
Assessment of Development Results at the Country Level: Strategy & Options

By Osvaldo Feinstein for UNDP's Evaluation Office

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Executive Summary

This report proposes an Integrated Participatory Evaluation Strategy (IPES). The IPES framework is used to consider options for a specific type of evaluation conducted by EO, the Assessment of Development Results at the country level (ADRs). The report attempts to clarify issues, such as the purpose of ADRs and their expected uses, selection of countries and themes, ways to promote their use, relation of ADRs with other types of evaluations, and different types of ADRs. Different options can be considered as consisting of a set of alternatives with different degrees of integration among EO's products (different types of evaluations) and services (in particular, evaluation quality assurance), various degrees and types of participation of different institutions/organizations in the evaluation process, alternative ADR "product mixes" and different evaluation processes. The option recommended in order to enhance the quality of EO's ADRs in a cost-efficient way is one that integrates ADRs with Thematic Evaluations and with EO's Quality Assurance services in order to maximize EO's contribution to development effectiveness.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADR	Assessment of Development Results at the country level
CO	Country Office (UNDP)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group
EO	Evaluation Office (UNDP)
IPES	Integrated Participatory Evaluation Strategy
RB	Regional Bureau (UNDP)
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

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1. *Introduction*¹

UNDP's Evaluation Office (EO) has conducted 15 Assessment of Development Results (ADRs) at the country level. This paper is based on interviews with UNDP staff and consultants (see Annex 3), a desk review of relevant documentation (see references at the end of the paper), and the experience of other organizations. It discusses and attempts to clarify a number of issues corresponding to EO's ADR experience (which were raised during the consultation process to prepare this paper), suggests ways to deal with them, and proposes a set of options for ADRs. Finally, one of these options is recommended in order to enhance the quality of EO's ADRs in a cost-efficient way. A by-product of this work on ADRs is a set of suggestions on how EO can integrate its evaluation activities in order to maximize their synergies, thus increasing EO's overall effectiveness.

The paper starts with a clarification of the purpose of ADRs. It continues with a discussion of the expected uses of ADRs and on the criteria for country selection. It then proceeds to consider the selection of ADR themes as a way to ensure the relevance of this type of evaluation. The paper continues with a presentation of different stages in the ADR evaluation process, with suggestions for each of them, and with a proposal the integration of ADRs with thematic evaluations and with EO's quality assurance and enhancement activities at the country level. This is followed by a discussion of the compatibility of a process of ADR consultations and the independence of this type of evaluations. The themes and level of analysis of the ADRs is the next topic, after which three different types of ADRs are presented. The subsequent issues considered in the report are: period and frame of reference, management response, ADR quality assurance and enhancement, difference and relations between ADRs, outcome, UNDAF & UNEG evaluations, resources for ADRs, and communication, dissemination and outreach. The paper concludes with a section on issues and options, which are discussed a set of twelve steps corresponding to the four phases of the ADRs, i.e., the pre-preparatory stage, the preparatory phase, the "conducting ADR" phase and the "follow-up" phase. Though the report makes several comments on the ADRs' experience, it should not be considered a review of ADRs²

2 *Purpose of ADRs:*

¹ ***Acknowledgements:*** the orientation and support from Ruth E. Abraham, EO's Task Manager, is gratefully acknowledged. Fadzai Gwaradzimba also provided valuable insights just before her exit from EO. Saraswathi Menon, Nurul Alam, Juha Uitto, Oscar Garcia, Michael Constable, David Rider Smith, Sukai Prem-Jackson, Khaled Ehsan and S.Nanthikesan shared their knowledge, experience and views concerning ADRs. The people interviewed for this assignment, whose names appear in Annex A, are also thanked for their time and insights. Last but not least, Cecilia Corpus provided excellent logistical support. This consultancy was done in 19 days during the period January – March 7, 2006.

² For a review of ADRs, see Gwaradzimba (2005). Reviews of development agencies' experience with country programme evaluations that are worthwhile to consult are those included in DAC (1999), EO (2004c) and World Bank (2005).

A first issue that needs clarification is the purpose of ADRs. Several questions were raised during the first phase of this consultancy: should ADRs be for learning or for accountability, or for some combination of learning and accountability, with an emphasis on the former or on the latter? Which are the relationships with outcome evaluations and with country program evaluations? (the draft evaluation policy made reference to CPEs and ADRs, indicating that ADRs are included within CPEs, whereas another view is that CPEs and ADRs are the same type of evaluation, and a third view is that CPEs are, or should be, part of a full-fledged ADR).

If the ADR is conceived as EO's assessment of development results at the country level³, with emphasis on UNDP's country programme (though in the broader context of development effectiveness) it becomes clear that an ADR is indeed a country programme evaluation (CPE), which is independent (in contrast with the former country programme reviews and with outcome evaluations) and that given its focus on development results at the country level it has to contextualize UNDP's country programme in the broader context of the country's development challenges (the "relevance" question; in order to emphasize the importance of considering also UNDP's value added by the intervention, its criticality and potential for scaling-up, ADRs could refer to "strategic relevance" rather than just to "relevance"). Furthermore, by taking into account the interventions of other development agencies, the ADR would be able to provide insights concerning UNDP's strategic positioning in the country and on the eventual need for its repositioning.

This type of learning concerning the orientation of the country programme should be complemented by the learning that arises from the assessment of the extent to which the country programmes' objectives were achieved, and the reasons for any shortfalls. Though the assessment of the achievements of objectives is frequently seen as an accountability analysis - see for example the DAC Peer Assessment (2006) - , it is also an important dimension of the learning process, in order to know what worked (what could be achieved), what didn't and why. Learning and accountability are thus like two sides of the same coin (or the left and right wheels of the development vehicle), rather than two different purposes on which a choice needs to be made.

Summing-up,

the **PURPOSE** of ADRs is to provide an independent assessment of development results at the country level, with particular emphasis on UNDP's country programmes, assessing their relevance and effectiveness, and thus to contribute to accountability and to learning from experience, taking into account self-evaluations (such as project and outcome evaluations) and the role of development partners (government and development agencies)

³ ADRs at the country level are complemented by assessments at the regional and the global level, which focus on the Regional and the Global Cooperation Frameworks.

The intended uses of ADRs are discussed in the next section, whereas ways to promote these uses are considered below, in section 15.

3. *Expected uses of ADRs and country selection*

Anticipating the expected uses of ADRs is important in order to design ADRs, and the ADR process, in such a way that “expected use” will become “actual use”. If ADRs are conducted in such a way that their purpose is fulfilled, then it is likely that they would become useful tools for strategic repositioning of UNDP’s country programmes (or, eventually, for confirmation of the appropriateness of UNDP’s positioning at the country level in specific cases). To increase the probability of a convergence between expected and actual use, it is crucial to select strategically both the ADRs countries and themes.

A fundamental aspect to take into account in planning ADRs is the decision making process at UNDP, so that the ADRs can feed into it, maximizing its expected value added. Thus, the following elements should be considered:

a) the country programme cycle, timing the ADRs so that they would become available by the time the country programme is reaching its completion and a new one has to be designed.

b) the expected change of a Resident Coordinator, as it is more likely that a new management would be more open to introduce changes in the country programme (i.e., less path-dependent)⁴

c) strategic importance of the country, either given UNDP's programme's size or the country's characteristics (for example, if it is a country of low HIV prevalence, and for the HIV UNDP practice it is very important to get evidence on what is happening in this type of countries).

d) availability of information (this is not a necessary condition, but it may be the “tipping reason” to decide on one country rather than on another, if all other conditions - a, b and c- are similar).

Whereas these criteria refer to individual countries, it is also worthwhile to consider criteria corresponding to the set of countries to be chosen for ADRs. Thus, the following could be added to the previous four:

- e) middle-income countries
- f) transition countries
- g) landlocked countries
- d) post-conflict countries

⁴ Indeed, this applies also to the "windows of opportunity" that are created by new governments; as pointed out recently in a discussion on lessons from country programme evaluations by Miguel Urrutia Montoya, the General Manager of the Central Bank of Colombia, "in democracies, reforms can be put through much more effectively in the first months of office" – see Chhibber et.al.(2006), p.68, and a similar comment, drawing on other experiences, by Masood Ahmed, in Chhibber et.al.(2006), p.28,

It is to be noted that the use of explicit criteria for country selection enhances the perception of independence of the evaluation function (in addition to increasing the probability that the ADR would make a significant contribution/value added).

Ensuring the timeliness of ADRs is one of the crucial ways to make them more useful. In addition, it is of course important to maximize the relevance of ADRs, and this will be address in the following section.

4. *Relevance of ADRs and selection of ADR themes*

UNDP is operating in 5 basic areas or “practices”. The 5 Practices, in turn, are decomposed into 32 service lines. By covering these “practices”, and evaluating what worked and what didn’t, and why, the ADRs could generate evidence on the presumed comparative advantages of UNDP, trying to identify what worked best in which context, thus making them highly relevant.

Furthermore, by proceeding in this way, it would be possible to “mine” the ADRs for thematic evaluations (or for thematic notes), and each ADR would be providing evidence for thematic evaluations, becoming a sort of “case study” (below this will be further explored, given the potential for increased depth of ADRs and possible efficiency gains that can be obtained through joint planning of ADRs and Thematic Evaluations).

In addition to the 5 Practices, the information search (including the literature review) done during the preparatory stage of the ADR), and the field work, may help to identify areas of importance for UNDP that may not have been considered so far in country programmes, and this could lead to a recommendation for their possible inclusion in future country programmes, becoming one of the ADR’s themes.

Summing- up,

the **USE** of ADRs to contribute to the UNDP’s strategic repositioning, by providing timely and relevant information for the preparation of country programs and for the review of UNDP’s practices, and by generating evidence on UNDP’s comparative advantages, depends to a great extent on the appropriate selection of countries and themes to be covered by ADRs, and on the processes followed in their planning, conduct and communication

5. *ADR Evaluation Process*

As indicated in the preceding box, the ADR processes will determine to a great extent the actual use of ADRs for decision making, in particular for strategic repositioning. Therefore, it is worthwhile to review the current ADR processes and to identify areas where there is scope for improvement

i) Currently EO carries out in-house consultation with regional bureaux during the process of country selection for ADRs. But this consultation is not done systematically, with a set of explicit criteria to guide it (such as those mentioned above, in section 3); furthermore, it is also important to engage in a systematic up-front consultation to identify key issues to be addressed by the ADRs, before the TORs are drawn and the profile of evaluation mission members defined. The upfront consultation should include the regional focal points of the community of practices (for those regional bureaux that have focal points), trying to identify key assumptions/hypotheses of the country programs, and with a view to elaborate a set of key evaluation questions that could help in generating evidence on the assumed UNDP's comparative advantages. These consultations should also help to develop, and manage, appropriate expectations concerning the ADR reports, and to mobilize CO support for them, minimizing the risks of misunderstandings concerning the purposes of the ADR.

ii) A critical aspect of the ADR process is the information search, once the country for the ADR has been identified. In order to manage the risk of information overload, it would be highly convenient to prioritize the documents, identifying those that are of crucial importance for the ADR. The search should try to identify evaluations done by evaluation offices/departments of development agencies (multilaterals and bilaterals), as well as the type of materials that are traditionally included in literature reviews. There are several websites, and servers-of-servers (such as www.google.com), that allow for a cost-efficient search (see Annex F). Furthermore, it is worthwhile to include in the search the country office audit reports done by UNDP's Audit Office -the first area of these audits includes a verification of the information on results; see OAPR(2003)-. Last but not least, it is important to search for data on UNDP's portfolio (and on self-evaluations of projects/programs that are part of this portfolio and which may have been carried out during the period covered by the ADR; in some cases it may be that for this and other information UNDP's SURF system could be of help⁵).

iii) The preparatory phase could also include a consultation with partner evaluation agencies (of the UN system, multilateral development banks and bilaterals, through UNEG, ECG and the DAC Network on Development Evaluation), informing them of the planned ADR(s) and asking them if they are also planning or currently conducting or had recently finalized country evaluations for those countries. It is not convenient to wait for the UNEG or ECG or DAC Network meetings to send this communication, because it may then be too late for an eventual coordination of a joint or parallel evaluation. This consultation with partner evaluation agencies may also help in the information search (in addition to exploring the possibility for pursuing joint evaluation opportunities).

iv) A half-day entry workshop in the ADR country could be done towards the end of the ADR preparatory phase, and before drawing the full-fledged TOR of the

⁵ The potential role of the SURFs was highlighted at the M&E workshop for COs in the Latin American and Caribbean Region; see UNDP(2005c), p.8

mission and the recruitment of the full mission. It is worthwhile to invite to this workshop government representatives, think tanks, research institutions, NGOs, representatives of other development agencies based in the country, local evaluation professionals or evaluation association/ networks and, of course, UNDP's country office representatives. This event would be helpful in developing country ownership, signalling the participatory approach used by EO, eliciting useful evaluation questions and completing the preparatory information search, including the identification of suitable good consultants (individuals and/or organizations; in addition, entry workshop participants could be asked to provide references to relevant documentation, including university theses).

This workshop could start with a presentation of the objectives of the ADR, a brief presentation of UNDP's portfolio in the country during the period that will be assessed, the issues that were so far identified (if possible, grouping them according to each of the UNDP's practice areas). Workshop participants will be asked to comment and to present their views on which issues they consider that should be taken into account by the ADR, indicating any relevant evaluation that had been done (or will be starting)

v). It would be highly convenient to combine the entry-workshop with an evaluation capacity development (ECD) activity, which could be an evaluation training workshop back-to-back with the entry workshop (for example, the afternoon of the same day that the entry workshop will be held). This ECD activity would be useful in developing a common knowledge and language with local teams. By doing this, EO would be implementing its mandate (as established in UNDP's evaluation policy) to strengthen local evaluation capacities and, as a by-product, it would facilitate the future ADR work by developing good-will towards the mission (that would not only be "extracting" information but also contributing to the development of local capacities). Finally, this ECD activity may also help in identifying local teams/individuals that could participate in the evaluation team and/or contribute with a background study.

vi) Before finalizing the report, and with the purpose to validate findings and to enhance country ownership, an exit workshop could be held in the country, including stakeholders, think tanks, and most of the people/organizations that were invited to the entry workshop. It would be worthwhile to explore always the possibility of a joint workshop with partners, presenting not only the ADR but also another evaluation at the country level (or even a sort of outcome, partial or focused country evaluation) from another development agency, so as to facilitate the consideration of different perspectives.⁶

6. *Planning ADRs jointly with other key EO activities at the country level*

An implication of the ADR process describe above, in particular under 5i) and 5ii), is that it would be worthwhile to plan the ADRs jointly with thematic evaluations

⁶ Though "communication, outreach, and dissemination" is another dimension of the ADR process, in order to facilitate the flow of the presentation it would be discussed below in section 15. See also below, in section 16, the description of the ADR evaluation process in twelve consecutive steps.

and with evaluation quality assurance/ enhancement at the country level. In this way EO would achieve synergies that could lead to better results with the possibility of cost savings. For example, if a decision is made to conduct an ADR in a country in which environment and/or energy represent a significant part of UNDP's portfolio, a thematic study on environment/energy could be conducted in that country, which may feed a thematic study on environment/energy (one of the 5 practices); thus, the thematic study on environment/energy in country X would be, at the same time, a building block for the ADR in that country and for a thematic study (and/or a thematic note – see below, section 15).

Furthermore, once it is decided that an ADR would be carry out in country X (or in a cluster of countries), it would be worthwhile if EO could provide evaluation capacity building support to carry out outcome evaluations (and some more general ECB support) in that country, so that this work could also support the ADRs. The crucial bottom-up assessment of the development impact and results of UNDP activities can be jeopardized if there are no project and program evaluations available to the ADR team⁷.

Thus, by integrating the three cluster of activities in a single country, EO could achieve a sort of “critical mass” effect, promoting synergies among these different activities, which could lead to higher quality results, creating also opportunities for cost savings (for example, in the search for information). A possible downside of this approach is that it may appear as if EO would reduce its country coverage. However, by increasing the number of "focused ADRs", which could correspond to a great extent to thematic evaluations, through adequate planning this risk may be avoided and turn into an opportunity to increase the total number of ADRs (including both, comprehensive and focused) at the thematic and the country level⁸.

Finally, taking into account the way the regional bureaux plan their own work, and the degree of predictability within the UNDP organizational framework, it may be worthwhile to plan ADRs with a three years time horizon. This would facilitate the preparation process of ADRs, and their integration with thematic studies within a three years rolling programme, which could facilitate the identification of opportunities for joint evaluation.

7. *Independence of the ADR and consultations with Operations staff*

⁷ This was the case in the Turkey ADR. See Linn (2004), p.3. See also Evaluation Office, UNDP (2004), p.65 and UNDP (2005a), p.8, which makes the same case for the Asia & Pacific Region, whereas the Bangladesh ADR points out the way in which under the leadership of a newly arrived Resident Representative a series of evaluations was carried out, on the basis of which nine non-performing projects were closed, releasing resources for other projects; see EO (2005b), pp. 57 & 58.

⁸ Of course, the "cluster ADRs" would also help in increasing the number of countries covered by ADRs.

The ADR process, as described in section 5, involves significant interactions with Operations staff (regional bureaux, country offices, UNDP practices)⁹. Given that sometimes evaluators are concerned that consultations with operations staff may jeopardize the independence of the evaluation function, it is worthwhile to attempt to clarify the issue. The important point to bear in mind is that in so far as evaluators do not participate in the decision-making process concerning operations (and vice versa), consultations of evaluators with operations staff would not jeopardize the independence of evaluators. Furthermore, these consultations, and a more participatory approach, would contribute to develop ownership of the evaluation, increasing the probability that the evaluation would address key questions and that it would be used for learning.

An aspect that is crucial with respect to independence is the selection of the evaluation team. It is important to ensure that none of the members of the evaluation team have a conflict of interest due to their involvement in decision making concerning the design or implementation of the operations/programmes that will be evaluated¹⁰.

8. *Themes and level of analysis of the ADRs*

The consultative/participatory process presented in section 5, and the information search, will facilitate the identification of the themes that the ADR should cover. Except in the case of “focused ADRs” (see below section 9), ADRs should cover all (currently five) UNDP “practices”. Whenever possible, depending particularly on the composition of UNDP’s portfolio in the country (which should be analyzed in the preparatory phase of the ADR; see section 5 ii), the analysis should reach the level of “service lines” (there are in total 32 service lines). If ADRs could produce evidence at this kind of “meso” level of analysis, they could contribute to the process of UNDP strategic repositioning in the country, as well as to an enriched discussion of UNDP’s actual comparative advantages.

Furthermore, in addition to the practice areas it would also be appropriate to include among the core ADR’s thematic coverage, the consideration of gender issues, capacity development and the coordinating role of UNDP.

Another aspect to take into account when deciding the specific themes of the ADRs are the themes of the National Human Development Report (if there are plans to prepare one for the ADR countries).¹¹ In the same way, the theme of the planned UNDP’s flagship, the “Human Development Report” (HDR), could be used as one of the criteria to decide on subjects for thematic and strategic evaluations, so as to be able to contribute to it with evaluative evidence. If some ADRs could be planned and finalized in time to

⁹ It is worthwhile to note that the World Bank’s Country Assistance Evaluation Retrospective pointed out that there was a widespread perception that more interactions with country teams during the preparation of these evaluations (similar to the ADRs at the country level) would enhance both their quality and the acceptance of their findings; see World Bank (2005).

¹⁰ As stated in the DAC Glossary, “independent evaluation” is “an evaluation carried out by entities and persons free of the control of those responsible for the design and implementation of the development intervention” .See DAC (2002), p.24. and UNEG (2005a) pp. 8 &9..

contribute to a thematic study that would aim to provide inputs to UNDP's HDR, their usefulness and visibility would be significantly enhanced.

Finally, a key question that the ADR evaluation team should bear in mind during its work is "what would have happened without the UNDP country programme?", that is, the "counterfactual" question. Some agencies have preferred to avoid dealing with this question because they are concerned that this would obliged them to develop or use computable general equilibrium (CGE) models or other complex tools which may be impractical given the multiple constraints faced in their evaluation work (including among them a binding resource and time constraint). However, what is important is to keep the question in mind when searching for evidence (including evidence on the role of external factors and of other development organizations), as this would help in guiding the evaluators to look for plausible rival hypotheses, and would make the evaluation more credible and less vulnerable to the criticism that other factors should have been considered. In some cases it may be that results could have deteriorated had it not been for UNDP's intervention, and if this can be shown to be the case, then the lack of negative results would be a significant accomplishment (and it would have been missed if no attention had been paid to the counterfactual question). Finally, it should be noted that Country Programmes may often provide the counterfactual, through their explicit and/or implicit rationale for the programme. The WB Country Assistance Retrospective refers to "embedded counterfactuals", and though it makes a similar point (which should be indeed credited to Greg Ingram), it does not establish the connection with the country programme's rationale; see World Bank (2005), p.18. This is an important aspect to be included in the methodological approach to ADRs; despite that the ADR methodology is not the subject of this consultancy, several parts of this report may be of help in facing the ADR's methodological challenges; an open or dynamic "logic model" (which would take into account the role of external factors and other partners, as well as the dynamic processes that can be launched by be one of the useful methodological tools that may be used for the ADRs. A brief description of the standard "logic model" can be seen in http://www.managementhelp.org/np_progs/np_mod/org_frm.htm and in <http://www.performanceweb.org/research/logicmodel.html>, See also World Bank (2005).

9. *Types of ADRs*

Though some attempts have been made to consider an ADR typology including country office managed evaluations of country programmes, and "light" evaluations, both UNDP's and other agencies' experience suggest that this is not convenient: the former blurs the distinction between self and independent evaluation; in fact, a UNDP country office managed evaluation of a country programme can certainly become a crucial building block of an ADR for that same country, or EO could just limit itself to "validate" or not that self-evaluation. On the other hand, "light" evaluations may jeopardize the reputation of the evaluation office, and their very name may quickly elicit a critique, particularly if the "light" evaluation is critical of the country programme.

What can be done is to distinguish between ADRs which cover all components of UNDP's portfolio (type 1 ADRs), and ADRs of limited scope (type 2 ADRs), that

consider all components of UNDP's country portfolio only for the strategic relevance assessment (for example, to determine if a key area was left out), but which then focus only on a subset practice areas. For example, the latter type of ADR in country X could be restricted to development results in the "energy and environment for sustainable development" and in the "governance" practice area, without assessing results in the remaining areas. In some cases these ADRs may consist just in the validation of outcome evaluations (self-evaluations) carried out in the ADR country.

A third type would be cluster ADRs, which could be done in the case of very small countries/territories, where UNDP may not have country offices or programs in each of them, or where the countries are contiguous and the size of the programs is very small. In any of these cases it is likely that economies of scale would justify the undertaking of a "cluster ADR", which could be either comprehensive or focused, depending on the circumstances and constraints (time and resources).

When there is a very short-term window of opportunity for an ADR, a type 1 ADR may not be feasible. Under these circumstances, a type 2 ADR would be an appropriate option. This could also be the case if there is a binding resource constraint and a need to deliver a certain number of ADRs within that budget constraint. Furthermore, in those cases where in addition to resource and time constraints ADRs are being considered for a set of neighbouring countries where UNDP's programs are small, a cluster ADR would be appropriate.

10. Period, Frame of Reference and Assessment of Intended Results

ADRs should cover the period corresponding to the last country programme, including its links with the preceding one. A good example is the ADR for Mozambique, which considers the Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) for 2002-2006 and the CCF 1998-2001; the evaluation was completed in 2004; see EO (2004 b). The framework of reference should be UNDP's country programme(s), with its corresponding intended results/objectives, assumptions and interventions.

One of the aspects that the ADRs should assess is whether intended results have been achieved. To show that this is not yet completely clear, it is worthwhile to consider the following quote from the DAC Peer Assessment of evaluation in UNDP: "EO's working methodology is unclear and inconsistent on the extent to which they should assess whether intended results have been achieved (...) The EO will be revising its guidance on country programme evaluations in early 2006, but the intended emphasis and approach for examining whether or not intended achievements have been met are not yet clear" (see Peer Assessment (2006), p.26, para.68)

It is important to ensure that there is no doubt that ADRs should assess whether intended results have been achieved (in some cases it may be that the "results" are too vaguely formulated, but this would indeed be an important aspect of the assessment).

Furthermore, the DAC Peer Assessment concludes that the lack of emphasis on evaluating against intended results is due to a relatively low priority accorded to accountability for the UNDP's evaluation system and the much greater emphasis on lessons learning alone; see Peer Assessment (2006), p.33, para.73. However, for lessons learning it is also very important to know if intended results were achieved, or not, in which context(s) and why. Indeed, this could be one of the most important pieces of evidence that ADRs could generate. Therefore, accountability complements learning.

Finally, ADRs should also assess the relevance of country programme objectives. For this purpose, the ADR should also take into account the CCF/CFF, the MYFF, the CCA and the UNDAF (when it is available). As stated in the CCA and UNDAF Guidelines for UN Country Teams, "CCAs provide the rationale for UN operations in the country concerned while the UNDAF indicates their strategic direction and expected results" –as quoted in Freeman(2005, p.20). Furthermore, the ADR should also consider the MDGs at the country level and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), in those country for which there is one.

11. *Management and Government response*

It would be important to request a management response from the country office and the regional bureau, providing a mutually agreed deadline counted from the time at which the ADR report is delivered (it would be worthwhile to include a standard deadline, for example 3 weeks, for the management response in UNDP's evaluation policy). Though some organizations, like the World Bank, expect a single, consolidated, management response, this practice requires more time and staff to handle the response, and, on the other hand, may not induce the knowledge spill-overs from one country to others in the same region (and eventually to other regions) as when the regional bureau is requested to focus on the ADR (or it would have much less impact on the country programme if the country office is not requested to contribute to the management response).

At the same time, EO should commit to a timeline for the delivery of the report. The management response should be perceived by UNDP management (and EO should convey this message and try to develop this perception) as a sort of stepping stone for the country office and/or the regional bureau in **their** process of defining or redefining the country programme. Governments should also be given a standard deadline, and if their response does not arrive in time, after an extra period of 2 weeks, the report could be issued without the government response¹².

12. *ADR Quality assurance and enhancement*

¹² A variant of Parkinson's law frequently holds: the time that it takes for a management or government response is the time that is allocated to it. Therefore, a deadline helps to shorten drastically the waiting period, that may jeopardize the timeliness of the ADR report.

From a quality assurance and enhancement perspective, it is highly convenient to ensure that ADRs are peer reviewed by an external and an internal reviewer (the latter from UNDP), if possible with expertise and experience in both evaluation and the country of the ADR. For the country programmes of bigger size, and for countries whose context is particularly complex, an advisory panel, composed with about four experts with different perspectives, could play a helpful role. The reviewers (and/or the Panel) should be involved during the preparatory phase, at the time of discussing the core of the general Terms of Reference for the mission (which corresponds to a sort of “approach paper”) and once the first draft becomes available.

It should be noted that, in addition to their contribution in assuring and enhancing the quality of ADRs, the participation of peer reviewers and/or of an advisory panel adds credibility to the evaluation.

13. Differences and relations between ADRs, Outcome, UNDAF & UNEG evaluations

During the consultations for the preparation of this paper, one of the issues that appeared in need of clarification is the relation between different types of evaluation¹³.

The relationship between ADRs and Outcome evaluations was discussed above: whereas the former is an independent evaluation, the latter is a self-evaluation; furthermore, except in the case of a focused ADR, the scope of the outcome evaluation would be narrower than that of the ADR. Finally, whenever outcome evaluations are available, they are important building blocks, or underpinnings, for ADRs, and, indeed, whenever possible it would make sense to support the production of Outcome evaluations in countries where an ADR will be conducted. This would allow the ADRs to synthesize a richer knowledge base¹⁴

The UNDAF evaluation, as indicated in the "UNDAF Evaluation Guidelines for Terms of Reference", will only take place where an UNDAF and UNDAF Results Matrix, and UNDAF M&E Plan exist (in the six pages of these guidelines there is not a single reference to the evaluation offices of the UN agencies, and indeed the UNDAF evaluation may be considered a self-evaluation.) Whenever available, it would have a particular value in terms of analyzing UNDP’s performance vis-à-vis that of the other UN agencies included in the UNDAF evaluation. When there is an UNDAF and a UNDAF

¹³ The need for this clarification was also voiced in the regional workshops on results-oriented monitoring and evaluation convened by UNDP in 2005; see, for example, UNDP (2005b), p.10

¹⁴ An important aspect of the ADR is to synthesize (and/or validate) information contained in self-evaluations, so, in principle, the richer the self-evaluation base, the richer the synthesis. Though it is not infrequent that the term “meta-evaluation” is used to refer to an “evaluation synthesis”, as it is done in the “Generic UNDP Guidelines for Meta-Evaluation” (a document on which detailed comments could be made available if requested), it is better to reserve the term “meta-evaluation” to the evaluation of evaluations, the second meaning refer to in the “Generic Guidelines”. A clarification on this issue is provided in Frans Leeuw and Leslie Cooksy, “Evaluating the performance of development agencies: the role of meta-evaluations”, in Pitman, Feinstein and Ingram (2005), pp. 95-108

Results Matrix, but not an UNDAF evaluation, it would be important for the ADR to take into account the UNDAF documents as part of its framework of reference

With respect to future UNEG evaluations at the country level, one option is to consider that UNEG joint evaluations would replace UNDP's ADRs. Though this would be desirable from the point of view of assessing development results at the country level, there are some practical considerations that should be taken into account. In fact, as observed in the paper prepared for the UNEG working group on country-level evaluations, "all the agencies interviewed pointed to practical constraints relating to their accountability requirements, organizational set-up, evaluation planning and budgeting system and human and financial resources which will make it necessary to adjust the evaluations put forward if they are to attract sufficient support"¹⁵. It should be pointed out that the UNEG paper does not deal with those constraints, and indeed it identifies another important factor: "especially for the smaller agencies interviewed – including those without formal representation at country level- evaluation resources are often allocated by their governing bodies on the explicit understanding that their primary use is to assess, report on and lead to improvements in agency performance.(...).They will need to be able to demonstrate the link between the proposed evaluations and their own accountability requirements"¹⁶.

If these practical limitations are overcome, then UNEG joint evaluations at the country level would provide an opportunity to assess more in depth the contribution of the UN system as a whole, and they could also allow for cost-sharing. The 12 steps indicated below for UNDP's ADRs could then be applied, with minor adaptations, to UNEG joint assessments of development results at the country level (see also below, in section 16, option 5, last row of the table of organizational options for conducting ADRs).

14. Resources for ADRs

If EO plans and implements its ADRs in an integrated approach with its Thematic Evaluations and its Quality Assurance and Enhancement Support at the Country Level, as discussed above, it could achieve efficiency gains (in addition to the quality gains). Furthermore, an active information search may be able to uncover work done at the country level that could replace an ad-hoc study, thus provides an additional opportunity for cost-savings.

In addition, the use of "cluster ADRs" and/or "type 2 ADRs", could also reduce the resources needed to undertake ADRs. Anticipating the possible effect on resources of joint evaluations is rather more difficult. A widespread view is that joint evaluations increase the resources needed by donors to undertake the evaluations (while saving transaction costs for the partner countries); however, if joint evaluation activities with cost-sharing arrangements are emphasized, such as contracting-out local studies and/or surveys, then there could also be opportunities for cost savings (in addition to the

¹⁵ See UNEG (2005 c), p.6

¹⁶ UNEG (2005 c), p.7

opportunities that these arrangements provide for building capacities through a learning-by-doing approach). Bilateral donors may be eventually interested in funding some of these activities.

During a pilot phase of one year, for example during 2006, it would be worthwhile to keep track of ADR costs, including staff time, so as to be better positioned in the future to make budget estimates for this type of evaluation.

15. *Communication, Dissemination and Outreach of ADRs*

Promoting the use of ADRs is important because the production of the evaluation report, even if it is of high quality and timely, does not guarantee that it will be used. It frequently happens that when evaluators, or task managers of evaluations, finalize an evaluation report their attention is captured by a new evaluation, and that important insights are like buried in the text of the report. The following suggestions could facilitate the use of ADR reports:

It is worthwhile to prepare a brief (1 to 2 pages) synthesis note for each ADR, with their main findings, conclusions and recommendations. This type of note could be called “ADR Brief” (possible title of a series of briefs), indicating the name of the country in the title (for example, “**ADR BRIEF : COLOMBIA**”), based on the Executive Summary of the ADR. The team leader could be requested in her/his terms of reference to prepare a draft of this ADR Brief just before completing her/his assignment.

Furthermore, it would be very useful to elaborate, based on the ADRs (and their background documents), a brief note for each regional bureau, with evidence and lessons learned corresponding to each of the 5 UNDP practices (their title could be, for example, “**Evaluation Highlights for the RBEC Region**”), and on any other relevant aspect (such as gender and UNDP’s role as coordinator or catalyzer) on which the ADRs (or their background documents/local studies)¹⁷ contain evidence.

The information in these regional notes could also be restructured so as to prepare another set of notes with evidence and lessons learned for each of the 5 UNDP practices; for example, “**Evaluation Highlights on Environment and Energy**” (thus, the China ADR – see EO (2005), pp.45/49 - provides valuable insights on environment and energy, which may be relevant even for other countries, but it is unlikely that UNDP’s Environment and Energy Practice would look into the China ADR for this purpose; however, a note produced by EO like the one recommended in this paragraph could easily attract its attention). Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to call attention in these notes to any evidence on results associated to a combination of UNDP practices (a sort of “cross practices” results), pointing out to synergies between or among them in achieving

¹⁷ Local studies for ADRs have been commissioned on several themes; some of them, which may be particularly relevant for UNDP practices are those on Environment (Bangladesh, Vietnam), Poverty (Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Jamaica, Nigeria, Yemen, Turkey), Governance (Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Mozambique, Nigeria, Turkey, Vietnam, Yemen). Those for Nigeria and Jamaica combined Poverty and Governance, which may be of special use to highlight inter-practices synergies.

results (another option is to elaborate notes on those cases in which results can be associated to a combination of practices).

A first stage in the implementation of this approach would consist in dealing with the stock of ADRs, “harvesting” these low-hanging fruits (nuggets of evaluative knowledge contained in the reports which could be “packaged” as “Evaluation Highlights”). An option would be to mine all the ADRs for all the themes corresponding to UNDP’s practices. A set of alternative options would be to focus on a limited set of practices, or eventually on a single practice, selecting them on the basis of the perceived or expected demand from the practices or from the development community (for example, if an important meeting will take place on a theme that has been partially covered by ADRs, and there would be an opportunity to present OE’s evaluation findings on this theme). The second stage would be updating the “Evaluation Highlights” and producing new ones, based on the more recent set of evaluations.

It would be convenient to design (if possible with help from professional designers) these notes in such a way that they become “reader friendly”. They can be useful tools to promote “knowledge spill-overs”, from one region to the others, and from one practice to the rest, facilitating knowledge sharing within UNDP. The ADRs could thus be seen as a sort of case studies that provide important inputs to UNDP’s knowledge base, and “mining” (or “milking”) them by EO would facilitate the use of ADRs by the rest of UNDP and by partner countries (as well as by other development agencies).

Finally, these notes could be used as the script for oral presentations at UNDP (a sort of dissemination workshop), which could also play an important role in communicating the ADR messages. The notes could be distributed at the end of the meeting, serving as a reference document for those that attended the workshop, and of course it could be circulated electronically and in paper copies to the regional bureaux and the practices, so that they can share it with their staff. These brief notes could also be shared with a much broader audience, including the countries to which they make reference. Whenever possible, they should be translated into the local languages. Last but not least, task managers should present at the outset of the ADR a brief identification of the intended internal (to UNDP) and external audience of the ADR and the ways in which it would be disseminated.

16. Issues and Options

In order to visualize the options it is useful to introduce in the ADR process chart, developed by EO, the different steps in the ADR evaluation process so that the options can be presented for each of the twelve steps into which the ADR evaluation process can be decomposed (or “deconstructed”). This section will pull together elements from the previous sections, recapitulating some of the points made and presenting them now in a sequential way. But before doing that, it may be helpful to visualize the range of organizational options to conduct ADRs at the country level, as shown in the following table:

Organizational options for conducting ADRs

<i>OPTION</i>	<i>ADR Managed by</i>	<i>ADR Conducted by</i>	<i>Benefits/Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats/Risks</i>
Option 1	UNDP's Evaluation Office (EO)	EO staff and a few consultants	*facilitates the internalization of learning *develops capacity of EO staff through learning by doing	*insufficient coverage due to lack of resources *perceived as not fully independent and therefore limited credibility
Option 2	EO	Consultants and an EO staff (contracting out/outsourcing)	*saves EO staff time *opportunity to involve consultants with significant expertise in the country or region	* limited internalization of learning * difficulty to ensure full understanding of UNDP's possibilities and restrictions
Option 3	UNDP's Country Office (CO)	CO staff and a few consultants	*ensures CO ownership * low cost	*non-performance or significant delays *lack of sufficient incentives
Option 4	CO	Consultants (outsourced)	* ensures CO ownership * saves CO staff time	* limited internalization of learning * limited capacity to manage the process
Option 5 (joint evaluation, including UNEG ADR)	EO & Partners (Steering and/or Management Committee)	Outsourced and/or with staff from partner evaluation units and/or from partner countries	* allows for a more holistic, comprehensive approach * opportunity for cost-sharing	*complexity of the management process *practical constraints may block the participation of relevant partners (see section 13)

Another possible option would be a “country led evaluation” (CLE); EO tried to launch an evaluation of this kind in 2001, jointly with the World Bank’s evaluation department and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ evaluation office. Though a useful diagnosis of evaluation capacities in Mozambique and evaluation capacity development work was done in the context of this initiative, the CLE was not actually implemented. What could be attempted is a “focused country led evaluation”, in partnership with the CO; thus, it would be a variant of option 4.

The human resource requirements from UNDP’s Evaluation Office, the approximate costs corresponding to these options and the circumstances under which the options could be used, are discussed in the following paragraphs:

Option 1 would involve a task manager and an evaluation officer (or advisor), in addition to one support staff to help with the logistics and a research/evaluation assistant, to assist in the preparation of the report and other related tasks, and one or two consultants; the cost of this option could be in a range of \$130,000 to \$160,000 depending on the number of consultants, DSA & travel cost, and assuming that the cost of local studies could be funded from the budget for thematic evaluations¹⁸. This option could be used if two EO staff are available (one of whom could be in a variant of this option the evaluation team leader), and if it is possible to identify a country case study that could serve both the ADR and a thematic evaluation.

Option 2 would require an EO task manager, in addition to one support staff to help with the logistics and a research/evaluation assistant, to assist in the preparation of the report and other related tasks and two or three consultants; the cost associated with this option would be in the order of \$180,000. This option could be used when there is a strong EO staff time constraint.

In the case of Options 3 and 4, EO could provide support from the QAT as part of its quality assurance role, so there is no significant ADR budgetary implication. These options could be used in countries where the country office has staff with evaluation expertise and when there is evaluation expertise in the country (Argentina may be a case in which these conditions hold).

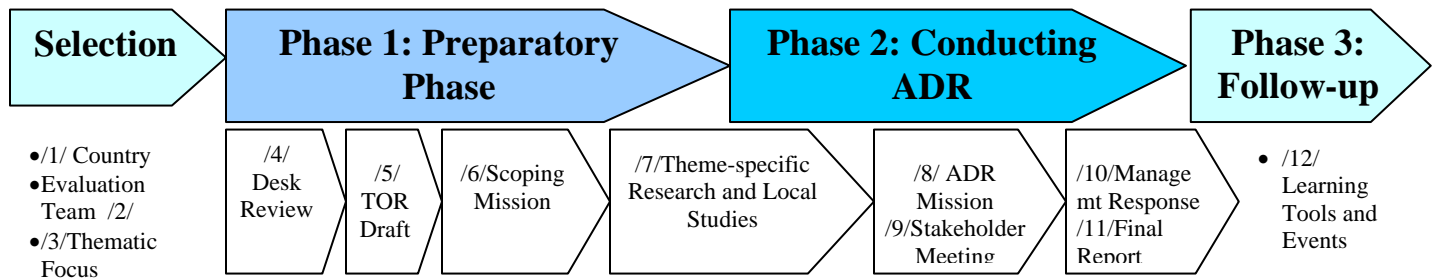
Option 5 would require an experienced OE task manager and a contribution to the pool of resources shared with the other joint evaluation partners. The cost may vary from \$50,000 to \$150,000, depending on the scope of the evaluation, which may be particularly suitable in the case of countries where several development agencies had combined interventions, such as budget support or sector wide approaches (SWAPs).

¹⁸ The costs presented for this and the following options do not include staff time (see at the end of section 14 a recommendation that, if followed, would allow in the future to prepare realistic estimates of staff time for ADRs), and they are made using as a benchmark the most . It should be noted that some other organizations, like the World Bank’s evaluation department, include the cost corresponding to staff time in their cost estimates.

It should be pointed out that Option 1, with the suggestions for the diffusion of learning included above in section 15, as well as below under step 12, and with the set of recommendations made in this report, would be the option that has the greatest potential to optimize EO's resources allocated to ADRs at the country level. EO's current practice is somewhat in between Option 1 (without the recommendations) and Option 2. Thus, through a set of specific steps, such as those recommended in this report, it would be feasible to enhanced significantly the quality and usefulness of EO's ADRs.

Turning now to the ADR evaluation process, the issues and options are presented as steps-in-the process:

Twelve Steps of the ADR Evaluation Process: Issues and Options¹⁹



Step 1: Country Selection

A first option is to ask the Regional Bureaux which are the countries for which they would like to have an ADR. A second, and recommended, option, is to consult with the Regional Bureaux (RB) using a set of country selection criteria (CSC), which could be sent to the RB before the meeting so that they can prepare adequately for it. The CSC could be the following (their rationale and some additional considerations about them are made in section 3):

- countries for which UNDP's programmes will be completed within the next three years.
- countries for which it is expected that there would be a change of Resident Coordinator within the next three years.
- countries of strategic importance of the country, either given the programme's size or the country's characteristics
- availability of information

This could also be the right time to reach a mutual agreement on a timeframe for the delivery of the ADR draft and the management response, as well as on a deadline for the

¹⁹ The timeline is discussed step by step

government response (for the last two, it could be a period of three weeks after the delivery of the ADR draft)²⁰. This step could take 2 weeks.

Step 2: Selection of Evaluation Team

A first option is to appoint a task manager and request her/him to identify a set of team members for the ADR. A second, and recommended option, is to proceed sequentially, during the different stages of the preparatory phase, as the scope of the work is defined and as the information search finds out what is available and what is missing. In terms of the composition of the ADR team, one option is to include in the team professionals with expertise in the country/region, and in the themes to be covered by the ADR, without including any team member with evaluation experience and expertise. A limitation observed in cases in which this option has been followed is that the team may incur in some frequent “evaluation fallacies” (such as resorting to a “before/after” analysis without any qualifications, illegitimate attribution, non or mis-application of the basic evaluation categories/concepts). Another option is to include at least one team member with evaluation experience/expertise, not necessarily the team leader (though it would be convenient, particularly if it is someone who has worked or studied the country, and in addition has evaluation expertise). The latter is the recommended option.²¹ Note that some ADR team member(s) may be identified at the time of the entry workshop. Duration: 2 weeks

Step3. Selection of Thematic Focus

One option would be to cover in the ADR the 5 UNDP practice areas. Another option is to limit the focus of the ADR to those areas recommended by the concerned regional bureau. But there is at least a third and better option, which consists in following the consultative/participatory process presented in section 5 i), and an active information search –as indicated in section 5 ii), which will facilitate the identification of the themes that the ADR should cover, and those for which there may be a need for specific studies. Except in the case of “type 2 ADRs” (that are limited to a subset of key issues: see above section 9), ADRs should cover all UNDP “practices” included in UNDP’s country portfolio. Whenever possible, depending particularly on the composition of UNDP’s portfolio in the country (which should be analyzed in the preparatory phase of the ADR; see section 5 ii), the analysis should reach the level of “service lines”, and may emphasize some particular areas where UNDP was (or could have been) most active in the country.

²⁰ This is consistent with Lesson 7 in Linn (2004), where it is mentioned (pp. 4 and 5) that the management response took 3 months and the governments' comments 4 months.

²¹ As stated in section 7, it is important to ensure that none of the members of the evaluation team have a conflict of interest due to their involvement in decision making concerning the design or implementation of the operations/programmes that will be evaluated

If ADRs could produce evidence at this level of analysis, they would contribute to the process of UNDP strategic repositioning in the country, as well as to an enriched discussion of UNDP's actual comparative advantages, assessing the extent to which UNDP's presumed comparative advantages (such as its global perspective, global knowledge, neutrality, coordinating role among UN agencies) made an actual difference, taking into account different country contexts (like post-conflict or high HIV prevalence). ADRs may also help to identify new areas of possible comparative advantage for UNDP, by showing what worked well, why and in which context.

Furthermore, in addition to the practice areas it would also be appropriate to include among the core ADR's thematic coverage, the consideration of gender issues and the coordinating role of UNDP. The selection of thematic focus should be revised, and modified or confirmed, after the entry workshop, in light of the discussions that will be held in the country, and the additional documentation connected there. It would be worthwhile to involve EO's Thematic Evaluations team in at least some of the discussions concerning the thematic focus of the ADRs, in order to benefit from their insights and to plan jointly some studies/activities that may yield useful building blocks for ADRs and for thematic evaluations (see section 6). Duration: 2 weeks

Step 4. Desk Review

The desk review should be done in combination with an active information search. As stated in section 5.ii), the search should try to identify evaluations done by evaluation offices/departments of development agencies (multilaterals and bilaterals), as well as the type of materials that are traditionally included in literature reviews (see Annex F for some of the relevant websites). There are several websites, and servers-of-servers (such as www.google.com), which allow for a cost-efficient search. Furthermore, it is worthwhile to include in the search the Country Office Audit reports done by UNDP's Audit Office; the first area of these audits includes a verification of the information on results, assesses the preparation of CO evaluation plan and the process for conducting outcome evaluations; see OAPR (2003). It is also important to search for data on UNDP's portfolio (and on self-evaluations of projects/programs that are part of this portfolio and which may have been carried out during the period covered by the ADR). The ADR theme should also consult with EO's Thematic Evaluation theme on internal and external sources of information for the literature review. A well-done desk review, including an active information search, can uncover valuable documents that may spare the need for the ADR mission to focus on some issues, leaving it time and resources to focus on those important issues that have not been appropriately covered. The option of a perfunctory desk review, which is not really integrated with the ADR work, should be discarded. Duration: 3 weeks.

Step 5. TOR Draft

It would be highly convenient if the TOR draft for the ADR mission, which should be a sort of "approach paper", is peer reviewed (see above, section 12). The entry

workshop will provide an opportunity for a validation of the TOR, and eventually they may have to be adjusted in light of the comments made during that workshop and by the peer reviewers. An option is to include in the TOR draft the full-fledged TOR for all team members. But this would not allow for a genuine participatory approach during the entry workshop/ scoping mission, leading to a rather closed approach at a time in which it would still be worthwhile to consider views and insights from the field on what the ADR should include in its TOR. Duration: one week

Step 6. Scoping Mission

In the formulation of the EO scheme corresponding to the three phases, this step appeared as “Scoping Mission to CO”. Though this is of course an option, by deleting the reference "to CO”, the scope of the mission may be perceived as broader and, indeed, it should be broader. It is important for the scoping mission to enter into a participatory dialogue with relevant stakeholders, and for this purpose an entry workshop at this time would be worthwhile (see above, section 5 iv), and it would be even better if this workshop is combined with an evaluation capacity building activity (see section 5 v). Duration: 1,5 week

Step 7 Theme-Specific Research and Local Studies

The identification of themes that the ADR should cover and that the information search revealed that specific work will be required, would result from Step 3. Part of the work to be done will be carried out by the ADR mission, but commissioning local studies could be very helpful to allow for more in-depth knowledge, to use local knowledge and to promote evaluation capacity building through learning-by-doing. This type of local studies on specific themes should be, as much as possible, building blocks for both the ADRs and Thematic evaluations, so it is important as mentioned above, to involve in their planning/design not only the ADR team but also the thematic evaluation team. Furthermore, it is highly convenient to ensure that local studies are finalized within a time frame that they would be timely available to ADR missions. Adopting a three years rolling evaluation plan for thematic evaluations and ADRs (as recommended in section 6) would be particularly helpful to ensure the timely availability of local studies for ADRs. During EO’s review/ quality assurance process of the draft report one of the aspects that should be reviewed is the use made by the evaluation team of the local studies and of the work done by the evaluation research assistant. Duration: 7 weeks

Step 8 ADR Mission

The ADR mission should go to the country with an outline of the report, and during its stay in the field it should try to produce a first draft (even if it is a rough draft). This would allow for a progressive validation of the findings and for a preliminary discussion of the feasibility of the recommendations, and it would facilitate the timely delivery of the revised draft report .

It is important to ensure that the ADR mission consults with stakeholders/informants that have a diversity of views and to actively cross-check/triangulate the answers they get, in a process of “progressive validation”, trying to obtain as much relevant data as possible to support the ADR’s statements. Duration: 3 weeks

Step 9 Stakeholder Meeting

As indicated above, in section 5.vi), before finalizing the report, and with the purpose to validate findings and to consolidate country (and UNDP’s country office) ownership, an exit workshop could be held in the country, including stakeholders, think tanks, and most of the people/organizations that were invited to the entry workshop. It would be worthwhile to explore always the possibility of a joint workshop with partners, presenting not only the ADR's findings, lessons learned and recommendations, but also allowing for the presentation of an evaluation at the country level (or even a sort of outcome, partial or focused country evaluation) from another development agency, so as to facilitate the consideration of different perspectives (this could also allow for cost-sharing). Thus the “stakeholder meeting” would be included within the exit workshop. Though it may be practical to rely on the CO for the logistics of the exit workshop, it is not necessary. In fact, involving other institution or organization in the preparation of the workshop may be less constraining to the ADR mission. Duration: 0,4 week (starting during the third week of the mission and ending at least one day before departure, so as to incorporate the results of the meeting in the draft report).

Step 10 Management Response

It would be important to request a management response from the country office and the regional bureau , agreeing on a deadline counted from the time at which the report is delivered (it would also be worthwhile to include in UNDP's evaluation policy a standard deadline, for example 3 weeks, for management response). At the same time, EO should also commit itself to a deadline for the delivery of the report. Duration: 3 weeks after delivery of the report

Step 11 Final Report (including preparation of draft)

The final report should take into account the comments provided by the peer reviewers (and the Advisory Panel, if it was established for the ADR). It is important to check if the recommendations and lessons learned are clearly linked to the evaluation findings, and to indicate who is expected to act on the recommendations (for example, identifying which recommendations are for UNDP, which for the Government, if any, and/or which for development agencies). It should be noted that the "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System includes a whole section on "evaluation reports" which is very relevant for ADR reports – see UNEG (2005 b), section 4, pp. 17-23; this is also the case of EO's guidelines for preparing evaluation reports – see EO (n.'d.)- Duration: 8 weeks.

Step 12 Learning Tools and Events

The final report is an important output of the ADR. But to achieve outcomes, efforts need to be made to communicate its findings, recommendations and lessons learned. In section 15 of this document, suggestions are offered to facilitate the use of ADR reports. One of them is the preparation of an "ADR Brief" for each ADR, based on its Executive Summary, a task that should be mainly done by the team leader of the ADR. The "ADR Brief" could be used as a script for brief oral presentations of the ADR to regional bureaux, country teams, and, whenever possible, to UNDP's most senior management (including UNDP's Administrator), for whom the ADRs could be "reality checks" on UNDP's work and results²² and as hand-outs. The regional bureau corresponding to the country for which an ADR report has (or will) become available may be able to indicate events at which the ADR could be presented to UNDP staff, in order to maximize the probability that the ADR will be effectively used, facilitating knowledge "spill-overs", and, therefore, that it will contribute to enhance UNDP's development effectiveness. Duration: 2 weeks.

17. *Conclusions and Recommendations*

Though in different parts of this report there are partial summaries of conclusions and recommendations, the following are of particular importance:

- i) the **PURPOSE** of ADRs is to provide an independent assessment of development results at the country level, with emphasis on UNDP's country programmes, though in a broad framework, assessing their strategic relevance and effectiveness, and thus to contribute to accountability and to learning from experience, taking into account self-evaluations (such as project and outcome evaluations) and the role of development partners (government and development agencies).
- ii) the **USE** of ADRs to contribute to the UNDP's strategic repositioning, by providing timely and relevant information for the preparation of country programs and for the review of UNDP's practices, and by generating evidence on UNDP's comparative advantages, depends to a great extent on the appropriate selection of countries and themes to be covered by ADRs, and on the processes followed in their planning, conduct and communication.
- iii) by **INTEGRATING** the three cluster of activities in a single country (ADRs, Thematic and Quality Assurance), EO could achieve a "critical mass" effect, promoting synergies among these different activities, which could lead to higher quality results, creating also opportunities for cost savings (for example, in the search for information).

²² These presentations would also have a powerful signaling effect to UNDP staff on the importance of ADRs.

- iv) ADRs should assess whether intended results have been achieved (in some cases it may be that the "results" are too vaguely formulated, but this would indeed be an important aspect of the assessment). This is important both for accountability and for learning.
- v) From a quality assurance and enhancement perspective, it is highly convenient to ensure that ADRs are peer reviewed by an external and an internal reviewer (the latter from UNDP), if possible with expertise and experience in both evaluation and the country of the ADR. For the country programmes of bigger size, and for countries whose context is particularly complex, an advisory panel, composed with about four experts with different perspectives, could play a helpful role.
- vi) The upfront in-house ADR consultation should include the regional focal points of the community of practices (for those regional bureaux that have focal points), trying to identify key assumptions/hypotheses of the country programs, and with a view to elaborate a set of key evaluation questions that could help in generating evidence on the assumed UNDP's comparative advantages. These consultations should also help to develop, and manage, appropriate expectations concerning the ADR reports, and to mobilize CO support for them, minimizing the risks of misunderstandings concerning the purposes of the ADR.
- vii) The use of explicit criteria for country selection enhances the perception of independence of the evaluation function (in addition to increasing the probability that the ADR would make a significant contribution/value added).
- viii) A half-day entry workshop in the ADR country could be done towards the end of the ADR preparatory phase, and before drawing the full-fledged TOR of the mission and the recruitment of the full mission. It is worthwhile to invite to this workshop government representatives, think tanks, research institutions, NGOs, representatives of other development agencies based in the country, local evaluation professionals or evaluation association/ networks and, of course, UNDP's country office representatives. This event would be helpful in developing country ownership, signalling the participatory approach used by EO, eliciting useful evaluation questions and completing the preparatory information search, including the identification of suitable good consultants.
- ix) It would be highly convenient to combine the entry-workshop with an evaluation capacity development (ECD) activity, which could be an evaluation training workshop back-to-back with the entry workshop (for example, the afternoon of the same day that the entry workshop will be held). This ECD activity would be useful in developing a common knowledge and language with local teams. By doing this, EO would be implementing its

mandate (as established in UNDP's evaluation policy) to strengthen local evaluation capacities and, as a by-product, it would facilitate the future ADR work by developing good-will towards the mission (that would not only be "extracting" information but also contributing to the development of local capacities). Finally, this ECD activity may also help in identifying local teams/individuals that could participate in the evaluation team and/or contribute with a background study.

- x) Before finalizing the report, and with the purpose to validate findings and to enhance country ownership, an exit workshop could be held in the country, including stakeholders, think tanks, and most of the people/organizations that were invited to the entry workshop.
- xi) It would be worthwhile to plan the ADRs jointly with thematic evaluations and with evaluation quality assurance/ enhancement at the country level, with a three-years perspective. In this way EO would achieve synergies that could lead to better results with the possibility of cost savings.
- xii) A key question that the ADR evaluation team should bear in mind during its work is "what would have happened without the UNDP country programme?", that is, the "counterfactual" question.
- xiii) A mutually agreed deadline should be established both for the management response and for the delivery of the draft ADR.
- xiv) ADR Reports are outputs that require further processing into knowledge management tools that can facilitate the communication and adoption of their results and recommendations. For this purpose, a set of knowledge management products are proposed in this report
- xv) Joint evaluations of development results, in the framework of UNEG, could replace in the mid- or long term the ADRs.

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Evaluation Office, UNDP (2005a): "Country Evaluation: Assessment of Development Results, China", New York, UNDP

²³ Only references quoted in the text are listed below.

Evaluation Office, UNDP (2005b): “Country Evaluation: Assessment of Development Results, Bangladesh”, New York, UNDP

Evaluation Office, UNDP (2004a): “Country Evaluation: Assessment of Development Results, Turkey”, New York, UNDP

Evaluation Office, UNDP (2004b): “Country Evaluation: Assessment of Development Results, Mozambique”, New York, UNDP

Evaluation Office, UNDP (2004c): "Report of the Workshop on Assessing Development Results at Country Level", Typescript

Evaluation Office, UNDP (n.d.): “Generic Guidelines for Meta-Evaluation”, Typescript

Evaluation Office, UNDP (n.d.): "Guidelines for Preparing UNDP Evaluation Reports, Typescript

Freeman, Ted (2005):"Country Programme Evaluation in an Era of Change", Evaluation Working Paper, Evaluation Office, UNICEF

Gwaradzimba, Fadzai (2005): "Conducting Assessment of Development Results (ADRs) Lessons Learnt", Discussion Note, Typescript

Linn, Johannes(2004):"Assessment of Development Results – Comments(...)",Typescript

OAPR (2003): "Country Office Audit Guide", UNDP, Typescript

Peer Assessment (2006: “UNDP Evaluation Office”, Koege, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

Pitman, G.K, Feinstein, O., and Ingram, G.K., eds, (2005) “Evaluating Development Effectiveness”, New Brunswick: Transaction

UNDP (2005a): "Monitoring & Evaluation Workshop for Country Offices in Asia & Pacific Region", Islamabad, Typescript

UNDP(2005b):"Regional Workshop on Results-Oriented Monitoring & Evaluation for RBEC Countries", workshop report, Bratislava, March 2005, Typescript

UNDP (2005c): "Monitoring & Evaluation Workshop for Country Offices RBLAC Region", Panama, Typescript

UNEG (2005a): “Norms for Evaluation in the UN System”, Typescript

UNEG (2005b): "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System", Typescript

UNEG (2005c): " Issues and Options Paper on UN Country Level Evaluations"

World Bank Operations Evaluation Department (2005): "Country Assistance Evaluation Retrospective", Washington DC, The World Bank

ANNEXES

Annex A: List of Persons Interviewed

EO Management: Saraswathi Menon, Nurul Alam

EO Task Manager for this consultancy: Ruth Abraham

EO ADR Team: Juha Uitto, Oscar Garcia, Michael Constable, Ruth Abraham

EO Quality Assurance Team: Sukai Prem-Jackson, David Rider Smith, Maritza Ascensio

EO Thematic Evaluation Specialist: Suppiramaniam Nanthikesan

Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific: Jean-Claude Rogivue, Selva Ramachandran, Claire van der Veen, Napoleon Navarro.

Regional Bureau for Europe and Comm. of Independent States: Marta Ruedas, Parviz Fartash, Sultan Hajiyeu.

Regional Bureau for Arab States: Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, Mounir Tabet,

Regional Bureau for Africa: Pascal Karorero, Marie Dimond, Shigeki Komatsubara

Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean: Neal Walker, Mauricio Ramirez, Marc Andre Franche, Nora Castillo, Marielza Oliveira, Rafael Sacal, Stefano Pettinato

Bureau for Development Policy (BDP)/ Energy and Environment Practice: Olav Kjørven

BDPolicy/ Governance Practice: Magdy Martinez-Soliman., Linda Maguire

Bureau for Development Policy/ Poverty Practice: Selim Jahan

Bureau for Development Policy/HIV/AIDs Practice: Joseph Annan,

Bureau for Crisis Prevention & Recovery/ Practice: Eva Busza

Operations Support Group /former Res.Rep. Albania: Anna Stjärnerklint, Jason Pronyk

Office of Audit & Performance Review: Jessie Mabutas

UN Office Internal Oversight & former ADR Task Manager: Arild Hauge

UN Development Group Office: Arthur Erken

UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs: Massimo D'Angelo, Maurice Clapisson

UNFPA: Christine Biering

UNICEF: Jean Quesnel, Lucien Back, Ada Ocampo

EO Team Leader for Turkey ADR: Johannes Linn (telephone interview)

Former EO ADR Team Leader: Fadzai Gwaradzimba (t.i.)

EO international team leader for Nigeria ADR: Mary Chennery-Hesse (t.i.)

EO international consultant for Jamaica ADR: Michael Reynolds (t.i.)

EO Sr. Adviser/team leader local study for Jamaica ADR: Denis Benn (t.i.)

Annex B: Guide for telephone interviews

For interviews with selected ADR team leaders/members on their ADR experiences, particularly in terms of lessons learned concerning:

- what worked well in the ADR process/methodology
- what would they have done differently
- their views on the role of the country office and on the participation of local teams/organizations
- any other matter that they think would help to enhance the quality of future ADRs.

Annex C: Questionnaire with Covering Letter to Country Offices Involved in ADRs

(though EO decided due to time constraints not to send the following questionnaire, it is included in this report as one of the tools that could be used in the future for an eventual assessment of ADRs)

As you may recall, UNDP’s Evaluation Office (EO) conducted in 20.. an Assessment of Development Results (ADR) for the country in which you are Resident Coordinator. Currently OE is reviewing the ADR process in order to enhance this type of evaluation in order to make it more useful.

As a contribution to this process, we would very much appreciate if you (and/or your concerned staff) could devote a few minutes to answer the following two questions by February 11th.

1. To what extent the ADR corresponding to your country programme was useful?
Please check the box that best reflects your views of the extent to which the assessment of development results conducted by OE in your country was useful for the design and/or the implementation of the country programme.

Not useful	Very limited usefulness	Somewhat useful	Quite useful	Very useful	Extremely useful

If possible, kindly provide an example of the use(s) was made of the ADR.

2. Do you have any suggestion(s) to enhance the excellence of ADRs?

3. Are there any ways in which you consider that UNDP’s Country Office could support the ADR process?

Annex D: Terms of Reference

It should be noted that the following TOR were orally modified at the beginning of the mission, on January 16th., 2006.

Consultancy to develop an Options Menu for Conducting Country Programme Evaluation (CPEs)/Assessment of Development Results (ADRs)

I. BACKGROUND

In 2002 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched country evaluations, called Assessment of Development Results (ADRs). The purpose of ADRs is to assess UNDP's added value and its development effectiveness through an in-depth assessment of the strategic positioning and responsiveness of its support, the actual development results (outcomes) produced and the identification of lessons that can enhance its organizational and development effectiveness at both country and corporate levels. ADRs aim to provide an objective measure of UNDP's contributions to development results at country level. The focus is on generating key lessons and determining whether or not UNDP is applying its comparative advantage optimally to make a real difference in poverty reduction and human development in a given country. With the abolition of country reviews and the adoption of UNDP's improved results based management (RBM) monitoring evaluation (M&E) architecture since 2001, ADRs have become part of the organization's four-tiered accountability and learning system comprising:

- The voluntary conduct of project evaluations at the discretion of country offices;
 - Mandatory outcome evaluations by country offices
 - 10 ADRs (including country-managed ADRs) per year independently conducted by EO in countries selected in consultation with Regional Bureaus and the Sr. Management Team (SMT); and
 - ROAR/MYFF and the Development Effectiveness Report (DER).²⁴
- From a corporate perspective ADRs seek to fulfill the following objectives:
- Support the Administrator's substantive accountability function to the Executive Board and serve as a vehicle for quality assurance of UNDP interventions at the country level.
 - Promote a culture of "managing for results" and knowledge and learning as ADR lessons are culled and used to influence future initiatives in a systematic and consistent manner
 - Provide to the stakeholders in the programme country an objective assessment of results (specifically outcomes) that have been achieved through UNDP support and in partnerships with other key actors.

To date, the Evaluation Office has conducted 15 such ADRs.

During the process of conducting these ADRs a number of challenges and issues have emerged. These were first detailed in an ADR Discussion Note prepared by EO (dated 28 January 2004 (see attached) which will serve as part of the reference material for the ADR methodology review. Key issues cited included turn-around time and coverage; manageability of the process; added value; methodological issues; the value of the in-depth studies; managing attribution; alignment of ADRs with UNDP M&E Framework etc. In 2004 EO organized a workshop on "Assessing Development Results at Country Level", to take stock, learn and share UNDP's experience with partners and deepen understanding and knowledge of what approaches work best in evaluating results at the country level. Some key conclusions on methodology included lack of codification of methodology and approaches used in country evaluations; a recognition of the importance of "plausible associations with results" rather than attribution; understanding that quality was not necessarily guaranteed by the independence of an evaluation unit but by a solid methodology that ensured that judgments were substantiated in evidence and that these could be openly formulated; and preference for a variety of evaluation approaches, rather than one single method.

In early November 2005 the UNDP Sr. Management Team endorsed in principle the new Evaluation Policy which emphasizes the importance of independent and credible evaluations and stipulates that each country programme will be subject to evaluations towards its completion in

²⁴ See Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results, 2002 p 17

time for evaluation findings, the CO's management response and any Executive Board comments on it, to feed into preparation of the next country programme.

2. SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT

The ADR Team in EO is in the process of developing a strategy for conducting ADRs, an options menu for the new evaluation policy, developing new guidelines and revising the current methodology, to roll-out and field test different modalities for conducting country programme evaluations (CPEs)/ADRs. To this end EO will recruit two consultants in early January 2006 to help EO develop modalities for conducting CPEs/ADRs. One consultant will be required to develop an options menu for conducting ADRs and a second consultant will prepare detailed guidelines on conducting ADRs. The second consultancy may commence during the last week of this consultancy to enhance synergy and exchange.

Through a variety of methods including desk reviews and interviews with UNDP EO, regional bureaus and HQ units, the consultant's specific tasks will be to address such issues as but not limited to: staffing; number of ADRs produced per year; EO staff capacity to undertake a set number of ADRs per year; budget requirements; maintaining independence and quality of evaluations while assuring quality; flaws/weak points in our existing approach. The consultant, with the support of the Task Manager and the EO ADR Team, and in close consultation with the EO Quality Assurance & Enhancement Group will look at questions of

- (a) who the current users of ADRs are, who the future users of ADR/CPE would be- what their demands are based on; existing demand for and use of ADRs; comparative experience from WB, DFID, UNICEF, EU and ADB; within the context of the Evaluation Policy, how would ADRs be conducted to respond to learning demands and accountability function
- (b) What such an evaluation should focus on – more strategic long-term vs more programmatic/ single cycle – and the implications of this for the approach, timing and cost.
- (c) Implications of UN harmonization at country level/ UNDAF evaluations
- (d) review of existing mechanisms used by our peers(i.e., by.....) in managing large numbers of evaluations- pros and cons of - contracting out; keeping in house but managing arms length, etc.

Specifically the consultant will

develop an options menu detailing how each option could be conducted in line with EO's strategy for conducting CPEs, and which complies with the evaluation policy, specifically on indicating ways to increase coverage and improve the quality of ADRs/CPEs in a cost-effective manner²⁵

3. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The consultant is expected to develop an options menu to field-test the different modalities for conducting CPEs/ADRs, including a consideration of the possible costs, benefits and risks corresponding to each of the options.

4. DURATION (Jan.16 – March 7, 2006)

The duration of the consultancy will be for nineteen working days, including discussion with EO and UNDP stakeholders; review of documents provided by EO, preparation of proposal, and drafting the methodology and guidelines. The consultancy will take place in January / February

²⁵ Lessons learned in the past indicate that the ADR methodology needs to be revised and 3 modalities have been proposed: cluster; country-managed meta-evaluation; and ADR with a revised methodology

2006 as follows. During the last week, this consultancy will overlap with the start of the consultancy on ADR Guidelines to maximize synergy:

- 5 working days: 1st visit to NY at the beginning of the assignment for intensive meetings with EO and other Bureaus; units at UNDP HQ and UNICEF and review documents: **Jan.16-20, 2006**
- 7 working days to prepare draft proposal paper on options menu, forward to EO for review **Jan.23-31**
- 3 working days - 2nd visit to NY to discuss proposal, obtain feedback and revise the draft proposal **Feb.27- March 1**
- 4 w/days to finalize and submit final product to EO. **March 2-7, 2006**

5. QUALIFICATIONS

A senior consultant will be recruited with an advanced degree in social sciences; extensive experience in country evaluations; excellent English writing skills required. Knowledge of UNDP/UN system advantageous. Must be able to work rapidly and meet deadlines under pressure.

6. DOCUMENTS TO BE PROVIDED

- ADR methodology
- ADR Reports (15)
- ADR Discussion Note (Jan. 2004) – Fadzai Gwaradzimba
- Administrator's Annual Report on Evaluation (2004)
- Comments on ADRs (Nov.2004) – Johannes F. Linn
- ADR workshop report (Nov.2004)
- Regional workshop reports (5)
- Handbook On Monitoring & Evaluating For Results
- Evaluation Policy
- Comparator reports
- MYFF
- MYFF Report
- UNEG Norms and Standards
- DAC Peer Assessment
- UNEG Country level Evaluations
- TCPR
- Country Programming Guidelines
- UNDP Executive Board Decisions
- RCF Meta-evaluation methodology

UNDP Evaluation Office
December 23, 2005

Annex E: List of UNDP Country Evaluations (ADRs/CPEs)

<http://www.undp.org/eo/country-evaluation.htm>

2005

[Country Evaluation: Bangladesh](#)

[Country Evaluation: China](#)

[Country Evaluation: Jamaica](#)

[Country Evaluation: Mozambique](#)

[Country Evaluation: Turkey](#)

[Country Evaluation: Ukraine](#)

[Country Evaluation: Yemen](#)

2004

[Country Evaluation: Egypt](#)

[Country Evaluation: Nigeria](#)

2003

[Country Evaluation: Bulgaria](#)

[Country Evaluation: Vietnam Vol I](#)

[Country Evaluation: Vietnam Vol II](#)

2002

[Country Evaluation: India](#)

[Country Evaluation: Sudan](#)

Annex F: List of Evaluation Websites that include Country Evaluations

Latin America and the Caribbean (Inter-American Development Bank)

<http://www.iadb.org/ove/DefaultNoCache.aspx?Action=WUCPublications@evaluations>

Asia (Asian Development Bank)

<http://www.adb.org/Evaluation/default.asp>

World Bank evaluations in all regions

<http://www.worldbank.org/oed/countries/cae/>

DFID evaluations in several regions

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/search/proxy/query.html?col=dfid&qt=evaluation&charset=iso-8859-1>

Miscellaneous:

http://www.linux.parcinfo.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=63&Itemid=153