

Terms of Reference for Mid-Term External Evaluation of Azerbaijan Trust Fund

Background

UNESCO and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan concluded a Framework Agreement for Cooperation in the Areas of Education, the Sciences, Culture and Communication on 18 July 2013 for a duration of 5 years. The Framework Agreement was set up in the amount of USD 5 million.

The rationale for the conclusion of the framework agreement was the donor's wish to strengthen past collaboration with UNESCO in "the promotion of mutual understanding, culture of peace, tolerance and inter-cultural dialogue in the context of activities of the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue (WFID), which is held once every two years in Baku, Azerbaijan", through financial support in UNESCO's areas of competence.

Potential areas of cooperation, set out in the Annex to the Framework Agreement, include: Intangible Cultural Heritage, protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict, social transformations and intercultural dialogue, World Heritage; Education for All; girls' education; science and innovation technologies; water; disaster risk preparedness and mitigation, as well as a special allocation to the Associate Expert Programme.

As indicated in the Framework agreement and further requested by the government, a mid-term evaluation of the overall fund is to be conducted in the form of an external evaluation. Since so far three projects, all under the Funds-in-Trust modality and in Education will be completed by the time of the evaluation, the mid-term evaluation will be limited to the evaluation of these projects, as requested by the donor; however, keeping in mind a final external evaluation at the time of the expiration of the current framework. The questions to be addressed will be applied to the three above-mentioned projects for the mid-term evaluation, as well as to the totality of projects and contributions of the overall Azerbaijan Fund (550AZE9000) in the context of the final evaluation. An overview of the project and projects funded to date can be found in Annex I, the three projects that form part of the mid-term evaluation are listed below:

1. **550KEN1000** "Health Literacy and Behavior Change Practices among Adolescent Girls in Kibera Informal Settlements in Nairobi, Kenya" (USD 300,000)
2. **550UGA1000** "Promoting Gender Equity and Equality in Education in Uganda through Gender-Sensitive Primary Teacher Education and Training" (USD 300,000)
3. **550URT1000** "Empowering Girls from Pastoralists' Communities in Ngorongoro, Tanzania (USD 300,000)

Purpose

The overall purpose of this mid-term external evaluation is

- to inform principally UNESCO and the donor, but also other programme stakeholders and partners on the progress in implementation, i.e. the delivery of planned outputs and outcomes achieved as well as progress towards achievements of the respective objectives, while highlighting enabling factors and challenges encountered,

- to provide action-oriented recommendations on how to improve several aspects of implementation for similar projects in the future, and
- to inform resource allocation for a future round of proposals, as well as to inform decisions on scaling-up, replication, and /or continuation.

The evaluation will therefore adopt both a retrospective as well as forward-looking approach and will feed into the future project design and implementation as well as and future strategic planning of projects and initiatives funded via the Azerbaijan Trust Fund.

The mid-term external evaluation will particularly assess:

- **Relevance** of the projects with regard to UNESCO's mission and with regard to the beneficiary countries' needs and requirements within the global and local development context; it shall identify how the Azerbaijan Trust Fund helped to strengthen UNESCO's activities;
- Aspects of **Efficiency and Effectiveness** in terms of the use of resources and the projects' results;
- **Sustainability** in view of how the projects are embedded in the overall development and reform context of the respective countries and their complementarity with initiatives undertaken by other development agencies and partners (institutional, political and financial sustainability);
- **Visibility**, in particular in view of communication and dissemination and how the visibility of the donor and UNESCO is addressed;

The mid-term external evaluation will start in early 2017 after the termination of the three FIT projects by the end of 2016. Aspects in relation to the potential longer-term impact and sustainability of the projects results may be considered in the final evaluation of the Azerbaijan Trust Fund.

Scope

The mid-term evaluation will cover the assessment of the key activities implemented during the duration of the three projects listed above, i.e. in the timeframe between September 2014 and December 2016. The geographic scope is determined by the projects being implemented in three countries of Eastern Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania), and the thematic focus on girls' education.

The evaluation will be guided by the indicative questions presented below and generate corresponding findings and recommendations aiming at improving project implementation and guiding the future strategic planning of the Azerbaijan Trust Fund.

It will focus principally on the following aspects. The following indicative evaluation questions will be further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation:

Relevance:

- To what extent are the projects, activities and outputs aligned with UNESCO's institutional mandate as captured in the medium term strategy (C4)?
- To what extent are project activities and outputs aligned with the needs and demands of key stakeholders and target groups (Africa, Gender, least developed countries)?

- Where the projects in line with the priorities of the concerned countries in the sphere of education?
- What is UNESCO's comparative advantage for implementing the above projects?
- To what extent do the projects fit within the specific development context considering their complementarity with initiatives of other development agencies and partners? To what extent have partnerships that have been established within the context of the projects benefited the project activities and have ensured complementarities in the interventions at the country level, instead of duplication of efforts? What has the quality of interactions among various stakeholders been throughout the implementation of the projects?

Efficiency and Effectiveness:

- What have been the key outputs of the projects?
- Is output delivery on schedule? Are there any delays? What have been the main challenges in the delivery of these outputs?
- What has been the nature and quality of interaction and collaboration at the national and regional levels, in particular what partnerships have been established with other development partners
- Which activities and use of the produced output were the most/least effective in contributing to the projects' objectives and why? What are their common quality aspects and challenges?
- What have been the key achievements and challenges of the 3 projects at the different levels (organisational/UNESCO, national/institutional, local/beneficiaries)?
- What are the main factors that have facilitated or obstructed the achievement of outcomes?
- Are adequate monitoring tools and mechanisms in place, and functional? Do they allow communication and exchange of lessons learned between the different projects?
- Are the established quality assurance mechanisms adequate?
- Have the existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms contributed to the achievement of expected results throughout the project implementation and how have these been effective? How could these work better for future interventions?
- Have the projects achieved the intended targets as agreed by UNESCO and the Donor?
- Have the projects been implemented in a cost efficient manner?

Sustainability

- What are the main factors that facilitate or threaten the (financial, political and institutional) sustainability of the outcomes of the projects and activities?
- What are the main challenges in safeguarding the sustainability of projects?
- To what extent is the current funding structure foreseen in the Fund appropriate, is it focused enough to determine its effects/impact?

- Are the newly developed advocacy and teaching materials considered in the education reform /policy debate, for piloting and /or rolling out/disseminating at national level?
- What was the potential for mobilizing further partners and donors and synergies with other programmes?
- What are the main lessons learnt from the programmes that could be documented? On that basis, to what extent could the programmes be scaled up or replicated in other regions?
- To what extent have national authorities/stakeholders/beneficiary countries (e.g. MoE) been involved in the design, planning and implementation phases of the projects and to what extent have they gained a sense of ownership of the interventions?
- To what extent do the outcomes of the projects fit into future/emerging priority frameworks of the respective countries? Are there intentions / signs for replication or scaling up?
- Has the training of trainees or other mechanisms to ensure multiplier effects been ensured?
- To what extent and how UNESCO field offices were involved into the implementation of the projects? Do they fit into broader priorities of the respective field office?

Visibility

- How has the visibility of the donor and UNESCO been assured through the UNESCO-Azerbaijan cooperation?
- What work has been undertaken by UNESCO HQ and field offices to raise awareness about the donor country, and has it been effective?
- To what extent have meetings with national (relevant ministries, national commissions for UNESCO etc.) and local authorities (municipalities, community leaders etc.) helped in raising awareness about the projects in order to increase their visibility and their potential for replication or scaling-up?
- How many materials (articles in newspapers, magazines, project documents etc.) about projects were published during the implementation period, and how, and to whom were they disseminated?

Methodology

The suggested methodology will include:

- a. An in-depth desk study analysis and mapping of all relevant material and resources, including:
 - Final narrative reports including a self-assessment for each project as completed by the relevant project teams;
 - Framework Agreement, strategy documents, operational procedures, minutes of steering Committee meetings;
 - Mapping of activities, projects and programmes and overview on how the objectives of the UNESCO/Azerbaijan Trust Fund were addressed;

- review of additional documentation such as: project documents, periodic progress reports, mission reports, UNESCO country programme documents, UNDAFs, evaluations, studies and research of other UN organizations and stakeholders on the subject being evaluated, flyers/brochures/websites;
 - Analysis of data extracted from SISTER (a UNESCO internal database containing all work plans and monitoring data).
- b. Reconstruction of an Overall Intervention logic / Theory of Change for the Azerbaijan Trust Fund and how the specific projects contribute to it;
 - c. Questionnaires and surveys addressed as appropriate to groups of stakeholders at various levels (e.g. line ministries, National Commissions, project implementation entities and other stakeholders and partners, etc.);
 - d. Semi-structured Interviews, focus group discussions and meetings (in person, via slype and telephone) with project officers, and relevant stakeholders at UNESCO HQ and respective UNESCO field offices, donor representatives, and with various stakeholders, such as implementation partners, particularly representatives of the beneficiary countries, and beneficiaries;
 - e. Selected field visits to meet with the local stakeholders, beneficiaries and partners involved in the implementation of the projects, including interviews with direct beneficiaries, particularly adolescent girls, and to determine the relevance and effectiveness on the ground;
 - f. Participatory workshops to steer the evaluation and to discuss findings and recommendations.

Evaluation Team and Responsibilities

The exercise will be managed by the Executive Office of the Education Sector (ED/EO), backstopped by the Evaluation Office of the Internal Oversight Service (IOS/EVS) and the Section for Mobilizing Government Partner Resources of the Bureau for Strategic Planning (BSP/MGP) and will be conducted by an external evaluator or evaluator team. The external evaluator shall be completely independent and shall not in any way have been involved in the implementation of the activities under review. An evaluation reference group will be established to provide overall guidance and quality assurance of the evaluation process, methodology and validation of the deliverables. It will consist of representatives of the above mentioned sections and services at UNESCO headquarters as well as a representative of the programme specialists involved in the projects, and the Delegation of Azerbaijan. ED and IOS will:

- Discuss the final evaluation approach and methodology with the evaluation consultant/ evaluation team and consult with the reference group accordingly.
- Ensure that the evaluation team has access to all relevant information sources and documents related to the projects.
- Discuss and comment on notes and reports delivered by the evaluation team.
- Assist in feedback of the preliminary findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations from the evaluation, in consultation with the reference group.

Programme specialists working under the different projects covered by the evaluation should be available to meet (directly or indirectly) with the evaluation consultant/team. They should provide additional information when necessary.

An external evaluation consultant/team will be contracted, who will be responsible for the overall delivery of the evaluation. The methodology of the evaluation will be further specified in a succinct inception report. Finally, the evaluation consultant/ team will be responsible for drafting and editing the draft and the final evaluation report in English.

Logistics

The external evaluation consultant/team will be responsible for his/her own logistics, including office space, administrative and secretarial support, telecommunications, printing of documentation. The external evaluation consultant/team will also be responsible for dissemination of all methodological tools such as surveys. ED and IOS will assist the evaluation consultant/ team in providing documentation and the setting up meetings. The external evaluation consultant/team is responsible for all travel related costs, including transport to and from the airport and transport to and from interviews. The travel costs should be itemized in the financial proposal.

Qualifications and Requirements of the external evaluation consultant/ team

Qualifications

The external evaluation consultant/team should possess the following qualifications:

- a) Experience in applying qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, with a minimum of 10 years of professional experience in programme and project evaluation of relevance to policy making demonstrating a strong record in designing and conducting/leading evaluations, including in the area of education
- b) Advanced university degree in education, programme management or other development-related fields
- c) Knowledge of the United Nations, including previous work experience or assignments for the UN particularly in evaluating projects and programmes
- d) Excellent language skills in English (oral communication and report writing), French (oral communication and reading); and,
- e) No previous involvement in the implementation of activities under review.

Moreover, it is desirable that the external consultant(s) possess the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Extensive knowledge of the global development arena in the field of education, with a minimum of 7 years of relevant work experience;
- Understanding and application of UN mandates in Human Rights and Gender Equality;
- Experience with assignments focusing on girls' education in the African region
- Other UN and relevant local language skills of Eastern African countries will be considered an advantage.

Verification of these qualifications will be based on the provided curriculum vitae. Moreover, references, web links or electronic copies of two or three examples of recently completed evaluation reports shall be provided together with the technical proposal. Candidates are also encouraged to submit other references such as research papers or articles that demonstrate their familiarity with the subject under review.

Attention will be paid to establishing an evaluation team that is balanced as regards gender and geographical balance (as applicable).

Budget

The evaluation is budgeted with an average of 30 - 40 consultant person days. The external evaluation consultant(s) is/are expected to visit the three countries concerned (possibly in one roundtrip). Additionally, the external team members are expected to travel to Paris at least once to participate in a kick-off meeting during the inception phase, to conduct interviews during the data collection phase, and to hold a stakeholder workshop for discussing and validating findings and recommendations. Some of these tasks may be conducted via skype or video conference.

Time frame

The evaluation is expected to start in May 2017 with an inception phase followed by intensive data collection (desk review, interviews, and surveys), analysis and report writing. A workshop for presentation and discussion of preliminary findings should be conducted in August 2017, and the final revised evaluation report should be delivered by end September 2017.

Deliverables and Schedule

The external evaluation consultant/team will be required to deliver the following key deliverables in English.

- a. Inception report: containing the evaluation framework, detailed evaluation methodology, project/programme sample, work plan and logistical arrangements.
- b. Workshop for Presentation and Validation of Findings and Recommendations: to present findings and tentative recommendations to the Reference Group.
- c. (Draft and Final) Evaluation report of max. 30 pages (excluding annexes) to be structured as follows:
 - Executive Summary (2-3 pages)
 - Summary Evaluation report highlighting the cross-cutting key findings, lessons learned and recommendations, including
 - Description of the UNESCO–Azerbaijan Cooperation Framework Agreement and the three projects under evaluation.

- Evaluation purpose
 - Evaluation methodology
 - Main findings (presented in terms of achievements and challenges)
 - Lessons Learned
 - Conclusions and Recommendations
- Annexes, including
- detailed country reports for each project with more details as the basis for the overall summary evaluation report, including interview list, details of the data collection instruments, key documents reviewed.

The evaluation consultant /team will provide the deliverables according to the following indicative timetable:

Deliverables and Schedule	Date
Selection of external evaluation team	mid May 2017
Inception Report* (including the refined Theory of change or intervention logic, the evaluation methodology and detailed workplan)	end May 2017
Data Collection and Field visits	mid July 2017
Presentation of main findings and tentative recommendations to the reference group	early August 2017
Draft mid-term evaluation report	end August 2017
Final mid-term evaluation report	end September 2017

How to submit a proposal :

Your electronic offer comprising of a technical proposal and a financial proposal, attached in two separate files, shall be sent to the following email address no later than **Wednesday 10 May, 2017, 23:59 CET**: ios@unesco.org

For any requests for clarification, please contact Ms. Mariana Kitsiona (m.kitsiona@unesco.org).

Annex I

Funds-in-Trust projects and contributions to Special Accounts under the Azerbaijan Fund to date

Education

- **550KEN1000** “Health Literacy and Behavior Change Practices among Adolescent Girls in Kibera Informal Settlements in Nairobi , Kenya” (USD 300,000) *FIT letter signed on 22/09/2014 , Plan of Operations signed on 19/02/2015 (Project duration for 1 year + 2 years validity for the FIT letter with flexibility clause for extensions) – extension requested until 31/12//2016 at the last Steering Committee Meeting.*
- **550UGA1000** “ Promoting Gender Equity and Equality in Education in Uganda through Gender-Sensitive Primary Teacher Education and Training “ (USD 300,000) *FIT letter signed on 22/09/2014, Plan of Operations signed on 24/01/2015 (Project duration for 1 year + 2 years validity for the FIT letter with flexibility clause for extensions) extension requested until 31/12//2016 at the last Steering Committee Meeting*
- **550URT1000** “Empowering Girls from Pastoralists’ Communities in Ngorongoro (USD 300,000) *FIT letter signed on 18/10/2014, Plan of Operations signed on 02/12/2014 (Project duration for 18 months + 3 years validity for the FIT letter with flexibility clause for extensions) /extension requested until 31/12//2016 at the last Steering Committee Meeting*
- **CAP EFA Special Account:** contribution to CAP EFA: USD 400,000 - support to the TVET sub-sector in Liberia. (467GLO9000)

Science

- **550RAS2000** “Avicenna Virtual Campus in Central Asia” (USD 300,000) *FIT letter signed on 03/10/2014 (Project duration for 24 months + 3 years validity for the FIT letter with flexibility clause for extensions) /extension requested until October 2017 at the last Steering Committee Meeting*
- **550GLO3000** “Developing E-Training resources for promoting intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding” (USD 250,000). *FIT letter signed on 16/09/2015 (Project duration for 24 months + 3 years validity for the FIT letter with flexibility clause for extensions)*
- Furthermore, contributions have been approved to the Special Accounts and Associate Expert Scheme under the Azerbaijan Trust Fund, as follows:

Culture

- USD 400,000 – voluntary supplementary contribution to support “Strengthening Capacities of States to safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Development in Bangladesh and Guatemala” (199GLO4000) : *These activities have not started yet, there have been delays in the preparation, consultation phases.*
- USD 160,000 in 2014 and USD 65,000 in 2016 for the ICHF sub account for enhancing human capacities. (199PER4000)
- **Silk Road** Special Account: Contribution to the Silk Road Special Account: USD 50,000. (498GLO4000)

Associate Expert Scheme

- **Associate Expert Scheme/Junior Professional Programme:** USD 364,587 (819AZE9000)

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/IOS/images/UNEG_G_2010_2_Quality_Checklist_for_Evaluation_Reports.pdf
- UNESCO's evaluation policy: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232246e.pdf>