

Terms of Reference

Independent Evaluation of the UNITAR Afghanistan Fellowship Programme

Background

1. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is a principal training arm of the United Nations, with the aim to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in achieving its major objectives through training and research. Learning outcomes are associated with about two-thirds of the Institute's 450-some events organized annually, with a cumulative outreach to over 40,000 individuals (including 25,000 learners). Approximately three-quarters of beneficiaries from learning-related programming are from developing countries. UNITAR training covers various thematic areas, including activities to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; multilateral diplomacy; public finance and trade; environment, including climate change, environmental law and governance, and chemicals and waste management; peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention; decentralized cooperation; and resilience and disaster risk reduction.
2. The Hiroshima Office is one of UNITAR's out-posted offices. As part of its programming, the Hiroshima Office has been delivering the **UNITAR Afghanistan Fellowship Programme** since 2003. The Fellowship Programme seeks to contribute to sustainable learning in the workplace and to build on the capacity of the Afghan civil service as it works to rely on its own ability and lessen its need to depend on the human resources and expertise provided by the international community. The Programme contributes to building capacities of a core group of senior government officials, academics and other practitioners from Afghanistan in diverse areas, including the following:
 - Organizational Development
 - Organizational Change
 - Project Design
 - Project Management
 - Human Resource Development
 - Human Resource Management
 - Accounting and Budgeting
 - Leading and Mentoring Teams for Development and Change
 - Team-building and Teamwork
 - Communication Skills
 - Strategic Planning
3. The Fellowship Programme has two long-term objectives:
 - To support Fellows in the application of their new knowledge and greater confidence to the transformation of their respective ministries and organizations; and
 - To build a committed and highly capable Fellowship community in Afghanistan which can serve as a resource for planning and implementing capacity-building and training activities at the local and national levels.

4. The seven-month long programme takes place on an annual basis and, since its launch in 2003, has completed nine cycles, reaching nearly 300 participants.

Purpose of the evaluation

5. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the UNITAR Afghanistan Fellowship Programme; to identify any problems or challenges that the Programme has encountered; and to issue recommendations, if needed, and lessons to be learned. The evaluation's purpose is thus to provide findings and conclusions to meet accountability requirements, and recommendations and lessons learned to contribute to programme improvement and organizational learning. The evaluation should not only assess how well the UNITAR Afghanistan Fellowship Programme has performed, but also seek to answer the 'why' question by identifying factors contributing to (or inhibiting) successful implementation and achievement of results.

Scope of the evaluation

6. The evaluation will cover the period from 2014 to 2017 and focus on the Programme's beneficiaries (fellows), the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired or developed through the Programme have been applied and have produced changes in the participants' respective organizational settings. The scope will also examine the progression of fellows to coaches and Afghan Resource Persons over the course of subsequent programmes.

Evaluation criteria

7. The evaluation will assess project performance using the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.
 - *Relevance: Is the UNITAR Afghanistan Fellowship Programme reaching its intended users and relevant to the beneficiaries' needs and priorities, including the organizations that the beneficiaries represent?*
 - *Effectiveness: To what extent has the programme produced its planned outputs and attained expected outcomes?*
 - *Efficiency: To what extent were the outputs being produced in a cost-effective manner?*
 - *Impact: What cumulative and/or long-term effects are expected from the Fellowship Programme, including contribution towards the intended impact, as well as positive or negative effects, or intended or unintended changes?*
 - *Sustainability: To what extent are the planned results likely to be sustained in the long term?*

Principal evaluation questions

8. The following questions are suggested to guide the evaluation:

Relevance

- a. *To what extent is the Fellowship Programme, as designed and implemented, aligned with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, including both male and female beneficiaries?*
- b. *To what extent are the objectives of the Fellowship Programme valid?*
- c. *Are the activities and outputs of the Fellowship Programme consistent with the overall goals and objectives?*
- d. *Were the activities and outputs of the Fellowship Programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?*

- e. *To what extent is the Fellowship Programme in alignment with UNITAR's mandate and strategic objectives?*
- f. *To what extent is the Fellowship Programme relevant to improving effective governance in Afghanistan?*
- g. *How was the intervention designed to contribute to human rights and gender related international agreements such as the Agenda 2030 and Goal 5?*
- h. *To what extent has the Fellowship Programme Coach and Mentor selection and acceptance been relevant for advancing gender equality?*

Effectiveness

- i. *To what extent has the Fellowship Programme contributed to sustainable learning in the workplace and developed the capacity of the Afghan civil service and civil society?*
- j. *To what extent has the Fellowship Programme been successful in supporting Fellows in the application of their knowledge and greater confidence to the transformation of their respective ministries and organizations, and in building a committed and highly capable Fellowship community in Afghanistan which can serve as a resource for planning and implementing capacity-building and training activities at the local and national levels?*
- k. *What factors have influenced the achievement (or non-achievement) of the Fellowship Programme's objectives?*
- l. *How effective has the Programme's methodology been to work with former Fellows as Coaches and eventually Afghan Resource Persons?*
- m. *How effective has the Fellowship Programme's methodology been to include both peer-, and mentor-reviews?*
- n. *To what extent were a human rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy incorporated in the design and implementation of the Fellowship Programme?*

Efficiency

- o. *To what extent have the outputs been produced in a cost-efficient manner (e.g. in comparison with alternative approaches)?*
- p. *Were the Fellowship Programme's outputs and objectives achieved on time?*
- q. *To what extent have partnerships or institutional collaborations been conducive to the efficient delivery of the Fellowship Programme and achievement of results?*

Impact

- r. *What observable end-results or organizational changes have occurred from the Fellowship Programme?*
- s. *What real difference has the Fellowship Programme made in supporting Fellows and building a fellowship community in Afghanistan?*

Sustainability

- t. *To what extent have the Fellowship Programme initiatives contributed to better governance of Afghanistan in the long term?*
- u. *What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the Fellowship Programme initiatives?*
- v. *How likely is it that enhanced leadership, management and professional skills of a core group of senior government officials, academics and practitioners from Afghanistan continue beyond the scope of the programme?*
- w. *What is the likelihood that the benefits of the Fellowship Programme will continue after donor funding ceases?*

- x. *To what extent is the Fellowship Programme likely to sustain its objectives and successes in the mid- to long-term?*

Project management, monitoring and self-assessment

9. The evaluation will also include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project management, monitoring and self-assessment, including the performance of implementation arrangements and partnerships. In particular, the evaluation will seek to answer the following questions:
- Has the Fellowship Programme management team been effective and efficient in supporting the implementation of the Fellowship Programme activities and delivery of results?*
 - How effective has the Fellowship Programme management been in coordinating the Fellowship Programme with the broader effective governance in Afghanistan?*

Evaluation Approach and Methods

10. The evaluation will be undertaken by a supplier an international consultant (the “evaluator”) under the overall responsibility of the UNITAR evaluation manager. The evaluation will be undertaken in accordance with the UNITAR Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework and the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.
11. The evaluation shall follow a participatory approach and engage a range of project stakeholders in the process. Data collection should be triangulated to the extent possible to ensure validity and reliability of findings and draw on the following methods: comprehensive desk review, including a stakeholder analysis; surveys; key informant interviews; focus groups; and field visits (given the current security situation in Afghanistan, alternative solutions shall be enquired). These data collection tools are discussed below.
12. The evaluator should engage in quantitative and qualitative analysis in responding to the principal evaluation questions and present the findings qualitatively or quantitatively as most appropriate.

Data collection methods:

Comprehensive desk review

The evaluator will compile, review and analyze background documents and secondary data/information related to the Fellowship Programme. A list of background documentation for the desk review is included in Annex A.

Stakeholder analysis

The evaluator will identify the different stakeholders involved in the Afghan fellowship programme. Key stakeholders at the global level include, but are not limited, to:

- Fellowship Programme team;
- The Aga Khan Foundation;
- The Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan;
- National Procurement Authority (NPA);
- University Support and Workforce Development Program;
- French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children (FMIC);
- Grand Technology Resources;

- Ministry of Higher Education;
- National Procurement Office;
- etc

Survey(s)

With a view to maximizing feedback from the widest possible range of project stakeholders, the consultants shall develop and deploy a survey(s) following the comprehensive desk study to provide an initial set of findings and allow the evaluator to easily probe during the key informant interviews.

Key informant interviews

Based on stakeholder identification, the evaluator will identify and interview key informants. The list of global focal points is available in Annex B. In preparation for the interviews with key informants, the consultant will define interview protocols to determine the questions and modalities with flexibility to adapt to the particularities of the different informants, either at the global or at the national level.

Focus groups

Focus groups should be organized with selected project stakeholders at the global and national levels to complement/triangulate findings from other collection tools.

Field visit

Given the current security situation in Afghanistan, field visits will most likely not take place. Interviews with key informants can instead be organized through telephone and/or skype.

Identify and interview key informants (national)

Based on the stakeholder analysis, the evaluator will identify national informants, whom he/she will interview. The list of national focal points is available in Annex B.

Gender and human rights

13. The evaluator should incorporate human rights, gender and equity perspectives in the evaluation process and findings, particularly by involving women and other disadvantaged groups subject to discrimination. All key data collected shall be disaggregated by sex and age grouping, and be included in the draft and final evaluation report.
14. The guiding principles for the evaluation should respect transparency, engage stakeholders and beneficiaries; ensure confidentiality of data and anonymity of responses; and follow ethical and professional standards.

Timeframe, work plan, deliverables and review

15. The proposed timeframe for the evaluation spans from January (initial desk review and data collection) to March 2018 (submission of final evaluation report). An indicative work plan is provided in the table below.
16. The consultant shall submit a brief Evaluation design/question matrix following the comprehensive desk study, stakeholder analysis and initial key informant interviews. The Evaluation design/question matrix should include a discussion on the evaluation objectives, methods and, if required, revisions to the suggested evaluation questions or data collection methods. The Evaluation design/question matrix should indicate any foreseen difficulties or challenges in collecting data and confirm the final timeframe for the completion of the evaluation exercise.
17. Following data collection and analysis, the consultant shall submit a zero draft of the evaluation report to the evaluation manager and revise the draft based on comments made by the evaluation manager.
18. The draft evaluation report should follow the structure presented under Annex C. The report should state the purpose of the evaluation and the methods used, and include a discussion on the limitations to the evaluation. The report should present evidence-based and balanced findings, including strengths and weaknesses, consequent conclusions and recommendations, and lessons to be learned. The length of the report should be approximately 20-30 pages, excluding annexes.
19. Following the submission of the zero draft, a draft report will then be submitted to the Hiroshima Office to review and comment on the draft report and provide any additional information using the form provided under Annex D by 4 May 2018. Within two weeks of receiving feedback, the evaluator shall submit the final evaluation report. The target date for this submission is 31 May 2018.

Indicative timeframe: January – May 2018

Activity	January	February	March	April	May
Evaluator selected and recruited					
Initial data collection, including desk review, stakeholder analysis					
Evaluation design/question matrix					
Data collection and analysis, including survey(s), interviews and focus groups					
Zero draft report submitted to UNITAR					
Draft evaluation report consulted with UNITAR evaluation manager and submitted to project Steering Committee					
Project Steering Committee reviews draft evaluation report and share comments and recommendations					
Evaluation report finalized and validated by project Steering Committee					

Summary of evaluation deliverables and schedule

Deliverable	From	To	Deadline
Evaluation design/question matrix	Evaluator	Evaluation manager	23 February 2018
Comments on Evaluation design/question matrix	Evaluation manager/ Hiroshima Office	Evaluator	9 March 2018
Zero draft report	Evaluator	Evaluation manager	6 April 2018
Comments on zero draft	Evaluation manager	Evaluator	20 April 2018
Draft report	Evaluator	Evaluation manager Hiroshima Office	4 May 2018
Comments on draft report	Hiroshima Office	Evaluation manager/ evaluator	18 May 2018
Final report	Evaluator	Evaluation manager/ Hiroshima Office	31 May 2018

Communication/dissemination of results

20. The final evaluation report will be shared with all Fellowship Programme partners and be posted on an online repository of evaluation reports open to the public.

Professional requirements

21. The evaluator should have the following qualifications and experience:
 - MA degree or equivalent in international relations, political science, development or a related discipline. Training and/or experience in the area of governance and/or post conflict reconstruction would be a clear advantage.
 - At least 7 years of professional experience conducting evaluation in the field of capacity building, sustainable learning, governance and community building
 - Technical knowledge of the focal area
 - Field work experience in developing countries
 - Excellent research and analytical skills, including experience in a variety of evaluation methods and approaches
 - Excellent writing skills
 - Strong communication and presentation skills
 - Cross-cultural awareness and flexibility
 - Availability to travel
 - Fluency in English. Knowledge of Pashto or Dari desirable.

Contractual arrangements

22. The evaluator will be contracted by UNITAR and will report directly to the Manager of the Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Section ('evaluation manager'). The evaluator should consult with the evaluation manager on any procedural or methodological matter requiring attention. The evaluator is responsible for planning any meetings, organizing online surveys and undertaking administrative arrangements for any travel that may be required (e.g. accommodation, visas, etc.). The travel arrangements will be in accordance with the UN rules and regulations for consultants.

Evaluator Ethics

23. The evaluator selected should not have participated in the project's design or implementation or have a conflict of interest with project related activities. The selected consultant shall sign and return a copy of the code of conduct under Annex F prior to initiating the assignment.

Annexes:

- A: List of documents and data to be reviewed**
- B: List of Fellowship Programme Partners and Contact Points**
- C: Structure of evaluation report**
- D: Audit trail**
- E: Evaluator code of conduct**

Annex A: List of documents/data to be reviewed

- *Afghanistan Fellowship* Reports, including financial reports
- *Afghanistan Fellowship* Agreements with various donors
- Content of *Afghanistan Fellowship* website
<https://www.unitar.org/hiroshima/Post-Conflict-Reconstruction-and-UNITAR-Fellowship-for-Afghanistan>
- <http://www.unitar.org/unitar-afghanistan-fellowship-programme-2016-cycle-commences>
- Database of *Afghanistan Fellowship* cycle events
- Content from workshop events
- Any other document deemed to be useful to the evaluation

Annex B: List of *Afghanistan Fellowship* Contact Points (to be updated)

Partners	
Organization	Focal Point

Annex C: Structure of evaluation report

- i. Title page
- ii. Executive summary
- iii. Acronyms and abbreviations
1. Introduction
2. Project description, objectives and development context
3. Theory of change/project design logic
4. Methodology and limitations
5. Evaluation findings based on criteria/principal evaluation questions
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations
8. Lessons Learned
9. Annexes
 - a. Terms of reference
 - b. Survey/questionnaires deployed
 - c. List of persons interviewed
 - d. List of documents reviewed
 - e. Evaluation question matrix
 - f. Evaluation consultant agreement form

Annex E: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form *

The evaluator:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. He/she should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. He/she must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. He/she are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncovers evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. He/she should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he/she must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. He/she should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom he/she comes in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, he/she should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Is responsible for his/her performance and his/her product(s). He/she is responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form¹

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at place on date

Signature: _____

*This form is required to be signed by each evaluator involved in the evaluation.

¹www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct