

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Component II of the Wider Europe: Aid for Trade for Central Asia, South Caucasus and Western CIS

Type of Contract: IC (Consultant)
Languages Required: English and Russian
Duration: May 2011 (approximately 23 working days: 4 working days per country including writing of the final report)
Location: home-based with travel to Semey, Batken and Khujand
Application Deadline: from ASAP for 2 weeks

Please note that UNDP is not in the position to accept incomplete applications - please make sure that your application contains all details as specified below in this notice.

1. Background

UNDP's Wider Europe project was initiated by the UNDP Bratislava Regional Center in partnership with several UNDP country offices. The purpose of this project was to improve the implementation of pro-poor trade reforms and **trade capacity development** measures by identifying trade policy responses to the global economic crisis, formulating trade-related needs and capacity gaps, and piloting technical assistance interventions.

The project focused on three sub-regions: **Western CIS** (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine), **South Caucasus** (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and **Central Asia** (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and consisted of the following components:

Component I (Aid for Trade Road Map in Central Asia: Identification of national and regional AfT priorities)

- the goal of this Component was to identify a set of **policy recommendations and technical assistance needs** aimed at improving the contribution of trade to human development and poverty reduction in SPECA countries.

The main outputs of the project include: the development of national **Aid for Trade Needs Assessment** reports and the **AfT Central Asia Regional Review**, which highlight capacity gaps, present trade-related policy recommendations, and provide an action matrix for potential donor assistance on the national and regional level. Currently, all AfT Needs Assessments (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and the Regional Review have been finalized.

The national studies provided an input to the *AfT Regional Review* (a document identifying regional needs). The *AfT Regional Review* constituted the main background document for the *AfT Ministerial Meeting* hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan in Baku on December 1-2, 2010.

Component II (Aid for Trade in Central Asia: Support to Economic Development along Trade Corridors)

- the goal of this Component was to develop **trade and trade development capacities** of entrepreneurs and local government structures along selected priority transport corridors in Central Asia. Key obstacles (to trade) small

and medium businesses in Central Asia face today result from a lack of market information, knowledge (e.g. international quality and sanitary standards, trade procedures), management skills (e.g. negotiation, marketing), access to international business partnerships, and access to services (e.g. financial services). Information and institutional constraints on producers identifying the best market opportunities and lack of knowledge of potential and existing value chains are especially severe for farmers or other small and medium-sized enterprises in both urban and rural areas of all Central Asian countries.

Component III (Aid for Trade Needs Assessments in South Caucasus and Western CIS) - the purpose of Component III is the identification of **capacity gaps** (institutional, human, etc.), and the **development of policy recommendations** and concrete project proposals for AfT interventions in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine. National studies will serve as background studies for national debates on trade policy issues, and provide background for and propose potential project interventions. Final papers will be presented during a meeting with ambassadors to trade organizations in Geneva. The meeting will be organized jointly by UNDP and UNECE in June 2011.

The project is implemented by the UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre and the respective UNDP country offices.

The present TOR focuses on the evaluation of component II of the Wider Europe initiative. A more detailed description of Component II can be found below:

Component II - Aid for Trade for Central Asia: Support to Economic Development along Trade Corridors

Activities

Component II was implemented in three Central Asian Countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, in the following regions:

- Kazakhstan: Semey Region;
- Kyrgyzstan: Batken Region;
- Tajikistan: Soughd Region in Ferghana Valley.

Activities under project *Component II* in selected areas included:

- 1) Trade marketing baseline assessment for export promotion interventions;
- 2) Capacity building on trade mainstreaming¹ targeted at local public authorities, and support to set up alliances with business associations for export promotion;
- 3) Establishing *regional export promotion centers* in identified regions to provide customized services.
- 4) Expanding SMEs' access to financial services by developing trade-focused microfinance products (trade finance) for supporting small export oriented agri-processing/fruit drying/packaging enterprises.

¹ Mainstreaming trade policies in national development strategies involves the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies, creating synergies in support of agreed development goals. Mainstreaming trade in local institutions involves the promotion of mutually reinforcing private sector development and export promotion support measures across different departments.

- 5) Promotion of environmentally friendly technologies and green commodity production to develop customized solutions (supply chain strategies) for producing and exporting key green commodities - and to provide financial support for piloting initiatives.

EVALUATION PURPOSE:

The project evaluation is being conducted at the request of the donor and UNDP to provide information about project implementation to ensure accountability for the expenditures to date and the implementation of the activities and so that managers can make any necessary corrections under phase II of the initiative. The results of this evaluation will be shared with the Project Board and relevant UNDP country offices, and will inform project implementation under phase II. Information specifically targeting the successes and failures of the Wider Europe project is especially sought after.

EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES:

This evaluation is expected to evaluate component II of the WIDER EUROPE: AID FOR TRADE FOR CENTRAL ASIA, SOUTH CAUCASUS AND WESTERN CIS project. The evaluation will cover the full implementation period (Aug 2009- Feb 2011) of the project, all the countries covered by the component, and the beneficiaries involved in the project. Component I and III will also undergo an evaluation; due to their distinctive nature, separate Terms of References to address the specific needs of these components have been developed.

Objectives of the evaluation are the following:

Assess the extent, to which the component achieved their overall objectives and outputs as identified in the project document and national annual working plans:

- Review effectiveness of the overall project interventions, their main achievements, compliance with expanding country's needs;
- Review and evaluate the extent to which project activities have reached the intended beneficiaries;
- Assess the likelihood of continuation and sustainability of project outputs and benefits after completion of the project - analyze how far the system of exit policy in the project ensures the sustainability of the project benefits;
- Identify gaps/weaknesses in the project design and provide recommendations as to their improvement;
- Identify lessons learnt from projects interventions.

Central to the evaluation are the following concepts:

Relevance-this is directly related to the consistency of activities and targets with national and local development programmes and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. This also relates to the relevance to UNDP's corporate and human development priorities.

Effectiveness: measures the manner in which the intended output targets were achieved. Measuring effectiveness involves an assessment of cause and effect in that how far can observable changes be attributed to project activities. This includes the following steps:

- Measuring change in the observed output and outcome;
- Attributing observed changes or progress towards the project;
- Assessing the value of the change (positive and/or negative).

Efficiency measures how economically resources (funds, expertise and time) are converted into results.

Sustainability is a key issue for the activities implemented under component II. It is important to measure to what extent the benefits of the activities will continue after the project has ended. Assessing sustainability involves evaluating to what extent the capacity can be maintained.

Impact, especially from UNDP's perspective, measures the changes on human development that are caused by the projects activities. Impact evaluation not only provides useful information for the continuation of phase II, it will also allow evaluating the success of the projects. Impact evaluation faces a number of challenges, first of all it is very often difficult to attribute impacts to certain activities. Furthermore, it is difficult to evaluate impact in a certain time span. Indeed, an impact evaluation ideally should be conducted some time after the completions of the project.

Evaluations in UNDP are guided by the principles of **human rights** and **gender equality**. As a result, when collecting data, evaluators need to ensure that women and disadvantaged groups are adequately represented.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

As component II was implemented in three different countries, the questions below need to be addressed for each country, as well as across the component as a whole:

- Measure the project contribution made towards achieving the Output (as per country AWP and RRF)
- Were the stated targets achieved?
- To what level were the different interventions effective?
- What factors (external, project design, project management, project approach, levels of intervention) have contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
- How do the beneficiaries and other partners perceive the project interventions?
- What factors have contributed to relevance or irrelevance?
- To what measure have the different interventions been sustainable? What factors have contributed to sustainability or unsustainability?
- To what extent do the country office staff and national project staff perceive the workflow between them and BRC as satisfactory – management structure? What was unsatisfactory? What can be done to improve this?

- What were the reasons for implementation delays and was UNDP's response satisfactory to mitigate these?
- What is the evidence on impact and success stories? What has/have been the critical factors to the success?
- Were the outputs of the international consultants (conducted during the inception period) beneficial in project design and implementation?
- Any other questions defined during the pre-evaluation process
- Other donors' activities and complementarities with them
- What effects have the activities had on women's status and empowerment

METHODOLOGY:

In order to gather evidence to address the evaluation questions, the evaluation needs to:

- Assess existing documentation (mainly quarterly reports, AWP, RRFs, visibility materials, project briefs and information on Teamworks)-desk review;
- Use standardized questionnaires to obtain information from stakeholders;
- Conduct one to one interviews with stakeholders and project staff;
- Conduct on-site observation (field/project sites visits) to record accurate information on-site;
- Conduct group or individual interviews;
- Make a presentation of, and discuss, interim findings and recommendations with UNDP team members in the country and in BRC (online);
- Formulate practical and helpful recommendations for the second phase of the project;

Data will be collected by the consultant selected to conduct the evaluation.

Sampling criteria: each country activity needs to be represented in the sample for each of the countries participating in the project.

Activities that have more than 100 direct beneficiaries need to have a sample of at least 10% of the beneficiaries. This sample needs to consist of at least 50% women. In addition, indirect beneficiaries need to be consulted.

Activities that have less than 100 direct beneficiaries need to have a sample of at least 20% of the beneficiaries. This sample needs to consist of at least 50% women. In addition, indirect beneficiaries need to be consulted.

In addition, samples should not only include community/association/government high-level representatives, but also ordinary beneficiaries.

In addition to targeting direct partners, the evaluation will also include project staff, country office staff, relevant government partners, private sector, and relevant development partners.

EVALUATION ETHICS:

Evaluations in UNDP are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'². The evaluation needs to be compliant to the standards set forth in these guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS:

Overall monitoring and implementation will be ensured by UNDP BRC, in close collaboration with the relevant UNDP COs and project staff in the country offices.

2. Description of Responsibilities:

The Evaluation Team will consist of one independent short-term International Consultant (Evaluation Team Leader) and the UNDP's Central Asian Economist. Under the overall facilitation of UNDP's project manager, the Evaluation Team will conduct a participatory project evaluation.

The **Evaluation Team Leader** will have overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP. Specifically, the Team Leader will perform the following tasks:

- Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
- Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology and approach;
- Conduct the evaluation in accordance with the proposed objective and scope of the evaluation;
- Draft and communicate the evaluation report;
- Liaise with the UNDP regional economist;
- Finalize the evaluation report in English and submit it to UNDP.

TIMELINE AND SCHEDULE (tentative):

The mission will commence in May 2011. The duration of the assignment is up to 23 working days, (4 working days per country) including writing of the final report.

Activity	Timeframe	Place	Responsible Party
Desk review of relevant reports, Evaluation design, methodology and detailed work plan,	Two days	On-line	International consultant
Initial briefing	One day	On-line	UNDP BRC, International consultant,
Consultations, meetings as well as in-	Four days per	Khujand	UNDP, International

² <http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines>

person interviews related to the evaluation including relevant partners	country	Batken Semey	consultant,
Preparation of draft evaluation report and recommendations	Four days	Home based	International consultant, UNDP
Finalization of evaluation report and recommendations incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP COs and submission of the final evaluation report	Four days	Home based	International consultant, UNDP

DOCUMENTS TO BE STUDIED:

UNDP corporate policy documents:

1. Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for results
2. UNDP Result-Based Management: Technical Note

Project related documents:

1. Project document;
2. Quarterly reports
3. Mission reports
4. AWP, RRFs
5. Evaluation report of the Area based development programme in Kyrgyzstan
6. Baseline assessments for the country interventions under component II
7. Mini-needs assessments for country activities under component II, where applicable
8. Other documents and materials related to the Project are evaluated (from the government, donors, etc.)

Useful links:

<http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/A659BADA-F203-1EE9-BFCED3F34E94AAF9> (public)

Outputs provided by the consultant:

1. Evaluation inception report (prior to start of evaluation mission)
2. Draft evaluation report (2 weeks after the evaluation mission)
3. Final evaluation report with dedicated sections per country and per activity (across countries) (1 week after reception of comments from stakeholders)
4. Evaluation action points and other relevant knowledge products

3. Competencies

- Strong analytical, communication and report writing skills
- Capacity to work in a team
- Good interpersonal/ communication skills to work with the target group representatives

4. Qualifications

- A. Higher education (post graduate) in a subject related to socio-economic development;
- B. Minimum 7-10 years of professional expertise in international development co-operation, including programme/project evaluation, impact assessment and strategic recommendations for continued support/development of programming/strategies;
Extensive experience in conducting evaluations, strong working knowledge of UNDP poverty reduction, rural development and trade development activities;
Extensive knowledge of results-based management evaluation, UNDP policies, procedures, as well as participatory monitoring and evaluation methodologies and approaches ;
- C. Excellent professional knowledge of the CIS region, especially Central Asia – Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan;
- D. Fluency in written and spoken English and Russian;

5. Evaluation of Applicants

Individual consultants will be evaluated based on a cumulative analysis **taking into consideration the combination of the applicants' qualifications and financial proposal.**

The award of the contract will be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria (see below).

Only the highest ranked candidates who would be found qualified for the job will be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Technical Criteria - 70% of total evaluation – max. 35 points:

- *Criteria A* (see Qualification A.) – max points: 5
- *Criteria B* (see Qualification B.)– max points: 12
- *Criteria C* (see Qualification C.)– max points: 10
- *Criteria D* (see Qualification D.) – max points: 8

Financial Criteria - 30% of total evaluation – max. 15points

6. Application procedures

Qualified candidates are requested to apply online via this website. The application should contain:

- **Cover letter** explaining why you are the most suitable candidate for the advertised position. Please paste the letter into the "Resume and Motivation" section of the electronic application.
- **Filled P11 form** including past experience in similar projects and contact details of referees (blank form can be downloaded from http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/hrforms/P11_modified_for_SCs_and_ICs.doc); please upload only the P11 instead of your CV.
- **Financial Proposal*** - specifying a total lump sum amount for the tasks specified in this announcement. The financial proposal shall include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (number of anticipated working days, travel costs including air ticket to the area and back home from the area that will be arranged by the consultant (UNDP will arrange and pay only for travel within the area), per diems and any other possible costs).
- **Incomplete applications will not be considered.** Please make sure you have provided all requested materials

Please note that the **financial proposal is all-inclusive and shall take into account various expenses incurred by the consultant/contractor during the contract period (e.g. fee, health insurance, visa fee, vaccination and any other relevant expenses related to the performance of services...). All envisaged **travel costs** must be included in the financial proposal.*

Payments will be made only upon confirmation of UNDP on delivering on the contract obligations in a satisfactory manner.

*Individual Consultants are responsible for ensuring they have **vaccinations/inoculations** when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director. Consultants are also required to comply with the **UN security directives** set forth under dss.un.org*

General Terms and conditions as well as other related documents can be found under: <http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/jobs>

*Qualified **women** and members of **minorities** are encouraged to apply.*

Due to large number of applications we receive, we are able to inform only the successful candidates about the outcome or status of the selection process.