



Interoffice Memorandum

To: Ms. Maria Do Valle Ribeiro
UN Resident Coordinator
Mauritania

Date: 11 June 2008

From: [Redacted]
Assistant Administrator and Director, Partnerships Bureau
UNDP New York

Extension: 6005

Subject: Subject: MDGF-1804-Heritage, Tradition and Creativity for Sustainable Development in Mauritania

File: MDGF 1804

I. Approval Status

On behalf of the MDG-F Steering Committee I am pleased to inform you that your Joint Programme Heritage, Tradition and Creativity for Sustainable Development in Mauritania is hereby approved with an allocation of USD\$7,500,000 million for three years. This figure includes 7% for indirect costs incurred by UN Participating Organizations. Please note the 1% AA fee will be reimbursed directly to the MDTF Office and need not be included in your allocation.

II. JP design comments

We have identified in section III below, some changes we require to the design of your Joint Programme. Once these adjustments have been reflected in the document, you may proceed with signature of the Joint Programme document. In addition to the Government, the UN Resident Coordinator and Participating UN Organizations should each sign the Joint Programme document. We would encourage you to ensure some visibility for this event and for the launch of implementation.

We consider this Joint Programme has a clear focus on poverty reduction and intends to boost opportunities in the tourism sector and traditional craftsmanship by improving qualifications, increasing productivity, identifying and expanding income generation activities that tap new technologies, knowledge, trade networks. The programme includes elements of policy support, capacity development, information and communication technologies development, entrepreneurship and cultural heritage preservation with additional targeted support to youth and women. The Programme clearly advances Government priorities. There is a clear division of labor between the UN Participating Agencies (UNFPA, UNESCO and UNDP).

The MDG-F Secretariat, in collaboration with various experts, has reviewed the draft Joint Programme presented and considers it a faithful extension of the approved concept note. We recognize that an acceptable effort has been made to address the recommendations of the Technical Sub-Committee. The .../... comments of our technical reviewer on the Joint programme document are attached for reference. The review is very positive and includes some useful recommendations you may wish to consider in the finalization of the document or during the course of the programme's implementation. Please note that the changes recommended by the reviewer are not required by the Fund, unless specified under section III below. The Secretariat supports this assessment.



We believe that the Joint Programme meets a number of the Fund's strategic goals and it is aligned with UNDAF for Mauritania. It is expected to contribute to the attainment of MDGs 3,4,5,7,8 and 9 through the empowerment of women and the catalytic effect of the culture in influencing behavioral change towards health, education, hygiene and natural and cultural heritage preservation. It is coherent with regional and national policies and legislation.

We also think that the logic of the results framework could be improved, particularly at the level of indicator and baseline setting. In terms of the proposed delegation to local authorities and communities the implementation of identified programme activities, it is necessary to provide further explanation on which organizations have been identified, what are the activities and how these will be delegated and monitored.

The Monitoring Plan could be improved by including baseline information (and not referring to studies for data as it is currently the case). Nevertheless, note that the Fund Secretariat plans to work with all approved programmes during the current year to address their M&E frameworks and to develop a small number of common indicators relating to the thematic windows, UN reform, Paris Declaration process and the Millennium Declaration.

III. JP re-design requirements

The Secretariat recommends that:

- The **Results Framework** and the **Monitoring and Evaluation framework** should be improved to identify appropriate baseline information, not just a reference to studies to obtain data.
- The mechanism for delegation of implementation of programme activities to **civil society organizations** and **regional and local government** should be further elaborated. It is expected that includes which organizations have been identified, what are the activities to be delegated and how these will be delegated and monitored.
- **Consistency:** In page 15 there is a reference to five expected outcomes and it should state that the Joint Programme only has **four outcomes**. In terms of use of terminology, it would be appreciated if the document refers to *effet* at the outcome level, or to *resultat* (page 15) so it is consistent with throughout the document including the results, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks

IV. Management arrangements and delegation of authority

On receipt of a copy of the signed document, the Fund Secretariat will transfer the full three-year allocation to the custody of the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) Office pending further instructions from you.

Please note the MDTF Office will pass-through funds to Participating Organizations on instruction from you as Resident Coordinator and Co-Chair of the National MDG-F Steering Committee.

As reflected in the Fund's Framework Document (Section 9 'Formulation Process & Release of Funds) and the global MoU with Participating Organizations (Article I, 2-c) the MDTF Office will release resources on an annual, advance basis. For the first advance, these funds will be transferred on the basis of receipt of the



first year Annual Workplan and the signed Joint Programme document. Subsequent annual advances will be released on instructions from you and on the basis of a) receipt of the next annual work-plan approved by the National Steering Committee; b) evidence that a formal review of the programme's progress has been undertaken not more than three months earlier, either in the form of an annual progress report (if the timing coincides) or through the minutes of a National Steering Committee where this has been discussed; and c) only when combined commitments against the existing advance have exceeded 70%. Please review the initial year budget requests carefully with participating organizations in order to ensure realistic delivery targets in this regard. The annual agency apportionment projected in the final budget attached to the signed Joint Programme document should also be reviewed and can be revised up to the time of your first funds-advance request. This is important for the reasons outlined below.

In order to allow the implementation team some flexibility to adapt the strategy to unexpected challenges and opportunities (most particularly delivery issues), and to empower Resident Coordinators in their oversight responsibilities, this memorandum also provides you with the authority over the three year duration of the programme in consultation with Participating Organizations and with the agreement of your National Steering Committee to (a) transfer up to \$1,000,000 or 20% of the total value of the project budget – whichever is lowest – *between Participating Organizations* identified in the original Joint Programme budget and (b) re-phase up to \$1,000,000 or 20% of the total value of the project budget – whichever is lowest - *between years*. The base-line against which these ceilings will be measured is the annual budget projection (by year and by participating organization) confirmed at the time of your first funds-advance request. The MDTF Office must be informed of any revisions of this kind, decided locally and is responsible for tracking these delegation ceilings for each programme. Any changes that fall outside these parameters will have to be referred back to the (Global) MDG-F Steering Committee for approval.

As you will appreciate, one of the MDG-F's express goals is to strengthen the role of Resident Coordinators as leaders of Country Teams. The success of the MDG-F activities will depend on your ongoing leadership and engagement. We count on you to exercise this leadership and to ensure this Joint Programme remains an ongoing, integrated effort by the UN system in support of national priorities. Please also use the National Steering Committee mechanism to help ensure national ownership by the Government in particular and involve it in important financial and programmatic oversight decisions.

The signed Joint Programme document and the completed Fund Release Form should be sent to the MDG-F Secretariat and MDTF Office within 30 days of the receipt of this memorandum. If this deadline is not possible, please inform the secretariat accordingly.

The Executive Coordinator of the MDTF Office, Bisrat Aklilu, will be in contact with any specific documentation requirements to ensure the programme meets compliance requirements for the Fund's pass-through arrangements.

With best wishes.

cc.

Mr. Bisrat Aklilu, Executive Coordinator, Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office
Mr. Gilbert Hougbo, Assistant Administrator and Director Bureau for Africa, UNDP New York



H.E. Mr. D. Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations
H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ould Tolba, Permanent Representative of Mauritania to the United Nations
Mr. Gabriel Ferrero y De Loma-Osorio, Deputy Director of Development Policy Planning and Evaluation,
MFA Madrid
Ms. Sally Fegan-Wyles, Director, Development Group Office
MDG-F Secretariat

Joint Programme: (OPAS # and title)

MDG-F 1804 Mauritania:

Heritage, tradition and creativity for sustainable development in Mauritania

Date: February 28, 2008

1. Overall comments

The JP has been elaborated by the resident and non-resident UN agencies, UNESCO (Lead agency), UNDP and UNFPA and has been the object of a wide consultation with national and local stakeholders. The Ministries of Culture and Communication, of Crafts and Tourism and of Economy and Finances have been directly associated to the elaboration of the project and its implementation mechanisms, whilst other stakeholders (both Institutional and civil society representatives) have been involved according to the nature of expected outcomes and designed outputs. The JP overall design and consultation process ensure national and local ownership as well as an effective and integrated managerial approach.

The JP content focuses on poverty reduction and local sustainable development, based on cultural resources considered as a strategic value for Mauritania.

The strong points of the JP are:

- The harmonious and high quality coordination between UN agencies, which already set a standard of best practices for the UNCT in Mauritania. This is a factor that contributed to developing strong and harmonious relations also with Mauritanian Ministries as well as between Ministerial departments, an important point for a successful project implementation.
- Cultural resources are found to be one of the most immediate employment opportunities and therefore a source for income-generating productive activities. This approach justifies fully the MDG-F Culture and Development thematic window content and goals.
- The UN agencies and namely UNESCO as a Lead agency elaborated voluntarily a “modest” project profile, based on trust and confidence building between actors and especially on behalf of beneficiary populations. This confers the added value of a bottom-up approach taking into consideration the beneficiaries’ identified needs, expectations and their constant implication as a guarantee for ownership and sustainability.
- The JP will be jointly led in two regions, Adrar and Assaba, with different but complementary features, an additional element that can create local interaction and therefore increase the project’s replication possibilities.
- Last but not least, the project seems to have studied and taken seriously into consideration lessons learnt, emanating not only from positive previous experiences but also from problems and difficulties encountered as per previously implemented projects (e.g. the 2000-2003 World Bank funded project for the safeguarding and valorization of Mauritanian cultural heritage), in order to capitalize experience and avoid committing similar mistakes.

2. Elaboration of the Concept Note

The final JP draft has carefully taken into account the Convener's comments on the Concept Note. Local stakeholders and beneficiaries have been explicitly identified and associated to the JP design and management, the budget has been reviewed and adjusted to the activities timeframe and management, whilst the Monitoring and Evaluation framework has been duly revisited and clearly set benchmarks and targets.

3. Relevance and external coherence

Global agenda

The JP is responding to the UNDAF objective of poverty reduction whilst providing populations with sustainable subsistence means. It is based on an approach demonstrating that a targeted and coherent investment into the cultural potential of the country can successfully lead to sustainable development and income generating activities, whilst enhancing cultural identity and cohesion.

The JP is articulated in 5 main Outcomes, themselves concretized by 22 concrete and detailed outputs.

The Outcomes are:

Outcome 1: The potential status of cultural products and services development is identified and intervention/coordination modalities defined

Outcome 2: National capacities to create and promote cultural enterprises are reinforced

Outcome 3: Cultural Heritage management, conservation and valorization capacities and means are reinforced

Outcome 4: Income-generating activities around Cultural Heritage are developed, experimented and disseminated

Outcome 5: Appropriation and visibility of the JP are ensured through an intense communication effort

National policy and Institutional context

The JP is in full harmony and coherence with national policies. The selected regions are within the UN agencies and government priority areas, whilst the JP content has a significant advantage: it is based on a thorough study of the Mauritanian society evolution as well as of the culture and development policies adopted by national bodies, such as: the 2004 National Strategy for Cultural Development, the 2007 National Policy for Tourism and the Overall Policy Declaration made by the Prime Minister, re-affirmed in May 2007. An important element that enhances this orientation seems to be the democratic process engaged by Mauritania, to the goals of which, in turn, the JP can highly contribute.

UN reform

As mentioned above, the three UN agencies have developed an excellent cooperation around this project, which is also being reflected in the coordination and management adopted

schemes. A special mention is made to UNESCO, that, although non-resident, “made an immense effort to ensure its presence, substantive leadership and quality control of the document” (UN Resident Coordinator’s Memorandum to the MDG-F Direction).

It is evident, all throughout the JP structure, that the best use of UN agencies competencies and expertise has been made. This is a positive point also in terms of the tasks breakdown and conception of the Outputs – Indicative activities template and timeframe.

4. Internal coherence

Programme design and delivery

1. The JP has been designed taking into account various interdependent and interactive parameters, such as: tangible, natural and intangible cultural heritage valorization, in conjunction to sustainable development needs, capacity building and finally the necessary administrative cooperation modalities.
2. Communication and visibility are included within the JP strategy, which is an important asset for replication / multiplication of its methodology and results.
3. Cultural industries, namely arts and crafts and cultural tourism are tackled within a spirit of employment creation and local development, at the same time caring for respect and preservation of the populations’ and the country’s cultural identity.
4. Trust relations building, national and local ownership and beneficiaries’ implication to the project’s elaboration phases are essential features of the JP and constitute promising prospects for the project’s successful implementation and sustainability.
5. The JP structure is very clear and follows an up-scaling logic in terms of Outcomes, Outputs and Indicative Activities.
6. Cultural diversity preservation has been addressed, whilst underscoring the unifying value of culture within the Mauritanian society: this approach being in total conformity to the 2005 Convention for the Protection and the Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions is an important asset of the JP design and sustainability.
7. The overall JP content tends to enhance integration between cultural resources and territorial sustainable development as an essential hinge in the compatibility between heritage safeguard and local development.
8. Within that optic, the JP introduces two important elements:
 - a. valorization of living “human treasures”, thus enlarging the scope of know-how valorization and promotion, as well as standard-setting quality for arts and crafts
 - b. creativity as an essential component of the JP methodology towards arts and crafts, thus avoiding them to be addressed as merely traditional or folkloric cultural expressions

These two features are extremely important, if properly exploited, in order to attract youth and integrate it within the cultural industries creative and productive chain.

Management arrangement, feasibility and risks assessment

Monitoring, management and follow-up have been foreseen to be ensured through a participatory and representative scheme, the same being valid as per funds management and transfers.

Risks have been carefully considered whilst mitigation strategy and measures are mainly based on the wide acceptance of the project, local ownership and continuous consultation process. The confirmed and concrete commitment of national authorities at various administration levels constitutes also an advanced guarantee for anticipating and remediating potential risks.

The template presenting risks – dimensions – appropriate measures is an excellent tool that can be very useful all through the implementation phase. It takes into consideration, not only political, social and economic features within the JP intervention areas, but also people's mentalities as well as social / cultural "resistance" attitudes related mainly to women' role and position.

Indicators have been clearly set and verification sources well identified. The Programme Monitoring Framework is a precious tool for the JP management and evaluation.

5. Overall recommendations to the UNCT for modifications to the JP design

1. Arts and crafts quality standards and commercialization:

(Output 8, Indicative activities 19 and 21 – Output 18, Indicative activities 48 – Output 20, Indicative activities 52 and 53):

These three Outputs and related activities should be seen as a sequence of the same process, in order to avoid overlapping, dispersion of energy and duplication of efforts.

Whilst keeping the timeframe evolution of the said activities, it has to be underscored that:

- Support to promotion and commercialization of cultural quality products (Output 8)
- Support to the commercialization of cultural/natural heritage products within the JP intervention zones (Output 18)
- Support to the creation and development of excellence poles within the fields of heritage and handicrafts within the JP intervention zones (Output 20),

are parts of one and the same process and should be dealt in an appropriately coordinated approach and method.

2. Ethical and responsible tourism

(Output 19, Indicative activity 51)

It would be compatible to the JP's overall approach - and especially to its will to introduce quality standards and chart for handicrafts- to introduce as well a Chart for ethical and responsible tourism, shared among all relevant public and private stakeholders. It should also be integrated within the JP visibility and communication strategy, namely targeting the tourists' and potential tourists' countries of origin. At the same time, awareness raising and information action on this theme should also be addressed to local populations and be the object of civil servants' trainings within the envisaged institutional capacities building and updating framework. For the Chart design and implementation, the involvement of NGOs and civil society organizations is of crucial importance.

3. Cross-border cooperation

Cross-border cooperation should be envisaged during and after the JP implementation, in order to enhance the project's results visibility and sustainability. There are already important contacts and exchanges namely with the neighboring Mali, in terms of arts and crafts, which can offer interesting opportunities and experiences' exchange, as well as open additional channels for commercialization of cultural products outside the country, in European markets namely. This could reinforce the local development projects, multiply income generated by sales and therefore further enhance the beneficiaries and national/local authorities' long term commitment.