Terms of Reference for Design and M&E Specialist
Geoscience Strengthening Program

1. Qualifications

The consultant should hold a post graduate degree that has included a research dissertation component. Alternatively, evidence of training in ***advanced*** research or evaluation design, conduct and management. Short professional development courses in M&E are not considered advanced training.

Where a post graduate degree in research or evaluation methods has not been completed, evidence of the quality of research or evaluation activities previously designed and conducted should be sought.

2. Experience

Essential

2.1 Experience developing design documents and M&E systems for projects in resource constrained settings. This is required to ensure that the proposed M&E systems are feasible in the context.

2.2 Demonstrated practical experience in research or evaluation design, conduct, and management. This experience should reflect expertise in developing a fully elaborated design of an M&E system which includes the design approach, articulation of M&E questions, development of sound methods and tools, conduct of data collection activities, analysis of data (or supervision of such), interpretation and dissemination of results and report preparation.

2.3 Demonstrated ability to breakdown and communicate complex concepts simply with a range of stakeholders in multi-cultural settings.

2.4 Demonstrated ability to develop and deliver M&E capacity building activities for implementation teams. This may include national partners.

2.5 Demonstrated ability to facilitate learning from M&E findings with implementation teams and other relevant stakeholders.

Desirable

2.6 Demonstrated experience in the delivery of development projects. This is required to ensure that the consultant is sensitive to the difficulties of implementing development projects in complex settings, that the design is feasible and value for money, and that the M&E systems meet the needs of all relevant stakeholders.

2.7 Demonstrated on-going membership of a domestic or international evaluation society, or other demonstrated commitment to keeping up to date with the theoretical and practice developments in the field of evaluation.

2.8 Knowledge of, or experience with, extractive industry regulatory frameworks, geoscience and/or social and environmental safeguards is highly desirable.

3. Terms of Reference

3.1 Support Geoscience Australia (GA) staff to design an activity to strengthen the geoscience capability in partner countries. The design and M&E specialist will be responsible for ensuring the activity design is consistent with AusAID design principles.

3.2 Using a participatory approach, design a monitoring and evaluation framework (plan) that meets the expectation of AusAID and international standards of practice in M&E. AusAID standards are available from Program Managers, while international standards could include the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards, or the Joint Committee Standards.

3.3 Contribute to the intellectual development of the initiative during implementation. Working as a facilitator, support the implementation team and other relevant stakeholders to interpret and respond to M&E findings over the life of the initiative.

The Contractor will develop a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (Plan) for inclusion in the final design. This Plan must be able to be operationalised. The Contractor is given a degree of flexibility for the content and format of the Plan, but the Contractor should consider the following key aspects at a minimum:

1. **An Evaluability Assessment** (EA) of the Project conducted with stakeholder participation where possible. An EA includes, at a minimum:

a) Consultation with stakeholders to confirm a shared interpretation of the expected long-term and end of initiative outcomes;

b) A review of the program logic and description of the extent to which it is evaluatable including clarity of expression of end-of-initiative outcomes in the documentation;

c) An examination of proposed/potential data sources (including partner systems) to ensure that data is of sufficient quality; is collected and analysed as expected; and will be available within the required reporting cycles;

d) An assessment of the capacity of the implementation team (if known) and partners to participate in the design and/or conduct of M&E activities;

e) A review of the budget/resources available for M&E activities;

f) Identification of reporting requirements for key stakeholders. This includes AusAID progress reporting, Quality at Implementation reporting and Annual Program Performance Reporting. There should be a clear recognition of how the M&E plan is expected to provide evidence for reporting against the AusAID Performance Assessment Frameworks.

g) Identify key evaluation questions of interest to stakeholders;

h) A review of cross-cutting policy areas that will need to be included in the MEF;

i) Clear identification of issues and/or constraints that will affect the design of the M&E Framework (plan).

2. **Clearly stated outcomes** at the whole-of-initiative and component levels with suitable outcome indicators (this may include additional intermediate outcomes not previously articulated in the design document).

3. Inclusion of relevant outcomes from AusAID **Cross-cutting themes** should be considered:

(a) Gender: At a minimum all relevant data should be sex disaggregated. Where partner systems do not allow reporting in this way, and where feasible, identify approaches to enable partners to report using sex disaggregated data. This data should be used to analyse and report on program results.

(b) Partnerships and Anti-Corruption: Discuss with AusAID Program Manager the extent to which this will be required to be reflected in the M&E Framework

4. All indicators will be supported by a **sound methodology**, and means of verification should be fully designed. Means of verification are not reports, but actual methods required to collect the primary data. Secondary data sources are also to be used where appropriate. All tools required to collect data must be designed and included in the annexes of the MEF (for practical reasons a small number of tools may not be able to be developed during the development of the initial MEF). The development of sound methodology usually requires specialist expertise.

5. Where **special evaluation studies** are to be conducted, the full design should be described in the MEF with a description of the methods for data collection and analysis elaborated and tools developed.

6. The **achievement and quality of outputs or deliverables** must be addressed. A number of output indicators are required to be reported on routinely. This could include the development of a “Fact Sheet” where key project outputs are reported against in a concise form that allows efficient monitoring and reporting of the project by AusAID staff (this is in addition to routine reporting requirements).

7. Identification of how the findings of the monitoring and evaluation activities will be **disseminated and utilised**. This does not refer to a reporting frequency table, but rather to what mechanisms are in place to ensure that findings are disseminated to all relevant stakeholders and that findings are likely to be responded to or utilised.

8. A full **implementation schedule** should be included that shows when all key M&E activities will be carried out. Identification of M&E activity responsibilities (that are matched to individuals’ capacities and resources to meet them) should be included in this plan.

9. There should be a **complete costing (budget)** of the MEF for both personnel requirements and the costs of conducting monitoring and evaluation activities.

Note: The design and conduct of M&E activities needs to be supervised and directly supported by an M&E Specialist with demonstrated practical experience in M&E theory and practice; and, with post graduate training in research or evaluation methodology.