**“Fostering Knowledge for human development in the Arab region”**

Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting

30 May 2012

**Background**

The “*Fostering Knowledge for Human Development in the Arab Region”* project seeks to promote knowledge generation and dissemination, to foster policy dialogue through examination of key regional development issues, and to develop capacities for the identification and application of development solutions that are human-centred, inclusive and sustainable. The project is firmly linked to the Regional Programme Document (RPD) as the main driver behind Outcome 4 (Promotion of Knowledge for Human Development). Further, it is aligned to the timeframe of the RPD as well as the UNDP Strategic Plan, both of which are in force through 2013.

A guiding principle of the RPD is that progress in human development requires developing stakeholder capacity to generate, acquire and apply knowledge in policy design and implementation. The present project will contribute to that process through the realization of two main outputs, namely 1) *AHDRs produced for human development advocacy and as a tool to foster development dialogue and debate on emerging issues, including gender issues,* and 2) *Analysis on key challenges in the region produced and spaces created for regional debate and knowledge sharing/dissemination.* The project is the successor project to the current Arab Human Development Report (AHDR) project.

The project is to be UNDP executed, but UNOPS implemented.

The total budget of the project is USD 15,694,170 of which USD 6,600,000 are have already been allocated by RPD through TRAC, to be immediately available upon project approval. The Arab Knowledge Report (AKR) is fully funded by the Mohammed Bin-Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation (MBRF) with a total amount of USD 6,127,504. Funding for the regional dialogue event in 2012 has been secured through the Government of Germany in the amount of USD 266,666. Other funding will need to be secured from other sources.

**Project Advisory Committee (PAC)**

The project document went through a first round of comments via a virtual PAC review in April 2012 and the comments received were consolidated in Table 2 below. The bureau units were invited to participate at the formal PAC meeting on 30 May 2012 where the project was endorsed by all participants. The PAC meeting was chaired by Mr. Sunil Saigal, Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional Director for the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States

Prior to the PAC, the Document was shared by with the following Units:

* Bureau For Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)
* Bureau for Development Policies (BDP)
* Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA)
* Bureau Of Management (BoM)
* Evaluation Office (EO)
* Human Development Report Office (HDRO)
* Operations Support Group (OSG)
* Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA)
* Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP)
* Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC)
* Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC)
* Regional Center in Cairo (RCC)

Responses were received from the:

* Bureau for Development Policies (BDP)
* Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA)
* Evaluation Office (EO)
* Human Development Report Office (HDRO)
* Operations Support Group (OSG)
* Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP)
* Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC)

The participants at the formal PAC were as follows:

* Bureau for Development Policies (BDP): Timothy Scott
* Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA): Douglas Passanisi
* Bureau Of Management (BoM): Abdul Hannan
* Evaluation Office (EO): Olivier Cossée
* Human Development Report Office (HDRO): Jon Hall
* Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS): Sunil Saigal, Adel Abdellatif, Susanne Kim Siao, Dania Marzouki, Theodore Murphy, Alexandra Regner

Please find below the consolidated response table to the PAC comments on the regional “Fostering knowledge for human development in the Arab region” project.

PAC minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 1: CONSOLIDATED RESPONSES TO THE PAC COMMENTS ON THE REGIONAL**  **“Fostering knowledge for human development in the Arab region” PROJECT**  **30 May 2012** | | |
| **Origin** | **Inputs** | **RBAS response** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BDP** Knowledge Management Practice Panama | It is necessary to establish and determine how to ensure a direct and cohesive connection between the AHDRs and the Arab Knowledge Report that will be produced, especially since there will be two different teams working on the reports. Both outputs mention the identification of key development themes, these themes for both should be linked to facilitate synergies and more opportunities for policy impact. | The themes of the reports and other knowledge products will be based on identified priorities in the Arab region, taking into account prominent reports such as NHDRs and the UNDP Arab Development Challenges Report 2011 among others and will provide a platform of opportunities for policy dialogue and policy impact. (page 5) |
| The true richness of these reports will be evidenced through the follow-up dialogues that are planned to be carried out. In this regard, it is necessary to determine what the expected impact of these dialogues will be. In the document they are described as spaces for dialogue about the issues raised in the reports. However, will knowledge products be developed post-dialogues? How will they be used as platform to advance human development in the region? | The dialogue events are not planned to be exclusively post-dialogues, they could be dialogue events to test the ideas and messages of the AHDR prior to the launch of the reports as well as dialogue events that are organized post-launch as part of outreach activities. |
| Beyond the events for launching the reports and websites, will CoPs/networks be encouraged / created / facilitated to further encourage consultations, dialogue, dissemination and use of the results of the AHDRs and AKR? It is through these networks and collaborative spaces where participants can continue to build on the discussions and share in-depth experiences/ideas on human development. This is perhaps a knowledge-based strategy that the project could make use of. | Addressing the need for CoP/networks and how to further encourage dialogue will be part of the outreach and communication strategy to be developed. |
| The risk: lack of clarity about the target audiences for knowledge products and advocacy efforts is very present in these dialogues and the creation of knowledge products. For example, who will participate in these dialogues? Who the knowledge products will be aimed at? A broad range of actors are mentioned, but the strategy of these products and sharing spaces have to be refined and detailed regarding the sort of outcome that is expected. Perhaps a particular umbrella theme can be determined and then carry out dialogues aimed at different actors (decision-makers, women, and youth) as all will provide different points of view. Periodic dialogues and knowledge products that do not have a specific target audience and clearly identified purposes with this audience, will most likely not have such a meaningful impact. | We have amended the risk log accordingly to include that ”*A mix of knowledge products will be developed to meet the information demand of different groups. A systematic assessment of the needs and demand for specific products among targeted audiences can be undertaken to ensure the relevance and value of the products*.” (page 20) |
| In regards to the knowledge platform that will be created, it seems to be linked to the AKR, but we wonder if the platform should be more linked to the AHDR framework and data. If linked to the AKR the document should make clear the type of data and information that the platform is going to host, e.g., indicators on knowledge societies, and define how existing data on knowledge societies will be compiled and used. However, in page 17 the platform appears as part of the AHDR component. Another question is how will the platform be sustained past 2015? | The knowledge platform is not specifically linked to the AKR, it is placed under output 2 as the outputs were taken from the executive board approved Regional Programme Document. We felt that the knowledge platform would correspond better to output 2 “Analysis and advocacy of key challenges in the region produced and spaces created for regional debate and knowledge sharing/ dissemination”. The question of how the platform will be sustained will be addressed in the strategy for the knowledge platform to be developed and will be updated in the exit strategy before the project is closed. |
| There is a vague reference to the development of other knowledge products, what will they be? What will be their target audience and objectives? | A mix of knowledge products will be developed to meet the information demand of different groups. A systematic assessment of the needs and demand for specific products among targeted audiences can be undertaken to ensure the relevance and value of the products. |
| The results framework could be complemented with indicators such as: consultation processes implemented, active communities involved in policy dialogues, policy makers reached, etc. | The RRF has been updated as follows: Number of dialogue events, including stakeholders such as civil society, opinion leaders and government officials among others, organized to foster dialogue on inclusive human development in the Arab region. (page 14) |
| The Knowledge Management and information sharing paragraph (page 17) could be complemented further. This is a knowledge management project per se, and KM is not only about using past experience, but embedding KM approaches in the design and development of the project. Our comments above aim towards that purpose | The project will benefit from and feed into the burgeoning stock of knowledge developed, shared and managed throughout UNDP. This includes knowledge resources of the Human Development Report Office, through their annual global reports as well as regular guidance for regional and national reports; the UNDP thematic practice architecture, through Headquarters Units as well as Regional Centres; and UNDP Country Offices, throughout the Arab States region, South-South knowledge-sharing as well as the exchange of knowledge with other regions. A space on Teamworks for both the AHDR and the AKR will be set-up as a means of knowledge exchange and sharing. A communication strategy will further address the issue of knowledge management and information sharing.(page 17) |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BDP (EEG)** | Consider referencing also the “UNDP Arab Development Challenges Report 2011” and highlight its key findings as this report can potentially contribute to the identification of priority topics for both the AHDRs and AKRs (page 3) | We have added “linkages with emerging and persistent development challenges in the region to the text. (see page 5) and referred to UNDP Arab Human Development Challenges Report (page 3) |
| Three reports in three years may be challenging given the need to ensure wide engagement, consultation, and follow-up as described in the para below. Two reports over this time period may achieve more meaningful results. | The current project document includes the launch of the AHDR in September 2012, please see footnote on page 4. The next AHDR is planned for 2013/2014 and the third AHDR within this project timeframe is planned for 2015 which allows adequate time for the preparation and launch of each AHDR. For the years 2002-2005 the AHDR used to be an annual publication. |
| Perhaps explicit reference could be made to post-Rio implementation around integrated sustainable development planning. | The theme of environment and sustainable development has been addressed in several AHDR editions. As part of outreach activities of the 2009 AHDR, the project organized post-launch dialogues on themes of climate change and environment. The project will pay close attention to the outcomes of the Rio+20 conference and determine in what ways the project can contribute to foster dialogue on these issues post Rio+20. |
| The State of Human Development in the region could also introduce and provide a bit more detail on the report’s main theme and sub-themes, rather than serving as a completely stand-alone chapter. | The state of human development in the region is limited to the first chapter, drawing on the statistical data and indicators, in order to be able to provide in-depth analysis of the selected priority theme for the rest of the report. |
| Perhaps the role of UNDP in the drafting and finalization of the document should also be made more explicit here and/or below. | In 1994 the United Nations General Assembly affirmed that the Human Development Report is “not an official document of the United Nations”. The AHDRs are prepared in this tradition of independence, which have brought critical development issues to the fore at the global, regional, and national levels worldwide. As has been noted in the forewords to previous AHDRs, they “are, deliberately, not formal UN or UNDP documents and do not reflect the official views of either organization. Rather they have been intended to stimulate and inform a dynamic, new, public discourse across the Arab world and beyond” and “some of the views expressed by the authors are not shared by UNDP or the UN.” By providing a platform for debate which reflects the way in which a number of the most pressing development challenges are seen by some of those who live them day-in and day-out, this report can play an important role in framing the development agenda in the region for years to come.  In producing the AHDR and the AKR, one of the very important strategies is for UNDP/RBAS to maintain its role as a natural convener to coordinate and facilitate the process of the report writing and production. These reports are prepared and owned by citizens of Arab countries and provide the Arab region with a much needed impartial forum for initiating dialogue and structuring debate to strengthen reform agendas within the region. The AHDR must be endorsed by the Executive office before it is published. The text has been amended. (see page 6) |
| As part of the process, a series of advocacy events and/or messaging beyond the dialogues could be produced during the process, rather than just at the time of launch. If so, reference to this on-going external advocacy beyond the formal advisory groups, should be mentioned in the document.  It would be useful to have more information about pre-and post-launch dialogues (target audience, regional, sub-regional?) | The dialogue events are not planned to be exclusively post-dialogues, they could be dialogue events to test ideas and message of the AHDR prior to the launch of human development reports as well as dialogues events that are organized post-launch in order to facilitate further dialogue and outreach. The outreach and communication strategy will further address this issue. |
| Ideally, the UNDP readers’ groups could be expanded slightly to include regional practice group expertise. Regardless of any specific expertise tied directly to AHDR themes, the group should include cross-disciplinary expertise covering a range of social, environmental, economic, and governance themes. | Readers’ groups will be established when the theme is selected. Apart from regional personalities, group members may include some of the key contributors to the global Human Development Report, HDRO representatives as well as experienced human development analysts from other regions and national HDR coordinators. The text has been amended. (see page 6) |
| Depending on the specific themes of recent and planned AHDRs, these meetings could piggy-back with other UNDP regional practice meetings targeting environmental, poverty, governance, practice areas, etc. This model has been used effectively in RBEC and RBLAC. | Coordination with other UNDP regional practice meetings in relation to AHDR events when possible will be supported and encouraged. |
| Perhaps the text could make clearer the difference between the AHDRs and the AKRs – the text is almost identical for both in terms of contents and process. Is there a reason for having too differently branded regional publications? Are the AKR’s also semi-independent? If not, this could be mentioned including a brief description of the risks related to having such similar products.  How will the two sets of reports leverage one another? What is the management structure, for example, to ensure these links?  What are the proposed themes, at least for AHDR2012 and AKR 2012? (page 8) | The AKR is a bi-product of the AHDR. The objective of the AKR series is to engage governments, civil society, and the private sector in the Arab countries in analysis and dialogue on issues related to building knowledge societies for human development, and to support the identification of regional and national priorities towards that end. These reports are distinct from the AHDRs but complement them effectively by continually expanding the analysis of this key issue in the region, which was originally given broad salience by the AHDR 2003, *Building a Knowledge Society* and identified critical challenges in areas such as education, innovation, freedom of expression, investment in research and other aspects underpinning knowledge societies. The AKR series addresses the state of knowledge in all its dimensions in the Arab region and fosters dialogue around its diagnoses and recommendations while stressing that urgent action is imperative to set the Arab region on the road toward a knowledge-based renaissance, a prerequisite for any significant gains in human development. |
| Ideally, the communication strategy would cover more than the fairly narrow window around the launch and dissemination, i.e. also, a series of potential advocacy and messages through the preparation and post-launch periods.  It would be useful to have a bit more detail included on these dialogues. Are these a combination of virtual and in-person events? What are their approximate size, timing, degree of national government/policy-makers ownership, eth elater being the main beneficiary of the AHDRs? Perhaps some of these dialogues could piggyback on other regional and global events depending on budget and theme. For example, the OECD global Forum, the HDCA annual conference, and other events organized by multilateral and sister agencies in the region around environmental, social, economic, and governance themes. As part of these efforts, there are many examples to build on from other regions, including RBLAC, RBEC, and RBAP, e.g. Virtual HD School, HD Community of Practices, Media and Student competitions, etc. | An outreach and dissemination strategy will be developed for the AHDR and AKR that is built on the understanding that the goal of policy change in the Arab countries will only be successful if driven by a momentum forged on world-class knowledge and broad-based dialogue. In broad terms the approach is intended as well to ensure that UNDP maximizes the use of this powerful tool by updating its approach to ensure that the AHDR and AKR are truly instrumental to help achieve development results. In order to do so, and to keep up with the times, past experiences from the AHDR and AKR showed that UNDP has to be innovate in order to engage a larger public, and to keep the dialogue flowing rather than confining it to the moment of the report launch. The dialogues will be “physical” dialogues organized on a regional and sub-regional level and RBAS will ensure the coordination with other regional and global events when possible and relevant. (see page 9) |
| “The primary beneficiaries will be the planners and policy makers in the Arab States” How are these policy makers being directly engaged in the AHDR preparation and dissemination process? Is there room to engage them further through consultations and/or UNDP COs, while still maintaining the semi-independence of the AHDRs? | The AHDRs have done much to expand the scope for policy discussion in the region in ways that are generally not possible at the strictly national level. They have also served as touchstones for efforts among the international community to understand regional challenges from the Arab perspective, and have provided foundations for bilateral and multilateral cooperation strategies as well as diplomatic discourse. RBAS is committed to provide support for research, analysis and dialogue around the human development challenges and opportunities that the Arab States are facing. The findings of the AHDRs and other knowledge products can be useful in developing policies, strategies, plans, programs and budgets. |
| Development of a communications/advocacy/outreach strategy could be one of the key indicative activities covering more the an media kits for the launch and dissemination | The development of a communication and outreach strategy has been added to the strategy. (see page 9) |
| The project document should have an annual work plan | We will attach a Year 1 Annual Work Plan to the project document. |
| “*The project will benefit from and feed into the burgeoning stock of knowledge developed, shared and managed throughout UNDP. This includes knowledge resources of the Human Development Report Office, through their annual global reports as well as regular guidance for regional and national reports; the UNDP thematic practice architecture, through Headquarters Units as well as Regional Centres; and UNDP Country Offices, throughout the Arab States region, South-South knowledge-sharing as well as the exchange of knowledge with other*” How will this knowledge be managed, and by whom – perhaps more details could be provided? | The project manager in coordination with UNDP RBAS is going to coordinate the knowledge management and information sharing of the project. The outreach and communication strategy will also address the question of knowledge management in order to provide a more detailed analysis. |
| We would like to see more detailed information in the knowledge management section and how some of the knowledge and experience can be shared. | The project will benefit from and feed into the burgeoning stock of knowledge developed, shared and managed throughout UNDP. This includes knowledge resources of the Human Development Report Office, through their annual global reports as well as regular guidance for regional and national reports; the UNDP thematic practice architecture, through Headquarters Units as well as Regional Centres; and UNDP Country Offices, throughout the Arab States region, South-South knowledge-sharing as well as the exchange of knowledge with other regions.  A space on Teamworks for both the AHDR and the AKR will be set-up as a means of knowledge exchange and sharing. A communication strategy will further address the issue of knowledge management and information sharing. The text has been amended. (see page 17) |
| As this is a regional project at least three governments must endorse the project document extending legal coverage. All countries in which activities are to take place must also endorse and extend legal cover likewise, but that can be secured after initial approval but before commencing activities in those countries. This is to ensure both the ownership and legal cover. Given the special nature of this project, RBAS will need to consult OSG/Executive Office on an exception | The project had been granted approval for a waiver by the Associate Administrator, which allows us to implement this new project without seeking the signatures of the governments in the region. This allows UNDP RBAS to keep with the spirit of the AHDR, which has been globally recognized as an independent report, and is used as a basis for analysis on the region by many partners and donors.  Furthermore, the regulation that at least three governments must endorse the project document extending legal coverage does not exist in the POPP anymore.  “*Following the PAC, the regional bureau may proceed with the finalizing and approval of the document. In so doing, the regional bureau or the PPR should seek endorsement from all countries that wish to participate. Government endorsement of the respective participating countries where project activities will take place must be obtained. A non-programme country may also participate in a regional project provided that it meets any additional costs that arise.”* |
| **RBAP** | Provide a clearer description of the objectives of the Arab Knowledge Reports (AKRs) and their interlinkage with the Arab Human Development Reports (AHDRs). The AKR series are to follow the AHDR thematically as described in the Prodoc. But the objective of the AKRs is not clearly established. The questions to be answered are: Does the AKR series draw upon sub-themes of the AHDRs – analyse the sub-themes more in-depth? Does the analysis in AKR series put people at the centre Or does the AKR series present technical/thematic analysis around the topic of AHDR? How does the AKR series help pushing boundaries of advocacy of the key messages of AHRs? Are they technical background papers that form the research basis for the AHDR? | The objective of the AKR series is to engage governments, civil society, and the private sector in the Arab countries in analysis and dialogue on issues related to building knowledge societies for human development, and to support the identification of regional and national priorities towards that end. These reports are distinct from the AHDRs but complement them effectively by continuously expanding the analysis of this key issue in the region, which was originally given broad salience by the AHDR 2003, *Building a Knowledge Society* and identified critical challenges in areas such as education, innovation, freedom of expression, investment in research and other aspects underpinning knowledge societies. (see page 7)  The AKR series addresses the state of knowledge, in all its dimensions, in the Arab region and fosters dialogue around its diagnoses and recommendations while stressing that urgent action is imperative to set the Arab region on the road toward a knowledge-based renaissance, a prerequisite for any significant gains in human development. |
| Dissemination planning and operationalization needs to be part of the strategy and could be an independent output following the launch. It could include systematic media and other stakeholder engagement. With the backing of the Bureau Director, there could also be links to country and regional programming that promotes a human development oriented approach on the themes identified. Support to NHDRs could also become a part of this output that encourages wider impact | The outputs in the project document are taken from the Executive Board approved Regional Programme Document (RPD) 2010-2013 which is linked to the Strategic Plan.  An updated outreach and dissemination strategy will be developed building on experiences from various regional HDR. |
| The AHDR process may consider:   * + Including a substantive editor who reviews all material and edits the whole text to maintain consistency in language and sharpening the report’s messages. The editor has to work with the Lead Author(s) closely.   + Suggest explaining in a sentence or so how the integrity of the process as “open, transparent, participatory and consultative” will be maintained. These elements are critical ensure that the AHDR is a report by/for the people of Arab countries. Stakeholder consultations at the regional/national level could help to identify the priorities for each theme and issues/successes/challenges related to the theme. | There are two editors: one for the English version and one for the Arabic version, who review all material and edit the whole text to maintain consistency in language and sharpening the report’s messages. We have amended the project document to clarify this. (see page 7)  In 1994 the United Nations General Assembly affirmed that the Human Development Report is “not an official document of the United Nations”. The AHDRs are prepared in this tradition of independence, which have brought critical development issues to the fore at the global, regional, and national levels worldwide. As has been noted in the forewords to previous AHDRs, they “are, deliberately, not formal UN or UNDP documents and do not reflect the official views of either organization. Rather they have been intended to stimulate and inform a dynamic, new, public discourse across the Arab world and beyond” and “some of the views expressed by the authors are not shared by UNDP or the UN.” By providing a platform for debate which reflects the way in which a number of the most pressing development challenges are seen by some of those who live them day-in and day-out, this Report can play an important role in framing the development agenda in the region for years to come. We have updated the text accordingly. (Please see page 6) |
| Emerging development challenges at regional and global level -- The report on Development Challenges for the Arab Region 2009, by UNDP, RBAS, highlights six key interrelated challenges including: institutional reform; job creation; the promotion and financing of pro-poor growth; the reform of educational systems; economic diversification; and food security within existing environmental constraints. The role of gender and governance are adequately recognized, as are data gaps.  However, there does not seem to be a recognition of emerging challenges like climate change, the changing role of the individual vis-à-vis the state facilitated by an unprecedented spread of newer communications technologies. The region cannot remain silent on these challenges.  As part of the objectives, their linkages with emerging and persistent development challenges in the region can be highlighted. | We have added “linkages with emerging and persistent development challenges in the region to the text. (see page 5) |
| Description of emerging risks and issues – In Annex 1, the risks identified are mostly on the production part of AHDRs. The risks related to the dissemination, communication and advocacy could arise from possible dissent on the statistics/evidence used. Post-launch fall-out is always possible and contingency planning is useful. Recognizing them in the prodoc will ensure cognizance of these issues which are on the rise with the increased knowledge base of people. | Emphasis will be placed on dialogue and consultation, as well as regional ownership, and integrity and analysis. Efforts will be made to make clear that the intention of this project is to propose solutions to development challenges and that the independence of the produced knowledge products is ensured. |
| It would be important to make explicit the stance on independence of the reports. How will the Arab HDR and AKRs be presented? Will they be reports sponsored by UNDP yet editorially independent? Will they have a UNDP logo? | UNDP RBAS’s aim is to facilitate a process that would produce reports by Arabs and for Arabs in order to ensure the credibility, ownership, and genuine reflection on the trends of development in the Arab world.  In producing the AHDR and AKR, one of the very important strategies is for UNDP/RBAS to maintain its role as a natural convener to coordinate and facilitate the process of the report writing and production. The AHDRs are prepared and owned by citizens of Arab countries and provide the Arab region with a much needed impartial forum for initiating dialogue and structuring debate to strengthen reform agendas within the region. |
| The pro-doc could specify the status of a core teams. HDRs tend to be very visible in the public eye and in the media, which brings with it attendant issues of sensitivity / accountability of UNDP to the spirit and text. Will the core team be staff or will they be a team of consultants? This has bearing on the process of reports preparation, as UN staff the accountability for the product from inception to completion lies with the core team. If they are envisaged as a team of consultants, the accountability for the quality and political nature of the knowledge products will fall back primarily on UNDP. | A team of professional staff (AKR Team Lead and 3 to 4 specialists and supporting staff) is formulated to ensure substantive support and the day-to-day management of the process and the coordination with all the key players involved.  A **Core Team** of skilled experts in the field is formulated on a consultancy basis to undertake the responsibility of producing a well-substantiated, readable report that commands the attention of the policy-makers and the Arab public at large.  It will be adjusted in the text to clarify that that core team including lead author will be hired on a consultancy basis. |
| **HDRO** | Pressure to produce reports: between 2002 and 2011 the Bureau has published 5 regional HDRs; three reports in three years appears ambitious and not necessarily desirable, especially when considering that time needs to be dedicated also to advocacy and follow up activities. | The current project document includes the launch of the AHDR in September 2012, please see footnote on page 4. The next AHDR is planned for 2013/2014 and the third AHDR within this project timeframe is planned for 2015 which allows adequate time for the preparation and launch of each AHDR. For the years 2002-2005 the AHDR used to be an annual publication. |
| Provide a clearer description of the objectives of the Arab Knowledge Reports (AKRs) and their interlinkage with the Arab Human Development Reports (AHDRs). | The objective of the AKR series is to engage governments, civil society, and the private sector in the Arab countries in analysis and dialogue on issues related to building knowledge societies for human development, and to support the identification of regional and national priorities towards that end. These reports are distinct from the AHDRs but complement them effectively by continually expanding the analysis of this key issue in the region, which was originally given broad salience by the AHDR 2003, *Building a Knowledge Society* and identified critical challenges in areas such as education, innovation, freedom of expression, investment in research and other aspects underpinning knowledge societies.  The AKR series address the state of knowledge, in all its dimensions, in the Arab region and fosters wide dialogue around its diagnoses and recommendations while stressing that urgent action is imperative to set the Arab region on the road toward a knowledge-based renaissance, a prerequisite for any significant gains in human development. |
| The project document could discuss the contribution provided by NHDRs to human development thinking in the region and discuss how to make use of this (these report appear to be largely ignored at the moment). There are several ways this could be done but one could imagine, for instance, an annual meeting between the regional HDR team and national human development focal points, whereby national focal points learn from the regional team and vice versa. It could also help motivate countries that have not produced a report in many years to re-start a process. Another suggestion would be to engage the Arab HDR team in the peer-review process of national HDRs. | We have updated the text as follows:  UNDP RBAS will produce additional knowledge products that provide analysis of key challenges in the Arab region. The knowledge products/background papers will be a medium for sharing recent research commissioned to inform the Arab Human Development Report, and further research in the field of human development. The topics of the commissioned series of knowledge products will be based on identified priorities in the Arab region, taking into account prominent reports such as NHDRs and the UNDP Arab Development Challenges Report 2011 among others |
| The project proposes a series of “regional dialogues on human development” around the region from 2012 to 2015. This again seems a great idea and appears to have a strong overlap with the UNDP plans for post 2015 MDG consultations over the same period, but it would be interesting to what the plan is to coordinate this post 2015?  There could be considerable efficiencies to combine forces on this.  Indeed, the Arab region is diverse and it is difficult to imagine how one might have a coherent regional dialogue on some aspects of Human Development when one considers how different the Gulf States are to Egypt for example.  Perhaps national, or sub regional dialogues, might work better at times? | The planned dialogues are regional and/or sub-regional dialogues. The text has been amended. (see page 9). |
| We think it is important to be clear on who clears the final report.  Generally the ‘political reading’ of the report is carried out by the RBAS in cooperation with the Executive Office. (See point 2 of the UNDP Publication Policy  [http://intra.undp.org/coa/Publications\_Policy\_revised\_5\_October\_20101[1].doc](http://intra.undp.org/coa/Publications_Policy_revised_5_October_20101%5b1%5d.doc)  “All major corporate publications such as the global Human Development Report and regional Human Development Reports must be endorsed by the Executive Office before they are published.”)  HDRO would also like to have a stronger role in reviewing the report as a key stakeholder. | We have updated the text accordingly to include that the AHDR must be endorsed by the Executive Office before it is published. (page 6)  Apart from regional personalities, group members may include some of the key contributors to the global Human Development Report, HDRO representatives as well as experienced human development analysts from other regions and national HDR coordinators. They will assess the report for quality of analysis and content. We have updated the project document accordingly. |
| **RBEC** | The situation analysis refers to development challenges but this is not reflected in the same way in the RRF. | The outcome indicators, baseline and targets in the RRF are taken from the Executive Board approved RPD which is in effect 2010-2013. The RRF describes the outputs and activities planned to be produced for the project life. |
| The budget of 15,000,000might be too high for 4 years and could pose a risk for under-delivery. | The cost of the AHDR is significantly higher as it is produced in English, Arabic and French. The budget has been established based on past experiences on the actual cost of producing the AHDR and AKR. |
| AHDR are seen as a main vehicle for Human Development Promotion. However, teaching of Human Development could be also a great tool. On the one hand, it would expand the network of experts for National and Regional HDRs. On the other, it can help create a broader group of supporters, not necessarily directly involved in HDR production.  UNDP BRC has very positive experience in teaching HD in cooperation with Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. RBEC has good experiences in organizing trainings for practitioners, ToT and sustainable HD training that could be shared. | Thank you for the suggestion. The possibility of teaching of human development at academic institutions will be explored as part of the outreach strategy |
| Could you provide more information on the follow-up to the messages of the knowledge reports? | An communication and outreach strategy will be developed for the AHDR and AKR that is built on the understanding that the goal of policy change in the Arab countries will only be successful if driven by a momentum forged on world-class knowledge and broad-based dialogue. In broad terms the approach is intended as well to ensure that we UNDP maximizes the use of this powerful tool in our hands by updating our approach to ensure that the AHDR and AKR are truly instrumental to help achieve development results. In order to do so, and to keep up with the times, past experiences from the AHDR and AKR showed that UNDP has to be innovate in order to engage a larger public, and to keep the dialogue flowing rather than confining it to the moment of the report launch. (page 9) |
| Why is there a research/management unit and additional expertise mentioned? | We have updated the RRF to clarify this point. There will be a management unit as well as contracted expertise. (page 11-13) |
| The report talks about a knowledge platform but it is not clear if this will be a website or something else and what the plan is for filling the funding gap of USD 2,000,000. | The planned knowledge platform/development portal plans to promote timely and high quality knowledge sharing and cooperation to generate opportunities for development and to raise the living standards in the Arab World. By having access to and effectively using knowledge resources, individuals, firms and communities can improve their individual and collective well-being, thereby contributing to overall economic development.  It is envisioned to set-up a website that will contain and make available the full range of quality macro data and information required by decision-makers in the public sector, private sector, academia, media and civil society with an active interest in development efforts in the Arab World. The knowledge platform/portal will serve as a tool for these users to improve the quality of work by basing their analysis on the best-available data and information. An outreach campaign will be carried out to attract users, and the website features and reliability will ensure that they are retained. The portal will thus contribute to a culture of evidence-based decision-making across various sectors in the region, for the ultimate benefit of development in Arab countries.  In the past RBAS was successful in mobilizing resources for outreach activities for the AHDR. It is envisioned that additional funding can be secured for regional dialogues in outreach activities around the messaged of the AHDR. |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BERA** | What is the use of UNOPS as an Implementing Partner in the field of knowledge? UNDP is listed as the Responsible Party on the first page, but should be the Executing Agency. | All RBAS regional projects are UNOPS implemented, and this does not require a LoA, as it is compliant with the POPP rules for “agency implementation” and comes under the agency-wide agreement UNDP has with UNOPS. And while operational implementation may be carried out by UNOPS, like with all UNDP projects, reporting lines are indeed to UNDP. UNOPS is the implementing partner and provides services such as human resources& contract management, budgeting, accounting and procurement. The cover page has been updated to clarify that UNDP is the Executing Partner and therefore has the overall ownership and responsibility for UNDP programme results. |
| It seems that the readership is not the intended audience the AHDR is trying to reach according to the statistics presented. A communication strategy could counteract this. | An outreach and dissemination strategy will be developed for the AHDR and AKR that is built on the understanding that the goal of policy change in the Arab countries will only be successful if driven by a momentum forged on world-class knowledge and broad-based dialogue. In broad terms the approach is intended as well to ensure that we UNDP maximizes the use of this powerful tool in our hands by updating our approach to ensure that the AHDR and AKR are truly instrumental to help achieve development results. In order to do so, and to keep up with the times, past experiences from the AHDR and AKR showed that UNDP has to be innovate in order to engage a larger public, and to keep the dialogue flowing rather than confining it to the moment of the report launch. (page 9) |
| What has the achievements in capacity development been under the predecessor project? | The reports are considered as controversial and are key products in global and national advocacy work. These reports have made significant contributions to the knowledge and policy agenda in the region. They have been discussed at regional forums and summits. They have been the subject of special programming on the regional satellite networks. They have been analyzed and debated throughout the regional printed press and online forums. They have inspired countless theses and academic articles. They are featured on the syllabi at the region’s most influential universities. And they have been energetically explored in various policy contexts by think-tanks, civil society groups and development institutions across the Arab region. In this way they have done much to expand the scope for policy discussion in the region in ways that are generally not possible at the strictly national level. |
| **OSG** | The investments we are making in analytical reports has instrumental value in the way we frame country programs and we should strengthen the analysis of d  For 10 years we have made the point that the reports draw on the capacity in the region, it would be interesting to include in the document what capacity has been augmented in the last 10 years and to provide more examples and to pronounce a little bit more what the project will do. | In RBAS’s view, while we try to advocate that Resident Representatives look at the reports and take the issues from the report into consideration, it is a matter of corporate guidance. This discussion becomes more relevant as we try to strengthen the results management and how we determine priority areas. The AHDR should feed into this and we believe it has had a strong impact on the development of country programs. The 2004 ADR for Egypt noted that UNDP Egypt’s program is aligned with the findings of the 2002 AHDR. The country office embarked on a strategy to use the AHDR as a strong background justification and validation of new projects under the CCF.  The reports are considered as controversial and are key products in global and national advocacy work. These reports have made significant contributions to the knowledge and policy agenda in the region. They have been discussed at regional forums and summits. They have been the subject of special programming on the regional satellite networks. They have been analyzed and debated throughout the regional printed press and online forums. They have inspired countless theses and academic articles. They are featured on the syllabi at the region’s most influential universities. And they have been energetically explored in various policy contexts by think-tanks, civil society groups and development institutions across the Arab region. In this way they have done much to expand the scope for policy discussion in the region in ways that are generally not possible at the strictly national level.  The role of the report has changed significantly since its inception in 2002. While the very first report as the ones to follow aimed at giving the Arab people a voice and generating and disseminating knowledge while also fostering debate and dialogue, it was difficult to engage Arab countries on issues as freedom, women and governance for example. At the beginning of 2011 and with the transformation the Arab region witnesses, this role has changed and as the Arab countries are in the process of transition it is easier for us to engage with them. |
| It seems that the readership is not for intended audiences. An analysis and a much stronger communication strategy would be needed for this project. | An outreach and dissemination strategy will be developed for the AHDR and AKR that is built on the understanding that the goal of policy change in the Arab countries will only be successful if driven by a momentum forged on world-class knowledge and broad-based dialogue. In broad terms the approach is intended as well to ensure that we UNDP maximizes the use of this powerful tool in our hands by updating our approach to ensure that the AHDR and AKR are truly instrumental to help achieve development results. Part of the outreach and dissemination strategy will also address the issue of intended audiences. (page 9) |
| Branding: The example was mentioned where the SG mentioned the Arab human Development Report but not in relation to UNDP, how can we improve branding of UNDP associate with important products such as the AHDR. | The AHDRs have served as touchstones for efforts among the international community to understand regional challenges from the Arab perspective, and have provided foundations for bilateral and multilateral cooperation strategies as well as diplomatic discourse. Over the course of 2011 the main messages of the AHDR have been cited on numerous occasions by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as the Administrator of UNDP. |
| **Evaluation Office** | Apart from the project document we would be interested to also see statistics on the AKR | We will make sure to make the statistics available on the RBAS webpage. |
| It was not very clear what the purpose of the AKR is and if there is a dissemination strategy? | An outreach and dissemination strategy will be developed for the AHDR and AKR that is built on the understanding that the goal of policy change in the Arab countries will only be successful if driven by a momentum forged on world-class knowledge and broad-based dialogue. In broad terms the approach is intended as well to ensure that we UNDP maximizes the use of this powerful tool in our hands by updating our approach to ensure that the AHDR and AKR are truly instrumental to help achieve development results. (Page 9) |

Date: 30 May 2012, New York

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2: CONSOLIDATED RESPONSES TO THE VIRTUAL PAC COMMENTS ON THE REGIONAL**  **“Fostering knowledge for human development in the Arab region” PROJECT**  **20 April 2012** | | |
| **Origin** | **Input/Comment** | **RBAS Response** |
| **RBAP** | Follow-up of AHDR launching needs some details: The prodoc provides detailed description of the AHDR preparation and dissemination strategy. But in my view it has not dealt with any follow-up strategy after launching the report.  For example, if AHDR makes a few recommendations, how those recommendations will be implemented or monitored at the national and regional levels. Whether our role is it just preparing and launching the report or we will go beyond that by working with governments and other stakeholders in designing and implementing new projects or programmes to promote human development at the national and regional levels.  A few sentences on this will be useful. | The objective of the AHDR is to engage institutions and citizens in the Arab countries in global issues and to build understanding and consensus around regional and national development priorities, identifying disadvantaged groups of population and regions as well as policies, strategies and opportunities for investment that target them and contribute to human development in the region.  Since the launch of its first edition in 2002, the AHDR has gained salience in the Arab countries as a source of knowledge, information and ideas about the status of human development in the region. It quickly became embedded in the national and regional debates. It is very frequently the subject not only of newspaper and magazine articles, but even books. It is featured on university syllabi, and its name and main messages are known by wide sections of the general public. It is a powerful example -- in fact, the leading example -- of the broad-based approach to policy change that is necessary in the Arab countries.  By their nature, multidimensional thematic analyses of regional issues produce multi-sectoral conclusions at the aggregate level. As a consequence, the crop they yield is not sufficiently granular for quick harvesting. The Reports acknowledge that their conclusions would have to be unpacked by multidisciplinary and cross-organizational task forces at the national level and that, moreover, needs and conditions for implementing their findings will vary from country to country. Thus each Report offers its recommendations as guidelines within a strategic vision for the region, to be further analyzed and adapted in different country situations.  An important factor in the reception of the Reports is the role played by UNDP Country Offices (COs) after the regional and sub-regional launches of the AHDRs. The text has been amended (see page 5)  A communication and outreach strategy will be developed that is built on the understanding that the goal of policy change in the Arab countries will only be successful if driven by a momentum forged on world-class knowledge and broad-based dialogue. (see page 9)  In broad terms the approach is intended as well to ensure that we as RBAS maximize the use of this powerful tool in our hands by updating our approach to ensure that the AHDR is truly instrumental to help achieve development results. In order to do so, and to keep up with the times, we realized that we would have to innovate in order to engage a larger public, and to keep the dialogue flowing rather than confining it to the moment of the report launch.  This will be achieved through national, regional and sub-regional dialogues. |
| Currently the project has two well-defined outputs – one for AHDR and another for AKR. In my view creating third output focusing on ‘advocacy, capacity development and advisory support services’ will be useful. Right now under output 2, the project document did provide some details on this: “in order to achieve broad impact of the messages…, UNDP plans to organise a series a regional dialogues on human development”. However, given the importance of this issue from the perspective of effective advocacy, policy advisory and capacity development support, I suggest creating a separate output/delivery on this area. | The outputs in the project document are taken from the Executive Board approved Regional Programme Document (RPD) 2010-2013 which is linked to the Strategic Plan. |
| Right now monitoring indicators on this area (baseline and performance indicators) are very weak. | The baseline and indicators are linked to the outcome indicators of the RPD which was approved by the Executive Board. |
| It is also not clear who will be responsible within the UNDP (RBAS, project team, RSC, CO) for all advocacy, policy advisory and capacity development related support to governments and other stakeholders on this important HD area. For example, as a follow-up of APHDR, if governments asked UNDP for policy advisory or CD support, how those requests could be fulfilled. Similarly, If COs asks technical backstopping support for preparation of NHDRs, who will be providing those supports.  It would be useful, if some of these issues are spelled out in the document. | The aim of the project is not to provide policy advice to governments or technical support to COs. However should such a request be received, UNDP will provide project expertise as available and relevant. |
| **HDRO** | National Human Development Reports  As you know several countries in the region have produced national human development reports and it would be beneficial to make some more this work here.  The regional report also offers a useful opportunity to strengthen the integration between the national, regional and global human development reporting system as it relates to the Arab Region.  For instance, the project document could discuss the contribution provided by NHDRs to human development thinking in the region and discuss how to make use of this (these report appear to be largely ignored at the moment).  There are several ways this could be done but one could imagine, for instance, an annual meeting between the regional HDR team and national human development focal points, whereby national focal points learn from the regional team and vice versa.  It could also help motivate countries that have not produced a report in many years to re-start a process.  Another suggestion would be to engage the Arab HDR team in the peer-review process of national HDRs. | RBAS welcomes this suggestion and the text has been updated as follows:  Readers group: “Apart from regional personalities, group members may include some of the key contributors to the global Human Development Report, HDRO representatives as well as experienced human development analysts from other regions and national HDR coordinators.” “The project seeks to further convene an annual meeting between the regional HDR team and national human development focal points, whereby national focal points learn from the regional team and vice versa.  This could also potentially motivate countries that have not produced a report in many years to re-start a process”(see page 6) |
| Similarly, output 2 describes the production of “additional knowledge products” that provide information on key challenges in the Arab, but it does not discuss the nature of these products. National Human Development Reports could make a valuable background contribution to informing the priorities for such products as well as a source of content. | The text has been updated as follows:  UNDP RBAS will produce additional knowledge products that provide analysis of key challenges in the Arab region. The knowledge products/background papers will be a medium for sharing recent research commissioned to inform the Arab Human Development Report, and further research in the field of human development. The topics of the commissioned series of knowledge products will be based on identified priorities in the Arab region, taking into account prominent reports such as NHDRs and the UNDP Arab Development Challenges Report among others. (see page 7) |
| Dialogue  The project proposes a series of “regional dialogues on human development” around the region from 2012 to 2015.  This again seems a great idea and appears to have a strong overlap with the UNDP plans for post 2015 MDG consultations over the same period.   There could be considerable efficiencies to combine forces on this.  Indeed, the Arab region is diverse and it is difficult to imagine how one might have a coherent regional dialogue on some aspects of Human Development when one considers how different the Gulf States are to Egypt for example.  Perhaps national, or sub regional dialogues, might work better at times? | The planned dialogues are regional and/or sub-regional dialogues. The text has been amended. (see page 9) |
| We also support the idea of the regional knowledge platform and are able to provide some support and links with the HDRO website. It would also be useful perhaps for the Arab HDR team to use Teamwork’s and create a space dedicated to the Arab HDR. We already have related spaces for Africa, Europe and the CIS and Asia and the Pacific as you can see here <https://undp.unteamworks.org/node/16796> .    It might be helpful for the documentation to mention these sorts of practical arrangements (for instance  in the KM and information sharing section on page 16 which at the moment is somewhat vague about  how the knowledge sharing will be operationalized). | We agree and have added the set-up of a space for the AHDR on Teamworks in the knowledge management section of the project document. (see page 17) |
| Project Documentation  We also think it could be useful to explain in more detail the value added of the Arab knowledge report.  The current draft emphasises the process rather than the product and, at first glance, it seems rather similar to the Arab HDR. Perhaps one or two paragraphs could explain why it is important to have research focused on knowledge issues in the region and how this work is complementary to the HDR? | The objective of the AKR series is to engage governments, civil society, and the private sector in the Arab countries in analysis and dialogue on issues related to building knowledge societies for human development, and to support the identification of regional and national priorities towards that end. These reports are distinct from the AHDRs but complement them effectively by continuously expanding the analysis of this key issue in the region, which was originally given broad salience by the AHDR 2003, *Building a Knowledge Society* and identified critical challenges in areas such as education, innovation, freedom of expression, investment in research and other aspects underpinning knowledge societies. |
| Related to this, the outcome indicator listed in the framework is “number of new knowledge reports” which is, as we are sure you know, an output-based measure.  Although outcomes are of course hard to measure, would it not be important to try to get a sense of the impact these reports have on public debate and policy dialogue?  We would be happy to discuss with you some possible alternative indicators. | The outcome indicator is taken from the Executive Board approved Regional Programme Document 2010-2013 which is linked to the UNDP Strategic Plan |
| Governance  We think it is important to be clear on who clears the final report.  Generally the ‘political reading’ of the report is carried out by the RBAS in cooperation with the Executive Office. (See point 2 of the UNDP Publication Policy [http://intra.undp.org/coa/Publications\_Policy\_revised\_5\_October\_20101[1].doc](http://intra.undp.org/coa/Publications_Policy_revised_5_October_20101%5b1%5d.doc) “All major corporate publications such as the global Human Development Report and regional Human Development Reports must be endorsed by the Executive Office before they are published.”)  HDRO would also like to have a stronger role in reviewing the report as a key stakeholder. | We have updated the text accordingly to include that the AHDR must be endorsed by the Executive office before it is published. (page 6)  Apart from regional personalities, group members may include some of the key contributors to the global Human Development Report, HDRO representatives as well as experienced human development analysts from other regions and national HDR coordinators. They will assess the report for quality of analysis and content. We have updated the project document accordingly. (see page 6) |
| Specific (minor) comments to the text (mainly as already given in late January):   * Situation analysis: another merit of the Arab HDR is to have inspired national HDRs, some of which (e.g. the Egypt HDR) are of excellent quality. | The project document has been amended as follows: “*Another merit of the Arab HDR is to have inspired national human development reports.”* (see page 3) |
| * The documentation talks about recruiting team leaders for each report but also talks about a team leader producing annual work plans.  It would be useful to clarify whether you plan to recruit a separate team leader and team for each HDR, or recruit one group of people to produce all the reports. | A team of professional staff (Team Leader, specialists and supporting staff) is formulated to ensure substantive support and the day-to-day management of the process and the coordination with all the key players involved for the duration of the project life  A **Core Team** of skilled experts in the field is formulated on a consultancy basis for each report to undertake the responsibility of producing a well-substantiated, readable report that commands the attention of the policy-makers and the Arab public at large.  The text has been adjusted to clarify that that core team including lead author will be hired on a consultancy basis, while the project management team (incl. Tam leaders) is formulated for the project life.(see page 16) |
| * Pressure to produce reports: between 2002 and 2011 the Bureau has published 5 regional HDRs; three reports in three years appears ambitious and not necessarily desirable, especially when considering that time needs to be dedicated also to advocacy and follow up activities. * In RBM terminology, the advisory board and the readers’ group might be presented as quality assurance mechanisms. * It would be preferable for the reader group to be established as soon as the theme of the report is selected, not when the first draft is ready. This would help ensure that competent people are available and ready to review the draft. | The current project document includes the launch of the AHDR in September 2012, please see footnote on page 4. The next AHDR is planned for 2013/2014 and the third AHDR within this project timeframe is planned for 2015 which allows adequate time for the preparation and launch of each AHDR. For the years 2002-2005 the AHDR used to be an annual publication.  The readers’ groups will be established when the theme is selected. (see page 5) |
| The outline for the implementation of the AHDR correctly underlines the importance of the production process and suggests various valuable steps. You might be interested to know that some countries have also formed “validation groups” to help ‘reality check’ the findings, as well as “follow-up groups”, who help to shape and implement an outreach and dissemination plan, both of which have often proved useful (for additional information please see: <http://hdr.undp.org/external/toolkit/chapter_2/default.html>)    Results and resources framework: as a baseline you might mention the contribution of previous Arab HDRs to the regional development debate. | This will be taking into consideration when drafting the outreach and dissemination strategy. The project document has been amended to include the contribution of previous AHDR to the regional development debate. (see page 11) |
| **Bangkok Regional Center** | Overall, the project document is well-written with much thought behind it. It was very good to read and we are happy to indicate our support. Specific suggestions based on experience from Asia Pacific HDRs are proposed below:   * Provide a clearer description of the objectives of the Arab Knowledge Reports (AKRs) and their interlinkage with the Arab Human Development Reports (AHDRs). The AKR series are to follow the AHDR thematically as described in the Prodoc. But the objective of the AKRs is not clearly established. The questions to be answered are: Does the AKR series draw upon sub-themes of the AHDRs – analyse the sub-themes more in-depth? Does the analysis in AKR series put people at the centre? Or does the AKR series present technical/thematic analysis around the topic of AHDR?  How does the AKR series help pushing boundaries of advocacy of the key messages of AHRs? Are they technical background papers that form the research basis for the AHDR? | The objective of the AKR series is to engage governments, civil society, and the private sector in the Arab countries in analysis and dialogue on issues related to building knowledge societies for human development, and to support the identification of regional and national priorities towards that end. These reports are distinct from the AHDRs but complement them effectively by continually expanding the analysis of this key issue in the region, which was originally given broad salience by the AHDR 2003, *Building a Knowledge Society* and identified critical challenges in areas such as education, innovation, freedom of expression, investment in research and other aspects underpinning knowledge societies.  The AKR series addresses the state of knowledge, in all its dimensions, in the Arab region and fosters wide dialogue around its diagnoses and recommendations while stressing that urgent action is imperative to set the Arab region on the road toward a knowledge-based renaissance, a prerequisite for any significant gains in human development. |
| * Dissemination planning and operationalization needs to be part of the strategy and could be an independent output following the launch. It could include systematic media and other stakeholder engagement. With the backing of the Bureau Director, there could also be links to country and regional programming that promotes a human development oriented approach on the themes identified. Support to NHDRs could also become a part of this output that encourages wider impact. | The outputs in the project document are taken from the Executive Board approved Regional Programme Document (RPD) 2010-2013 which is linked to the Strategic Plan.  An updated outreach and dissemination strategy will be developed building on experiences from various regional HDR. |
| * The AHDR process may consider:   + Including a substantive editor who reviews all material and edits the whole text to maintain consistency in language and sharpening the report’s messages. The editor has to work with the Lead Author(s) closely.   + Suggest explaining in a sentence or so how the integrity of the process as “open, transparent, participatory and consultative” will be maintained. These elements are critical ensure that the AHDR is a report by/for the people of Arab countries. Stakeholder consultations at the regional/national level could help to identify the priorities for each theme and issues/successes/challenges related to the theme. | There are two editors: one for the English version and one for the Arabic version, who reviews all material and edits the whole text to maintain consistency in language and sharpening the report’s messages. We have amended the project document to clarify this. (page 8)  In 1994 the United Nations General Assembly affirmed that the Human Development Report is “not an official document of the United Nations”. The AHDRs are prepared in this tradition of independence, which have brought critical development issues to the fore at the global, regional, and national levels worldwide. As has been noted in the forewords to previous AHDRs, they “are, deliberately, not formal UN or UNDP documents and do not reflect the official views of either organization. Rather they have been intended to stimulate and inform a dynamic, new, public discourse across the Arab world and beyond” and “some of the views expressed by the authors are not shared by UNDP or the UN.” By providing a platform for debate which reflects the way in which a number of the most pressing development challenges are seen by some of those who live them day-in and day-out, this Report can play an important role in framing the development agenda in the region for years to come. |
| Emerging development challenges at regional and global level -- The report *on Development Challenges for the Arab Region 2009*, by UNDP, RBAS, highlights six key interrelated challenges including: institutional reform; job creation; the promotion and financing of pro-poor growth; the reform of educational systems; economic diversification; and food security within existing environmental constraints. The role of gender and governance are adequately recognized, as are data gaps.   * + However, there does not seem to be a recognition of emerging challenges like climate change, the changing role of the individual vis-à-vis the state facilitated by an unprecedented spread of newer communications technologies. The region cannot remain silent on these challenges.   + As part of the objectives, their linkages with emerging and persistent development challenges in the region can be highlighted. | We have added “linkages with emerging and persistent development challenges in the region to the text. (see page 5) |
| * Description of emerging risks and issues **–** In Annex 1, the risks identified are mostly on the production part of AHDRs. The risks related to the dissemination, communication and advocacy could arise from possible dissent on the statistics/evidence used. Post-launch fall-out is always possible and contingency planning is useful. Recognizing them in the prodoc will ensure cognizance of these issues which are on the rise with the increased knowledge base of people. | Emphasis will be placed on dialogue and consultation, as well as regional ownership, and integrity and analysis. Efforts will be made to make clear that the intention of this project is to propose solutions to development challenges and that the independence of the produced knowledge products is ensured. |
| * It would be important to make explicit the stance on independence of the reports. How will the Arab HDR and AKRs be presented? Will they be reports sponsored by UNDP yet editorially independent? Will they have a UNDP logo? | UNDP RBAS’s aim is to facilitate a process that would produce reports by Arabs and for Arabs in order to ensure the credibility, ownership, and genuine reflection on the trends of development in the Arab world.  In producing the AHDR and AKR, one of the very important strategies is for UNDP/RBAS to maintain its role as a natural convener to coordinate and facilitate the process of the report writing and production. The AHDRs are prepared and owned by citizens of Arab countries and provide the Arab region with a much needed impartial forum for initiating dialogue and structuring debate to strengthen reform agendas within the region. |
| The pro-doc could specify the status of a core teams. HDRs tend to be very visible in the public eye and in the media, which brings with it attendant issues of sensitivity / accountability of UNDP to the spirit and text. Will the core team be staff or will they be a team of consultants? This has bearing on the process of reports preparation, as UN staff the accountability for the product from inception to completion lies with the core team.  If they are envisaged as a team of consultants, the accountability for the quality and political nature of the knowledge products will fall back primarily on UNDP.  Indicators can be adjusted based on these comments. | A team of professional staff (AKR Team Lead and 3 to 4 specialists and supporting staff) is formulated to ensure substantive support and the day-to-day management of the process and the coordination with all the key players involved.  A **Core Team** of skilled experts in the field is formulated on a consultancy basis to undertake the responsibility of producing a well-substantiated, readable report that commands the attention of the policy-makers and the Arab public at large.  The text has been adjusted to clarify that the core team including the lead author will be hired on a short term basis for the duration of the task. (see page 6) |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **BDP** | One suggestion is to include provisions in the project document to accompany regional preparations/participation in major international policy fora affecting human/sustainable development in the Region. These include Environmental Conventions, WSSD as well as relevant trade, economic and social fora. The quality of participation from the Arab Region has often been inadequate in order to influence the international policy agenda and deliver its commitments. This suggestion would help deal with risk number 3 in the risk log namely “Lack of clarity about the target audiences for knowledge products and advocacy efforts” which could reduce the impact of knowledge products on influencing policy and/or public discussion. | We have amended the text accordingly. The dialogue events will be an opportunity for regional leaders and civil society to define and test their ideas for the way forward on these issues and to communicate these ideas in an effective way at international fora. (see page 9) |
| In addition, it is suggested that the section on “situation analysis” makes reference to the recently published “UNDP Arab Development Challenges Report 2011” and highlights its key findings as this report can potentially contribute to the identification of priority topics of Arab Human Development Reports (Output 1 in the project document) and of Arab knowledge Reports (Output 2 in the project document):  <http://arabstates.undp.org/subpage.php?spid=16&sscid=188> | The project document has been amended to make reference to the UNDP Arab Development Challenges Report 2011. (see page 3)  The Advisory Board comprises prominent persons and former policy-makers from the region – academics, public servants and representatives of civil society, serving in their personal capacity, including prominent activists, researchers or leaders on gender equality, will provide advice and guidance to the process of producing the report. |
| **BDP** (Gender Team) | Ensuring that the project board has sufficient gender expertise represented (either a through a strong activist from the region, from the bureau, from BDP or the RPL-Cairo). We would of course assume this position to be in-house.  The second way to do this is to ensure that the Advisory Boards of both the AHDR and the AKR’s which are comprised of prominent persons include prominent activists-researchers or leaders on gender equality – who will have the cloud to bring the issues to the table.   And we should certainly aim for a gender balanced board.  Likewise, the readers group should have gender expertise in the form of advisors, academics or activists either from or well familiar with the region. | The AHDRs are prepared and owned by citizens of Arab countries and provide the Arab region with a much needed impartial forum for initiating dialogue and structuring debate to strengthen reform agendas within the region. The process of producing the AHDR will mirror the approaches it advocates: it will be open, transparent, participatory and consultative. During this process, gender balance and expertise is crucial in terms of inclusiveness as well as the quality of the final product and will be ensured. (see page 4) |
| The dialogue events should build on the POGAR’s good practices which have included the assurance of gender balanced participation at events and also in panels (as a means to giving visibility and building women’s leadership). These events should also prominently ensure gender issues in their dialogue. | The dialogue events will ensure a gender balanced participation in events. |
| Lastly the Arab spring has opened up the opportunity to think about democratic space in the region differently. We think that the report would be strengthened by making special effort in the content, engagement, and amongst the reviewers to engage rural women and men and youth as well. We feel this is a critical point since they bring very different perspectives. | We have amended the text as follows: Experience shows that the selection of a few critical topics for sound analysis backed by accurate data is key to the success of a national or sub-regional Human Developments Report (HDR). Moreover experience demonstrates that the process of preparing HDRs is as important as the product: the more people are engaged during this process, the more widely the results will be disseminated and used. Therefore, the project strategy revolves around the quality product and a participatory, transparent process, ensuring the participation of youth and women. (see page 4 |
| **Bratislava Regional Center** | AHDR are seen as a main vehicle for Human Development Promotion. However, teaching of Human Development could be also a great tool. On the one hand, it would expand the network of experts for National and Regional HDRs. On the other, it can help create a broader group of supporters, not necessarily directly involved in HDR production.  UNDP BRC has very positive experience in teaching HD in cooperation with Central European University in Budapest, Hungary (<http://www.summer.ceu.hu/sustainable-2012>). I also attached a Summary of lessons learned during 5 years of course implementation  MRHDR preparation as a learning process is an extremely important point. May be it could lead to institutionalization of Sustainable Human Development teaching in a University of the region? | Thank you for the suggestion. The possibility of teaching of human development at academic institutions will be explored as part of the outreach strategy. |
| There is great scope for inter-regional cooperation here. On the one hand, UNDP BRC has provided assistance in the past to a number of Arab countries in calculation of indexes and writing of National Human Development Reports.  On the other hand, there is a number of coinciding topics and ideas, which call for cooperation. For instance, issues related to youth were quite vividly highlighted in Regional HDR on Social Exclusion (<http://europeandcis.undp.org/home/show/BCBE0C20-F203-1EE9-B455A13AB9956F84>, and especially <http://europeandcis.undp.org/blog/2011/09/05/from-london-riots-to-arab-spring-measuring-social-exclusion-is-a-first-step-to-address-it/>). Also, the forthcoming Regional HDR for Europe and CIS will most probably devote significant attention to Youth. This can open the door for active exchange in methodology and analysis between regions. | We agree that the exchange of experience, methodology and analysis between regions is essential in the promotion of knowledge for human development. Participation by experts from other regions will transmit experience from other parts of the world to the Arab region, as well as give the Arab experience more salience outside the region. (see page 6) |
| You may want to elaborate on what you envisage as the practical use of these reports. (AKR) | The objective of the AKR series is to engage governments, civil society, and the private sector in the Arab countries in analysis and dialogue on issues related to building knowledge societies for human development, and to support the identification of regional and national priorities towards that end. These reports are distinct from the AHDRs but complement them effectively by continually expanding the analysis of this key issue in the region, which was originally given broad salience by the AHDR 2003, *Building a Knowledge Society* and identified critical challenges in areas such as education, innovation, freedom of expression, investment in research and other aspects underpinning knowledge societies. |
| “*Developing new methodologies to compile the requisite knowledge data. The AKR series will need to provide original research and analysis providing a quantitative and qualitative assessment of Arab human capital*  This could again be an area where some work has been in the Europe and CIS region. Human Capital related methodology and knowledge sharing could be useful for both Arab states and BRC. | Agreed. We have further elaborated on the subject of knowledge sharing between different regions in the text. (see page 17) |
| It is not clear from this description, if “*knowledge platform*” includes just compilation of information from HDRs, or if it also includes database and quality assurance mechanism? Issue of metadata (data on data) is not highlighted as well. It would be also beneficial to outline the division of responsibilities between National Statistical Offices, UNDP RBAS, and other actors. Experience for Europe and CIS Region suggests buy-in from NSOs is crucial in ensuring good quality of statistical data. Another useful tool for improving statistical data is the global Assessment of the National System of Official Statistics by UNECE, which analyses whole Statistical System and proposes ways for its improvement (see, for instance report on Kyrgyzstan <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/Kyrgyzstan_global_Eng.pdf>). | The planned knowledge platform/development portal plans to promote timely and high quality knowledge sharing and cooperation to generate opportunities for development and to raise the living standards in the Arab World. By having access to and effectively using knowledge resources, individuals, firms and communities can improve their individual and collective well-being, thereby contributing to overall economic development.  It is envisioned to set-up a website that will contain and make available the full range of quality macro data and information required by decision-makers in the public sector, private sector, academia, media and civil society with an active interest in development efforts in the Arab World. The knowledge platform/portal will serve as a tool for these users to improve the quality of work by basing their analysis on the best-available data and information. An outreach campaign will be carried out to attract users, and the website features and reliability will ensure that they are retained. The portal will thus contribute to a culture of evidence-based decision-making across various sectors in the region, for the ultimate benefit of development in Arab countries |
| “*The goal is to improve the scope, depth, reliability, availability and use of development data*” This calls for focusing on three stages of data process—data production, dissemination, and use. Each stage requires specific activities.  Risk analysis log “*Lack of credible data sources and/or differences in the quality and breadth of national statistical information as well as information on national policies could impede evidence based research*” I would split this risk into three parts, related to stages in the data life-cycle: data production, data dissemination, and data use. This would allow addressing risks more precisely. For instance, lack of credible data call for the use of international data, triangulation, statistical system strengthening. Insufficient data dissemination call for creation of data demand, and corresponding supply, promotion of data openness. Inadequate data use is much long-term issue and requires training, education and nurturing culture of data use. | We have amended the risk log to include that *”The project will use a mix of standardized international data as well as national data where it can be quality tested and verified. The project will support consultative processes to ensure access to policy knowledge and promote a culture of data use through trainings and education*.” (see page 20) |
| Risk analysis log :  “*An absence of a clear and specific target audience could reduce the impact of knowledge products on influencing policy and/or public discussion.”*  Target audience for knowledge products could include different groups with different interests. Consequently, it could make sense to develop *set* of knowledge products, suitable for different groups. This will not require changes in analysis and preparation stage, but some additional work to package products on publication stage. | We have amended the risk log accordingly to include that ”*A mix of knowledge products will be developed to meet the information demand of different groups. A systematic assessment of the needs and demand for specific products among targeted audiences can be undertaken to ensure the relevance and value of the products*.” (see page 20) |

Date: 20 April 2012