**Annex 1. ToRs of the Mid-Term Evaluation**

**Title:** International Consultant for Mid-term Evaluation of UNDP/GEF Projects

**Duration:**25 working days within the period from 11 Nov 2013 to 10 Jan 2014

INTRODUCTION

UNDP/GEF seek to hire International Project Evaluation Expert to carry out Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the following projects:

1. "**Ensuring Sufficiency and Predictability of Revenues for the Georgia’s Protected Areas System" –UNDP Georgia   
   "Catalyzing Financial Sustainability of Armenia’s Protected Areas System" –UNDP Armenia**

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a mid-term evaluation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Joint Mid-term Evaluation (TE) of the aforementionedprojects

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

Project Ensuring Sufficiency and Predictability of Revenues for the Georgia’s Protected Areas System Summary Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Project Title: |  | | | | | |
| GEF Project ID: | | 4285 |  | *at endorsement (Million US$)* | | *at mid-term (Million US$)* |
| UNDP Project ID: | | 59440 | GEF financing: | 1,000,000 | | 877,500 |
| Country: | | Georgia | IA/EA own: |  | |  |
| Region: | | RBEC | Government: | 2,435,000 | | 1,679,290 |
| Focal Area: | | Biodiversity | Other: | 1,930,000 (CNF/CPAF[[1]](#footnote-2))  TJS, KfW 144,000  Bank of Georgia  225,000 | | 791,255 of which 34,676 TJS, 502,781 CNF Activity 1, 225,000 BoG |
| FA Objectives, (OP/SP): | | BD-1 | Total co-financing: | 4,440,00 | | 2,182,071 |
| Executing Agency: | | CNF | Total Project Cost: | 5,440,000 | | 3,059,571 |
| Other Partners involved: | |  | ProDoc Signature (date project began): | | | July 2010 |
| (Operational) Closing Date: | | Proposed:  2016 | Actual:  2016 |

Project Catalyzing Financial Sustainability of Armenia’s Protected Areas System Summary Table

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Project Title: |  | | | | |
| GEF Project ID: | | 4258 |  | *at endorsement (Million US$)* | *at mid-term(Million US$)* |
| UNDP Project ID: | | 00057497 | GEF financing: | 990,000 | 849,400 |
| Country: | | Armenia | IA/EA own: |  |  |
| Region: | | RBEC | Government: | 2,425,000 | 1,425,083 |
| Focal Area: | | Biodiversity | Other: | 2,161,000 (CPAF)  174,000 (TJS/KfW) | 626,287 of which 62,570 TJS |
| FA Objectives, (OP/SP): | | BD-1 | Total co-financing: | 4,760,000 | 2,051,370 |
| Executing Agency: | | NGO | Total Project Cost: | 5,750,000 | 2,900,770 |
| Other Partners involved: | | CNF | ProDoc Signature (date project began): | | October 2010 |

Project description

**The projects have two components and objectives**: to ensure sufficiency and predictability of revenue sources for the PA system and to raise cost-effectiveness and capacities of PAs through the operation of the regional conservation trust fund (CNF)[[2]](#footnote-3), including the newly constituted, country - dedicated, 7-year sinking fund.

The duration of the project is seven years. Total budget of the project for Georgia is US$ 5,734,000 (including 1,000,000 from the GEF) and for Armenia 5,750,000 (including 990,000 from the GEF). The remaining amount is financial and in-kind parallel co-funding, including: respective governments, CNF, KfW/TJS, and other partners.

UNDP is a GEF implementing agency for the project. Sinking Fund operations and management as well as capacity development and provision of high-quality technical advice on sustainable financing of PAs, is delegated to CNF the project management and fund operations responsibilities and reflected in Sinking Fund and Project Management Agreement. CNF was selected for fund operations and the project management is that it is the only organization in the Caucasus with the mandate granted by the governments of three South Caucasus countries to operate Trust Funds, including both endowment and sinking funds in support of Protected Areas in these countries. CNF’s organizational structure and operations allow for effective and efficient management of the Trust Fund, whose general rules and policies is defined in the framework agreement between the respective governments the CNF.

A Project Executive Board (PEB) directs the project and is the ultimate decision-maker for it, ensuring that the project remains on course to deliver the desired outcomes of the required quality.

The implementation of the project started as planned and all components of the project are on the way to reaching the project objectives. Thus, for the second half of 2013 the project will reach the phase, when the progress should be reviewed, the project approach analyzed and if found necessary modified, lessons learned captured, replication strategy developed and implemented.

The evaluation is initiated and commissioned jointly by UNDP Country Offices in Armenia and Georgia along with the UNDP/GEF regional coordination unit (Bratislava). 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:

1. Strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project;
2. Enhance the likelihood of achievement of the project and GEF objectives through analyzing project strengths and weaknesses and suggesting measures for improvement;
3. Enhance organizational and development learning;
4. Enable informed decision-making;
5. 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.

Evaluation approach and method

An overall approach and method[[3]](#footnote-4) for conducting project evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact,** as defined and explained in the UNDP-GEF Evaluation Guidance (2011). A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR ([Annex C](#_TOR_Annex_C:)) The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence‐based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct field missions to Georgia and Armenia, including the most appropriate projects sites to be selected by the evaluator in consultation with the UNDP COs and project teams and in accordance with logistical availability, available timeframe and what seems best suited for the purposes of the evaluation*.* Interviews will be held with representatives from the following organizations in both countries at a minimum:

**- UNDP COs (Energy and Environment Portfolio managers and Management);**

**- Ministries of Nature Protection (Armenia) and Environment (Georgia). GEF Operational Focal Points, CBD focal points, Agency of Protected Areas in Georgia;**

**- CNF;**

**- from WWF and other key NGOs;**

**- from World Bank offices, USAID, KFW and other key international partners.**

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Annex B](#_TOR_Annex_B:) of this Terms of Reference.

Evaluation Criteria & Ratings

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see  [Annex A](#_TOR_Annex_A:)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact.** Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in  [Annex D](#_TOR_Annex_D:).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Evaluation Ratings:** | | | |
| **1. Monitoring and Evaluation** | ***rating*** | **2. IA& EA Execution** | ***rating*** |
| M&E design at entry |  | Quality of UNDP Implementation |  |
| M&E Plan Implementation |  | Quality of Execution - Executing Agency |  |
| Overall quality of M&E |  | Overall quality of Implementation / Execution |  |
| **3. Assessment of Outcomes** | **rating** | **4. Sustainability** | **rating** |
| Relevance |  | Financial resources: |  |
| Effectiveness |  | Socio-political: |  |
| Efficiency |  | Institutional framework and governance: |  |
| Overall Project Outcome Rating |  | Environmental : |  |
|  |  | Overall likelihood of sustainability: |  |

Project finance / cofinance

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the evaluation report.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Co-financing  (type/source) | UNDP own financing (mill. US$) | | Government  (mill. US$) | | Partner Agency  (mill. US$) | | Total  (mill. US$) | |
| Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual | Planned | Actual | Actual | Actual |
| Grants |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Loans/Concessions |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * In-kind support |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| * Other |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Totals |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Mainstreaming

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

Impact

The evaluator will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Conclusions, recommendations & lessons

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions**, **recommendations** and **lessons**.

EVALUATION Implementation arrangements

The mid-term evaluation will be carried out by an international Mid-term Evaluation expert. The logistical support and workspace to the MTE expert will be provided respectively by the UNDP CO Armenia and Georgia under overall supervision of Energy and Environment Portfolio managers and Programme Associates.

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Armenia. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

In preparation for the evaluation mission, the project managers, with assistance of UNDP COs, will arrange completion of updated Financial Scorecards for the Armenian and Georgian PA System. Results of the Financial Scorecard should be used by the international project evaluation consultant, who will track the progress in financial sustainability of Armenia’s and Georgia's PA system. Updated Financial Scorecards should be attached as a mandatory Annex to the MTE evaluation report.

Evaluation timeframe

The total duration of the evaluation will be **25** days according to the following plan:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | Timing | Completion Date |
| **Preparation** | 3 days | 14November 2013 |
| **Evaluation Mission** | 10 days | 24 November 2013 |
| **Draft Evaluation Reports** | 7 days | 10 December 2013 |
| **Final Reports** | 5 days | 10 January 2014 |

Evaluation deliverables

The evaluator is expected to deliver the following:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Deliverable | Content | Timing | Responsibilities |
| **Inception Report** | Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method | No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission. | Evaluator submits to UNDP CO |
| **Presentation** | Initial Findings | End of evaluation mission in Georgia  End of evaluation mission in Armenia  The evaluator may elect to organize one common briefing of initial findings at the end of both missions for the discussion of issues common to both countries | To project management, UNDP CO |
| **Draft Final Reports** | Two full reports for each respective project, (per annexed template) with annexes | Within 3 weeks after the evaluation mission | Sent to COs, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs |
| **Final Reports\*** | Two revised reports | Within 1 week after receiving UNDP comments on the draft reports | Sent to CO for uploading to UNDP ERC. |

\*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

MTE Expert Duties and Responsibilities:

* Desk review of documents, development of draft methodology, detailed work plan and MTE outline;
* Debriefing with UNDP CO, agreement on the methodology, scope and outline of the MTE report;
* Interviews with Project Executive, relevant Government, Project Manager, NGO and donor representatives and UNDP/GEF Regional Technical Advisor;
* Field visit to two project sites and interviews with PA administration key staff;
* Debriefing with UNDP, Project Executive and Project Manager;
* Development and submission of the first MTE report drafts. The draft will be shared with the UNDP CO, UNDP/GEF (UNDP/GEF RCU Bratislava) and key project stakeholders for review and commenting;
* Finalization and submission of the final MTE reports through incorporating suggestions received on the draft reports.

Required Qualifications and Competencies:

* At least Master’s degree in Biodiversity Conservation, Natural Resource Management, Environmental Economics or other related areas;
* At least 7 years of working experience in providing management or consultancy services to the biodiversity conservation and/or protected areas projects, preferably in protected areas finance;
* Experience in monitoring and evaluating protected areas and/or biodiversity conservation projects for UN or other international development agencies (at least in one project);
* Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage.
* Knowledge of the CIS region, particularly Georgia’s context;
* Knowledge of GEF M&E guidelines and procedures;
* Sound knowledge in results-based management (especially results-oriented monitoring and evaluation);
* Fluency in English both written and spoken and good technical writing skills
* E-literacy;

Competencies:

* Ability to critically analyze issues, find root-causes and suggest optimum solutions;
* Ability to interact with a wide range of partners: government officials, development agencies and etc.;

Excellent team working and management skills;

1. CNF is used after the establishment of the Caucasus fund and has replaced the CPAF (Caucasus protected areas fund) which is the reference used for this establishment during project development and within the project documents. For purposes of clarity, references to this organization in the evaluation should use the current title -- CNF (Caucasus Nature Fund). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. CNF is used after the establishment of the Caucasus fund and has replaced the CPAF (Caucasus protected areas fund) which is the reference used for this establishment during project development and within the project documents. For purposes of clarity, references to this organization in the evaluation should use the current title -- CNF (Caucasus Nature Fund). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](http://www.undp.org/evaluation/handbook), Chapter 7, pg. 163 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office:  [ROTI Handbook 2009](http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/M2_ROtI%20Handbook.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)