

UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR'S OFFICE

Independent Evaluation of the UN Drought Response

**Relief and Technical Assistance to
the Drought Crisis in Moldova**

May 2008

Terms of Reference

I. Background

During the summer of 2007, Moldova suffered from a devastating drought that has affected most of the country. According to international ratings on the impact level of this phenomenon on ecology and agriculture, this drought was of catastrophic proportions. For the entire period of meteorological observations conducted on the territory of the country, similar phenomena were observed only twice – at the end of the 19th century and in the period of 1946-1947.

The drought has exacerbated the problems in rural livelihoods and exposed a large number of farmers and vulnerable people to poverty. In response to the crisis, the United Nations is implementing a *Relief and Technical Assistance Response to the Drought*, targeting the most vulnerable households and focusing initially on the short-term emergency needs, namely, winter wheat seeds, spring maize seeds, fertilizer, fuel, animal feed, food packages and cash for work schemes.

As foreseen in the project, the severity of the situation and the long term implications require the need to design and implement a wide-ranging set of measures to build the necessary coping mechanisms and improve rural livelihoods. This will complement the initial emergency response phase of the project.

Brief description of the project to be evaluated

The Relief and Technical Assistance to the Drought in Moldova constituted a coordinated United Nations response to the request for assistance made by the Prime Minister of Moldova to the United Nations Secretary General in July 2007. The project proposal was designed to address primarily the emergency needs built on the findings of the joint UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme assessments undertaken during July and August 2007. It considered the difficult situation that many farmers as well as socially vulnerable groups were facing and aimed to mitigate the harsh effects from a poverty alleviation viewpoint.

The project included five key outputs: (a) Technical expertise, management, coordination; (b) Emergency procurement and distribution of seeds, fodder and agricultural supplies; (c) Emergency assistance to socially vulnerable groups; (d) Aid Monitoring; (e) Planning for medium and long-term assistance.

The project was managed by the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Fund for Population, United Nations Children Fund, other UN agencies and the Government of the Republic of Moldova, as well as non-governmental organizations and representatives of local public authorities.

Project duration: September 2007 – August 2008
Budget: 9,968,500.59 USD

(For more detailed background information please refer to www.un.md/drought and. Particularly, the project document may be found on the following link www.un.md/drought/drought_project/index.shtml.)

II. Purpose of the evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation is:

1. To provide an objective assessment of the achievements, constraints, performance, results, impact, relevance, and sustainability of the project.

The evaluation should be comprehensive and cover the outcome, outputs, activities and inputs of the project..

III. General Terms of Evaluation Mission

Scope: The scope of the evaluation should incorporate the following categories of analysis:

Relevance: the degree to which the purpose of the project was valid and pertinent.

Efficiency: the productivity of the implementation process - how good and how cost efficient the process of transforming inputs into outputs and outcomes was.

Effectiveness: the extent to which project have contributed through an effective use of their results.

Capacity development: as a key to **development effectiveness**, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable local development.

The evaluation is expected to address the following:

Outcome status:

Outcome Analysis - what and how much progress has been made towards the achievement of the outcome (including contributing factors and constraints).

- Determine whether or not the outcome has been achieved and, if not, what was the progress made towards its achievement.
- List innovative approaches tried and capacities developed through project assistance.
- Assess the relevance of outputs to the outcome. Ascertain the progress made in relation to the outputs.
- List the factors (positive and negative) that affected the accomplishment of outputs.

Underlying factors: Analyze the underlying factors beyond UN agencies control that influenced the outcome. Distinguish the substantive design issues from the key implementation and/or management capacities and issues including the timeliness of outputs, the degree of stakeholders and partners' involvement in the completion of outputs, and how processes were managed/carried out.

Outputs status:

Output Analysis - the relevance of and progress made in terms of the UNDP and other UN Agencies outputs.

Were the outputs relevant to the outcome? Were the outputs achieved? What were the factors (positive and negative) that affected the accomplishment of the outputs? Assess

whether the drought response was considered in the Government planning. Assess UN Agencies' ability to advocate best practices, and influence the government response to the drought. Special attention should be paid to financial, planning, management and M&E aspects.

Activities status:

Analysis of activities - Were the activities to achieve the outputs effective and efficient?

How well the activities were planned and implemented? Were key methodologies and approaches that facilitate the success of the initiative, particularly regarding participation and empowerment, gender balance, and delivery of necessary inputs appropriate?

Inputs status:

Inputs Analysis - what contribution UNDP and other UN Agencies have made to the progress towards the implementation of activities and achievement of the output and outcome.

How appropriate were the inputs? Were the inputs sufficient to achieve the results? How cost-effective they were?

Partnership strategy: Ascertain whether UN's partnership strategy has been appropriate and effective. What were the partnerships formed? What was the role of UNDP vis-à-vis other UN agencies? How did the partnership contribute to the achievement of the outcome? What was the level of stakeholders' participation? Examine the partnership among UN Agencies and other donor organizations in the relevant field.

Cross-cutting issues: Sustainability: an assessment of the likelihood that the projects results will endure after the end of UN active involvement. To what extent the changes (and benefits) brought by the project can be expected to last after project completion. The evaluation team is requested to provide recommendations for potential follow-up interventions, i.e. how feasible the follow-up actions would be, what alternatives can be identified and/or what components can be added to it, what knowledge products could be developed.

IV. Methodology:

An overall guidance on evaluation methodology can be found in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. The evaluators should come up with a suitable methodology for this evaluation based on the guidance given in this document.

During the evaluation, the evaluators are expected to apply the following approaches for data collection and analysis:

- n Desk review of relevant documents (project documents with amendments made, review reports -midterm/final, donor-specific, etc);
- n Discussions with the Senior Management and programme staff of UN agencies in Moldova;
- n Briefing and debriefing sessions with UN and the Government, as well as with other donors and partners
- n Interviews with partners and stakeholders (including gathering the information on what the partners have achieved with regard to the outcome and what strategies they have used); other donors, etc.
- n Field visits to selected project sites and discussions with project teams, project beneficiaries;

- n Consultation meetings.

Composition of the evaluation mission

The team will be constituted of three evaluators/consultants, one international and two national (Moldovans); the international consultant will act as team leader. Members of the mission must not have been associated with the project's formulation, implementation or monitoring. The UN may also consider funding an independent consultant representing the Government on the mission. Donors active in the sector are invited to be represented in the mission by consultants/staff selected by them. The UN in Moldova welcomes suggestions from partners as to candidates for the posts of team leader and national consultants.

The international consultant must have an advanced university degree and at least eight years of work experience in the field of agriculture and rural development, local development, participatory planning for sustainable development, including participatory monitoring and evaluation, sound knowledge about results-based management (especially results-oriented monitoring and evaluation). He /she should have demonstrated relevant experience in the review, evaluation and assessment of early recovery humanitarian / development projects, preferably focusing on recovery from natural disasters. The team leader will take the overall responsibility for the quality and timely submission of the evaluation reports to the UN RC office in Moldova.

Specifically, the team leader will perform the following tasks:

- n Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
- n Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology (including the methods for data collection and analysis) for the report;
- n Decide the division of labor within the evaluation team;
- n Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs, activities, inputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above) for the report;
- n Draft related parts of the evaluation reports; and
- n Finalize the whole evaluation report.

The national consultant should have advanced university degrees and at least five years work experience in the areas of agriculture and rural development. He/she should have sound knowledge and understanding of agriculture and rural development in Moldova, and have experience in conducting evaluation. The national consultant will focus on agriculture, performing the following tasks respectively:

- n Review documents;
- n Participate in the design of the evaluation methodology;
- n Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs, activities, inputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above);
- n Draft related parts of the evaluation report; and,
- n Organize all meetings and interviews;
- n Assist the team leader in finalizing document through incorporating suggestions received on draft related to his/her assigned sections.

Evaluation mission schedule (tentative: 5 June – 25 June, 2008)

Activity	Timeframe and responsible party
Evaluation design and work plan	One day, by the evaluation team
Desk review of existing documents	5 days, by the evaluation team

Field visits, interviews with partners, and key stakeholders	9 days, by the evaluation team
Drafting of the evaluation reports	6 days, by the evaluation team
Debriefing with UN Resident Coordinator	Half a day, UN and the evaluation team
Debriefing with partners	Half a day, partners and the evaluation team
Finalization of the evaluation reports (incorporating comments received on first drafts)	3 days by the evaluation team

Working Days: 25

V. Products expected from the evaluation

1. The key product expected from this evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, as a minimum, include the following contents:

- Executive summary;
- Introduction;
- Description of the evaluation methodology;
- Analysis of the situation with regard to the outcome, the outputs, the activities, the inputs and the partnership strategy;
- Analysis of opportunities to provide guidance for the future programming;
- Key findings (including best practices and lessons learned)
- Conclusions and recommendations
- Annexes: ToRs, field visits, people interviewed, documents reviewed, etc.

The mission is required to discuss and finalize the evaluation reports prior to departure from Moldova. The reports shall be submitted in hard copy and electronic form.

VI. Management inputs

UNDP: On behalf of the RC Office will undertake background work, including preparation of ToRs for the Evaluation Team, work plan, securing the clearance of the ToR and participation of partners and stakeholders.

Evaluators: An initial note reflecting substantive and logistical issues, including the evaluation methodology that would have to be addressed in order to complete the evaluation successfully will be prepared and submitted by the Evaluation Team Leader to UNRC.

Draft evaluation report comprising all the above described components will be made available 3 working days prior to the scheduled completion date of the evaluation mission.

A plenary meeting with partners and stakeholders, including Government representatives to validate findings, lessons learned and recommendations will be held 1 working day prior to the scheduled completion date of the evaluation mission.

Project staff: The staff of the projects will provide relevant information/materials and necessary support in terms of logistics.

VII. Reference materials

The following documents should be studied by the evaluators:

1. UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results
2. UNDP Results-Based Management: Technical Note
3. Project Documents and relevant reports
4. Other documents and materials related to the project to be evaluated (from the government, donors, etc.)

Background documentation is available on www.un.md