Term Evaluator would also provide ratings of Project achievements according to the GEF Project Review Criteria.

### **Management arrangements**

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out by the international independent Evaluation Expert (EE). The logistical support to the EE will be provided by the Project Coordination Unit (Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovnia), UNESCO-IHP Paris and the UNESCO Antenna office in Sarajevo.

### **Duration of the mid-term evaluation**

The assignment is expected to commence in mid-August 2012 and be completed by mid October 2012. The MTE shall not exceed 28 consultancy days.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Deliveries</b>	<b>Timeframe (not to exceed)</b>
<b>1</b>	Inception report preparation	<b>7 days</b>
<b>2</b>	Field visits, interviews, questionnaires, de-briefings, draft MTE report submitted and comments received	<b>14 days</b>
<b>3</b>	Final report submitted and accepted by supervisor	<b>7 days</b>

### **Duties, skills and qualifications of the Evaluation Expert**

- Duties and responsibilities
  - ✓ Desk review of documents, development of draft methodology, detailed work plan and MTE outline (5 days homework)
  - ✓ Debriefing project team and implementing partners (2 days)
  - ✓ Interviews with project implementing and executing partners, UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor, donor representatives (3 days, Skype conferences)
  - ✓ Interviews with the relevant Government representatives (4 days)
  - ✓ Field visits to project sites and interviews with the key experts in the breakdown of project components (7 days)
  - ✓ Development and submission of the first draft MTE report (4 days homework)
  - ✓ Finalization and submission of the final MTE report (3 day homework)
- Qualifications and competencies
  - ✓ 10 year of technical knowledge and experience in the thematic areas related to water resource management, environmental management, international waters, climate change, transboundary monitoring, and other environmental issues;

- ✓ Proven expertise and experience in conducting evaluations (including evaluations on international level)
- ✓ Sound RBM expertise (especially result-orientated monitoring and evaluation)
- ✓ Excellent command of technical English related to water resources management language. Knowledge of one of the languages spoken in the region would be an asset.

- Contract Type, Duration and Payment Modality

The international independent Evaluation Expert will be hired for maximum 28 days under Individual Consultant contract by UNESCO. He/she will be paid daily consultancy fee and travel costs (economy class ticket, and DSA). DSA and other travel related expenses will be calculated according to the UN official rates.

Duty station: home based with in-country missions to the project countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro) and Paris.

A complete application package should consist of a CV and a letter of motivation.

**List of documents to be reviewed**

- Project document and its annexes
- Project Inception Report
- Project Annual Work Plans
- Annual/quarterly operational and progress reports
- Project procurement and financial documents
- 2011/2012 UNDP/GEF Project Implementation Reviews (APR/PIR)
- Technical reports prepared by the experts and consultants in the breakdown of the project components
- Minutes of the Steering Committee meetings

## Annex 1. Field Visit Report Format

Date of visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Subject and venue of visit: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose of the field visit:

Outcomes	Update on outcomes	Outputs	Update on outputs	Reasons of progress below target	Update on partnership strategies	Recommendations and proposed actions
	A brief analysis on any relevant changes pertaining to the outcome	State output from project document or work plan	Achievements of the project in outputs	If applicable		Actions on any matter related to outcome, progress of outputs, and/or partnerships. Corrective measures. Responsibilities/time

Project performance – implementation issues

(List the main challenges experienced during implementation and propose a way forward)

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Progress towards results

Lessons learned

(Describe briefly key lessons learned during the project)

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Participants in the field visit:

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Annexes:

List of persons met

Other annexes

## Annex 2. Table 1. Co-financing and Leveraged Resources

(For projects that have undergone a mid-term, phase or a terminal evaluation)

### A. CO-FINANCING

Co financing (Type/ Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Multi-lateral Agencies (Non- GEF) (mill US\$)		Bi-laterals Donors (mill US\$)		Central Government (mill US\$)		Local Government (mill US\$)		Private Sector (mill US\$)		NGOs (mill US\$)		Other Sources*		Total Financing (mill US\$)		Total Disbursement (mill US\$)	
	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual	Pro pose d	Actual
Grant																				
Credits																				
Loans																				
Equity																				
In-kind																				
Non-grant Instruments*																				
Other Types*																				
<b>TOTAL</b>																				

- “Proposed” co-financing refers to co-financing proposed at CEO endorsement.
- Please describe “Non-grant Instruments” (such as guarantees, contingent grants, etc):

- Please explain “Other Types of Co-financing”: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please explain “Other Sources of Co-financing”: \_\_\_\_\_

Projects that have not realized expected co-financing levels must provide explanations. Please describe in 50 words the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project’s global environmental objective.