Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation

Mid-Term Evaluation of Project GCP/KOS/005/FIN "Support to Implementation of Forest Policy and Strategy in Kosovo"

Terms of Reference

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

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Terms of Reference[1]

1 Background of the Project

1. A Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Sector Development 2010-2020 (PSP) was prepared during 2008-2009. The Government of Kosovo adopted the PSP on 12 February 2010. Aiming to respond to the challenges of the PSP, a project named "Support to Implementation of Forest Policy and Strategy in Kosovo" was prepared by the Kosovo Government and FAO. The project, funded by the Government of Finland with project budget of 3,740,752 USD and project delivery of 1,656,480 USD, has three components with the following development objectives and expected outcomes:

2. **Institutional support for the implementation of forest policy and strategy:** The development objective of component 1 is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the government in implementing new forest policy, strategy and action plans.

- **Outcome 1**: Kosovo Government capacities are strengthened to Coordinate and Implement the Action Plan (AP) as formulated in the Policy and Strategy Paper 2010 –2020.
- **Outcome 2**: Basic forest legislation is updated and harmonized with new policy and strategy.
- **Outcome 3**: An information strategy on the importance of the forestry sector is developed and implemented.
- **Outcome 4**: Support the completion of the decentralization process in forestry

3. **Integrated forest management and practices**: The development objective of Component 2 is to improve forest management practices leading to increased yield from forestlands and enhanced employment opportunities for the rural population.

- **Outcome 1:** Improved condition of low-growth forests through better forest management and silvicultural practices.
- **Outcome 2:** Updated information on the status of existing forest plantations.
- **Outcome 3:** Forest health situation in Kosovo is improved.

4. **Climate change mitigation:** The development objective of component 3 is to assess the forestry sectors adaption and capacity for mitigating climate change.

- **Outcome 1:** Increased understanding of, and capacity to combat climate change in the forestry sector.

5. The project "Support to Implementation of the Forest Policy and Strategy in Kosovo" commenced in April 2011. The Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) and the National Team Leader (NTL) started their assignments on 20 May 2011. On 9 June 2011 the project was officially launched.

[1] This title will be deleted in real ToR, as well as the text in italic that follows

6. At the end of the inception phase the project suggested some changes in the project design which did not affect the project objectives or outcomes but certain project activities. In addition, the project faced two major challenges to be addressed, namely 1) the unsatisfactory composition of the Forest Management Board (FMB) and 2) the substantial overlap and potential duplication of planned activities with an EU twinning project2.

7. By the end of the year 2011 consensus was reached on the composition of the FMBand the FMB was re-established with the Kosovo Government. Meanwhile, the drafting of the new Forest Law was closely followed by the project and assistance was provided to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD). In addition, the introduction of the concept of Kosovo Forest Information System (KFIS) as a major tool for improved management of Kosovo forest resources was promoted to key decision makers. The climate change component and corresponding activities were suspended in the second half of 2011 in order to avoid duplication of work with the EU Twinning project.

8. The First Tripartite Review Meeting was organised together with the Fourth Project Steering Committee meeting on 9 January 2013. At the meeting the Project Steering Committee and other meeting attendants agreed to conduct a Mid Term Evaluation of the project. It is expected that the report of the project Mid-Term Evaluation will be presented in the middle of 2013.

2 Purpose of the Evaluation

9. The MTE is envisaged in the project document and requested by the donor and the Government at the First Tripartite Review Meeting held in January 2013. It should review the progress made towards achievement of outcomes in accordance with the full project document and identify corrective actions if necessary.

3 Evaluation framework

3.1 Scope

10. The Independent Mid-Term Evaluation will evaluate the two years of project implementation and will be undertaken at the beginning of the third year of project implementation. It will determine progress being made towards the achievement of project outcomes and will identify corrective actions if necessary. The MTE will assess the project from its concept and design to current and potential results.

11. It will, inter alia:

- review the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation;
- analyze effectiveness of implementation and partnership arrangements;
- identify issues requiring decisions and remedial actions;
- identify lessons learned about project design, implementation and management;
- highlight technical achievements and lessons learned;
- analyze whether the project is on track with respect to achieving the expected results; and

[2]This Twinning project completed its activities at the end of 2012.

- propose any mid-course corrections and/or adjustments to the Work Plan as necessary.

12. The Terms of Reference for this Mid-term Evaluation were prepared in close consultation with FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) in accordance with the evaluation policies and procedures of FAO. The MTE is planned to take place from the second half of May to the end of July 2013.

3.2 Evaluation criteria

13. The project will be critically assessed through the internationally accepted evaluation criteria, i.e. relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. In line with the new FAO project cycle, the evaluation will assess compliance with the following UN Common Country Programming Principles: Human Rights Based Approaches (HRBA)/ Right to Food/ Decent Work; Gender equality, Environmental sustainability, Capacity Development and Results Based Management.

Evaluation issues:

I. Relevance of concept and design

a. Project relevance to national/regional development priorities, including: Policy and Strategy Paper on Forestry Sector Development 2010-2020, programmes, needs of the population; UNDAF; and other UN programming framework; FAO Country Programming Framework FAO Global Goals and Strategic Objectives/Core Functions; other aid programmes in the sector; Finnish Development Policy priorities and to its human rights based approach and crosscutting objectives;
b. Robustness and realism of the theory of change underpinning the project;
c. Clarity, coherence and realism of the Logical Framework[3] of the projectand of its design, including:
   - The causal relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, expected outcomes (immediate objectives) and impact (development objectives);
   - Validity of indicators, assumptions and risks;
   - Approach and methodology;
   - Resources (human and financial) and duration;
   - Stakeholder and beneficiary identification and analysis;
   - Institutional set-up and management arrangements.

II. Effectiveness of outputs and outcomes

d. Overall effectiveness of the project, actual or potential, in attaining its intermediate/specific objectives:
   - Description and analysis of the outputs produced, in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness; including the following outputs and expected outcomes:

Component 1. Institutional support for the implementation of forest policy and strategy
Outcome 1

[3] The Logical Framework embodies the Results-Based Management approach in a project

Kosovo Government capacities are strengthened to Coordinate and Implement the Action Plan (AP) as formulated in the Policy and Strategy Paper 2010–2020
Output (1/1) The Forest Management Board (FMB) for supervising implementation of forest policies and strategies is fully functional, and all the main stakeholders are represented
Output (1/2) PSP implementation is facilitated, followed up and monitored by a Coordination Unit
Output (1/3) PSP Action Plan has gone through a prioritization process and has a work plan for implementation
Outcome 2 Basic forest legislation is updated and harmonized with new policy and strategy
Output (2/1) The law preparation process is well coordinated and all stakeholder groups, including women and vulnerable groups, have been fully involved and the text of the updated forestry law is ready for presentation to Parliament
Output (2/2) New and revised practices and procedures for information management are implemented at all levels of forestry administration, and the forest policy and legal documents are available to and used by all forestry staff at headquarters, and in the regions and municipalities.
Outcome 3 An information strategy on the importance of the forestry sector is developed and implemented
Output (3/1) The general public (especially young people) are aware of the importance of the forestry sector and are familiar with the main principles of the adopted forest policy.
Output (3/2) Information material has been developed for and is used by the educational institutions
Output (3/3) The status of forestry institutions has been promoted in mass media through functional support and nationwide publicity events
Output (3/4) Forestry institutions are active in media, news, documentaries and other releases.
Outcome 4 Support the accomplishment of the decentralization process in the forestry sector
Output (4/1) Ongoing decentralisation process is facilitated.
Output (4/2) Personnel of the decentralised forestry offices are familiar with the forest policies and legislation and have been trained to carry out their tasks properly
Component 2. Integrated forest management and practices
Outcome 1 Improved condition of low-growth forests through better forest management and silvicultural practices
Output (1/1) Test/pilot areas are selected, marked in the field and drawn on the map.
Output (1/2) Arrangements are made with local stakeholders for carrying out management activities. Special attention is given to the involvement of women and representatives from vulnerable groups
Output (1/3) Improved capacity for applying integrated approaches in forest management.
Output (1/4) Trainers/extensionists have received instructions to meet the needs in the pilot areas.
Output (1/5)

Modalities for joint (public/private) forest management and use are defined and introduced
Output (1/6) Standard approach for local agreements is established and is known at all levels.
Outcome 2 Updated information on the status of existing forest plantations.
Output (2/1) A survey on the current situation of forest plantations has been carried out
Output (2/2) Permanent plantation information system has been designed, established and is in use.
Output (2/3) A database is ready, and accessible for users
Outcome 3 Forest health situation in Kosovo is improved.
Output (3/1) Forest officials, relevant stakeholders and forest owners are aware of the health hazards resulting from improper forest practices
Output (3/2) Information on how to mitigate pests and diseases has been disseminated to stakeholders
Output (3/3) Support provided for establishing a forest health monitoring system in Kosovo
Output (3/4) Options for establishing an organization for monitoring forest health have been identified
Output (3/5) Forest researchers in Kosovo have established contacts with their colleagues specialized in forest health issues
Output (3/6) Conditions created for exchange of research results and experiences in prevention and mitigation of pests and diseases.
Output (3/7) Establishment of laboratory premises for applied research
Component 3. Climate change mitigation
Outcome 1 Increased understanding of, and capacity to combat climate change in the forestry sector.
Output (1/1) A strategy and action plan to address climate change adaptation and mitigation in the forestry sector is prepared
Output (1/2) Arrangements are made to have the strategy approved at the highest political level

- Description and analysis of the outcomes achieved, expected and unexpected, their robustness and expectations for further uptake and diffusion.[4]

e. Use made by the project of FAO's normative and knowledge products and actual and potential contribution of the project to the normative and knowledge function of the Organization.

III. Efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation process

[4] 'FAO projects should have (only) one outcome. Programmes may have more.' From FAO Project Cycle Guidelines, 2012

f. Assessment of project management:
   - Quality, realism and focus of work plans;
   - Assessment of delivery, causes and consequences of delays and of any remedial measure taken, if any;
   - Monitoring and feed-back loop into improved management and operations;
   - Staff management;
   - Development and implementation of an exit strategy;

g. Institutional Setup:
   - Administrative and technical support by FAO HQ, regional, sub-regional and country office, as appropriate;
   - Institutional set-up, internal review processes, coordination and steering bodies;
   - Inputs and support by the Government/s and resource partner/s.

h. Assessment of financial resources management, including:
   - Adequacy and realism of budget allocations to achieve intended results;
   - Adequacy and realism of Budget Revisions in matching implementation needs and project objectives;
   - Rate of delivery and budget balance at the time of the evaluation and in relation to work-plans.

IV. Analysis of the application of the UN common country programming principles, cross-cutting themes, and of the Humanitarian Principles and Minimum Standards in the case of emergency projects

i. Analysis of gender mainstreaming for gender equality. This will include:
   - extent to which gender equality considerations were reflected in project objectives and design to address the needs, priorities and constraints of both women and men, and in the identification of beneficiaries;
   - extent to which gender equality considerations were taken into account in project implementation and management;
   - extent to which gender relations and equality have been or will be affected by the project.[5]

j. Analysis of the Capacity Development dimension in the design, implementation and results of the project, at individual, organizational and enabling environment levels.[6] This will include CD on both technical and soft-skills, i.e. planning, budgeting, partnering and negotiating.

k. Analysis of the adoption of the Human-Rights Based Approach, namely:
   - the integration of the Right to Food dimension and principles, in the design, implementation and results of the project;
   - the integration of decent rural employment concerns in the design, implementation and results of the project.

l. Analysis of Partnerships and Alliances, namely:
   - how they were planned in the project design and developed through implementation;
   - their focus and strength; and

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[5] See: http://typo3.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/gender/docs/FAO_FinalGender_Policy_2012.pdf

[6] See: http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/en/

- their effect on project results and sustainability.[7]

m. Analysis of how environmental impacts were taken into consideration and addressed, following the steps and criteria contained in the FAO Environmental Impact Assessment guidelines.

V. Impact

n. Overall impact of the project, actual or potential, positive and negative, produced directly or indirectly, intended or unintended; and

o. Overall contribution of the project to FAO Country Programming Frameworks, Organizational Result/s and Strategic Objectives, as well as to the implementation of the corporate Core Functions.

VI. Sustainability

p. The prospects for sustaining and up-scaling the project's results by the beneficiaries and the host institutions after the termination of the project. The assessment of sustainability will include, as appropriate:
   - Institutional, technical, social and economic sustainability of proposed technologies, innovations and/or processes;
   - Expectation of institutional uptake and mainstreaming of the newly acquired capacities, or diffusion beyond the beneficiaries or the project;
   - Environmental sustainability: the project's contribution to sustainable natural resource management, in terms of maintenance and/or regeneration of the natural resource base.

14. Based on the above analysis, the evaluation will draw specific conclusions and formulate recommendations for any necessary further action by Government, FAO and/or other parties to ensure sustainable development, including any need for follow-up or up-scaling action. The evaluation will draw attention to specific good practices and lessons to be learned as they are of interest to other similar activities. Any proposal for further assistance should include specification of major objectives and outputs and indicative inputs required.

4 Evaluation methodology

4.1 Approach and tools

15. The evaluation will adhere to the UNEG Norms & Standards8.

16. The evaluation will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process. Triangulation of evidence and information gathered will underpin its validation and analysis and will support conclusions and recommendations.

17. The evaluation will make use of the following methods and tools: review of existing reports,

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[7] See: http://www.fao.org/partnerships/partners-home/en/

[8] United Nations Evaluation Group, http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards

18. In-depth interviews with the Senior Management of the Kosovo Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Forest Agency, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Education and Science;
19. Discussion with a wide range of stakeholders in Kosovo, including Association of Private Forest Owners; Association of Municipalities; Municipal Authorities where FAO project has activities; Kosovo Forest Institute; Faculty of Agriculture.

20. Consultations with key agencies and institutions working in forestry and rural development sectors including UNDP, EC, etc. academic sector, NGOs, industry, donors.
21. Semi-structured interviews with other key informants, stakeholders and participants, Interviews will be supported by check lists and/or interview protocols;

22. Visits to project sites for in-depth information gathering about major challenges in the forestry sector and assessment of the project work regarding expectations and capacities of local stakeholders;

23. Direct observation during field visits; surveys and questionnaires.

24. Particular attention will be devoted to ensure that women and other under-privileged groups will be consulted in adequate manner.Insofar as possible and appropriate, interaction will also take place with non-participants to canvass their opinions. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework;[9] the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) framework can be used for assessment of project results.[10]

4.2 Stakeholders and consultation process

25. The evaluation team will discuss in detail with the key stakeholders of the project and will take into account their perspectives and opinions.Key stakeholders will include:

- Project Task Force members;
- Government representatives from the partner organizations; i.e. European Union Office in Kosovo; European Union Rule of Law Mission; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; UNDP Kosovo; UN Mission in Kosovo; USDA Kosovo
- the resource partner; the Finnish Embassy
- FAO Representatives in the participating countries; and
- Participants in communities, including farmers, processors, exporters, organizations and cooperatives, service providers, etc.

26. Particular attention should be given also to the Government and to following stakeholders;

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[9] The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework identifies five different capitals (human, social, natural, financial, and physical), each including different assets. It helps in improving understanding of livelihoods, in particular of the poor. For more information, among others: http://www.livelihoods.org/info/guidance_sheets_pdfs/section2.pdf

[10] SWOT is a widely used strategic planning tool, useful also in the assessment of development interventions, to canvasstheir strengths and weaknesses, as well as future perspectives. It is particularly used in focus groups, but it can be adapted to individual interviews as well.

27. Association of Kosovo Municipalities; Forest Management Board; Kosovo Forest Agency; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (Kosovo); Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Ministry of Finance; Norwegian Forestry Group; National Association of Private Forest Owners in Kosovo.

28. The evaluation team will maintain close liaison with: the FAO Office of Evaluation, the Project Task Force members and Project staff at country and regional level. Although the mission is free to discuss with the authorities concerned anything relevant to its assignment, it is not authorized to make any commitment on behalf of the Government, the donor or FAO.

29. The team will present its preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations to the project stakeholders in the visited country/ies and in the Regional Office for Europe, to obtain their feedback at the end of the data-gathering phase.

30. The draft ToRwill be circulated among key stakeholders for comments before finalisation; suggestions will be incorporated as deemed appropriate by OED.The draft evaluation report will also be circulated among key stakeholders for comments before finalisation; suggestions will be incorporated as deemed appropriate bythe evaluation team.

5 Roles and responsibilities

31. Should other stakeholders engage in the evaluation process beyond participating in meetings, discussions and information gathering, their roles and responsibilities should be added here. Additional tasks can also be added to those proposed below.

32. FAO Budget Holder (BH), the Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and the Project Task Force (PTF) of the project to be evaluated are responsible for initiating the evaluation process, drafting the first version of the Terms of Reference, and supporting the evaluation team during its work. They are required to participate in meetings with the team, make available information and documentation as necessary, and comment on the draft final terms of reference and report. Involvement of different members of the project Task Force will depend on respective roles and participation in the project.

33. The BH is also responsible for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management Response and the Follow-up Report to the evaluation, fully supported in this task by the LTO and PTF. OED guidelines for the Management Response and the Follow-up Report provide necessary details on this process.

34. FAO Office of Evaluation assists the BH and LTO in drafting the ToR, in the identification of the consultants and in the organization of the team's work; it is responsible for the finalization of the ToR and of the team composition;11 it shall brief the evaluation team on the evaluation methodology and process and will review the final draft report for Quality Assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the ToR and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations.

[11] The responsibility for the administrative procedures for recruitment of the team, will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

35. The Office of Evaluation has also a responsibility in following up with the BH for the timely preparation of the Management Response and the Follow-up to the MR.

36. The Evaluation Team is responsible for conducting the evaluation, applying the methodology as appropriate and for producing the evaluation report. All team members, including the Team Leader, will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits, and will contribute to the evaluation with written inputs for the final draft and final report.

37. The Team Leader guides and coordinates the team members in their specific work, discusses their findings, conclusions and recommendations and prepares the final draft and the final report, consolidating the inputs from the team members with his/her own.

38. The Evaluation team will be free to expand the scope, criteria, questions and issues listed above, as well as develop its own evaluation tools and framework, within time and resources available.

39. The mission is fully responsible for its report which may not reflect the views of the Government or of FAO. An evaluation report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO although OED is responsible for Quality Assurance of all evaluation reports.

40. As a contribution to the OED Knowledge Management System:

- the Team Leader will be responsible for completingthe OED quantitative project performance questionnaire, to be delivered at the same time with the final evaluation report;
- OED will ask all team members to completean anonymous and confidential questionnaire to get their feedback on the evaluation process.

41. For further details related to the tasks of the Team leader and team members, please refer to template TORs provided in annex.

6 Evaluation team

42. Mission members will have had no previous direct involvement in the formulation, implementation or backstopping of the project. All will sign the Declaration of Interest form of the FAO Office of Evaluation.

43. The evaluation team will comprise the best available mix of skills that are required to assess the project, and as a whole, will have expertise inall the following subject matters:

- forestry, environment and natural resources management
- forest management, climate change and forest health issues
- Gender equality and HRBA;
- Conduct of evaluations;
- Institutional development in forestry sector

44. Furthermore, to the extent possible, the team will be balanced in terms of geographical and gender representation to ensure diversity and complementarity of perspectives.

7 Evaluation deliverables

45. The evaluation report will illustrate the evidence found that responds to the evaluation issues, questions and criteria listed in the ToR. It will include an executive summary. Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report when considered important to complement the main report.

46. The recommendations will be addressed to the different stakeholders and prioritized: they will be evidence-based, relevant, focused, clearly formulated and actionable.

47. The evaluation team will agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process, based on the template provided in Annex I of this ToR. The report will be prepared in English with numbered paragraphs, following OED template for report writing. Translations in other languages of the Organization, if required, will be FAO's responsibility.

48. The team leader bears responsibility for submitting the final draft report to FAO within two weeks from the conclusion of the mission. Within two additional weeks, FAO will submit to the team its comments and suggestions that the team will include as appropriate in the final report within maximum two weeks.

49. Annexes to the evaluation report

- Terms of reference for the evaluation;
- Profile of team members;
- List of documents reviewed;
- List of institutions and stakeholders interviewed by the evaluation team;
- List of project outputs.