**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**THEMATIC EVALUATION OF UNDP’S CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT (2008-2013)**

**INTRODUCTION**

In 2014, the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will conduct a thematic evaluation of the contribution of UNDP to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE). The frames of reference for the evaluation will be the UNDP Strategic Plan (2008 – 2013) and the Gender Equality Strategy (2008 – 2013). As the second Evaluation Office exercise dedicated to the theme, this evaluation will assess the overall performance of UNDP in mainstreaming gender and the organization’s contribution to development and institutional change in gender equality and women’s empowerment. The mandate for this evaluation is found in decision 2010/15 of the UNDP Executive Board approving the Evaluation Plan for UNDP in June 2010 (DP/2010/19).

**BACKGROUND**

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are recognized as integral to successful human development and fundamental aspects of women’s human rights. They are major themes in the global commitments emerging from the world conferences of the 1990s and first decade of the 21st century, including the Fourth World Conference on Women and its follow-up, the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals and their reviews, Security Council Resolution 1325 and the UN World Summit of 2005.

In line with these commitments, UNDP adopted gender mainstreaming in all its activities across the board and developed a Gender Equality Strategy[[1]](#footnote-1) (GES) for the period 2008-2013, which aimed to:

1. Develop capacities, in-country and in-house, to integrate gender concerns into all programmes and practice areas;
2. Provide gender-responsive policy advisory services that promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the four focus areas of the Strategic Plan; *and*
3. Support specific interventions that benefit women and scale up innovative models.

**PURPOSE**

The purposes of the evaluation are to: provide substantive support to the Administrator’s accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board; support UNDP accountability to stakeholders and partners; serve as a means of quality assurance for UNDP interventions; and contribute to learning at corporate, regional and country levels.

**OBJECTIVES**

The primary objectives of the evaluation are to assess UNDP’s contributions to gender equality and women’s empowerment during the period 2008-2013; assess the extent to which the GES was used and successfully functioned as guidance to UNDP programming in the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and provide recommendations with respect to UNDP’s new Gender Equality Strategy (2014 – 2018), considering lessons learned and findings from the previous strategy and changes already made to the new one.

**SCOPE**

The scope of the evaluation is aligned with the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan’s vision of advancing gender equality through, (1) initiatives that support gender equality and the empowerment of women, and (2) mainstreaming gender throughout the four UNDP focus areas of poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention & recovery, and environment &energy at the global, regional and country levels. It will cover two distinct but inter-linked results areas: (1) development results and (2) institutional results. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the GES functioned as “an integrating dimension of UNDP’s work”[[2]](#footnote-2) in the implementation of the Strategic Plan[[3]](#footnote-3).

More specifically the evaluation is being scoped to cover:

**(1) Assessment of development results:** This component will assess UNDP’s development contribution against the goals established during the period of the first GES in relation to the (a) strategic intents as expressed in the outcomes of the Strategic Plan as well as (b) the gender-responsive indicators presented in the GES. It will also asses the cross-cutting development issues set out in the Strategic Plan and GES (i.e., national ownership, capacity development, South-South Cooperation, effective aid man­agement, etc.) to see if and how these issues affected performance. In addition, and where possible, the evaluation will assess UNDP’s performance in different develop­ment contexts (ie LDCS, small island developing states, landlocked countries and middle-income countries).

 **(2) Assessment of institutional change:** This component will assess how UNDP has used the GES to promote gender responsive change in UNDP at the technical, policy and cultural levels within the organization. It will also assess the accountability frameworks for gender equality, gender parity results, the community of practice and knowledge management frameworks and its communication and advocacy efforts. Attention will also be paid to the extent possible to progress on gender equality strategies spearheaded by Resident Coordinators and UN country teams.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND CRITERIA**

The evaluation questions below will be assessed using the four evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability:

**1. Has UNDP contributed to gender equality and women’s empowerment development results?**

* How effective has UNDP been in contributing to development results being gender responsive[[4]](#footnote-4)?
* To what extent has UNDP contributed to development results being gender transformative[[5]](#footnote-5)?
* What is UNDP’s value added in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment results?
* How has UNDP used partnerships to promote GEWE at global, regional and national level?

**2. Has UNDP integrated gender equality across the institution at the programme, policy, technical, and cultural levels during the period 2008-2013?**

* How effective has UNDP been in implementing gender mainstreaming and contributing to institutional change results?
* How effective has UNDP been in building in-house gender equality capacity and accountability frameworks?
* To what extent is gender equality a priority in the culture and leadership of the organization?

**3. Where have UNDP’s institutional change results been the most and least successful in improving gender equality and women’s empowerment development results?**

* To what extent has UNDPs gender mainstreaming strengthened the link between development results and institutional change?
* What are the key factors contributing to successful gender equality and women’s empowerment results?
* To what extent has UNDP learned from past evaluation findings to strengthen gender equality results at the programme and institutional levels?

The evaluation will consider the following factors that may have influenced UNDP’s performance, within the context of the GES: (i) cultural and political environment; (ii) power relations; (iii) national context; (iv) conflict; (v) national ownership of initiatives and results; (vi) use of national capacities; (vii) Middle Income Country status; (viii) South- south and triangular cooperation; (viiii) global agendas; and (ix) participation and voice in pursuit of equitable access to opportunities and gains. During the data collection process other factors will be identified.

**MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

**1. Management Team, IEO Evaluation Office**

The evaluation will be the responsibility of 2 IEO staff that will function as Evaluation Manager (EM) and Associate Evaluation Manager (AEM). Aside from managing the overall evaluation, the EM and AEM, together with an Institutional Change & Gender Mainstreaming Consultant, will engage in assessing the institutional results component of the thematic evaluation.

Two short-term consultants will support the evaluation as follows: first an Evaluation Methodologist to guide and quality assure the data collection and synthesis aspects of the evaluation exercise. Second, a research consultant will support the evaluation process, and produce synthesis reports on (1) benchmarking gender mainstreaming efforts in other UN and non-UN organizations and (2) results from key IEO thematic evaluation reports and Assessments of Development Results in UNDP. In addition, this consultant will also provide knowledge management and communications support for the overall evaluation.

**2. Independent Consultants (ICs)**

The EM/AEM will work with five independent consultants who will have specific expertise in gender evaluation and provide thematic expertise in the areas of poverty, governance, crisis prevention, environment, and institutional change. Each consultant will prepare a separate chapter covering their respective area of expertise. The independent consultants will work closely with the EM/AEM, with specific guidance from the Methodologist, to synthesis these chapters into a draft evaluation report. The EM and AEM will be responsible for preparing the final evaluation report.

**3. External Advisory Panel**

Two high-level development experts will serve as an external advisory panel at key points during the course of the evaluation. These experts are directly accountable to the Director of IEO and will provide quality assessment of the final report.

**4. Technical Reference Group**

A reference group composed of representatives from Office of human resources (OHR, Executive Office of the Operations support Group (OSG) and regional representatives from each level of UNDP's gender architecture has been consulted during the pre-scoping and design phase of the evaluation. Members of this group and other external experts familiar with UN system gender issues will constitute a technical reference group to advise, facilitate access to sources of information, and comment on the evaluation products for factual corrections and errors of interpretation or omission.

Additionally, the draft TOR and draft report will be made available to the UNDP Organizational Performance Group (OPG) to review and provide comments. OPG will also receive the final report so a management response can be prepared.

**EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

The evaluation will be a transparent, participatory process involving development stakeholders at the corporate, regional and country levels. It will be carried out within the framework of the [UNDP Evaluation Policy](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/evaluation-policy.pdf) and the [United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards](http://www.unevaluation.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4).

The evaluation will seek to obtain data from a range of sources, including document analysis, surveys, as well as stakeholder consultations through semi-structured interviews and focus groups at UNDP headquarters and in a range of programme countries, Regional Service Centers (RSC) and other relevant institutions or locations. The rationale for using a range of data sources (data, perceptions and evidence) is to triangulate findings in a situation where much of the data, due to the very nature of GEWE, is qualitative and thus interpretation is critically dependent on evaluator judgment.

Where possible and appropriate, the evaluation should seek to obtain counterfactual evidence as to what may or may not have occurred in the absence of the GES. Some of UNDPs programmes or modalities may not, due to the very design of the GES, have benefited from its application. Such programmes or modalities may thus serve to provide insights into the relative value added of the GES.

A detailed evaluation design will be developed during the inception phase of the evaluation. The evaluation design will include an evaluation matrix to link the evaluation criteria and questions with data collection methods and sources of data and verification of evidences.

**Theory of Change (TOC)**

In launching the evaluation, an important initial exercise will be to develop a Theory of Change for UNDPs planned contribution to GEWE during the time frame under evaluation (2008-2013), taking into account: i) Strategic Plan results; (ii) expected outcomes of GES; (iii) any strategic or operational changes introduced during the implementation process; and (iv) key milestones and achievements, as outlined in progress reports. The Theory of Change will serve to highlight the logic underpinning UNDP’s approach to GEWE, its assumptions and risks. The exercise of developing a TOC should also help the evaluation team identify, at an early stage, any challenges or bottlenecks that may affect *evaluability*.

**Data Collection**

After the theories of change have been validated with key stakeholders, the data collection approach will comprise:

**1. Stakeholder analysis.** An important initial exercise will be the conduct of a stakeholder analysis in order to identify, *inter alia*, the institutional entities and individuals within UNDP involved in planning, management and implementation of UNDP GEWE activities; the primary target groups of different UNDP GEWE initiatives; and different partners and beneficiaries.

**2. Documentation reviews.** Due to the wide scope of UNDPs GEWE activities, a very large number of documents and reports (published and unpublished) will be collected. Some may be the subject of only a general review, while others will be subjected to detailed review. Some of the key sources of information will comprise: (i) global and regional programme documents and results frameworks, project documents, monitoring and financial reports, evaluations, as well as key project outputs; (ii) Thematic Trust Fund and related documentation (as above); and (iii) strategic partnership documentation.

**3. Country/regional visits.** The evaluation team will use country and regional visits to complete triangulation of evidences, validate what has been found in other sources of information, (e.g. reports and evaluations) and explore some other topics as identified in the inception phase to strengthen internal and external validity of findings (See Annex I for the country visit selection process and criteria). One possibility that will be explored is the preparation of detailed background paper/s by local consultants, contracted by IEO through Country Offices. The broad scope of the evaluation will not permit the selection of a methodologically appropriate number of country visits or case studies that could be considered a representative sample of UNDP initiatives for generalized judgments. Therefore, the evaluation will use a purposive sampling approach and try to assess a broad range of global, regional and country level initiatives, looking at different practice areas, design and implementation modalities to check the theory of change principles and hypothesis. A set of parameters will be developed based on the Theory of Change models and preliminary analysis of the thematic portfolios for more in-depth coverage of particular issues (i.e., representation of women in elections, GBV approaches, Gender Equality Seal Initiative, etc.).

**4. Consultations.** Structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews and consultations will be conducted. The results of these consultations and interviews are to be documented for internal team analysis. Structured interview methods are also to be used for other consultations. In some cases, focus-group discussions may be held to capture the dynamic of information sharing and debate and to increase validity of findings. Where possible, the evaluation team will consider conducting interviews by telephone or skype/tele/video conference to cover as many country examples as possible and evidences as needed.

The Evaluation Team will select countries and stakeholders to be visited based on criteria to be finalized in consultation with the Independent Evaluation Office and key UNDP stakeholders (see Annex I). Surveys of project managers, policy advisers, selected practice focal points, Resident Coordinators/Country Directors and national counterparts may also be carried out. Additional consultation will also be considered early in the evaluation process to identify perceptions of UNDP staff and help point in the direction of credible and factual sources of information.

**TIMEFRAME AND EVALUATION PROCESS**

The evaluation process will be conducted as follows:

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| Timeframe for the evaluation process – Tentative |
| Activity | **Responsible** | Proposed timeframe |
| Pre-scoping and Launch Phase | Dec –Feb 2013 |
| TOR Developed and reviewed by Advisory Panel and OPG, and approval by the IEO | EM / EAM | February |
| Desk Review and Inception Phases | Mar – Aug 2014 |
| Preparatory desk review and analysis | EM/AEM/Consultants | March-June |
| Data collection piloting (Armenia and Uruguay)  | EM/AEM/Consultants | May-June |
| Recruitment of evaluation team members | EM/AEM/Consultants | July – August  |
| Preliminary review of available data and context analysis  | EM/AEM/Consultants | August  |
| Inception Workshop & Design of Data Collection and Analysis Plan | EM/AEM/Consultants | August – September  |
| Data collection and Analysis Phases | Sep-Nov 2014 |
| Data collection, (including country/regional visits) | EM/AEM/Consultants | September - November |
| Synthesis workshop and draft evaluation chapters on Development Results and Institutional | EM/AEM/Consultants  | October - November |
| Report Finalization and Review Phase | Dec 2014-April 2015 |
| First draft – clearance by IEO  | EM and AEM  | December |
| Semi-final draft - review by Advisory Panel | EM | January - February |
| Stakeholder Workshop - Final draft presented to Technical Reference Group | EM | February |
| Final report editing and formatting | IEO | March |
| Production, Presentation and Follow-up Phase | May – Sept 2015 |
| Management response  | UNDP Management | May |
| Executive Board Paper and Informals | IEO, Management | April -May |
| Issuance of the final report  |  | May |
| Evaluation presented to the UNDP Executive Board Dissemination of the final report  | IEO  | Sept  |

**ANNEXES:**

Attached is the following relevant background document:

Annex I: Draft Methods to Select Countries to be visited for the Gender Thematic Evaluation

**ANNEX I: CRITERIA TO SELECT COUNTRIES TO BE VISITED FOR THE GENDER THEMATIC EVALUATION**

1. **OVERVIEW**

While most of the assignments will be home-based, it is envisaged that the Evaluation Team will be required to conduct field visits to twelve (12) countries (approximately three (3) country visits for each Focus Area).

It should be noted that the evaluation design envisages the country and regional visits not as in-depth case studies but as an important data verification exercise which will contribute to triangulation of evidence and help to validate what has been previously reviewed, reported and evaluated in depth during the Inception phase, through different sources of data (e.g evaluations, monitoring reports, surveys). In addition, the country and regional visits will provide an opportunity to explore specific topics (i.e., a review of the Gender Seal[[6]](#footnote-6) process countries, review of the experience of women’s parliamentary caucuses, women in elections, women in conflict settings, etc.) as identified in the Inception phase, to help strengthen internal and external validity of findings. The evaluation will use a purposive sampling approach and try to assess a broad range of global, regional and country level initiatives, looking at different practice areas, design and implementation modalities to check the theory of change developed and related hypotheses.

Based on a preliminary desk review, the Evaluation Team (IEO) has established the parameters below for country visit selection. A minimum of twelve countries will be selected for visits that meet the following criteria:

1. **SELECTION CRITERIA**

**Regional Coverage:** At least 2 Country Visits per Region *(i.e. Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean)*

**Thematic Coverage:** Approximately 3 Country Visits per Focus Area, with no less than 2 per Focus Area *(i.e. Democratic Governance, Poverty Reduction and MDG Achievement, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Environment and Sustainable Development)*

**Development Contexts:** A balanced representation of development contexts *( e.g. Special Development Situations, Least Developed Countries, Low Income Countries, Lower Middle Income Countries, Upper Middle Income Countries, Net Contributor Countries)*

**Gender Equality Context:** Gender Inequality Rankings will be taken into consideration

**Programme Coverage**: A purposeful representation based on the following criteria:

* Outliers from the Gender Marker rating system in each Focus Area of programme expenditures ratedGEN2 and GEN3 (See table 1 for an explanation of the Gender Marker rating system)
* Countries with top percentage of programme expenditures rated in the Gender Marker system as GEN0
* Representation from Gender Seal pilot countries
* Countries most cited in Annual Reports (2008-2013) to the Executive Board on the Implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy
* Countries identified as learning opportunities (positive and negative)

Note: Data will be collected from the 2014 ADR countries (e.g. Armenia, Malaysia, Tanzania, Uruguay, Somalia, Zimbabwe)[[7]](#footnote-7) in addition to the 12 country visits outlined above.

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| **Table 1: UNDP GENDER MARKER** |
| **Background**In 2005, UNDP commissioned a review of the organization's financial system, ATLAS, in order to identify possibilities for enhancing reporting on expenditures expected to contribute to gender equality. The review concluded that *the existing approach was not reflecting the full extent of UNDP's expenditure on gender equality*.In 2007, as a response to the UNDP Executive Board's request, UNDP configured ATLAS to better track financial allocations and expenditures for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. *In 2009, after two years of piloting in 17 countries, the Gender Marker was rolled out to all UNDP country offices*. The methodology is based on the OECD/DAC Gender Marker.**What is the gender marker approach?**The approach aims to score the contribution of investments and expenditures in respect of both gender mainstreaming and targeted interventions on women's empowerment.* The scoring is done at the output level (project ID level in Atlas). Every single output of each office must be rated on gender equality against a four-point scale that ranges from 0 (no gender impact) to 3 (gender equality as the main objective).
* The rating is based on the nature of the output, not on the amount of resources allocated to it.
* A special *gender attribute* has been added to the ATLAS system to record this rating.

**What do Gender Marker scores mean?***As noted above*, each output must be allocated a gender score of 0, 1, 2 or 3, as such: |
| **Score** | **Meaning** |
| 3 | Outputs that have gender equality as the main objective |
| 2 | Outputs that have gender equality as a significant objective |
| 1 | Outputs that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly |
| 0 | Outputs that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality |
| **What does the Gender Marker in the ATLAS tell us?**The Gender Marker enables us to:* Track the trend and pattern of *resource allocation* and *financial expenditures* in each programme/project and how it contributes to the achievement of gender equality results across all UNDP focus areas, country office and regions as identified in the UNDP Strategic Plan.
* Improve our gender responsive planning, budgeting and policy decision making to ensure that those who need UNDP's support will be benefit from resource allocation.
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1. The Gender Equality Strategy was developed largely in response to an independent evaluation conducted by IEO and published in 2005, entitled ”Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UNDP” which had concluded that UNDP had not effectively engendered its development programmes. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UNDP, Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2013, p.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It should be noted that this is not an evaluation of the content of the GES as a stand-alone document. Instead it is an inquiry of the extent to which the GES was effective in guiding the institutional and devel­opment contributions UNDP made to gender equality and women’s empowerment during the implementation of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Gender responsiveness implies consciously creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of the lives of women or men within their social setting. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Making results gender transformative means considering not only symptoms of gender inequality but also how to produce results that address the social norms, behaviors, and social systems that underlie them. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The UNDP Gender Equality Seal is a corporate certification process that recognizes good performance of UNDP Country Offices, Regional Service Centers and Headquarters in delivering gender equality results. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The IEO will be conducting six (6) Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in 2014. The Methods consultant will work with the AEM to devise a core set of questions and data (by end March 2014) to be gathered by the Evaluation Managers of each ADR and this data for the Gender Thematic Evaluation will be collected in the ADR countries visited by IEO staff/consultants. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)