**Annex 4**

**Terms of Reference**

**Evaluation of the Knowledge and Innovation initiatives, time period: 2012-2013**

**Bratislava Regional Center**

**Background and context**

UNDP’s corporate strategy is to become a solution-oriented, knowledge based organization. Yet the knowledge and innovation capacity remained limited within the Europe and CIS region until several years ago. This gap is all the more significant in the context where most UNDP partners are increasingly sophisticated middle income countries with growing demand for innovative solutions.

The UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS (BRC) established the Knowledge and Innovation practice that, as a response to this gap. The Practice designed a regional project on Knowledge and Innovation 2012/2013 that served as an umbrella for a variety of initiatives that were implemented in the ensuing period. Project’s primary beneficiaries were the BRC and UNDP Country Offices staff, with secondary beneficiaries being the national and regional/local level partners in the ECIS region. The two year project served as the regional ‘umbrella initiative’ for the recently established K&I practice and defined its key service lines, expected outputs and results.

In addition, the K&I practice put in place a number of mechanisms in order to utilize innovation as a mechanism to design new business products and services, and help position COs better in a new development context. These included but are not limited to: (i) Research and Development annual events exploring the cutting edge topic that is trending globally (e.g. behavioral science and policy, complexity development) in an effort to design new generation of services; (ii) Innovation Fund- capacitating COs to develop rapid prototyping capabilities.

The practice put in place essentially the first effort of its kind to capacitate clients in the Europe and CIS region to respond to the growing demand for innovative solutions in a range of development contexts, working on achieving three outputs: building a distributed knowledge and innovation capacity in BRC and across the region; establishing an innovation hub and rapid prototyping capacities, and positioning UNDP and its experts as thought leaders in the dialogue on the key sustainable development issues in the region. Subsequently and as one of the direct results of this project, the innovation agenda corporately has expanded and is one of the major priorities in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

**Evaluation purpose**

This is the first evaluation of the innovation-related activities in ECIS region (not surprising since the 2012/2013 knowledge and innovation project and K&I practice was the first innovation-related intervention not only in the region but corporately). The results of these initiatives will feed into and inform the new regional project on innovation. Additionally, since the implementation of the 2012/2013 knowledge and innovation project and other innovation-related activities positioned RBEC as the corporate leader in innovation, the results of the evaluation could serve to further inform corporate thinking on how to better design and provide innovation-related services.

**Evaluation scope and objectives**

It is within this context that the K&I practice at the BRC is seeking for a supplier who would evaluate the initiatives of the Knowledge and Innovation practice in the period between 2012/2013 across a range of different dimensions. Since the Europe and CIS is perceived as a leader in driving the innovation agenda, the evaluation seeks to be forward looking in so far as it would use the lessons from the 2-year efforts as building blocks for designing more effective innovation services within the context of the new Strategic Plan and the regional project document.

**Evaluation questions**

The following are the main questions that should drive the evaluation:

1. **To what extent has the K&I project and related activities resulted in:**
2. Country Offices designing new services and products across different program areas?
3. Country Offices establishing new partnership that increased both the profile and new insights into our work
4. Country Offices mobilizing new funds for key program areas
5. UNDP Europe and CIS (both the BRC and Country Offices in the region) developing internal expertise in a number of new areas of potential interest to our clients
6. Impacted corporate/global rules and procedures
7. What specific **dimensions of support** from BRC (K&I team that managed the project) to COs (the clients) proved to be critical in achieving results? What should that support look like moving forward, within the context of the Regional Program Document and the new UNDP Strategic Plan?

The experience of running the K&I project and related activities of the K&I practice, and seemingly experience of many other outfits working on innovation-related agenda show that a more traditional corporate systems and processes may not be the most suitable mechanisms for running, monitoring and evaluating innovation-related activities – that is the work that implies perpetual experimentation with high failure rates in order to obtain more evidence and understand feasibility of different new approaches. In this context, three questions emerge:

1. What type of a **framework is suitable for innovation-related activities that would ensure collection of rigorous evidence about the impact of innovation without thwarting innovation** itself from the get go?   (how do we put in place ‘[circuit breakers’](http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/so-the-world-is-a-complex-system-what-should-aid-agencies-do-differently/)).
2. Moving forward, has the project managed to **sequence innovation-related activities** with accompanying support to Country Offices?
3. What lessons has the project uncovered that may inform **corporate thinking around innovation**?

**Evaluation products (deliverables):**

* **Report** based on in-depth qualitative study of the project’s and related activities’ result based on the defined questions and focusing on **methodology employed for evaluation, the findings, and recommendations for the future**
* **Prototype designed of what future support service from BRC to COs** could look like, based on the findings
* **Prototype designed of a framework for measurement and evaluation** of innovation-related activities

**Required competencies**

* At least 10 years of experience and expertise in integrating innovation in the context of international development organizations and public administration (national and local level)
* At least 10 years of experience and expertise in setting up evaluation mechanisms for innovation-related activities, with specific focus to policy making and development
* At least 10 years of experience and experience with the use of qualitative methods of research, evaluation and prototyping, with specific experience in applying these methods to innovation-related capacities
* Deep understanding of what mechanisms move intended policy to praxis.

**Implementation arrangements**

The contractor will conduct the evaluation under the supervision of the knowledge and innovation specialist with the mandatory briefing and de-briefing sessions with the Project Management Board of the 2012/2013 knowledge and innovation project and the Knowledge and Innovation practice.

**Evaluation resources**

The contractor will have access to all necessary staff, partners and individuals who have taken part in or benefited from the innovation-related activities, project beneficiaries, along with all the other documentation, blogs, prototypes, and any other deliverables or results that were the consequence of the project. Overall, the contractor will be expected to brief and de-brief with members of the Project Management Board (3 heads of UNDP offices in the region), a community of practice of knowledge and innovation practitioners in the region, and various program teams within the regional center who are the main clients of the Knowledge and Innovation practice (in large part, the scope will depend on the proposed methodology from the contractor and based on the project document provided in an annex of this ToR). The detailed plan for carrying out the evaluation will be contingent upon the proposed methodology by the supplier, worked out and agreed with the knowledge and innovation specialist. In addition, the 2012/2013 knowledge and innovation is one of the annexes of this ToR, providing an overview of different themes that it covered in a 2-year period.

**Evaluation ethics**

The Evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’including but not limited to safeguarding the rights and confidentiality of information providers, for example: measures to ensure compliance with legal codes governing areas such as provisions to collect and report data, particularly permissions needed to interview or obtain information about children and young people; provisions to store and maintain security of collected information; and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

**Reporting:** The contractor will work under the coordination of and report to UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre. While the effort will be managed out of the RBEC Regional Service Center, the BRC will ensure coordinating with the relevant Country Offices, national partners and/or any other individuals or outfits deemed necessary to be included in the process of evaluating the impacts of the project and answering specific evaluation questions.