

**Minutes of the Joint Project Board Meeting of
"Support to Innovation Policy and Technology Transfer"
and**

"Capacity building for economic forecasting and planning at national and local levels" projects

Date: December 3rd, 2012
Venue: Institute of Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research
Time 11.30 – 12.20

I. Meeting agenda:

- Opening speech - Avazbek Sadikov (Director of the Institute, NPC) and Jaco Cilliers (a. i. RR UNDP Uzbekistan)
- Presentation of project evaluation results - Sheila Marnie, Central Asia Economist, UNDP
- Presentation of the new phase of the project - Zarif Jumaev, Programme Coordinator (UNDP, EGU)
- Discussion - Project Board, participants
- Concluding remarks - Avazbek Sadikov (Director of the Institute, NPC) and Jaco Cilliers (a.i. RR UNDP Uzbekistan)

II. Presentations and Discussions:

The meeting was opened by Avazbek Sadikov, Director of IFMR and National Coordinator for the two projects. Mr. Sadikov once again thanked UNDP for the valuable support to the Institute and acknowledged the achievements of the projects. He proposed to use the meeting as a platform to discuss future cooperation between IFMR and UNDP.

Jaco Cilliers, a.i. Resident Representative, UNDP Uzbekistan, thanked Mr. Sadikov for the warm welcome and noted that the meeting should also serve as a forum to discuss the impact of the two projects and see how the funds were spent. He reminded of the necessary procedural aspects of project closure that would need to be followed in line with UNDP regulations.

Following the introductory remarks, Sheila Marnie, Central Asia Economic, UNDP, presented the results her evaluation of the Capacity Building for Economic Forecasting project. Ms. Marnie briefly reminded of the process of evaluation, which involved a number of meetings with key stakeholders of the Institute in the Government as well as some international partners (eg, GIZ). She noted that overall the evaluation had found a notable progress in the capacities of the Institute compared to the results of the assessment that had been conducted in 2009. The technical skills and motivation had grown visibly, together with abilities of the Institute to address the requests from the Government. The support from UNDP was also crucial in establishing useful links with a number of foreign research institutions, as well as piloting a number of important surveys (eg, of Consumer Demand Index, and Assessment of Business Environment). Ms. Marnie concluded by reiterating the need for continuation of the support to the Institute as it faced new challenges, such as the need for necessary expertise in post-MDG agenda and developing long-term national development strategies (ie, the Vision 2030).

The meeting continued with the presentation by Zarif Jumaev, Programme Coordinator (UNDP, EGU), who summarized the major results and impact of the two projects and outlined the proposals for future cooperation between the Institute and UNDP.

Summarizing the results of the Innovation project, it was noted that the project had achieved the following:

- A community of researchers, including from among the young staff of IFMR, equipped with a necessary methodological tools to monitor and develop innovation programmes had been created
- The Agency for Technology Transfer had been provided with necessary skills, equipment and tools to sustain its operations through consultancy services and trainings on technology transfer related topics.
- A set of legislative documents prepared within the project and submitted to the Government (on Valuation of IP, on Support to Innovative Activity, on the Distribution of Rights on IP produced with budgetary funds, etc.) would help eliminate bottlenecks and revitalize technology commercialization in the country.

Regarding the Capacity Building for Macroeconomic Forecasting project, the following were listed as the major outcomes:

- A solid team of young researchers within the Institute, capable of undertaking complex research initiatives had been created
- Fifteen important research studies on critical topics for decision-making had been completed and shared with the Government and stakeholders (including on the topics of Growth and Poverty Reduction, Assessment of Business Climate, and Consumer Demand Index).
- The prestige and influence of the Institute had notable increased both thanks to the improved quality of policy products and important visibility events (eg, annual Forums of Economists)

Based on the positive results of the cooperation with the Institute, and following the recommendations of the evaluation report prepared by Sheila Marnie, UNDP and IFMR agreed to continue the partnership under the Capacity Building for Economic Forecasting project. The main objectives for the continuation of the project are:

- To reinforce the achieved results on building necessary national capacities for informed economic analysis and policy-making
- To diversify the cooperation channels of IFMR both with local and international partners
- To ensure greater independence and openness of IFMR

With the above goals in mind, it is suggested to provide several new dimensions to the next partnership stage:

- Research topics should focus on issues of long-term sustainable (green) and inclusive development;
- Attracting new partners into the research process, including foreign experts and supervisors of research teams, short-term internships in leading foreign think-tanks (eg, KDI and UNDP Policy Center in Seoul), as well as joint initiatives with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on topics of IP protection for stimulating innovations;
- Trainings are to be more targeted and tailor-made according to the practical needs of IFMR
- Two additional regional development strategies are to be designed in close cooperation with UNDP's Local Governance project, Budget System Reform project, and UN's Joint Programme for Karakalpakstan;
- The project will continue the activities aimed at expanding the visibility and outreach of IFMR through organizing Forums of Economists outside the capital Tashkent, and introduction of a discussion blog in at least Uzbek and Russian languages.

Concluding the presentation, it was noted that as per preliminary consultations, IFMR agreed to provide Soum 100 mln (equivalent to \$50,0000 at UNDP exchange rate) on a cost-sharing basis, while UNDP will be allocating \$200,00 from TRAC funds.

Following the presentation, Mr. Sadikov opened the floor for comments and discussion.

Khamidulla Narmuratov (Project Manager, Support in Innovation Policy and Technology Transfer project) highlighted the difficulties with assessing longer-term impact of the project, particularly regarding the preparation of legislative proposals, which require additional time and efforts for and after their adoption.

Sergey Chepel (Project Manager at IFMR) reminded the meeting participants of the important studies completed during the project implementation and noted the successful creation of a capable team of young national experts. He stressed the importance of continuing the technical support to the young researchers.

To this, Mr. Jumaev added that following the preliminary consultations that were conducted between UN DESA with the help from Sheila Marnie, UN DESA expressed interest in supporting the Institute's capacities in macroeconomic modeling. A scoping mission of UN DESA in early 2013 would allow discuss and formulate the details of this cooperation within the framework of the new project between UNDP and IFMR.

Kakhramon Yusupov (former project manager of the Capacity Building for Macroeconomic Forecasting project, now Dean at the State Academy of Public Administration) noted that although it might seem that the project results are confined to the Institute, there was a great spillover effect for a much wider audience both in the Government, academia and expert community. This was evidenced, amongst other things, by the wide debates and policy implications resulting from the studies and policy recommendations produced with the help of the project.

Shukhrat Shukurov (Deputy Director, IFMR) shared his observation with regards to the situation that he had witnessed at the Ministry of Economy 4-5 years ago, when there were only a couple of experts capable of macroeconomic analysis and modeling. With the help of the Institute and UNDP, the number of professionals engaged in macroeconomic analysis and modeling for policy making has nowadays notable increased, although there is still need to increase technical capacities in medium to long-term forecasting and macroeconomic modeling

In his concluding remarks Mr. Sadikov once again thanked UNDP for the valuable support and the agreement to continue the partnership over the next two years. He informed the Board meeting participants of recent decision by the Government to entrust the development of the national long-term strategic plan (Vision 2030) to the Institute, as well as the Center for Economic Research. Both research institutions are expect to complement each other's work and contribute to design of the national plan. UNDP's support would be key to ensuring necessary capacities are sustained and strengthened at the Institute to meet the new demands from the Government.

Mr. Cilliers thanked Mr. Sadikov and noted that UNDP encouraged cost-sharing of projects from the national budget, which would increase the ownership and practical results of the projects. UNDP looks forward to the next stage of cooperation with the Institute.

III. Conclusions and decisions on follow-up actions resulting from the Project Board meeting:

1. Based on the feedback UNDP will be finalizing the project document for the next stage of cooperation with the Institute by combining the work of two projects under one initiative while closing the Innovation project in December 2012.
2. A cost-sharing agreement with the following commitments for the next two years (2013-2014) will be signed together with the new project document:
 - a. UNDP contribution: \$ 200,000
 - b. IFMR contribution: \$50,000 (in soum equivalent)
3. All assets and equipment remaining under the Innovation project (ID: 00073949) will be transferred to the national partners as per UNDP procedures.



Jaco Cilliers

a. i. Resident Representative
UNDP Uzbekistan



Avazbek Sadikov

Director of the Institute of Forecasting and
Macroeconomic Research

Reviewed by: Sherzod, Akbarov, Head of EGU, UNDP Uzbekistan

Prepared by: Zarif Jumaev, Programme Coordinator, EGU, UNDP Uzbekistan



Meeting Participants:

Institute of Forecasting and Macroeconomic Research

Mr. Avazbek Sadikov, Director of the IFMR, National Project Coordinator

Mr. Shukhrat Shukurov, Deputy Director of the Institute

Mr. Sergey Chepel, Project Manager of the Institute

Mr. Jahongir Muinov, Project Manager of the Institute

UNDP

Ms. Jaco Cilliers, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative

Mr. Sherzod Akbarov, Head of UNDP Economic Governance Unit

Mr. Zarif Jumaev, UNDP Economic Governance Unit Program Coordinator

'Support to innovation policy and technology transfer' project staff:

Mr. Khamidulla Narmuratov, Project Manager of the "Support to Innovation Policy and Technology Transfer" project

Mr. Marat Tursunov, Head of Agency for Technology Transfer

Mr. Vyacheslav Luchkin, Task Manager I

Mr. Usmon Rakhimjanov, Task Manager III

Ms. Ulmas Sayfiddinov, Administrative and Finance Assistant

'Capacity building for economic forecasting and planning at national and local levels' project staff:

Mr. Kakhramon Yusupov, former Project Manager of the "Capacity building for economic forecasting and planning at national and local levels" project

Mr. Ulugbek Kamaletdinov, Regional development Specialist

Ms. Olga Tarabrina, Administrative and Finance Assistant