

APPENDIX 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

The Evaluation Office (EO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a series of country evaluations, called Assessments of Development Results (ADRs), in order to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results at the country level. Undertaken in selected countries, the ADRs focus on outcomes and critically examine achievements and constraints in the UNDP thematic areas of focus, draw lessons learned, and provide recommendations for the future. The ADRs also recommend a strategy for enhancing performance and strategically positioning UNDP support within national development priorities and UNDP corporate policy directions.

The overall objectives of the ADRs are:

1. Support the Administrator's substantive accountability function to the Executive Board and serve as a vehicle for quality assurance of UNDP interventions at the country level.
2. Generate lessons from experience to inform current and future programming at the country and corporate levels.
3. Provide to the stakeholders in the programme country an objective assessment of results (specifically outcomes) that have been achieved through UNDP support and partnerships with other key actors for a given multiyear period.

An ADR is planned for China beginning April 2004. It will focus on the period of the last five years but will cover earlier events that the evaluation team may find relevant. It will refer to UNDP activities under the CCF 1996-2000 as well as the CCF 2001-2005.

2. Objectives of the assessment

The purpose of the evaluation is to review the experience of UNDP in China, draw lessons learned and recommend improvements. The ADRs in China will:

- Provide an overall assessment of the results achieved through UNDP support and in partnership with other key development actors during the last five years.
- Provide an analysis of how UNDP has positioned itself strategically to add value in response to national needs and changes in the national development context.
- Based on the analysis of achievements and positioning above, present key findings, draw key lessons, and provide clear and forward-looking recommendations in order to make the necessary adjustments in the current strategy applied by UNDP and partners towards intended results.

The thematic focus areas for the evaluation will, to a large extent, follow those prescribed by the CCF 2001-2005, also drawing on the experiences from the CCF 1996-2000 period, as follows:

1. Deepening reforms and governance

- a. The Country Review 1999 stipulated this as an over-arching, lead theme for the UNDP programme. The ADR will consider what form this has taken in the overall UNDP programme since that time.
- b. Some main future themes within the area of governance have been stipulated as listed below and should be studied further in-depth by the ADR exercise:
 - i. Public-sector reform
 - ii. Fiscal reform
 - iii. Rights-based approach to development
 - iv. Civil society development

2. Poverty reduction

- a. The ADR should consider results from existing documentation, including the outcome from the recent workshop on macroeconomics and poverty.
- b. The ADR will explore existing links between poverty reduction and the environment.
- c. Microfinance has been a key component of UNDP's poverty reduction programme and should be considered as an important part of the ADR evaluation.

3. HIV/AIDS

- a. This theme needs to be considered by the ADR in an inter-agency context. A 2003 UNDAF review and part of the Resident Coordinator's 2003 report discusses this subject.

4. Environment

- a. The recent full outcome evaluation should be considered as key background documentation for the ADR.
- b. A very large volume of this portfolio consists of GEF and Montreal Protocol funding, and related documentation and processes should be considered specifically.
- c. The programme is in the process of moving from more individual project interventions on specific, technical issues, towards a more programmatic and strategic approach, offering strategic policy advice and capacity building. The ADR should study this process.

5. Gender

- a. The ADR should study the effectiveness of treating gender as a cross-cutting theme.
- b. An internal evaluation is underway and will form part of the basis for the ADR.

6. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- a. The MDGs and the related Chinese national process are on their way to become the main strategic framework for the UNDP programme. The ADR should consider this strategic positioning.

7. Aid coordination

- a. This appears to be a high leverage area for UNDP in China, and the ADR should consider the effectiveness of various interventions in this area.

8. Implementation arrangements

- a. The ADR should study the long-standing implementation arrangements for NEX with CICETE, Ministry of Finance and other government agencies.

9. General

- a. The ADR should explore the degree to which the UNDP programme is focused on a select number of key strategic areas.
- b. The ADR should study the effectiveness of the widely used approach of initiating pilot projects, which thereafter are replicated and/or scaled up, as well as translated into policy guidance, in collaboration with government.

3. Scope of the assessment

The evaluation will undertake a comprehensive review of the UNDP programme portfolio and activities during the period of review, with more in-depth focus on specific areas. Specifically, the ADR will cover the following:

- a. Strategic positioning
 - Ascertain the relevance of the UNDP support to national needs, development goals and priorities, including linkages with the goal of reducing poverty and other MDGs. This may include an analysis of the perceived comparative strengths of the programme, a review of the major national challenges to development.
 - Assess how UNDP has anticipated and responded to significant changes in the national development context, affecting the specific thematic areas it supports. The Evaluation may, for example, consider key events at national and political level that influenced (or will influence) the development context, the risk management of UNDP, any missed opportunities for UNDP involvement and contribution, efforts of advocacy, UNDP's responsiveness versus concentration of efforts etc.
 - Review the synergies and alignment of UNDP support with other initiatives and partners, including that of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the Global Cooperation Framework (GCF) and the Regional Cooperation Framework (RCF). This may include looking at how UNDP has leveraged its resources and that of others towards results and the balance between upstream and downstream initiatives.
 - The Evaluation should consider the influence of systemic issues, i.e. policy and administrative constraints affecting the programme, on both the donor and programme country sides, as well as how the development results achieved and the partnerships established have contributed to ensure a relevant and strategic position of UNDP.

b. Development results

- Provide an examination of the effectiveness and sustainability of the UNDP programme, by (a) highlighting main achievements (outcomes) at national level in the last five years and UNDP's contribution to these in terms of key outputs; and (b) ascertaining current progress made in achieving outcomes in the given thematic areas of UNDP and UNDP's support to these. Qualify the UNDP contribution to the outcomes with a fair degree of plausibility. Assess contribution to capacity development at the national level to the extent it is implicit in the intended results. Consider anticipated and unanticipated, positive and negative outcomes.
- Provide an in-depth analysis of the main areas mentioned in point 2 above, assessing the anticipated progress in achieving intended outcomes.
- Identify and analyze the main factors influencing results, including the range and quality of development partnerships forged and their contribution to outcomes, and how the positioning of UNDP influences its results and partnership strategy.

c. Lessons learned and good practices

- Identify key lessons in the thematic areas of focus and on positioning that can provide a useful basis for strengthening UNDP and its support to the country and for improving programme performance, results and effectiveness in the future. Through in-depth thematic assessment, present good practices at country level for learning and replication. Draw lessons from unintended results.