CONSULTANT FOR MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE UNDP-GEF MEDIUM-SIZE PROJECT (MSP) CAPACITY BUILDING FOR INTEGRATION OF GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITMENTS IN INVESTMENT/DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS

Location: home based and Podgorica, MONTENEGRO
Application Deadline: 20-Jan-14
Type of Contract: Individual Contract
Post Level: International Consultant
Languages Required: English
Starting Date: (date when the selected candidate is expected to start) 03-Mar-2014
Duration of Initial Contract: Two months
Expected Duration of Assignment: 1st March 2014 - 1st May 2014

Background

UNDP in Montenegro, as one of the implementing agencies for the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), has begun the implementation and coordination of a number of GEF funded projects. These include: the First National Communication to the UNFCCC secretariat, the Biodiversity Strategy-Action Plan and National Report, the Power Sector Policy Reform to Promote Small Hydropower Development in Montenegro and now also a project on "Capacity building for integration of global environment commitments in investment/development decisions".

The immediate objective of this project is to analyze, identify, and pilot advanced tools and practices for environmental information management and compliance monitoring of the national implementation of the Rio Conventions. Specifically, the project would develop national capacities collect and analyze data and information against the metrics of global environmental indicators, and integrate these within national sustainable development and environmental decision-making processes. The expected outcome of this project is that a systematic and sustainable approach to assessing global environmental achievements through the implementation of national policies, programmes and plans has been initiated. This project will also be an important contribution to the national experiences in developing and implementing tools and practices for measuring, reporting, and verifying the cost-effectiveness of official development assistance to implementing multilateral environmental agreements, in particular the Rio Conventions.

Duties and Responsibilities

Objectives of the assignment: 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. To this end, the MTE will serve to:
• Strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project;
• Enhance the likelihood of achievement of the project and GEF objectives through analyzing project strengths and weaknesses and suggesting measures for improvement;
• Enhance organizational and development learning;
• Enable informed decision-making;
• Create the basis of replication of successful project outcomes achieved so far.

Job content: Under the direct supervision of UNDP Programme Manager consultant will be responsible for the following: UNDP/GEF wishes to contract a consultant to carry out mid-term evaluation of the project “Capacity building for integration of global environment commitments in investment/development decisions”.

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

• To monitor and evaluate results and impacts;
• To provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements;
• To promote accountability for resource use; and
• 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.

Evaluation will address: Project Conceptual Design: The evaluation will examine whether the project design, outcomes, indicators, targets, risk and assumptions that were revised and agreed upon, as necessitated by the changing geopolitical situation, during the Inception Workshop are still relevant in the context of the country’s changing circumstances. The expert should evaluate how the UNDP managed the changed environment in terms of designing and agreeing on the new set of goals and activities within the project, whether these reflect major national priorities, whether these have been designed clearly/in a results-oriented manner and whether these were realistic. The evaluation should review the extent to which the objectives, outputs, and expected results of the project as designed initially were realistic. Review remaining project activities and schedule and assess realistic duration for remaining activities.

• Assess the results and achievements of the project since its start. In particular, the evaluation should focus on the following aspects:
  • Assess whether the project has produced its outputs effectively and efficiently and identify the major factors which have facilitated or impeded the progress of the project in achieving its goal and desired results;
  • Determine the degree of support given to the project at the national and local level;
  • Review and assess the project delivery and implementation progress to achieve the overall objectives and also assess each outcome against the baseline and target values;
  • Assess and rate sustainability - the extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end.

Effectiveness of the approach used to produce the project results:
Review the management structure of the project and determine whether the organizational structure of the project, the resource, the distribution of responsibilities and coordination mechanisms were appropriate for the achievement of project objectives;
Review the project strategy and approach to ensure sustainability beyond the project period;
Assess whether these organizational arrangements were cost effective;
Assess the support and roles of teams at UNDP CO level, project management level, and international/local Consultants.

The efficiency of project management:

- Assess the efficiency of the approach used in planning, organizing, and controlling the delivery of inputs.
- Evaluate the agreements made on the inception workshop and PMB
- Assess the coordination and communication process (incl. the information flows) between the various stakeholders of the project;
- Assess and update the monitoring tools currently being used including validation of its efficiency, information generated, key partners involved;
- Determine whether the project document was explicit enough on the above and whether sufficient funding was earmarked.

The impacts on/ views of the direct beneficiaries and stakeholders:

- Assess the degree of involvement of various stakeholders in the project implementation process;
- To the extent possible, the evaluation will collect the views and impressions of beneficiaries;
- Assess to what extent the project managed to build national and local level ownership;
- Assess the impact of the project on the main beneficiaries, policies and the physical environment, etc.;
- To the extent possible highlight linkages (direct or indirect with other government or donor supported projects);
  Assess involvement and contributions of national staff of implementing and cooperating/responsible partners.

Findings and lessons learned:

- Produce, as logically and objectively as possible, significant conclusions that are extracted from the evaluation in terms of project overall goals, approach, relevance, performance, success, failure, strengths, and weaknesses;
- Highlight the major problems, shortcomings, and weaknesses in order of importance and validity to resolve.

Recommendations:

- Outline the recommendations for corrective actions by the parties involved. The recommendations must be objective, realistic, practical, understandable and forward looking;
- Link the recommendations logically to the findings; taking into consideration their impact on the improvement of project performance and accomplishments of its objectives;
- Classify the recommendations into categories, if possible, by order of importance;
- Recommend realistic duration for implementation of remaining project activities;
- Recommend new projects activities that could be included in the second part of project implementation;

The evaluation will consult with main stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project such as:

- Project Board Members;
- Implementing and cooperating/responsible partners;
- Local NGOs in Montenegro;
- Project partners and donor communities operation in Montenegro;
- Project staff and national staff of implementing and cooperating partners.

Scope of the Evaluation: The evaluation will cover all the GEF, UNDP and Government of Montenegro funded components and their implementation since the start of the project in Montenegro as well the in-kind and parallel government contribution included in the project document. It covers relevance of the project, quality of project design, efficiency of implementation, effectiveness to date, partners’ perception of change and potential sustainability. It assesses the achievements of the project with respect to the relevance of its objectives and the attainability of its outcomes. It assesses the project design including, to what extent the assumptions/risks outlined in the logical framework are valid and identifies external factors beyond the control of the project that affected it negatively or positively. Special emphasis is placed on the degree to which the project has succeeded in carrying out the activities outlined in the logical framework. It will also assess lessons learnt and make recommendations for way forward to ensure national/local ownership and effectiveness in achievement of project results.

The expected results:

- A comprehensive Mid-term evaluation report will be prepared. The report shall include an assessment of the Project and Project components’ concept design and administrative arrangements, progress achieved to-date vs. planned targets (identification of causes of slow progress, if any, and suggestion of corrective measures), lessons learned, and revision or re-prioritization of scheduled activities, plans, etc (if necessary). The report will also include recommendations for improvement, including recommendations for the revision of project strategy, approach, outputs and activities, if necessary;
- Recommendations for a strategy for future replication of the project approach for other types of indicator-based environmental monitoring related projects, for other countries in the region;
- Description of best practices, and an “action list” in a certain area of particular importance for the project.

Methodology or Evaluation Approach: The project progress and achievements will be tested against following GEF evaluation criteria:

- Relevance – the extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.
- Effectiveness – the extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.
- Efficiency – the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible.
- Results/impacts – the positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short-to medium term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.
- Sustainability – the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.

Timing and reporting:

- Preparatory phase: 1st half of March, 2014;
- Desktop review: first half of March, 2014;
- Field visit: 31st March – 4th April 2014;
Final report: end of April 2014.

Time duration and travel: The consultant will be engaged immediately upon the completion of the selection procedure. It is expected to start MTE and complete until the end of April, 2014. The proposed dates for the 1 (one) in-country mission, up 5 working days to Podgorica, Montenegro are from March 31st – 4th April, 2014. The assignment is to be completed by the end of April, 2014.

Competencies

- Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN’s values and ethical standards;
- Promotes the vision, mission and strategic goals of UN/UNDP;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Ability to lead strategic planning, results-based management and reporting;
- Builds strong relationships with clients, focuses on impact and result for the client and responds positively to feedback;
- Consistently approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude;
- Demonstrates good oral and written communication skills;
- Demonstrates ability to manage complexities and work under pressure, as well as conflict resolution skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills.

Required Skills and Experience

Education:

- An advanced degree in environmental management or relevant equivalent experience.

Experience:

- Minimum of 5 years of working experience in the area of natural resource valuation, conservation, protection climate change and management. (Preferably in Eastern Europe and CIS);
- Excellent knowledge of the legislation for setting Environmental Indicators and their management;
- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
- Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy is an asset;
- Recent knowledge of UNDP’s results-based evaluation policies and procedures an asset;
- Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported similar projects.

Language:

- Fluency in English language with excellent communication skills (oral, written and presenting).

Application Process:

- Interested applicants are requested to submit their applications by January 20th, 2014 by using the Apply now button;
- The application should contain a duly completed Personal History Form (P11) that can be downloaded from http://www.me.undp.org/content/montenegro/en/home/operations/jobs.html.
Only the short-listed applicants will be contacted and requested to submit a letter of interest including a price quotation indicating the lump sum (in EUR) requested for the work and travel envisaged in the section "Duties and Responsibilities".

UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, nationality and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups and persons with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.