

Title of Document: Terms of Reference for 1st Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project

1. Introduction

This document outlines the terms of reference (ToR) for the mid-term evaluation of the project titled "FRIENDSHIP: Strengthening EU-Mongolia Friendship through Equitable, Resilient, and Innovative Growth in Darkhan Uul Province." The evaluation will assess the progress, effectiveness, and impact of the project against its stated objectives and activities.

2. Background of the Project

The FRIENDSHIP project aims to promote inclusive and sustainable growth in Darkhan city and its province through collaborative multi-stakeholder participatory and knowledge-sharing approaches. It focuses on establishing inter-regional cooperation, strengthening participatory governance, developing an innovation and entrepreneurship hub, and piloting collaborative projects.

2.1. Specific Objectives of the Project

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To establish a multi-stakeholder inter-regional cooperative forum for promoting decentralised cooperation between EU and Darkhan and its province
- To strengthen the existing participatory arrangements in Darkhan city using digital technology by promoting social inclusive planning, transparent and accountable monitoring mechanisms
- To develop a hub for supporting entrepreneurship and innovation to accelerating digital transition and promoting social enterprises
- To pilot inter-regional collaborative projects on municipal services and social entrepreneurship.

2.2 Output and Activities of the Project

The outputs and activities of the project are:

Network Building: Inter-Regional Darkhan-EU Forum (IDEF) Setup, Rapid Assessment Report on Joint Areas of Cooperation, IDEF Network Meetings, IDEF Best Practice forums, Study Visits, Exchange Programmes

Participatory Governance: Darkhan City Forum (DCF) set up, DCF Rulebook to Strengthen Local Development Forum (LDF) and Social Inclusiveness, Capacity building of Darkhan city officials, DCF meetings between citizen and city officials, integrated e-governance tool to promote transparency and accountability, DCF Awareness and sensitisation campaigns

Darkhan Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub: EU Darkhan Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub (EU-DEIH) set up, training programmes of potential social and tech entrepreneurs (general and specialised), entrepreneurs provided seed capital and technical support, EU-DEIH Awards for best Entrepreneurs, Website and Marketing platform, Business visits to EU for selected entrepreneurs

Pilot Project: Undertake pilot projects for Municipal services water, sanitation, energy (participatory e-governance and infrastructure provisions), Social/ IT Entrepreneurship pilot projects through call for competition, Report on Pilot projects.

3. Objectives of the Mid-Term Evaluation

The objectives of the mid-term evaluation are as follows:

- Assess the progress of the project against its objectives planned outputs and activities.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of project interventions in promoting good governance, social inclusion, resilience, and greening, while catalysing prosperity through innovation and incubation ecosystem.
- Identify challenges and risks encountered during project implementation and recommend mitigation measures.
- Examine stakeholder engagement and attitudes towards the project.
- Provide actionable recommendations for enhancing project effectiveness and impact and expansion under other regional European Union strategies.

4. Scope of the Evaluation

In line with the increasing [EU emphasis on result-oriented approaches](#) and the contribution towards the implementation of the SDGs, **the mid-term evaluation will focus on the extent to which the Friendship project has achieved its intended results¹**, including the impact it has had so far on inclusive and sustainable growth in Darkhan city and its province, and the factors driving or hindering progress towards the results and intended impact. In addition to the afore-mentioned focus on results, the evaluation will also gather evidence on a number of relevant dimensions, including:

- Stakeholder engagement and collaboration.
- Sustainability of project outcomes beyond the project duration.
- Cross-cutting themes such as gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and environmental sustainability.

In addition to serving accountability purposes, the midterm **evaluation is also intended to be forward looking** and provide a set of recommendations and key lessons learned to the Project Management team and interested stakeholders in order to improve project effectiveness and impact and expansion under other regional European Union strategies

5. Methodology

The evaluation will utilize a mixed-methods approach, including:

- Document review: Evaluation of project documents, reports, and other relevant materials.
- In-depth Stakeholder interviews: Conducting interviews with project stakeholders to gather insights and perspectives. Specific interviews and feedback will be organised and will include national, sub-national and local provincial administrators.
- Data analysis: Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to assess project progress and impact.
- Contribution analysis will be used to unpack the complex nature of the evidence reviewed and generated by the evaluation, and to analyse the causal linkages between the intervention and the changes documented at the level of the target population.
- Analysis of Third party funding support beneficiaries: Evaluation of feedback on process, cooperation, engagement strategy and result of financing.

6. Evaluation Criteria of FRIENDSHIP Project

The evaluation will use the [OECD DAC evaluation framework](#) and be based on the following criteria:

- Relevance: The extent to which the project addresses the needs and priorities of the target population.

¹ Results are defined as the outputs, outcomes or impacts of development interventions, with each element contributing to the next, as set out in the results chain below. The links between each element are as important as the results themselves, reflecting the theory of change and the roles of providers and other stakeholders. See: Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development. What are results? Available on the following link <https://www.oecd.org/dac/results-development/what-are-results.htm>.

- Effectiveness: The degree to which project results (at the level of outputs and outcomes/project objectives) are being achieved.
- Efficiency: The utilization of resources in relation to the outputs and outcomes of the project.
- Impact: The tangible and intangible effects of the project on the target population and relevant stakeholders.
- Sustainability: The potential for project outcomes to be sustained beyond the project duration.

During the inception phase of the Evaluation, the selected team is expected to develop an **Evaluation Matrix**, further developing these criteria into Evaluation Questions and outlining the performance indicators, means of verification and sources of information. A **stakeholder matrix** shall also be developed, to identify the key stakeholders and the approaches to engage them.

7. Reporting

The evaluation team will prepare a comprehensive mid-term evaluation report (of maximum 30 pages excluding annexes), including findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The report will be submitted to the project steering committee and other relevant stakeholders.

8. Timeline

The mid-term evaluation will be conducted over a period of 30 Days. The evaluation team will adhere to the agreed timeline and deliverables.

9. Proposals: The firm or the consultants interested in carrying out this mid-term evaluation must send a proposal to mendee.p@sab.edu.mn and cc to kherlen@darkhan.gov.mn by 5 pm on 24.12.2024.

The proposal should contain the following:

- a. Description of the consultant's expertise
- b. Description of the consultant's experience relevant to this evaluation
- c. Description of the detailed agenda per activity, deliverables and methodologies likely to be used .
Budget

10. Budget

A budget for the mid-term evaluation will be allocated based on the agreed scope of work and methodology. The total budget from the proposer shall not exceed EUR 5000.

11.Payment: The consultant selected to carry out the mid-term evaluation will be offered a fixed price based on full duration of assignment irrespective of number of man-days.

- a. 50% upon signature of the contract
- b. 50% upon submission and acceptance of the final report steering committee.

12. Evaluation Team of FRIENDSHIP Project

The evaluation team will comprise independent experts with relevant expertise in project evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and development issues. The Project Coordinator, Darkhan- Uul Province will deploy technical expert with full overview of project concept, outcome and output in relations to budget line "Local Authorities- Partnerships for Sustainable Cities" shall act as facilitator to support the external independent evaluators.

13. Confidentiality

The evaluation team will ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information obtained during the evaluation process.

14. Review and Approval of ToR and Proposal

These terms of reference will be reviewed and approved after the advice and recommendation from Technical Evaluation Committee of ToR and Proposal led by Partners.

Selection Criteria:

- Experience of Firm and Team members in European Union project and other donor aided assignment.
- Experience of Firm and team members in consulting and advisory service to project with focus on local and regional authorities
- Experience of Firm and team members in conducting, planning, executing and reporting assignments which are related to design, implementation, monitoring & evaluation and review of project design, activities and diverse experience in auditing and assurance services.
- Experience of working in countries of multiple geographies and regions will be prioritised.

15. Contact Information

For further information or inquiries regarding the mid-term evaluation, please contact P.Mend-Amgalan Ph. D. @ mendee.p@sab.edu.mn and Kherlen Gankhuyag @ kherlen@darkhan.gov.mn