

19 April 2016

Dear Mr. Oudkerk,

**Report on the Final Evaluation of the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS)
Amerindian Development Fund: Village Economy Development under GRIF (Phase I)**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is pleased to submit the report on the Final Evaluation of the LCDS Amerindian Development Fund (ADF): Village Economy Development under Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (Phase I). The independent evaluation focused on the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation, lessons learned and impact and sustainability of results in keeping with provision in the LCDS ADF Phase I Initiation Plan. The report is attached.

The Final Evaluation found that the LCDS ADF Phase I project, *inter-alia*:

1. Produced a mechanism for disbursing funds to Community Development Plans (CDPs).
2. Has been relevant to the national objective of promoting development of Amerindian communities as an integral component of the national LCDS.
3. Has the potential to meaningfully impact socio-economic development of Amerindian communities. However, the realization of this potential is contingent upon linking up with additional sources of funding to build on capacities created through GRIF ADF.

The Consultant suggested that "the renamed Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs (MoIPA) is cognizant of the need for substantial strengthening of the Ministry, particularly in various aspects of project management, including monitoring and reporting." Further, the Consultant offered that the "UNDP should thus reopen discussions with the Ministry on how to proceed to agree on and implement a capacity development plan for the Ministry."

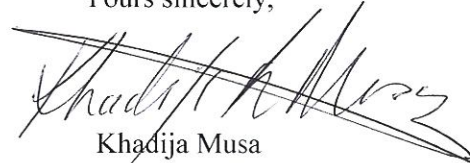
Mr. Nikolaus Oudkerk
Coordinator
Project Management Office
Ministry of the Presidency
Shiv Chanderpaul Drive, Bourda
Georgetown

CC: Hon. Sydney Allcock, Vice President and Minister
Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

UNDP commends the Final Evaluation report to you, and assures that the findings from the report are being used to reorient the implementation and management of the LCDS ADF Phase II project. Further, UNDP is working with the MoIPA to continue to build capacity in the areas of project management, including monitoring and reporting at the level of the Ministry and Amerindian Village Councils. These activities will consume the remaining funds allocated to the LCDS ADF Phase I project. A copy of the 2016 Annual Work Plan is attached for information.

UNDP looks forward to continuing the successful partnership with the Government of Guyana in building capacity for the development of Amerindian village economies.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Khadija Musa', written over a horizontal line.

Khadija Musa
Resident Representative

Encl:



United Nations Development Programme

COUNTRY: GUYANA

ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2016

Project Title

Amerindian Development Fund Phase 1 Project

UNDAF

Outcome(s):

(1) Improved Economic and Social Policies and Programmes to enable the creation of a climate-resilient economy in the context of the Low Carbon Development Strategy.

Expected CP Outcome(s):

Strengthened institutional and regulatory capacities of Government, Civil Society Organizations to enable access to Sustainable Financial and Business Development services for the economic poor, women and indigenous populations

Expected Output (s)

The expected outputs of the Initiation Plan for Low Carbon Development Strategy Amerindian Development Fund: Village Economy Development under GRIF (Phase 1) are:

- A functional, scalable and transparent disbursement mechanism created;
- The capacity of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs (MOIPA) to plan, manage, and support community development strengthened;
- 15% of the Community Development Plans (CDPs) received funding to test the disbursement mechanism;
- Selected indigenous communities have improved the planning, management and support mechanisms in place for the implementation of the CDPs;
- The Full Project Document prepared and submitted for approval

Implementing Partner

Direct Implementation (DIM) by UNDP

Responsible Parties

Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs (MOIPA), Ministry of the Presidency, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Communities, Environmental Protection Agency, Amerindian and Private Sector Organisations

*Final Evaluation of the Low Carbon
Development Strategy (LCDS) Amerindian
Development Fund Village Economy
Development Project under the Guyana REDD-
plus Investment Fund GRIF (Phase 1)*

Prepared for: UNDP Guyana

Prepared by: Mohammad Pournik - February 2016

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Executive Summary:

This report presents the findings of the final evaluation of the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) Amerindian Development Fund (ADF) Village Economy Development Project under the Guyana REDD-plus Investment Fund (GRIF) (Phase 1). The evaluation is concerned with reviewing outcomes and outputs delivered by the project from its approval in August 2012 until end of field activities in December 2014. As the evaluation takes place one year after the end of project activities, it has also been able to evaluate the sustainability of project outputs through assessing the current status of assets created by the project at the community level.

The ADF1 project had three goals. First, it aimed to test a workable mechanism for disbursing funds to isolated Amerindian communities, as part of Guyana's national low carbon development strategy, making use of funds put at the disposal of the Government of Guyana by the Government of Norway. Second, it envisaged elaborating a full-scale project document to expand the coverage of activities initially targeting 15% of Amerindian communities to all of them. Third, the project intended to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA) in transparently managing the main phase of the project, with minimal support from UNDP.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess a) project performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency; b) sustainability of results and c) implications for the follow up ADF2 project. The evaluation is mostly focused on providing lessons for improvements in the way the ADF2 project is implemented.

The primary audiences for the evaluation are the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, UNDP, Amerindian communities, implementing partners and civil society actors.

The methodology followed by the evaluation was to review all documents provided by the project team, while supplementing and verifying this information. Due to paucity of reports on the current status of individual community development plans (CDPs), the evaluation draws heavily on information collected in the course of field visits to CDPs undertaken over a one week period. The evaluation also draws upon information provided by key informants, interviewed in groups or individually as feasible.

The field mission to Guyana was carried out from 5 to 17 December 2015. It provided an opportunity for the evaluator to interact with key stakeholders and gain a first-hand understanding of the complexity of the environment in which the project was operating. The main beneficiaries of the project were Amerindian communities who live in isolated villages, scattered over vast areas in the country's interior with a minimal transport network.

The ADF1 project had been designed following a participatory process, which included the project document being put on the GRIF website with an open invitation extended to anyone who wanted to comment to provide their inputs. The evaluator, however, was not able to obtain any of the written comments that may have been provided by various stakeholders.

Insufficient community ownership and weak monitoring systems are largely responsible for the shortfalls observed with respect to the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of CDPs. The GRIF ADF has the potential to meaningfully impact socio-economic development of Amerindian communities. However, the realization of this potential is contingent upon linking up with additional sources of funding to build on capacities created through GRIF ADF. Furthermore, the balance between resources allocated to capital grants under CDPs and those allocated to strengthening the human capacity of Amerindian communities in various fields has to shift in favour of more attention to the latter.

The renamed Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs (MoIPA) is cognizant of the need for substantial strengthening of the Ministry, particularly in various aspects of project management, including monitoring and reporting. The UNDP should thus reopen discussions with the Ministry on how to proceed to agree on and implement a capacity development plan for the Ministry.

The following lessons can be drawn from the experience of ADF1 to further strengthen the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of ADF2.

The design of ADF2 can be further improved by taking steps to ensure greater community ownership of CDPs and more robust monitoring and reporting at community and MoIPA levels.

The ADF2 should correct for some of the failings of ADF1 through adopting the following steps:

- Agree on and proceed with implementation of a capacity development plan for the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs;
- Put in place stringent criteria to ensure greater community ownership of CDPs through having them defined following clarification of amount of funding available, stipulating a quorum for consultation meetings that review them, ensuring continuity of CDP management teams and having reservations for female participation in the management teams;
- Strengthen the monitoring of and reporting on CDPs, by increasing the technical competence and mobility of Community Development Officers and having them aided in the discharge of their duties by a revamped Community Support Officer scheme;
- Put in place systems to deal with common constraints faced by many CDPs with respect to marketing of their products and access to quality inputs at reasonable cost;
- Establish linkages between activities initiated under ADF GRIF with those funded by other sources such as the mining revenue linked ADF; and
- Link up communities engaged in CDPs with sustainable sources of future financing whether as grants or loans.

development finance by providing villagers with a transparent and accountable mechanism to fund community development projects.

These community development plans (CDPs) had been developed earlier by Amerindian communities with support from Community Development Officers (CDOs) and other Ministry of Amerindian Affairs (MoAA) staff. The CDPs listed community priorities for dealing with their most pressing socio-economic development issues. During the development of CDPs, communities were supposed to articulate a vision for the long-term development of their villages. The village councils submitted the CDPs that had been approved by village general meetings to the MoAA.

The project document does not explicitly mention that each community participating in ADF will be provided with 5 million Guyanese Dollars (GD) to fund its CDP. However, the budget foreseen for implementing the 27 CDPs does give an average grant of 5 million GDs. In actual fact all communities received a grant not exceeding 5 million for CDPs, irrespective of the original foreseen budget of the CDPs that were supposed to be funded with this grant.

The project was formally signed between the Government of Guyana and UNDP on 9 August 2012, following a participatory preparation process that lasted more than one year. In the course of interactions with major stakeholders in Georgetown, covering both the Government and civil society actors, all concerned parties confirmed their knowledge of the project, as it was being designed. Although no stakeholder raised any issue regarding their major comments on the document not being taken into account, many indicated that they had not received information about progress on project implementation and that their inputs on project implementation were not sought.

The project was implemented directly by UNDP under DIM arrangements. However, it should be noted that the MoAA provided overall direction to the project and their staff were involved in project implementation as part of the capacity building effort for the Ministry. In addition protocol required that all Guyanese entities address any concerns they had with project implementation to the Government, who would share with them any reports or information it deemed appropriate.

In the course of the preparation process, all Amerindian villages had already engaged in the production of Community Development Plans (CDP) for undertaking economic empowerment projects. There had been no UNDP involvement in the initial preparation of CDPs and the evaluation was not able to establish whether the communities had been given any specific advice as to the budget to keep in mind when preparing their CDPs. In addition, the time lag experienced between the initial preparation of CDPs and when funds were actually disbursed impacted both the cost and viability of many projects.

The CDPs had been subject to internal discussion/consultations within the village and at the National Toshias' Conference, as well as with the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. In some cases the Toshias had gone back to their villages following interaction at the national level to review

Evaluation Scope and Objectives:

The scope of the evaluation is the GRIF funded Amerindian Development Fund 1 project, which has since been succeeded by the ADF2 project.

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and contribution of this GRIF funded project to the economic empowerment of indigenous communities and overcoming acute poverty through implementation of community development plans. Further, it will explore the extent to which this project has contributed to the achievement of the UNDP Country Programme 2012 – 2016 Outcome 1, namely “strengthened institutional and regulatory capacities of government, civil society organizations to enable access to sustainable financial and business development services for the economic poor, women and Indigenous populations.”

This evaluation specifically focuses on:

- Providing evidence to support accountability of the project;
- Assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of project results;
- Identifying areas of strengths, weaknesses and gaps in project implementation;
- Assessing impediments to achieving results; and
- Lessons learnt that apply to more effective implementation of the ADF2 project

The TOR for the evaluation contained a list of evaluation questions, which were addressed to the extent possible given the time and logistic limitations within which the exercise was carried out.

With respect to relevance, the evaluation attempts to assess:

- The extent to which the GRIF Amerindian Development Fund is relevant to national development priorities; and
- How relevant the project design is to producing the desired outputs?

The evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the project in moving towards its stated outputs by reviewing:

- The progress made towards the achievement of the intended outputs;
- The effectiveness of UNDP’s community engagement strategy;
- The extent to which UNDP’s project implementation practices affected the achievement of the outputs; and
- The appropriateness of UNDP’s partnership strategy for the achievement of the outputs.

The efficiency and cost-effectiveness of UNDP’s strategy in producing the project outputs are assessed through evaluating:

- The capacity and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the project.

The evaluation has as its primary audience the Government of Guyana (with an emphasis on the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs), UNDP and Amerindian communities. Its findings are also relevant to implementing partners of ADF2 and the wider development community in the country.

The evaluation mission was focused on gathering first-hand information about the manner in which the CDPs had been implemented and the economic viability and sustainability of activities undertaken. The evaluation inception report had suggested that the CDPs to be visited be selected based on a prior classification of all completed CDPs into successful, somehow problematic and problematic projects. The absence of updated information on the current status of all projects made this impossible, and hence a decision on which CDPs to visit had to be based on logistical considerations. However, based on discussions held with a range of key informants, there is no reason to assume that the sample visited was unrepresentative of the range of CDPs implemented.

The original plan was for the evaluation mission to visit 10 CDPs. In actual fact only 8 CDPs were visited. Please refer to annex 5 for the list of CDPs visited.

In each village visited, the evaluator had the possibility of interacting with a small number of villagers, mostly drawn from the current village councils and including members of the CDP management teams. Despite expectations to the contrary, language did not prove to be a constraint in reaching out to communities. In all communities visited the village council members and CDP management teams were conversant in English. Only in one village (Rupertee) did some of the participants in the community general meeting require translation.

The prominence of logistic considerations in the choice of the CDPs visited might well have produced a non-representative sample. Thus any conclusions drawn from the field visits would remain somehow tentative.

These interactions and visits to project sites, as well as review of accounts maintained by the CDP management teams, allowed the evaluator to assess the current status of the CDP and become aware of project implementation challenges faced by the concerned teams.

Though two UNDP staff accompanied the evaluator they did not interfere with the freedom of the evaluator to interact with villagers. In most cases, the relevant community development officer (CDO) who had supported the CDP implementation process was present and provided additional insights about the manner in which the projects were implemented and monitored.

The small size of participants in most meetings did not necessitate or allow for focus group discussions with particular subsets of the population, such as women or youth.

The recent change in composition of village councils and Tshaos, as a result of the village elections held in mid-2015, meant that in some cases the elected officials who had been involved with CDP implementation were not present to provide intimate details about challenges faced.

While some Tshaos and village councils complained about receiving late notice of the visit, it was possible for the evaluator to meet with people who had knowledge of and involvement in the CDP in all cases.

Main Findings and Conclusions:

Relevance of the project to national development priorities:

In this section, the report assesses the extent to which the GRIF Amerindian Development Fund is relevant to national development priorities and implications of project design for the success of the project in producing the desired outputs.

The project was expected to contribute to the twin national objectives of reducing poverty and conserving the pristine environment of the country. The successful implementation of the project was expected to reduce poverty by increasing opportunities for income earning activities. It should also have reduced pressure on the environment by providing communities with income earning opportunities that do not degrade or abuse natural resources.

The link between the project and national poverty reduction and low carbon development strategies is, however, tenuous, given the long-term nature of the former and the limited duration and funding of the project.

Having said that, the development of a model for funding local economic development in Amerindian communities, which was developed under ADF1, has the potential to contribute to sustainable development of Amerindian communities, if supplemented by additional funding and technical support. To that extent the project remains relevant to national development priorities.

The project design puts emphasis on provision of financial resources, implicitly considering the main constraint on income earning opportunities as lack of funds. Discussions with a range of stakeholders, both in the selected villages and in the capital, however, indicated that a more binding constraint is limited human resources and skills.

The implementation of CDPs was entrusted to the existing local governance structure in indigenous communities, with the village councils given pre-eminence as a body corporate. The elaboration of CDPs even preceded the approval of ADF1. It had been carried out with technical support from the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs. The arrangement implicitly assumes that elected bodies, which by necessity change with elections held every three years, are an appropriate forum for managing what were supposed to be commercially viable projects on a continuous basis.

The creation of a dedicated CDP management team to be chosen by a general community meeting was expected to provide a professional structure to manage these commercial projects. The procedures did not, however, foresee specific measures to ensure community ownership and participation, and safeguard against capture of CDP benefits by powerful individuals or groups. In actual fact, at least in the case of the CDPs visited by the evaluation mission, the CDP management teams were dominated by village council members and the

amounts previously provided to communities was sizeable, the amounts concerned were not sufficiently large to meet expectations for substantial improvement.

The ADF inception workshop report includes an appendix 2 in which the first question relates to relevance of the CDP. The report, however, does not reflect any discussion regarding the continued relevance of CDPs that had been identified years prior to the start of project activities. In addition, anecdotal evidence provided by some key informants seems to indicate an unwillingness on the part of the Government of the day to reopen the choice of CDPs.

The assessment of the contribution of ADF1 to socio-economic development of Amerindian communities has to await the implementation of ADF2, as the major objective of ADF1 as a preparatory assistance project was the development of a model to be followed by ADF2. The ADF2 project, can make a significant contribution to the national goal of promoting sustainable development and reducing poverty, with some modification of the way it approaches the design and implementation of CDPs.

The insistence that the ADF1 deliver on a Government promise to provide every Amerindian community with a grant of 5 million GDs created conditions that increased risks of inefficient and wasteful use of resources.

The CDPs, which had been prepared by communities prior to the initiation of ADF1, required budgets that only in rare cases were close to 5 million. The communities insisted on receiving the full 5 million promised, even if their original CDP had been costed for less. At the same time, in cases where the budget required was more than 5 million there was no flexibility to increase the allocation. Hence the concerned communities felt obliged to meet the shortfall. However, there was no mechanism put in place to ensure the promised community participation was forthcoming before a CDP received funding from ADF1.

Achievements with respect to each project objective:

This section assesses the effectiveness of the project in moving towards its stated outputs by reviewing:

- The progress made towards the achievement of the intended outputs;
- The effectiveness of UNDP's community engagement strategy; and
- The efficiency of UNDP's project implementation and partnership strategy for the achievement of the outputs.

Effective progress towards intended outputs:

ADF1 was designed as a preparatory assistance project with a nine-month time horizon. During these months the project carried out a capacity assessment of the MoAA, developed and agreed on a funding mechanism for CDPs and held the project inception workshop. The actual funding of CDPs only started following the inception workshop. Given the objectives the

There was, however, no agreement by the Ministry to proceed with implementation of the suggested capacity development plan. Hence this objective was not met.

The lack of progress on this component of the project, beyond the initial capacity assessment exercise, meant that the CDPs did not receive the foreseen level of regular monitoring. The CDOs who were tasked with monitoring the CDPs are responsible for all manner of development activities in all Amerindian villages. They thus were not able to monitor the CDPs on a monthly basis as stipulated in most CDP documents. Based on the CDPs visited by the evaluation mission, the CDOs were only able to visit the CDPs on average four times a year. This shortfall could have been partly offset by more creative use of CSOs, who were recruited from amongst village youth and paid by the MoAA. However no mechanisms were foreseen for ensuring that the CSOs received the required training and authority to at least report on progress of CDPs. Some CSOs received basic training in project management and reporting and were assigned to work as frontline staff for CDPs. In actual fact they did not produce any systematic CDP progress reports, even though they might have had some limited capacity to perform this task.

The capacities of concerned communities to plan, implement and monitor development projects have improved, though admittedly from a low base. The training provided to the CDP management teams has allowed them to better plan project activities and the exposure they have gained to modern financial reporting systems has enabled them to better account for funds spent. The CDP management teams have also gained technical knowledge in the respective area of their selected activity. They have also gained skills of working as a team and jointly identifying problems and offering solutions to them. There is thus a base on which to build for resolving the viability problems of some of the existing CDPs.

It is regrettable that the suggested measures to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry in the areas of monitoring and evaluation and reporting were not agreed to by the authorities at the time. The current management of the Ministry, which has been renamed the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs, is fully cognizant of the urgency of carrying out the suggested capacity development activities to benefit the Ministry.

Fund disbursement mechanism:

The project has managed to provide a mechanism through which funds can be disbursed to isolated communities. Though the officials of the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs, had expressed some concern regarding the high cost of accessing funds from banks, given the distance and costly transportation, the transaction costs for receiving funds were not found to be excessive. In most cases the cost of collecting the money from the bank and transporting it back to the community did not exceed 0.5% of the amount collected. However, the cost did lead communities to withdrawing substantial amounts in each trip to the bank. This does create a potential financial risk, as the safe keeping of these amounts can pose challenges for the

The disbursement mechanism appears to strike a reasonable balance between the need for accountability and difficulty of accessing banking services in its areas of operation. In the majority of cases, funds were disbursed in two tranches, with the release of the second tranche being conditional on receiving an acceptable accounting for expenditures incurred with the initial disbursement. While second tranche disbursements were made following submission of financial and narrative reports and spot check missions, it is not clear how thoroughly the accounts presented were scrutinized. In particular there is no evidence of any attempt to assess the quality of goods and services procured. The project, further, did not institute any measures to mitigate the inherent risks of large amounts of cash being held by CDP management teams at any time, given the large amounts withdrawn from the bank on the few occasions the teams would visit the bank. All the same, the limited number of withdrawals is understandable, given the high cost involved in getting to and from the bank.

The main problem on the accountability front, however, is with there being no system to enforce the submission of a final financial report. In addition, there are no provisions for dealing with any financial irregularities. The inability of CDP management teams to use the banking system for making payments, means that there are few points for cross checking of information. Thus, while the occasional withdrawal of a large advance from the bank can be verified against the withdrawal slip issued by the bank, the daily expenditure out of funds kept in some safe place within the village is only backed by one receipt.

In the absence of an audit report it is difficult for the evaluation to assess whether there has been any misuse of funds. However, concerns about such misuse were aired in some of the communities visited by the evaluation mission.

In conclusion it can be said that the ADF1 project did manage to test a workable fund disbursement mechanism. Moving forward, however, the system for accounting on how funds are actually spent and a systematic approach for dealing with possible misuse of funds should be instituted in the follow up ADF2 project.

Development of the ADF2 project document:

The project document for the main phase has been prepared and shepherded through to approval. The ADF2 is already operational, with some lessons learnt from ADF1 taken into account to improve operations. The improvements introduced include better sequencing of training and fund disbursement in particular.

The urgency given in practice to the development of the ADF2 project was due to mounting public pressure for implementation of CDPs across the board in all Amerindian communities. As a result the foreseen process for documenting lessons learnt from the pilot project was put on the back burner. Thus the design of ADF2 did not fully benefit from all the lessons that could have been drawn from a careful study of the pilot project.

community ownership. The ADF project team was under pressure to approve CDPs at a fast rate, hence they were not able to devote time and effort to correcting for any shortcomings in the process that had been followed by a Government driven process earlier, to identify CDPs.

Insufficient community ownership of CDPs also partly explains the shortfall in terms of value for money against incurred expenditures. While many communities had agreed to provide different amounts of own contribution to CDP expenses, it was difficult to establish the extent to which such promises had been kept. Further, the fact that many CDP management teams had become dysfunctional following the ending of project funding, indicated that at least some members of these teams were only motivated by prospects of gaining access to some monetary benefit. Some villagers also mentioned that wages offered by CDPs were at times higher than the market rate, indicating suboptimal value for money for ADF1 project funds.

Efficiency of project implementation practices:

Some key informants indicated that cost increases and other changes in the operating environment from the time a CDP was conceived and its implementation reduced the likelihood of effective project implementation. Given the volatile nature of some commodity prices and the impact of climatic changes on the timing and extent of rainfall in project areas, such comments are not unreasonable. The urgency attached to meeting demands for release of funds provided limited practical scope for revising CDPs that had already been cleared by the MoAA. Given that these projects had been proposed a few years earlier, this rigidity further undermined chances of CDPs in meeting their set targets.

The ADF1 scores high on having achieved economies with respect to project management expenses. As is stated in the project final report, it opted for a slimmed down management structure, thus keeping overhead costs low. This might well have been motivated by a desire to respond to Government requests that bulk of project resources be spent on direct support to communities. However, given the pilot nature of the project and the correctly stipulated intense level of monitoring, more funds and human resources should have been spent on project management.

Serious concerns regarding the viability and feasibility of many CDPs, reflected in the scoping mission reports that accompanied their approval, were not effectively met through specific activities budgeted for and implemented under ADF1. The CDP documents consulted by the evaluation mentioned serious doubts for example with respect to the market for cassava products in the case of Manawarin. Yet, the project team decided to move ahead with the project without budgeting money and resources for dealing with this concern.

Given the high cost and time consuming nature of monitoring activities, the amount of resources allocated to project monitoring were not sufficient to allow for rigorous monitoring of project activities. The lack of movement on strengthening the capacity of the MoAA in project monitoring and reporting further weakened oversight arrangements of CDPs.

the same time, the time that has lapsed since the last time the ADF1 project team visited the CDPs and lack of clarity on post ADF1 follow up arrangements for the CDPs might negatively impact the evaluation of the sustainability of benefits generated by CDPs.

The evaluation mission noticed many cases of assets created by CDPs not being fully utilized. In two of the cassava projects the processing facilities were not in use and in the third one it was operating at a level well below its capacity due to difficulties experienced in selling the products. In the first two cases, the constraint appeared to be limited supply of cassava for processing, while in the last one the issue related more to marketing. A guesthouse set up in Santa Aratak was also not in use on the day of our visit and had only been occupied on an occasional basis since completion more than one year back. The fishpond project in Annai remains incomplete. The only two projects that appear to be making good use of the facilities created through their CDPs are the animal herd in Rupunau and the village shop in Paruima.

The best indicator for sustainability would be the ability of village councils to continue to operate the facilities created through the ADF1 at or close to its planned capacity without the need for additional injection of funds or expertise.

Two requirements have to be met for an operation to be considered sustainable. It needs to have an operational management structure, with the requisite authority and expertise to efficiently manage the CDP. In addition, it needs to generate sufficient revenue to cover operating costs as well as set aside a depreciation fund to replace assets as they reach the limit of their useful life.

The two Savannah based cassava projects do not face a marketing constraint due to their access to an abundant market in nearby population centres. The one in Manawarin, however, faces high transport costs for accessing markets. In all cases the acreage allocated to growing cassava to be processed in the communal processing plants needs regular replacement given the slash and burn nature of cultivation practiced. With respect to the cassava projects in the Savannah there is additional attention needed to ensuring that the farms created can survive periodic droughts that are becoming more common given climate change.

The guesthouse at Santa Aratak appears reasonably well maintained and the village council has demonstrated its interest in seeing it become a money making exercise, by investing additional amounts in expanding its capacity from 10 to 13 beds. However, the use made so far of the facility does not inspire confidence. Despite its proximity to the International Airport in Georgetown, the high cost of getting to and from the village means it is unlikely to generate sufficient tourist demand without substantial expenditures for marketing. However, the facility might be able to generate at least sufficient income to cover its operating expenses and allow for replacement of fixed assets over time, if it can garner more of the market for one or two day retreats organized by various Georgetown based Governmental and donor funded agencies.

The village shop in Paruima, despite having had a problematic start, with funds provided for purchase of supplies prior to training on how to plan for such purchases, appears on track to

Amerindian communities. This has been due to insufficient attention to removing external risks that have the potential for undermining the viability of initiated activities.

Given the high cost of operations in most Amerindian villages, due to high costs of transport and limited markets and/or production potential of these communities, the value of the grant may have been too low to be able to significantly impact local economic development. The likely impact of CDPs was further negatively influenced by the insufficient attention paid to supportive capacity building efforts.

The size of the grants being fixed irrespective of village population size has meant that the relative additional injection of funds into a community has been negligible in bigger villages, even given low levels of per capita monetary income in most villages. The average Amerindian family in the villages we visited was reported by most community members to have an annual money income of close to 200,000 GDs. Thus in a large village with some 300 to 400 households, the average annual income of the village is around 70 million GDs. A grant of 5 million GDs does not even represent an injection of 10% of the annual village income. It is thus not surprising that the project's likely impact at the village level is limited at best.

The likely impact could be increased substantially if the funds available had targeted capacity building on a larger scale, supplemented by linking up the communities that receive this capacity support to sustainable sources of funding for productive investments. Such investments, if well-conceived and based on a thorough vetting process, can be made bankable. Attracting commercial funding and having the rigour that repayment of a loan creates, as well as the potential for ever greater loans, makes it possible for one to plan for substantial impact on economic activities. This would also have required some flexibility in implementing the CDPs outside the scope of local governance structures, and/or providing the CDPs with independent legal character so that they can attract loan funding in particular.

Recommendations

1) Community ownership

1a. Community consensus

To ensure continuity of CDPs beyond the three year life of a village council, it is important that there be community consensus on the priority assigned to it. To achieve that community consensus sufficient time and energy has to be devoted to the elaboration and adoption of CDPs. One cannot equate the approval of such projects in an open meeting by the majority of those present, as evidence that the project responds to community aspirations. There should be some kind of quorum arrangement as well as allocation of sufficient time to respond to all the concerns that might be raised by community members about a particular activity before adopting it as the priority CDP. Such a broad community ownership and understanding of the CDP would help ensure popular oversight and substantially reduce the risk that resources might be wasted.

The rules governing participatory decision making processes should be tightened to require a certain quorum in public meetings that approve CDPs. In cases where at the time of scoping missions a quorum is not met, the visiting missions should have sufficient flexibility in timing to extend their stay until such time as a quorum is reached. Insisting on a quorum is not a magic bullet in itself and has to be complemented by measures that create continuity between incoming and outgoing village councils with respect to development projects.

1b. Separation of CDP management from village councils

The CDP management teams should ideally be given some distance from village councils, by insisting that in addition to a few councilors who are on the team in their capacity as ex-officio members, there be at least an equal number of members selected in their individual capacity by the community. In cases where following elections some individual members of management teams, might turn into ex-officio members, then new individual members would need to be selected by the community. This way, at least one gets some way towards decision making by consensus and at best there will be some element of continuity in management of CDPs as the individual members carry with them the institutional memory of the project.

2) A developmental compact between the State and Amerindian communities

2a. Community counterpart contributions to CDPs

There can be a stipulation that before any grants are released under ADF2, the concerned community should deposit a certain amount as counterpart contributions in a dedicated CDP account. Introducing this stipulation also provides an opportunity for the Government to revisit

capacities of such women. Otherwise there will be no economic empowerment of women, as it is possible that such quotas only lead to formalistic as opposed to real participation of women in CDP management.

4) Advisory support to CDPs

4a. Marketing and economies of scale

Marketing has proven to be a major hurdle for a number of CDPs. It thus makes sense for the ADF2 project to deal with this issue at the central level, especially given the similarity of the type of projects chosen by different communities. Many of them are focused on cassava production and processing. It thus makes sense for the ADF2 project management unit to look into the feasibility of linking the many CDPs interested in similar projects to a central marketing outlet. It also makes sense for more engagement with communities and encouraging nearby villages that are interested in similar projects to pool their resources together. As an example the Rupertee and Massara communities are only some half an hour apart by car. They had both engaged in similar cassava production and processing projects. Some joint activities could well have been beneficial for both communities, if not outright merger of the two grants into one bigger grant that can go for economies of scale at both the farming and processing levels.

The ADF2 project has to take this into consideration and ensure viability of CDPs through allocating more resources to removing production and marketing constraints in particular and providing the required funding flexibility to ensure that CDPs are funded to the needed capacity level.

4b. Continued support to CDPs initiated through ADF1

The suboptimal use of the three cassava processing CDPs visited relate more to lack of clarity on responsibility for continued operation of CDPs beyond the life of ADF1 and can be addressed by requesting that the ADF2 project take on the responsibility of overseeing the CDPs established through funding from ADF1. This makes imminent sense, given that ADF2 is in a sense an extension of ADF1.

4c. Increased allocation of resources to training

The relative allocation of project funds between grants and training elements, and insufficient allocation of resources for monitoring and CDP technical support activities are inconsistent with a quest for efficient use of resources. It would be helpful for the ongoing ADF2 project to commission a detailed study of the return to grants and training in order to arrive at a formula that would maximize the total return to funds spent.

The balance between grants and capacity building support was understandably skewed towards capital grants under ADF1. The experience gained in ADF1 confirms the high returns to capacity building efforts. In addition, discussions with a range of stakeholders confirm limited human

5c. Strengthening capacity of local governance structures

Given the role that local governance structures have in the identification and implementation of CDPs, it is imperative that they have increased project management expertise. The fact that village councils are organized along thematic lines with each counselor responsible for a given thematic area provides a good basis on which to build. Training all the councilors responsible for the likely thematic areas of CDPs in project identification, implementation and monitoring would allow the village councils to approach their developmental responsibilities in a more professional manner. It would also help create a network amongst communities and facilitate exchange of experiences. This can facilitate joint action for dealing with common problems and allow the communities who have not yet embarked on their CDPs to learn from the mistakes and good practices of their peers, thus increasing the likelihood of success.

5d. Linking Hinterland Employment Youth Service to CDPs

Some of the youth involved in the Hinterland Employment Youth Service, which has replaced the Community Support Officer programme, can be trained in project management skills and serve as programme officers for the village councils. As such, they should be able to partially offset the inability of CDOs in their present numbers, responsibilities and funds for travel to provide intensive monitoring of CDPs.

5e. Strengthening capacity of CDOs

The CDOs would also require further training in monitoring and reporting, as well as in communal socio-economic dynamics to be able to identify potential problems in the way CDPs are managed and suggest remedial action in a timely manner. Budgetary constraints permitting, an increase in their numbers and funds allocated to them for transport services can further strengthen their role in monitoring CDPs.

5f. International support to economic empowerment of indigenous communities

There are good practices available globally in this area that the Government of Guyana can learn from, as it proceeds to refine its approach to economic empowerment of indigenous communities, with a focus on appropriate institutional structures and capacities. The newness of such approaches in the country and the critical role that indigenous communities play in safeguarding a global public good, namely pristine environmental assets of Guyana, makes it imperative that the international community redouble its support to the economic empowerment component of the national local carbon development strategy.

Annexes:

Annex 1: TOR of the evaluation

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Final Evaluation
Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) Amerindian Development Fund:
Village Economy Development under GRIF (Phase 1)
September – October 2015

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) of Guyana sets out the vision through which economic development and climate change mitigation will be enabled in the course of the generation of payments for standing forest and eco-system services. The Guyana REDD+ Investment Fund (GRIF) has been established to channel results-based payments for avoided deforestation towards the implementation of the LCDS. Some of the resources mobilized through the LCDS are in part directed to more inclusive models of pro-poor growth, targeting those most affected by poverty. Critical to the realization of goals set out in the LCDS is recognition of the important role that indigenous communities play in protecting and sustainably managing the forests.

There are in excess of 180 Indigenous communities located across Guyana but concentrated in a geographic space referred to as the rural interior/hinterland, situated mostly within the boundaries of regions 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9. The population of those communities range between 150 and 5, 000 inhabitants. The poverty levels in the rural interior where most of the indigenous communities are located are high, combined 78.6 percent according to the household budget survey of 2006. This is a reflection of traditional lifestyle and cultural freedoms valued by different standards of wealth co-existing with gradual integration into relatively modern aspects of the wider production and consumption structures of the national economy.

Like some aspects of the rest of the national economy, indigenous communities are primarily involved in subsistence, primary productive activities such as agriculture, hunting, fishing and small scale logging and mining, among others. Amerindians own 13.9 percent of Guyana's land and constitute 9.2 percent of Guyana's population or 68, 675 people, at the last population census in 2002. There are nine groups of Amerindian Peoples in Guyana namely the Warrau, Carib, Arawak, Patamona, Arekuna, Macushi, Wapishana and Wai Wai – each of which has its own distinct cultural identity and heritage, language and traditional economic activities. The diversity of their focus in community development priorities therefore is a reflection of self-determination revealing idiosyncratic features of communities, their traditions, and special interest in exploiting niche opportunities reachable through the GRIF window.

The Amerindian Development Fund (ADF), established to support the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), seeks to provide funding to support the socio-economic development of Amerindian communities and villages, through the implementation of their Community Development Plans (CDPs). The rationale behind the ADF is the implementation of business ventures in communities by utilizing their CDPs. These CDPs represent and reflect the diversity of community development priorities and

EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The Evaluation will consider the project, inputs, activities, outputs and the project's contribution to CPAP outcome 1.

The primary issues would be the relevance/appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the outputs.

Specifically, this exercise will:

Provide evidence to support accountability of the project

Identify current areas of strengths, weaknesses and gaps, especially with regard to:

The appropriateness of UNDP's implementation strategy

Impediments to achieving the outputs

Adjustments to be made

The Consultant is expected to take the following factors into account:

Geographic coverage of Community Development Plans;

Timeframe of the Community Development Plans;

The relevance, performance and success of the Community Development Plans.

The evaluation should provide insights on the successes and weaknesses of the project, identify important lessons that UNDP and the Government of Guyana can use to inform future interventions in the area of Supporting Village Economy Development. More specifically, consideration should be given to the effectiveness of the project and the outputs it has produced, as well as the timeliness of implementation. The evaluation should also assess linkages between Community Development Plans and regional/national plans to address poverty and/or sustainable development.

Furthermore, a review of the project implementation arrangements including the process of community engagement should also be carried out to identify practical, implementable recommendations to improve future project design, implementation and management measures.

A comprehensive list of Community Development Plans will be provided to the Consultant to aid in carrying out the consultancy.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation should generate information on:

Relevance: concerns the extent to which a development initiative and its intended outputs or outcomes are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. Relevance also considers the extent to which the initiative is responsive to UNDP corporate plan and

Sustainability: measures the extent to which benefits of initiatives continue after external development assistance has come to an end. Assessing sustainability involves evaluating the extent to which relevant social, economic, political, institutional and other conditions are present and, based on that assessment, making projections about the national capacity to maintain, manage and ensure the development results in the future:

What are the underlying factors beyond UNDP's control that influence the outputs (including the opportunities and threats affecting the achievement of the outputs)?

What is the extent to which UNDP established mechanisms ensure sustainability of the outputs?

The evaluation will also:

Isolate and elaborate lessons emerging from the programme of work implemented for application to ADF Phase II;

Provide recommendations for improvement of the project in terms of partners, programming, operations for ADF Phase II;

Provide recommendations on how UNDP can better fulfill its commitment to key programming principles and cross-cutting issues (gender mainstreaming, knowledge management, result-based management, capacity building, human-rights based approach and environmental sustainability).

5. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation must be carried out using a sound methodology including a mixed method evaluation i.e. quantitative and qualitative which allows for rigor and provides reliable results for decision making. The evaluation will follow the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation as well as the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluations.

The approach of the evaluation shall be participatory in all phases, particularly in the validation of the findings and conclusions and should be sensitive to gender and human rights and be based on a theory of change. The evaluation will use methodologies and techniques as determined by the specific needs for information, the questions set out in this ToR, the availability of resources and the priorities of stakeholders. In all cases, the consultant is expected to use all available information sources that will provide evidence on which to base evaluation conclusions and recommendations. Findings must therefore be justified with primary and secondary data (in the narrative text). Anticipated approaches to be used for data collection and analysis by the evaluator are: documentation review, interviews with key stakeholders, field visits, questionnaires, participatory techniques, triangulation and participation of stakeholders and/or partners. Data collection methods and process should consider gender sensitivity and data should be systematically disaggregated by gender and age and, to the extent possible, disaggregated by geographical regions, disability, and other contextually-relevant markers of equity.

7. EVALUATOR QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The evaluation will be conducted by a Consultant working under the guidance of the Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Guyana. Consideration of the local context would be critical to the execution of this assignment.

Consultant

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE: A minimum of a Master's degree in the Social Sciences, Sustainable Development, Agriculture or related fields.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE: At least 5 years' experience in conducting project level evaluations as sole evaluator or team leader. Understanding of, and experience in, the required evaluation methodologies.

SECTORAL EXPERTISE: Expertise in the sectoral area of the project being evaluated - at least 7 years of experience in sustainable development projects. Experience in indigenous issues would be desirable.

Additionally, the evaluator should meet the following secondary requirements

IMPARTIALITY: No conflict of interest with any of the parties involved in the evaluation of the project.

COMMUNICATION and INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: Able to communicate the evaluation results in a manner that is easily understood by all parties. Able to interact with all parties in a sensitive and effective way.

And should:

Know UNDP, its programmes, operations and evaluation procedures, including the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017;

Be available for full participation and intensive work within required timeframes;

Have working knowledge of community engagement and community economic development initiatives;

Bring fresh perspectives, insights, experiences and recent state-of-the-art knowledge;

Organize and facilitate debriefing with relevant stakeholders on findings of the Evaluation.

Role of Ministry of Indigenous People’s Affairs

- Provide documentary support to evaluator in the implementation of the evaluation;
- Identify and ensure the participation of relevant national stakeholders in the evaluation;
- Review inception, draft and final reports and provide feedback on areas for strengthening;

Procedures to amend TOR:

For amendments to this TOR, specific requests can be made to the Deputy Resident Representative UNDP Guyana.

Reporting relationships:

The Consultant will submit evaluation deliverables to UNDP Guyana.

Time Frame for the Evaluation Process

Tasks	Number of w/days	Tentative dates	Expected result
Desk review of project document, reports and other background documents	2	September 14 - 16	Inception report containing work plan, key findings of desk review and evaluation methodology
Development of evaluation methodology/inception report			
Comments to the Inception Report	5	September 17 - 23	
Site Visits, Meetings and interviews with stakeholders, beneficiaries and Partners; Debriefing (last day of the mission)	8	September 28 – October 7	Data from major stakeholders collected
Data analysis and preparation	3	October 8 - 12	Draft evaluation report with

Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

Criteria/Key Question	Second Level Question	What to look for	Data sources	Data collection methods	Data analysis method
Relevance	What is the extent to which the Amerindian Development Fund is relevant to national development priorities?	Contribution of ADF to LCDS Links between ADF and National Poverty Reduction Strategy	ADF reports LCDS reports PRSP reports Key informants	Secondary reports Key informant interviews	Triangulate statements made in reports against results of key informant interviews
	How relevant is the project design in addressing the outputs?	Project management structure Project time frame and budget	ADF reports Key informants	Secondary reports. Key informant interviews	Triangulate statements made in reports against results of key informant interviews
Criteria/Key	Second Level Question	What to look for	Data sources	Data collection	Data analysis

Question					method
Efficiency	Has UNDP's strategy in producing the outputs been efficient and cost-effective?	Ratio of overhead expenditures in total expenditures Quality of project monitoring activities	ADF reports, Key informants	Secondary reports, Key informant interviews	Identify key implementation bottlenecks resolved, and recurring problems
	How efficient has been the roles, engagement, and coordination amongst various stakeholders in implementing the project?	Roles of UNDP and MoIPA as specified in the PD versus in practice Regularity and quality of project board meetings Time taken to overcome implementation problems	ADF reports, Key informants,	Secondary reports, Key informant interviews	Stakeholder analysis Importance & influence matrix
	Has there been any duplication of efforts with other organizations in contributing to the outputs?	Non project support to socio-economic development projects in included villages Non project capacity building support to the MoIPA	Key informants, Donor and Government reports	Secondary reports, Key informant interviews	Stakeholder importance and relevance matrix
	What is the assessment of the quality and institutional arrangements for the implementation of the project?	Project delivery versus budget Quality of project monitoring reports	ADF reports, key informants	Secondary reports, Key informant interviews	Triangulation compare project reports against key informant views
Criteria/Key	Second Level Question	What to look for	Data sources	Data collection	Data analysis

Question			Institutional capacity assessments, Selected community members, Key informants	methods	method
Lessons Learned and Recommendations	<p>Isolate and elaborate lessons emerging from this evaluation for application to ADF phase 2</p> <p>Provide recommendations for improvement of ADF phase 2 in terms of partners, programming, and operations</p>	<p>Needed capacity building measures for Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs in particular supplemental action by Government to secure needed budget and personnel</p> <p>Needed measures to improve community ownership of CDP</p> <p>Review linkages between ADF and key Government technical ministries as well as chamber of commerce</p> <p>Review adequacy of funding for project monitoring activities</p> <p>Look into modalities for release of funds for CDPs</p>	<p>ADF II project document</p> <p>ADF II reports</p> <p>Key informants</p>	<p>Secondary reports, Focus group discussions, Key informant interviews</p> <p>Secondary reports, Key informant interviews</p>	<p>Capacity assessment, Participatory rural appraisal</p> <p>Stakeholder analysis, Fund flow analysis, Cost benefit analysis of monitoring activities</p> <p>Capacity needs assessment tools</p>
	<p>Recommend how UNDP can better fulfill its commitment to key programming principles and cross-cutting issues (gender mainstreaming, knowledge management, results based management, capacity building, human rights based approach, and environmental sustainability)</p>	<p>Review need for training on gender sensitive and human rights based programming to all project counterparts</p> <p>Review arrangements for screening of CDPs for gender sensitivity, respect for indigenous populations and environmental sustainability</p>	<p>ADF operational procedures, Key informants</p>	<p>Secondary reports, Key informant interviews</p>	

Annex 4: List of individuals/groups interviewed/consulted

H.E. The Minister of Indigenous People's Affairs and third Vice President, Mr. Sydney Allicock

H.E. The Junior Minister of Indigenous People's Affairs, Mrs. Valerie Garrido-Lowe

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Indigenous People's Affairs, Mr. Vibert Welch

Ms. Khadija Musa, UNDP Resident Representative

Ms. Shabnam Mallick, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative

Mr. Patrick Chesney, ARR Environment, UNDP

Mr. Trevor Benn, head of the Governance and Poverty Team in UNDP

Mr. Aubrey Samuels, Vice Chairman of the National Toshaos' Council

Mr. Eyom Boyal, Secretary, National Toshaos' Council

Mr. Colin Klautky from the Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples

Ms. Audrey Nedd-Johnson of the Ministry of Finance

Mr. Peter Persaud of The Amerindian Action Movement of Guyana (TAAMOG)

Mr. Ashton Simon, National Amerindian Development Foundation (NADF)

Ms. Jean La Rose of the Amerindian People's Association (APA)

Mr. Komalchand Dhiram, of the Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. Eishwar Susenavine, Project Management Office, Ministry of the Presidency

Mr. Nikolaus Oudkerk, Project Management Office, Ministry of the Presidency

Mr. Quacy Bremner of the National Forestry Training Centre.

Mr. Quincy Thon, Senior Environmental Officer, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission

Ms. Karen Raphael of EMPRETEC, currently with EDC

Mr. Aubrey Roberts, Kingdom Apiary Products and Supplies

Ms. Andrea Heath-London, Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst, UNDP

Mr. Ronald Cumberbatch, Programme Analyst, UNDP

Annex 6: List of supporting documents reviewed

- UNDP 2014-2017 Strategic Plan
- UNDAF 2012-2016
- UNDP Country Programme Document (2012 - 2016)
- Country Programme Action Plan (2012 - 2016)
- Low Carbon Development Strategy
- Project Document – Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) Amerindian Development Fund: Village Economy Development under GRIF (Phase 1)
- ADF 1 Project Inception Report
- Ministry of Amerindian Affairs Capacity Development Report
- Field Mission Reports – ADF 1
- Final ADF1 Project Report
- ADF II Project Document
- Actual Community Development Plan documents
- Mining and Amerindians in Guyana: Final report of the APA/NSI project on 'Exploring Indigenous Perspective on Consultation and Engagement within the Mining Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean' by Marcus Colchester, Jean La Rose and Kid James (2002)
- Bulkan, Janette. "The struggle for recognition of the indigenous voice: Amerindians in Guyanese politics." *The Round Table* 102, no. 4 (2013): 367-380.
- Chung Tiam Fook, Tanya. "A 'Win-Win' Strategy for All? Guyana's Climate Change Strategies and Implications for Indigenous Communities." *Caribbean Journal of International Relations and Diplomacy* 1, no. 1 (2013).
- Ifill, Mellissa. "The Indigenous Struggle: Challenging and Undermining Capitalism and Liberal Democracy." PhD diss., Ph. D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Guyana, 2009.

Annex 8: Short biography of the evaluator

Mohammad Pournik has over thirty years of international development experience, most of it with UNDP. He studied development economics in both the UK and the USA.

He started his career with UNDP as a programme officer and his last posting was as the poverty practice leader for Arab states. He managed a multi-million dollar, multi-country community development project operating in South Asia, the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme, for three years.

He has written extensively on challenges facing socio-economic development, with a focus on the Arab region.

He undertook an in house assessment of a major area based development programme in the Sudan, which assisted a number of isolated communities in different parts of the country to implement substantial local economic development projects.

He has been involved in all aspects of planning and implementing development projects, from project conception to final evaluation. He has been responsible for monitoring and reporting on project portfolios in diverse fields, including agriculture, industry and community development.

He retired from UNDP in early 2013.

He is fluent in English and French and his mother tongue is Persian.