

Evaluation

UNIDO's Online Procurement Test



UNITED NATIONS
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UNIDO EVALUATION GROUP

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Abbreviations and acronyms

COR	Programme for Change and Organizational Renewal
DGB	Director-General's Bulletin
EVA	Evaluation Group
FMT	Financial Management of Technical Cooperation
HQ	Headquarters
HPD	Human Resource Planning and Development Unit
HUO	Head of UNIDO Operations
IOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
LEG	Office of Legal Affairs
ODG	Office of Director General
OSS	Operational Support Services Branch
PRS	Procurement Services Unit
PSM	Programme Support and General Management Division
PTC	Programme Development and Technical Cooperation Division
RSF	Regional Strategies and Field Operations Division
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UR	UNIDO Representative
USD	United States Dollar

Executive summary

Introduction and background

The online procurement test was introduced in November 2008. It aimed at increasing the knowledge of UNIDO staff on procurement rules and procedures and providing a basis to grant the authority to perform decentralized procurement.

The independent evaluation of the online test was approved by the UNIDO Executive Board. The main objective of the evaluation was to assess the test's relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency; and develop lessons and recommendations for enhancing the design and implementation of similar future initiatives within UNIDO.

The evaluation was conducted in late 2010 and early 2011 by Ms. Thuy Thu Le, Evaluation Officer of the Evaluation Group, with the assistance of an external consultant Ms. Jessica Chao.

Design

The online procurement test was well designed. Nearly 80% of UNIDO staff members who responded to an evaluation survey believed the test was a good *testing* tool. The test questions were appropriate for testing procurement knowledge; the language easy to understand; and the test itself user-friendly and easy to use.

There is room to further improve the test. Some questions are too heavily focused on procurement terminology, making some questions difficult to interpret and understand. The test only informs test-takers of their score but not the mistakes they made, therefore staff will not be able to learn from these mistakes. The test does not have a 'save' function which would have allowed staff to complete the test at their own pace and is particularly useful for field staff whose internet connection is not always stable. Staff members consistently recommended that real-life examples or case studies be added to the test to make it more practical.

There is a high level of confusion of the nature of the test. Many staff members still believed that the test was an online procurement *training* tool and it remains unclear for many whether the test was mandatory for them or not.

Relevance

There is a high degree of congruence between the test's objectives and staff members' and organizational needs and priorities.

According to the evaluation survey, only 47% took the test because it was mandatory for them, while 64% genuinely wanted to improve their procurement knowledge and 77% wanted to re-evaluate their knowledge. 81% of the survey respondents were involved with centralized and decentralized procurement transactions and 75% found knowledge of procurement useful for their day-to-day tasks.

Nearly 80% of the 128 professional staff participating in the evaluation survey were required to pass the test in order to obtain the decentralized procurement authority. Nearly 80% of

UNIDO's Project Managers and 96% of URs have passed the test. Evidently the test was successful in targeting the group of staff members for whom it had been intended.

The online procurement test was clearly in line with UNIDO's objective of ensuring efficient and effective support services and in following the internationally recognized principles of aid effectiveness in international development cooperation. Sufficient knowledge of procurement rules and regulations of staff members and more decentralized procurement are believed to contribute towards efficient, cost-effective and timely procurement of goods and services for UNIDO's project implementation.

Effectiveness

The test was highly effective in that it achieved its key objectives of improving the procurement knowledge of UNIDO staff members and provided a good basis for the Organization to grant decentralized procurement authority to staff. However, in order to properly perform or assist procurement, staff members need additional practical training and hands-on support from the Procurement Services Unit.

Overall the test has had stronger effects on staff members than on the Organization as a whole. It has helped staff to improve their procurement knowledge and increase their confidence on performing and assisting decentralized procurement. It has also contributed to an increase of decentralized procurement transactions, especially by UNIDO field offices. Other expected long-term changes such as faster and better procurement for TC implementation are not yet obvious.

The proportion of PTC project managers as well as URs having passed the test is relatively high, 79% and 96% respectively; however only 5 HUOs, representing 33%, and 45% of the field-based project managers have passed the test thus far.

There was an overwhelming consensus from both the staff interviews and the survey that the online procurement test had achieved its objective in improving the knowledge of UNIDO staff members of procurement issues. As a result, 65% of the survey respondents felt more confident in performing or assisting decentralized procurement transactions; 57% have incorporated lead times into project planning; 55% have provided more accurate information to the Procurement Unit for centralized procurement transactions; and 39% have prepared procurement documents faster.

It is not entirely clear whether financial risks to staff members have been reduced. Many PTC staff members found it riskier to procure by themselves and have tried their best to avoid decentralized procurement, have requested URs to procure for their projects or have procured only minor goods and services.

A number of staff members indicated that there may be a higher financial risk to the Organization when the number of decentralized procurement transactions increases as most of those who have been performing decentralized procurement are self-taught and each person has her/his own ways of performing procurement.

Passing the online test has been consistently used as a condition to grant the authority to perform decentralized procurement since the launch of the test in October 2008. So far 134 staff members have obtained this authority.

Since the introduction of the procurement test in 2008 there has been a sharp increase in decentralized procurement for TC implementation, especially by UNIDO field offices. The total number of transactions has gone up by 27% from 2008 to 2009 and by 21% from 2009

to 2010. Decentralized procurement by UNIDO field increased by 80% from 2007 to 2008, by 63% from 2008 to 2009 and by 50% from 2009 to 2010. On the other hand, the number of centralized procurement transactions by Procurement Officers has expectedly decreased since 2008 (by 36% from 2007 to 2008).

Two years after the introduction of the online procurement test, there are some observable effects on the Organization. More staff members have performed decentralized procurement and authorized officials have performed better decentralized procurement. There have been fewer delays in the procurement process and in project implementation. But many staff members who are working closely with procurement processes have not been able to see many positive changes. They continue to witness a lack of procurement planning, incomplete or poor documentation submitted to the Procurement Services Unit; the same types of errors/mistakes by colleagues, and the same requests for assistance.

Efficiency

The online test proved however to be a highly cost-effective option and has been administered in an efficient manner. The investment in the test, in terms of financial resources and staff-time, was small in relation to the number of staff it has reached so far (50% of the Organization's staff members) and its achievements.

Recommendations

The recommendations of the evaluation are as follow:

1. Once the Enterprise Resource Planning system is institutionalized at UNIDO and the procurement process and procedures are updated, the online procurement test should be revised to reflect the required changes.
2. The future online test should also incorporate real case studies and functions that will allow staff members to know which questions they have answered correctly or wrongly, save parts of the test they have completed, and automatically send their certificate and results to HPD.
3. Training courses on decentralized procurement (step-by-step) should be organized for all staff members and consultants who have been performing or assisting decentralized procurement. The course should cover the whole procurement process: from planning, preparing procurement Terms of Reference, soliciting offers, opening and evaluating offers to awarding and managing contracts. The training should also include best practices and common mistakes when developing technical criteria and specifications, preparing the contract, dealing with shipping and custom clearance problems, handling legal issues, etc.
4. The Procurement Services Unit should conduct a review of decentralized procurement to assess its quality and, if necessary, make recommendations on how to improve the quality,. The review should also look into the issue of risks associated with decentralized procurement; and the potential for conflict of interests for project managers and project assistants when performing or assisting decentralized procurement. The findings of this review should feed into the content of the above mentioned training courses.

1.

Introduction and background

Procurement plays an important role in delivering UNIDO's Technical Cooperation Programme. In 2009 the total value of procured goods and services was around USD 55 million, accounting for nearly 40% of UNIDO's Technical Cooperation delivery. An online procurement test was introduced in October 2008 in order to increase the knowledge of the staff of UNIDO procurement rules and procedures and enable decentralized procurement transactions. The purpose of the test was two fold:

- To serve as a tool to improve UNIDO staff's knowledge of procurement issues and processes; and
- To provide a basis to grant authority to individual Allotment Holders (AH), Heads of UNIDO Operations (HUOs) and UNIDO Representatives (URs) to perform decentralized procurement.

The test is mandatory for all UNIDO staff members eligible to procure goods and services as Authorized Officials in accordance with UNIDO Financial Rule 109.5.2 (a). It is also mandatory for 'all staff involved in the procurement process directly or indirectly (through provision of advice or information)¹'. Before taking the test, staff members are supposed to study the 2008 Procurement Manual and are encouraged to participate in procurement training. Those who pass the test receive a certificate, currently a requirement for obtaining the authority to perform decentralized procurement.

1.1. The procurement online procurement test

The UNIDO procurement test is web-based and contains 80 multiple choice questions. These questions focus on basic rules, regulations and ethics of UNIDO procurement. In order to help staff members pass the test, the Procurement Services Unit (PRS) of the Programme Support and General Management Division (PSM) has prepared a package of documents, made available on its website. This package includes: the 2008 Procurement Manual, a list of issues to be reviewed before taking the test as well as several PowerPoint Presentations on procurement rules and issues. Staff members are encouraged to study the Procurement Manual or take part in procurement training in order to prepare for the test. To pass the test, one must answer correctly 80% of the questions, meaning the lowest score to pass the test is 64 out of 80.

PRS staff members involved in the development of the test have emphasized that the test assesses *general* knowledge of UNIDO procurement rules, regulations and ethics and does not attempt to test *in-depth* knowledge of how to perform procurement transactions.

The online procurement test was launched in October 2008 and has been administered by a staff member within the Procurement Unit. Besides his normal duties as a Procurement

¹ Email from the Director of UNIDO Human Resources Branch, dated 2 September 2008, announcing the launch of the procurement training and the online test.

Assistant, he has also performed a Procurement Helpdesk function and has supported staff having problems with the test.

Originally the Procurement Services Unit had intended to develop an online procurement *training* instrument, but finally opted for the online *test* for different reasons, namely: i) high costs; ii) the urgent need for a tool which would facilitate procurement certification by verifying that allotment holders have gained basic procurement knowledge in order to obtain decentralized procurement authority. However, many UNIDO staff members still falsely perceive the online procurement test as a training tool.

1.2. Decentralized procurement and the delegation of authority

The concept of decentralized procurement of Technical Cooperation goods and services was introduced at UNIDO in 1998. At this time the Organization was embarking on an initiative to open field offices in 30 countries and started to introduce the position of UNIDO Representative (UR) for the first time. Allotment holders were authorized to procure goods and services below USD 20,000. Project managers and URs were granted the authority to perform decentralized procurement regardless whether he/she had sufficient procurement knowledge.

However, in 2007 it was noted that decentralized procurement had not been widely used since its introduction in 1998. Given the important role of procurement in project implementation and the continued search for methods to increase TC delivery, it was felt that more decentralized procurement would be useful to increase the efficiency and speed of UNIDO project implementation.

At the same time, it was recognized that insufficient knowledge of UNIDO's procurement rules and issues could lead to serious consequences for the Organization, project delivery and staff members. As a result, the Procurement Manual was introduced in January 2008 and all staff involved in the procurement process, directly or indirectly, were required to undergo mandatory procurement training and pass the online test. It was also decided that passing the online procurement test would be a prerequisite to obtain the delegation of authority to perform decentralized procurement.

Decentralized procurement transactions can be performed by project managers and procurement officers from the HQ, by the URs or project managers from UNIDO field offices and by UNDP field offices on behalf of UNIDO.

2.

The evaluation and its methodology

The evaluation of UNIDO's online procurement test was included in the Evaluation Group's Work Programme and Budget for 2010/2011. This is the first independent evaluation of an initiative of the PSM. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UNIDO Evaluation Policy and had two purposes:

- Assess the online procurement test in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- Develop lessons and recommendations for enhancing the design and implementation of similar future initiatives within UNIDO.

The evaluation was carried out in late 2010 and early 2011 in accordance with the terms of reference (TOR) developed for this exercise, to be found in Annex A. The evaluation was conducted by Ms. Thuy Thu Le, Evaluation Officer of the Evaluation Group, with the assistance of an external consultant Ms. Jessica Chao. Neither had been involved in any aspect of the design and implementation of the online procurement test.

A presentation of preliminary findings were made to key stakeholders at UNIDO headquarters in Vienna on 28 February 2011 and their feedback was incorporated in the draft evaluation report which was circulated for factual validation and comments. This final report incorporates the feedback received.

While maintaining its independence, the evaluation was conducted based on a participatory approach which sought views and assessments of various parties involved. The evaluation team closely consulted staff members from the Procurement Services Unit throughout the evaluation process.

The evaluation used a mixed method approach, drawing on a range of building blocks of qualitative and quantitative natures to ensure that data collection and analysis delivered an evidence-based assessment. Information and data were collected through: a desk review of relevant documents; statistical analysis of data related to the online test provided by PRS, the Programme Development and Technical Cooperation Division (PTC) and the Regional Strategies and Field Operations Division (RSF)²; interviews with a number of selected UNIDO staff members (both those who contributed to the development and management of the test and test-takers); and an online survey of UNIDO staff who have passed the test. Interviews were also conducted with staff members to whom the test could have been relevant but did not take it.

Desk review. Existing documents relating to the design and implementation of the online procurement test and decentralized procurement at UNIDO were reviewed. The responsible Evaluation Officer studied the Procurement Manual and the documents made available by

² In this report, the statistics related to RSF refer to the Division before UNIDO field operations and offices were integrated into PTC from RSF, as per the Director-General's Bulletin dated 5 November 2010.

the PRS on the Intranet to prepare for the test, completed the online test and took part in a series of procurement training events.

A key source of information was the data on the online test results, the list of Authorized Officials for decentralized procurement provided by the Procurement Services Unit, and data on centralized and decentralized procurement transactions from UNIDO's information management system AGRASSO.

Online survey. An online survey targeting all UNIDO staff members who have taken the procurement test was conducted. Around 360 staff members and consultants, both field and HQ-based, were invited to participate in the survey. 85% of them responded to the survey³ and provided good feedback. This excellent response rate enabled the evaluation to use the survey results as a solid information source to assess the procurement test. The survey questionnaire is in Annex B of this report.

The table below indicates a good balance of staff participating in the survey from different staff categories, from the field and HQ, and those with and without authority to perform decentralized procurement. It was interesting to note that 50 staff members were not involved in any procurement transactions per year whereas around 110 were involved with more than 10 transactions, which were many considering PTC staff's core function was not procurement.

Table1. Profile of online survey respondents

	Number of respondents	% of total respondents
Staff category		
Director	16	6
Professional Staff	114	42
General Services Staff	122	45
National Officer	5	2
Consultants	17	6
Duty station		
Field-based	80	29
Headquarter-based	194	71
Having Delegation of Authority		
Yes	100	36
No	174	64
No. of procurement transactions (centralized & decentralized) involved per year		
None	50	18
Less than 3	40	15
4-10	70	26
10-15	23	8
More than 15	90	33

Source: Online survey of UNIDO staff who have taken the online procurement test.

³ This figure excludes invalid invitees – those who have left the Organization or were on long leave.

Interviews with key stakeholders within UNIDO. Interviews were conducted with key informants involved in the design and implementation of the online test and those closely involved with procurement for TC projects and programmes from PSM, PTC and RSF. All Procurement Officers working with TC projects were interviewed in order to seek their view of any improvements related to the procurement process since the test was introduced in late 2008. A selected number of UNIDO staff members who had taken the test and those who had not were chosen randomly for interviews. The interviews were semi-structured and followed interview guidelines developed for this evaluation. Annex C provides a full list of the interviewees.

Data collected from different sources were aggregated and compared. The findings from the data analysis were validated with the interview and survey results.

As foreseen in the evaluation TOR, this exercise focused on assessing the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the online procurement test. It addressed neither procurement training nor decentralized procurement issues. Another limitation on the scope of the evaluation was the relatively short time that had passed since the introduction of the test (two years), which meant that it was not possible to capture longer-term and more intangible effects of the test on UNIDO TC operations.

3.

Findings

3.1. Design of the online procurement test

The online procurement test was designed based on a consultation process by the staff members of the Procurement Services Unit. Around 130 questions were formulated and 80 questions, which were considered adequate to test basic knowledge of procurement rules and issues, were selected for the test. In order to save time and resources, it was decided that the test should be web-based with multiple-choice questions and should be simple as well as easy to use.

The test is open to anyone with a valid contract with UNIDO and one can complete the test at any time and anywhere with internet connection. There is no time limit and no restriction on the number of times you can take the test. The order of the test's questions changes each time a test taker logs in to avoid cheating.

Overall the online test was well designed. Around 80% of the UNIDO staff members who responded to the evaluation survey found that the test questions were good to test their procurement knowledge; the language was easy to understand; the test itself was user-friendly and easy to use; and they did not enter any technical problem when taking the test. 78% of the respondents believed the test was a good *testing* tool and 70% considered it a good *learning* tool.

The procurement test also has some weaknesses. The questions are too heavily focused on procurement terminology, making some questions difficult to interpret and understand. Some of the survey respondents found that they were tested more on their procurement vocabulary than knowledge. Although many staff members (nearly 60% of the survey respondents) felt that the test focused mainly on assessing their procurement terminology, some suggested that this problem originated from the Procurement Manual itself which could be more precise and concise.

At the end of the test, one receives only her/his score without knowing what mistakes he/she has made and therefore will not be able to learn from these mistakes. A 'save' function would have allowed staff to complete the test at their own pace and is particularly useful for those based in the field where internet connection is not as stable and readily available as in HQ. Many staff members found that 80 questions were too many and repetitive. Many recommended merging some questions and dividing the test into sections e.g. centralized or decentralized procurement.

To make the test more practical and less theoretical, there was a consistent agreement among staff members surveyed and interviewed that real-life examples or case studies should be added to the test. This would also allow for the test to be more of a learning tool rather than only a testing tool.

The test cannot perform several functions that were foreseen in its initial design:

“Results of the training [test] will be recorded in a specially developed system, which will produce reports indicating the staff members who have completed the test,

*generate the certificates for successful staff members as well as provide relevant information to the staff member's record in the Intranet, HRM and OSS [Operational Support Services Branch]. The system should also produce a list of those who have not completed the test*⁴.

Although the test is capable of generating certificates for successful staff members, it cannot feed this information directly into the staff member's record in the Intranet and. As a result, HRM must regularly collect the information and update their database manually, which is a time-consuming process. Furthermore, the test software is not capable of producing a list of staff members who have not taken the test.

Feedback from the staff interviews and survey also indicates a high level of confusion of the nature of the online test. Many still believed that the test was an online procurement *training* tool and it remains unclear for many whether the test was mandatory for them or not. In fact this is an issue to be clarified, especially for those from non-PTC branches. Some staff members also believe that the test should not be mandatory for those whose work does not involve procurement activities.

Interestingly enough, quite a number of surveyed staff suggested that the test should be repeated at regular intervals and re-launched when major changes are introduced. The questions should also be changed or updated regularly.

3.2. Relevance

Under relevance, the evaluation assessed whether the objectives of the online procurement test had been consistent with the needs and priorities of UNIDO staff members involved directly or indirectly in the procurement process; and with the Organization's management priorities and policies.

Since the test targets staff members involved directly or indirectly in procurement process, its target group includes not only project managers, URs and HOU's but also HQ and field-based project/programme assistants and staff members from support services units. The evaluation found that improving knowledge of procurement rules and issues as well as obtaining decentralized procurement authority were consistent with the target group's needs and priorities.

As the test is mandatory for all the staff categories mentioned above, it was expected that most of the survey respondents would have quoted this as the main reason for taking the test. However, according to the survey, only 47% took the test because it was mandatory for them, while 64% genuinely wanted to improve their procurement knowledge and 77% wanted to re-evaluate their knowledge.

Some UNIDO staff members interviewed by the evaluation team cast doubt whether the test had reached the right target group. However the results of both the test and the evaluation survey contradicted this thinking. According to the survey, 81% of the respondents were involved with centralized and decentralized procurement transactions and 75% found knowledge of procurement useful for their day-to-day tasks while only 7% did not. Nearly 80% of the 128 professional staff participating in the evaluation survey were required to pass

⁴ Email from the Director of UNIDO Human Resources Division, dated 2 September 2008, announcing the launch of the procurement training and the online test.

the test in order to obtain the decentralized procurement authority. In addition, nearly 80% of UNIDO's Project Managers and 96% of URs have passed the test. It is evident that the test was successful in targeting the group of staff members for whom it had been intended.

During the evaluation process, it was apparent from the interviews and the survey that there were staff members who had asked others to take the test for them. A question on this issue was included in the survey which confirmed that indeed there were such incidents but not as many as assumed. 9% of the survey respondents (around 25 people) knew somebody who had asked others to do the test for them.

The online procurement test was clearly in line with UNIDO's objective of ensuring efficient and effective support services and in following the internationally recognized principles of aid effectiveness in international development cooperation. Sufficient knowledge of procurement rules and regulations of staff members and more decentralized procurement are believed to contribute towards efficient, cost-effective and timely procurement of goods and services for UNIDO's project implementation. As the current 'Change Management' initiative and streamlining of internal business processes evolves and the decentralization of field offices deepens, the objectives of the test continue to be relevant, while its content will need to be updated to reflect the required changes in processes and procedures.

In sum, there is a high degree of congruence between the online procurement test's objectives and the Organization's management objectives as well as staff members' needs and priorities.

3.3. Effectiveness

Under effectiveness, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the online procurement test has achieved (or is likely to achieve) its objectives.

Results of the online procurement test

So far around 350 UNIDO staff members, including approximately 15 consultants, have passed the test. Excluding more than 100 staff from the Building Management Services, who are not involved with procurement work, this figure represents nearly 50% of all UNIDO staff members. This indicates a high level of participation from UNIDO staff members in such an initiative and an adequate promotion of the test within the Organization.

The average score of all test takers was 71, which is satisfactory and higher than the required score of 64 to pass the test (80% of correct answers). There was a relative balance between the sexes passing the test: 53% of male and 47% of female.

PTC and RSF were the two divisions with the highest rates of staff passing the test: 66% from PTC and 47% from RSF (see table below).

The proportion of PTC project managers as well as URs having passed the test is relatively high, 79% and 96% respectively; however only 5 HUOs, representing 33%, and 45% of the field-based project managers have passed the test thus far. The rates of HQ-based and field-based project assistants/clerks having successfully completed the test are similar, 57% from PTC and 53% from field offices.

Table 2. Staff members passing the online procurement test by division

Division	No. of staff members passing the test	% of all staff in the division/UNIDO
PTC	154	66
RSF	102	47
PSM	63	26
Others (ODG, IOS, LEG, COR, projects...)*	16	14
TOTAL	335	41**

Note:

*) ODG= Office of Director General, IOS = Office of Internal Oversight Services, LEG = Office of Legal Affairs, COR = Programme for Change and Organizational Renewal

***) This figure includes more than 100 staff members from the Building Management Services

Source: Data from ICM, PTC and RSF as of 3 November 2010 and from PRS as of 11 Jan 2011

Table 3. Staff members passing the online procurement test by category

Division	No. of staff members passing the test	% of all staff in the division
PTC project managers	92	79
PTC project assistants/clerks	56	57
URs	26	96
HUOs	5	33
Field-based project managers	13	45
Field-based project assistants	19	53

Source: Data from ICM, PTC and RSF as of 3 November 2010 and from PRS as of 11 Jan 2011

The test's effectiveness in improving staff's procurement knowledge

There was an overwhelming consensus from both the staff interviews and the survey that the online procurement test had achieved its objective in improving the knowledge of UNIDO staff members of procurement issues. 73% of survey respondents found the test a good tool to improve their procurement knowledge; 83% felt they were more informed of procurement rules and issues; and 79% felt their knowledge of procurement had improved or deepened after having completed the test.

Decentralized procurement authority

Passing the online test has been consistently used as a condition to grant the authority to perform decentralized procurement since the launch of the test in October 2008. Prior to the introduction of the test, many PTC project managers, URs and field-based allotment holders had been granted this authority. Since the test was introduced, the Procurement Services Unit has been working closely with the PSM units, namely Human Resource Planning and Development Unit (HPD) and Financial Management of Technical Cooperation (FMT), and the front offices of PTC and RSF to ensure that staff members, who have already had decentralized procurement authority but had not taken the test, have actually passed the test. For example, PRS, HPD and the PTC and RSF front offices have regularly updated their database and have sent reminders to those who had not taken the test to do so. PRS and FTM have put in place some measures to prevent those who had not taken the test from performing decentralized procurement. Thanks to these consistent efforts, to date, most staff members who have the authority to procure have also completed the test.

So far 134 staff members have obtained the authority to perform decentralized procurement. In field offices, almost all URs (except one) have this authority; however only 10 project managers and one HUOs are able to perform decentralized procurement. In HQ, nearly 60% of PTC project managers and directors have been granted this authority.

Table 4. Staff members having authority to perform decentralized procurement

	No. of staff members having the authority	% of all staff in this category
PTC project managers & directors	72	58
URs	25	93
HUOs	1	7
Field-based project managers	10	34

Source: Data from ICM, PTC and RSF as of 3 November 2010 and from PRS as of 11 Jan 2011

Effects of the test on individual staff members and the Organization

Thus far the procurement test has had more effects on individual staff members than on the Organization. There has been a general agreement among staff interviewed and surveyed by the evaluation that many have made personal improvement after having taken the test. 65% of the survey respondents felt more confident in performing or assisting decentralized procurement transactions; 57% have incorporated lead times into project planning; 55% have provided more accurate information to the Procurement Unit for centralized procurement transactions; and 39% have prepared procurement documents faster.

Table 5. Effects of the online procurement test on individual staff members

After having completed the test,	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
I feel more informed of procurement rules and issues	83	8	9
My knowledge of procurement has improved/deepened	79	12	9
I feel more confident in performing/assisting decentralized procurement	65	15	20
I am more aware of lead times and now incorporate them into planning project implementations	57	16	26
I provide more accurate information required by the Procurement Unit	55	16	29
I prepare documents required by the Procurement Unit quicker	39	26	35
There have been less financial risks for me	36	21	43

Source: Online survey of UNIDO staff who have taken the online procurement test.

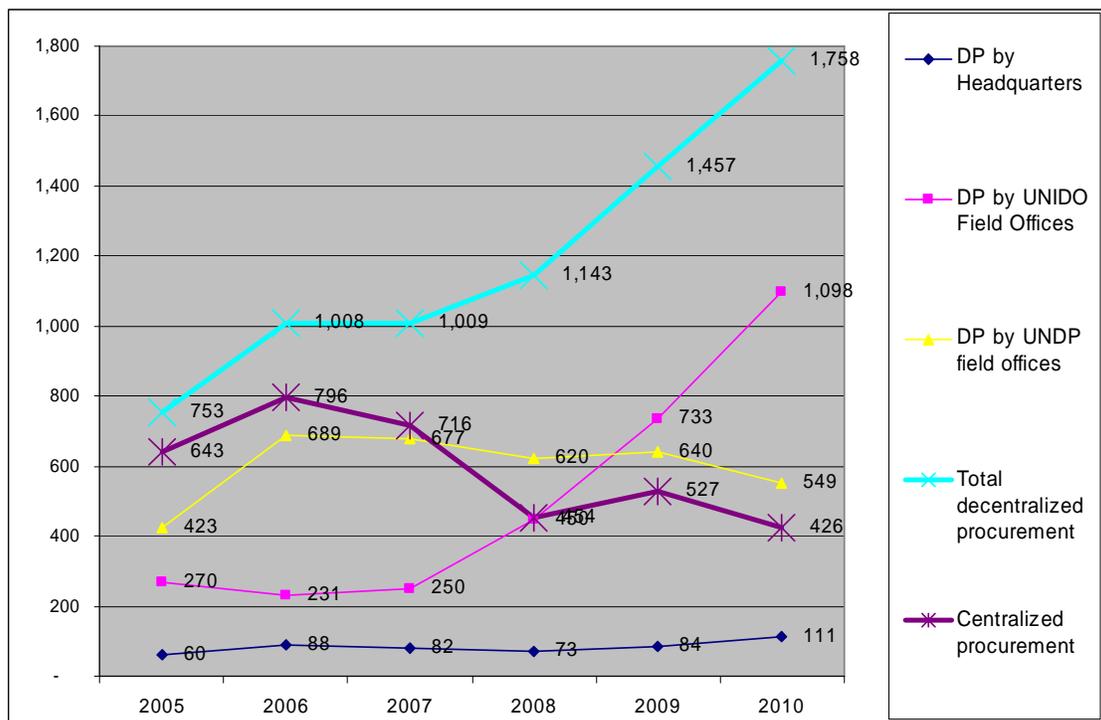
However it is not entirely clear whether financial risks to staff members have been reduced. 21% of staff surveyed disagreed with the assumption that there would be fewer risks for them while 43% did not know. In-depth interviews with UNIDO staff revealed that many PTC staff members found it riskier to procure by themselves and have tried their best to avoid decentralized procurement or have requested URs to procure for their projects or have procured only simple goods and services. Some project managers, who are willing to perform and have been doing decentralized procurement in order to speed up project implementation, would avoid procuring complex equipment to reduce the risks for themselves.

There are several reasons why many staff members associate decentralized procurement with higher risk. These include: i) procurement is a profession in itself and many staff do not feel procurement is their core competence; ii) staff members only gain general knowledge of procurement rules, regulation and ethics after passing the test but do not know how to perform a decentralized procurement transaction properly; and iii) HQ-based staff do not often know the local markets as well as the URs and are not well equipped to prepare contracts, deal with legal issues of the contracts or handle complicated procurement transactions when there are problems with either shipping or custom clearance. Some even felt that there would be a potential conflict of interest in managing the project and procuring goods and services for the project by the same person. In addition, some do not feel that there is any tolerance from the Organization when mistakes are made and therefore do not feel the obligation to perform decentralized procurement.

A number of staff members indicated that there may be a higher financial risk to the Organization when the number of decentralized procurement transactions increases. Most of those who have been performing decentralized procurement are self-taught and therefore each person has her/his own ways of performing procurement. Since 2008 when more UNIDO staff members started to perform decentralized procurement, no review has been conducted to determine whether the transactions have been carried out properly, whether they had met the quality standards, what obstacles staff face during the procurement process, and what are the common mistakes and lessons. In addition, procurement has been raised as a matter of concern in a number of evaluations by the UNIDO Evaluation Group.

Since the introduction of the procurement test in 2008 there has been a sharp increase in decentralized procurement for TC implementation. The total number of transactions has gone up by 27% from 2008 to 2009 and by 21% from 2009 to 2010 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of TC centralized and decentralized procurement transactions*



Note:*) The data include only obligation under the budget line 21 (for subcontracting of goods and services) and 45 (equipment)
Source: AGRSSO (UNIDO Information Management System) as of 12 January 2011.

Decentralized procurement performed by UNIDO HQ increased by 15% from 2008 to 2009 and by 32% from 2009 to 2010. Decentralized procurement by UNIDO field offices already made a big jump in 2008 when many URs were granted the decentralized procurement authority (without having passed the test which came into existence only at the end of 2008), increasing by 80% from 2007 to 2008, by 63% from 2008 to 2009 and by 50% from 2009 to 2010. As UNIDO began to handle more procurement transactions, UNDP field offices performed less decentralized procurement in 2009 and 2010, with a small yearly increase by 3% from 2008 to 2009 and a decrease by 14% from 2009 to 2010. Similarly as more allotment holders from PTC and field offices perform procurement, the number of centralized procurement transactions by Procurement Officers has expectedly decreased since 2008 (by 36% from 2007 to 2008), coinciding with the increase of field-based procurement.

The total number and value of TC decentralized procurement transactions have consistently increased since 2008, but the average size has become smaller as can be seen in table 5. While the average size of HQ transactions has doubled from Euro 4300 Euro in 2008 to Euro 8700 in 2010, and the size by UNDP field offices remains more or less the same during the same period, the size by field offices has decreased from around Euro 4000 to Euro 3000 since 2008.

Table 5. TC Decentralized procurement transactions before and after 2008*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
By Headquarters						
No of Purchase Orders	60	88	82	73	84	111
Value (Euro)	143,468	178,574	505,034	311,383	482,687	967,107
Average size of purchase orders	2,391	2,029	6,159	4,266	5,746	8,713
By UNIDO Field Offices						
No of Purchase Orders	270	231	250	450	733	1,098
Value (Euro)	1,321,417	911,468	1,049,662	1,334,731	2,318,044	3,304,767
Average size of purchase orders	4,894	3,946	4,199	2,966	3,162	3,010
By UNDP field offices						
No of Purchase Orders	423	689	677	620	640	549
Value (Euro)	1,858,716	2,662,869	2,407,108	2,355,216	2,795,202	2,393,596
Average size of purchase orders	4,394	3,865	3,556	3,799	4,368	4,360
All decentralized procurement						
No of Purchase Orders	753	1,008	1,009	1,143	1,457	1,758
Value (Euro)	3,323,602	3,752,912	3,961,804	4,001,329	5,595,933	6,665,470
Average size of purchase orders	4,414	3,723	3,926	3,501	3,841	3,792

Note: The data include only obligation under the budget line 21 (for subcontracting of goods and services) and 45 (equipment)
Source: AGRSSO (UNIDO Information Management System) as of 12 January 2011.

The total value of centralized procurement for TC projects started to decrease in 2007 but rose again in 2009 and 2010 as can be seen in the table 6. However the value in 2009 and 2010 was still smaller than that before 2007. In the meanwhile the average size of the transactions has kept increasing from Euro 57,000 in 2006 to Euro 77,000 in 2009 and Euro 100,000 in 2010.

Table 6. TC Centralized procurement transactions before and after 2008*

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
No of Purchase Orders	643	796	716	454	527	426
Value (Euro)	45,687,043	45,687,043	39,245,492	33,322,703	40,723,586	42,997,864
Average size of purchase orders	71,053	57,396	54,812	73,398	77,274	100,934

Note:*) The data include only obligation under the budget line 21 (for subcontracting of goods and services) and 45 (equipment)
Source: AGRESSO (UNIDO Information Management System) as of 10 March 2011.

2 years after the introduction of the online procurement test, there are some observable effects on the Organization but these have been less pronounced in comparison with the effects on individual staff members. It has been noted that more staff members have performed decentralized procurement and authorized officials have performed better decentralized procurement. Around 26% to 28% of the survey respondents noticed that there have been fewer delays in the procurement process and in project implementation; and there have been less financial risks for UNIDO. But a high proportion of staff members who participated in the evaluation survey (from 57% to 66%) do not know whether the test has led to any positive changes in the Organization. This could be explained by two factors: i) these changes are too subtle to notice; and ii) some staff are not working closely with procurement and project implementation and therefore are not in a position to see changes.

Table 7. Effects of the online procurement test on UNIDO

So far, around 340 UNIDO staff members have passed the test, please indicate whether you have seen any of the changes below:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
There have been more staff members performing decentralized procurement	34	3	64
Authorized Officials (Project Managers, UNIDO Representatives, Head of UNIDO Operations...) have performed better decentralized procurement	31	8	61
There have been less delays in the procurement process	28	16	57
There have been less delays in project implementation	27	16	57
There have been less financial risks for UNIDO	26	8	66

Source: Online survey of UNIDO staff who have taken the online procurement test.

Many staff members who are working closely with procurement processes have not been able to see many positive changes. They continue to witness a lack of procurement planning, incomplete or poor documentation submitted to the Procurement Services Unit; the same types of errors/mistakes by colleagues, and the same requests for assistance.

A hypothesis of the evaluation was that the test would have been more effective had it been complemented with other measures such as interactive learning features as well as case studies, similar to the UN 'Basic Security in the Field - Staff Safety, Health, and Welfare' and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) online training. This hypothesis has proven to be wrong. To increase UNIDO staff's knowledge of procurement rules and regulations and to provide a basis for granting the decentralized procurement authority, more than half of the staff surveyed (56%) believed that the test has been effective as it is and does not require further complementary features. Some stated that the test has served its purpose very well in a sense that it has made many staff members study the Procurement Manual in-depth, which they may not have done otherwise.

However, many staff believed that the test should be the first step in granting delegation of decentralized procurement authority. By studying the Procurement Manual and passing the test, one has gained sufficient theoretical and general knowledge of procurement, but not enough practical knowledge to procure goods and services. To enable UNIDO staff to procure properly, practical and step-by-step training on how to procure should accompany the test. A few staff members mentioned combining procurement training with AGRESSO and IPSAS in order to fully understand the procurement process. Also, additional training on legal implications as well as contract preparation is needed.

Some staff members would like an interactive online procurement *training* tool like the UN Basic Security and IPSAS training, but also stressed the need to balance the high costs to develop such a tool with the number of targeted test-takers. The huge investment in these UN training tools was justified by the high number of people likely to take part.

In summary, the online procurement test has been highly effective. It has achieved its key objectives in improving the procurement knowledge of UNIDO staff members and has provided a good basis for the Organization to grant decentralized procurement authority to staff. However, in order to perform or assist procurement properly, staff need additional practical training and hands-on support from the Procurement Services Unit. Overall the test has had stronger effects on staff members than on the Organization as a whole. It has helped staff to improve their procurement knowledge and increase their confidence on performing and assisting decentralized procurement. It has also contributed to an increase of decentralized procurement transactions, especially by UNIDO field offices. Other expected long-term changes such as faster and better procurement for TC implementation have yet to be seen.

3.4. Efficiency

In terms of efficiency, the evaluation assessed how economically inputs, such as funds, expertise and staff time, were converted into outputs; and whether the procurement test was cost-effective.

The cost of buying the software to develop the online test was small, around 100 Euro. The software has provided basic functions of an online test but as an 'off-shelf' product it does not offer many functions desired by UNIDO staff. A 'Save' function, which would allow test-takers to regularly save what he/she has completed, would have been particularly useful for staff in the field without stable internet connection. Similarly it has not been possible to incorporate a function which would automatically send certificates of successful staff members to the Human Resource Planning and Development Unit to file in the system, as foreseen in the original design. This has created inconveniences for staff within HPD and has led to some loss of staff time in maintaining the database manually.

The design of the procurement test took about a week of several staff members from the Procurement Services Unit and included a range of activities from identifying and selecting the right questions to preparing the layout of the test and uploading it online. Without the online test, it would have taken a lot more of PRS staff time in certifying that UNIDO staff members have sufficient knowledge to do decentralized procurement. The option to go for an online test has proven to be a wise and economical choice.

The online test has been administered by a PRS staff member, who has also provided support related to the test, in addition to his normal function in the Unit.

The total cost in designing and maintaining the online procurement test has been relatively low. Given the small investment cost and its high level of achievement so far, the test has proven to be highly cost-effective.

3.5. Other feedback from UNIDO staff for PRS

Surveyed and interviewed staff members have suggested some ideas to further improve the work of the PRS.

Recommendations for e-activities include: e-signatures wherever possible, video materials for training, reception of offers through e-mails in order to reduce lead times as well as a tracking tool which can inform the status of a procurement transaction and how much time is needed for its completion. Some staff members felt that Authorized Officials should not only take the test on a yearly basis but also need to attain a higher score to pass the test.

There is a consistent feedback among interviewed and surveyed staff that Procurement Officers and Assistants have been responsive to their request and are willing to help whenever there is a problem during decentralized procurement transactions. However, there are only five Procurement Officers to serve approximately 120 PTC project managers. Many believed that this had increased the time needed for all procurement transactions with which PRS are involved.

Additionally, there were a few suggestions to strengthen PRS by hiring more procurement officers to handle the workload and outsourcing as much procurement as possible to the field. If it is not possible to increase the number of procurement officers, many believed that UNIDO should look for different methods to solve this problem. There have already been several on-going experiments within the Organization. Some PTC project managers have hired their own 'procurement specialists', either sitting in their units or in PRS, to support them in performing decentralized procurement transactions or working closely with PRS on centralized procurement to speed up the process.

4.

Conclusions and recommendations

The online test was undoubtedly a necessary instrument in increasing UNIDO staff's general knowledge of the Organization's procurement rules, regulations and ethics. It has proven to be a good tool for the Organization to grant decentralized procurement authority to staff members. The objectives of the test was clearly relevant to UNIDO's management priorities in ensuring efficient and effective support services and following the internationally recognized principles of aid effectiveness and efficient international development cooperation.

The test's objectives were consistent with the needs and priorities of UNIDO staff in improving procurement knowledge and in obtaining the authority to procure in a decentralized manner. The test has largely reached its intended target group.

The test has proven to be the right choice for what the Organization intended to achieve and has been successful in achieving its objectives. It was certainly a success in terms of increasing and deepening staff's procurement knowledge and improving staff's confidence in performing and assisting decentralized procurement. Passing the online test has been used as a condition to grant staff the authority to perform decentralized procurement.

One of the outstanding concerns is the financial risks staff members believe they would encounter by performing decentralized procurement. Having passed the test has not reduced these risks. Some staff members also foresee a higher risk for the Organization when the number of decentralized procurement transaction increases and their quality is not assured.

Decentralized procurement performed by UNIDO staff, especially from field offices, has remarkably increased since the introduction of the online procurement test in late 2008. Centralized procurement, on the other hand, has decreased as expected.

The test's likely effects on the Organization were noticeable but much more subtle than its effects on personal improvement of staff members. More staff members have performed decentralized procurement and many believe that their performance has improved. But expected longer-term effects on the Organization such as faster and better procurement for TC implementation have yet to be seen.

There is certainly room for further improvement on the test but overall the test has served its purpose well and has been effective.

The online test was a cost-effective option and has been administered in an efficient manner. The investment in the test, in terms of financial resources and staff-time, was small in relation to the number of staff it has reached so far (50% of the Organization's staff members) and its achievements.

Recommendations

The evaluation team would like to put forward the following recommendations.

5. Once the Enterprise Resource Planning system is institutionalized and the procurement process and procedures updated, the online procurement test should be revised to reflect the required changes.
6. The future online test should also incorporate real case studies and functions that will allow staff members to know which questions they have answered correctly or wrongly, save parts of the test they have completed, and automatically send their certificate and results to the Human Resource Planning and Development Unit.
7. Training courses on decentralized procurement (step-by-step) should be organized for all staff members and consultants who have been performing or assisting decentralized procurement. The course should cover the whole procurement process: from planning, preparing procurement Terms of Reference, soliciting offers and opening and evaluating tenders to awarding and managing contracts. The training should also include best practices and common mistakes when developing technical criteria and specifications, preparing the contract, dealing with shipping and custom clearance tasks and handling legal issues.
8. The Procurement Services Unit should conduct a review of decentralized procurement to assess its quality and, if necessary, make recommendations on how to improve the quality. The review should also look into the issue of risks associated with decentralized procurement; and the potential for conflict of interests for project managers and project assistants with performing or assisting decentralized procurement. The findings of this review should feed into the content of the above mentioned training courses.

Lessons learnt

The evaluation has the following lessons to be learnt.

1. The online procurement test has not only reached out to a high number of staff in the Organizations but also its target groups. This is possible because the test was made mandatory to all staff involved directly or indirectly with procurement process. But more importantly, the initiative has been followed upon, monitored and coordinated consistently by staff members from different PSM units, namely PRS, HPD and FMT, and the front offices of PTC and RSF.
2. The software of the online procurement test costs little but cannot provide many functions required by the test designers. This has forced some PRS and HPD staff members to spend extra time in maintaining and updating their databases. It is worth to invest a bit more in software to save staff time in the long run.

Annex A: Terms of reference



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of UNIDO's online procurement test

Background

Procurement plays an important role in delivering UNIDO's Technical Cooperation Programme. In 2009 the amount of procured goods and services was around USD 55 million, accounting for nearly 40% of UNIDO's total TC delivery. Better knowledge of procurement process of UNIDO staff in general and decentralized procurement in particular were considered essential in speeding up technical cooperation delivery. In addition, it was recognized at UNIDO that insufficient knowledge of the existing procurement rules might potentially lead to serious consequences for the Organization, its technical assistance and staff members themselves. In this context, UNIDO launched an online procurement test in October 2008. The purpose of the test is two fold:

- ✓ To serve as a tool to improve UNIDO staff's knowledge of procurement issues; and
- ✓ To provide a basis to grant authority to individual Allotment Holders (AH), Heads of UNIDO Operations and UNIDO Representatives (URs) to perform decentralized procurement.

The test is mandatory for all UNIDO staff authorized to procure goods and services as Authorized Officials in accordance with Financial Rule 109.5.2 (a). Before taking the test, staff are supposed to familiarize themselves with the 2008 Procurement Manual and are encouraged to participate in procurement training. Those who complete the test successfully receive a certificate which now is a precondition for obtaining the authority to perform decentralized procurement.

So far nearly 340 UNIDO staff have completed and passed the online procurement test, of which 154 are General Service staff and 170 are Professional staff. More than 80 project managers from the Programme Development and Technical Cooperation Division (PTC) and nearly 40 URs and field-based staff members have passed the test⁵.

⁵ The information is provided by the Procurement Service Unit as of 30 October 2010.

Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the UNIDO Evaluation Policy and has two purposes:

- Assess the online procurement test in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- Develop lessons and recommendations for enhancing the design and implementation of similar future initiatives within UNIDO.

Evaluation scope, key questions and methodology

Scope. The evaluation will focus on assessing the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the online procurement test. It will address neither procurement training nor decentralized procurement issues.

Key questions. The evaluation will examine the following aspects:

Relevance

- The extent to which the objectives of the online procurement test are consistent with the:
 - ✓ Needs and priorities of UNIDO staff involved directly or indirectly with procurement process (such as project managers, URs, Heads of UNIDO Operations (HUOs) and project assistants...);
 - ✓ Management priorities and policies of UNIDO, in particular in light of the ongoing change management process and best practice from other comparable UN and international organizations;
- Do the test's objectives remain relevant? Is there a need to adjust the test?

Effectiveness

- What results has the test achieved so far (both qualitative and quantitative results)? Are the actual results commensurate with the original objectives of the test? To what extent have the expected results been achieved or are likely to be achieved?
- Has the test generated any results that have or could lead to changes in the ways AHs, URs, HOU's and project assistants manage TC projects? Have there been any unplanned effects?
- How many people passed the test? Which categories of staff did they belong to and what is the gender balance?
- Did the people for whom the test was intended take the test?
- Did the test lead to staff members becoming more and better informed about procurement issues? Did it lead to better knowledge about procurement rules?
- Did the test lead to an increase in decentralized procurement?
- Have UNIDO staff become more knowledgeable about the procurement issues? Has the online test been used as a condition to grant the authority to perform decentralized procurement? How many people (and what categories) have obtained the authority to perform decentralized procurement? Has this led to faster or better procurement for TC implementation (due to less delays, more precise information

provided to Procurement Services Unit, more AHs/URs perform decentralized procurement, procurement in line with rules and regulations...)? Has this led to less risk to the Organization and individual staff members?

Efficiency

- Was the online procurement test cost-effective, in terms of financial and human resources? How efficiently has the test been administered?
- Is the test a good instrument to increase knowledge about procurement rules and issues?
- Would the test have been more effective if it had been complemented with other measures?
- What lessons can be learnt to feed into the development of future e- activities, such as e-learning, within UNIDO?
- Was the test accurately assessing knowledge about procurement and a suitable instrument to grant authority to perform decentralized procurement?
- Was the test sufficiently promoted within UNIDO?
- Was the test appropriately designed and clear to the users?
- Was the test user-friendly?
- Were users satisfied with the test and found it to be a good learning tool?

The evaluation findings will contribute to the continuous effort of the Procurement Services Unit in improving UNIDO staff's knowledge of procurement issues and in facilitating the procurement related work of allotment holders. To learn from this e-initiative of the Procurement Services Unit, the evaluation will look for lessons that can feed into the development of future e-initiatives such as e-learning within UNIDO.

Evaluation methodology. The evaluation will use a mixed method approach, drawing on a range of building blocks of qualitative and quantitative natures to ensure that data collection and analysis deliver evidence-based assessment. Information and data will be collected from: a desk review of relevant documents, statistical analysis of data on the participation in the test and test results provided by Procurement Services Unit, interviews with a number of selected UNIDO staff (both managers of the test and participants in it) and an online survey of UNIDO staff who have passed the test. Interviews will also take place with people to whom the test could have been relevant but did not take it, if any.

Desk review. Existing documentary related to the design and implementation of the online procurement test and decentralized procurement at UNIDO will be reviewed and this will include the test instrument itself.

Online survey. An online survey targeting all UNIDO staff completing the online procurement test will be conducted (around 340 staff members and consultants). The survey will be the main source of information to assess the procurement test in quantitative terms.

Interviews with key stakeholders within UNIDO. Interviews will be conducted with key informants involved in the design and implementation of the online test and those closely involved with procurement for TC projects and programmes from the Programme Support and General Management Division (PSM), the Programme Development and Technical

Cooperation Division (PTC), and the Regional Strategies and Field Operations Division (RSF). A selected number of UNIDO staff completing the test (and those who have not) will also be interviewed to validate the findings from the online survey.

Reporting. Preliminary findings will be presented to the colleagues from Procurement Services Unit and others at the HQ. On the basis of this feedback, the evaluation report will be prepared. The draft report will be shared with the Procurement Services for factual validation and comments before being finalized. The evaluation report will be in English with a 3-page executive summary.

Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report: All UNIDO evaluations are subject to quality assessments by UNIDO Evaluation Group. The quality of the evaluation report will be assessed and rated against the criteria set forth in the Checklist on evaluation report quality (Annex 1). The applied evaluation quality assessment criteria are used as a tool to provide structured feedback.

Evaluation team and process

Evaluation team. The evaluation team will include: 1) an Evaluation Officer from the Evaluation Group and 2) a Consultant with knowledge and experience in conducting surveys. The profiles and duties of the consultant are specified in the job description in Annex 2 attached to this TOR.

All members of the evaluation team must not have been involved in the design and/or implementation, supervision and coordination of the online procurement test. This principle is underlined in the UNIDO Evaluation Policy: *“For independent evaluations, the members of an evaluation team must not have been directly responsible for the policy-setting, design or overall management of the subject of evaluation (nor expect to be so in the near future)”*. The consultant will be requested to sign a declaration that none of the above situations exists and that the consultant will not seek assignments with the manager/s in charge of the project before the completion of her/his contract with the Evaluation Group.

Evaluation process. While underscoring the need for independence, the Evaluation Group recognises the importance of engaging the main stakeholders in an active dialogue throughout the evaluation process. The UNIDO Evaluation Policy states that: *“Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential at all stages of the evaluation process. Involvement of and consultation with stakeholders facilitates consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations; it also heightens the credibility and quality of the evaluation”*. This is fundamental to ensure the evaluators’ full understanding of the opportunities and constraints faced by the Procurement Services Unit, to engage the stakeholders in a fruitful collaboration and to facilitate the discussion of the recommendations and their adoption.

In order to do so, colleagues from the Procurement Services Unit will be invited to review and comment on the proposed evaluation methodology and process as set out in this terms of reference, participate in key discussions of the preliminary findings, as well as review and comment on the draft evaluation report.

The Procurement Services Unit will provide information and support to the evaluation as required. The evaluation will be conducted in November and December 2010.

Annex 1. Checklist on evaluation report quality

Report quality criteria	UNIDO Assessment notes	Evaluation Group	Rating
(a) Did the report present an assessment of relevant outcomes and achievement of project me objectives?			
(b) Were the report consistent and the evidence complete and convincing?			
(c) Did the report present a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes or did it explain why this is not (yet) possible?			
(d) Did the evidence presented support the lessons and recommendations?			
(e) Did the report include the actual project costs (total and per component or project)?			
(f) Quality of the lessons: Were lessons readily applicable in other contexts? Did they suggest prescriptive action?			
(g) Quality of the recommendations: Did recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented?			
(h) Was the report well written? (Clear language and correct grammar)			
(i) Were all evaluation aspects specified in the TOR adequately addressed?			
(j) Was the report delivered in a timely manner?			

Rating system for quality of evaluation reports

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = 0.

Annex 2. Job description

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF UNIDO ONLINE PROCUREMENT TEST JOB DESCRIPTION

Post title	Consultant
Duration	1 w/month
Started date	10 November 2010
Duty station	UNIDO HQ in Vienna

Duties

The consultant will contribute to the preparation and implementation of the evaluation of UNIDO online procurement test, especially the online survey as specified in the evaluation terms of reference.

Duties	Outputs
Supporting the Evaluation Officer in conducting an online survey, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ reviewing and revising survey questionnaire after receiving feedback from stakeholders✓ uploading and testing the questionnaire online✓ administering the online survey (including checking the progress and sending reminders)✓ analyzing the survey results✓ drafting the survey findings	Draft survey questionnaire, data analysis, charts and tables for the evaluation report, draft section on survey results
Total	30 days

Qualifications:

- Advanced university degree in development fields;
- Experience in research and conducting online surveys;
- Preferably, knowledge of UNIDO activities and experience in working with the UN system desirable.

Language:

- English

Absence of Conflict of Interest:

According to UNIDO rules, the consultant must not have been involved in the design and/or implementation, supervision and coordination of and/or have benefited from the programme/project (or theme) under evaluation. The consultant will be requested to sign a declaration that none of the above situations exists and that the consultants will not seek assignments with the manager/s in charge of the project before the completion of her/his contract with the Evaluation Group.

Annex B: Survey questionnaire

UNIDO's online procurement test – Evaluation Survey

Survey questionnaire

Please select the answer that most closely reflects your views. This survey is confidential.

1. My main reason(s) for taking the online procurement test is/are (please select more than 1 answer, if suitable):

To improve my procurement knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>
To obtain the authority to perform decentralized procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>
To re-evaluate my procurement knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>
To move to other units/branches where I will work more with procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>
To be asked by my supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. In order to PASS the procurement test (please select more than 1 answer, if suitable),

I studied the Procurement Manual and/or the PowerPoint Presentations on the intranet	<input type="checkbox"/>
I took part in procurement training workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>
I did not need to do anything, I have already had a good knowledge procurement issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. What do you think about the design of the test?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The language was easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The questions were good to test my procurement knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The test mainly assessed my knowledge of decentralized procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The test focused on assessing	<input type="checkbox"/>				

my procurement terminology					
I had no technical problem while taking the test	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The test was user-friendly and easy to use	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The test was promoted sufficiently within UNIDO	<input type="checkbox"/>				

4. In your opinion, what improvements could be made to this test?

5. Overall, I found the test was:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
A good testing tool	<input type="checkbox"/>				
A good learning tool	<input type="checkbox"/>				
A good tool to improve my procurement knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>				

6. Knowledge of procurement is useful for my day-to-day tasks.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

7. Passing the test is a good basis to grant the decentralized procurement authority.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

Please elaborate briefly if disagree:

8. The test would have been more effective to improve procurement knowledge if it had complemented other measures.

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

If you agree, please suggest some measures:

9. After having passed the test,

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
I feel more informed of procurement rules and issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My knowledge of procurement has improved/deepened	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am more aware of lead times and now incorporate them into planning project implementations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I prepare documents required by Procurement Unit quicker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I provide more accurate information required by the Procurement Unit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been less financial risks for me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel more confident in performing/assisting decentralized procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Please elaborate briefly how you have changed the way you work after having passed the test (if this change is not included in question 9).

11. So far, around 340 UNIDO staff members have passed the test, do you see any changes below:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
There have been less delays in the procurement process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been less financial risks for UNIDO	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been more staff members performing decentralized procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Authorized Officials (Project Managers, UNIDO Representatives, Head of UNIDO Operations...) have performed better decentralized procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There have been less delays in project implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. In my opinion, practical training on how to perform procurement transactions is needed:

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

If agree, please suggest forms of training:

13. I know a colleague(s) who has asked others to take the test for them.

Yes No

14. In your opinion,

	General Staff Services	Authorized officials (Project managers, UNIDO Representatives, Head of UNIDO Operations...)	Procurement Officers	Don't know
in a CENTRALIZED procurement transaction, most of the work is performed by	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
in a DECENTRALIZED procurement transaction, most of the work is performed by	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. What is your position?

D level P level GS level Consultant Others, please specify

16. Are you based in the field or in Headquarters?

Field

Headquarters

17. Do you currently have Delegation of Authority?

Yes

No

18. How many procurement transactions (centralized and decentralized) are you generally involved with per year?

None

Less than 3

4-10

10-15

More than 15

19. If you have any advice or recommendation for future e-activities, such as e-learning, within UNIDO, please elaborate:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION!

Annex C: List of persons met/interviewed

Unit	Name	Functional Title
PSM/OSS/PRS	APPIATENG, Eric	Senior Procurement Officer
PTC/TCB/CIU	BAU, Bernard	Industrial Development Officer
PSM/OSS/PRS	DETHLEFSEN Michael	Chief of Unit
PTC/TCB/OD	DIAZ CASTILLO, Juan	Programme Assistant
PTC/OMD	ISOYAMA, Atsushi	Programme Management Officer
PTC/BIT/CUP	KAUFMANN, Claudia	Project Assistant
PTC/MPB/RAU	KOESZEGVARY, Akos	Industrial Development Officer
PSM/OSS/GES	KOLOS KOV, Viktor	Unit Chief and Deputy to the Director
PTC/ECC/IEE	KURUTTUPARAMBIL, Abraham	Project Assistant
PSM/OSS/PRS	MAABDI, Natalie	Contracts Officer
PTC/AGR/AIT	MOLL DE ALBA CABOT, Jaime	Industrial Development Officer
PSM/OSS/PRS	ORLOV, Alexander	Procurement Officer
PTC/AGR/AIT	PAPASTAVROU, Stavros	Technical Programme Coordinator
PSM/OSS/PRS	PINJO-DZIGAL, Zilha	Contracts Officer
PSM/FIN/FMT	PLESKATCH, Vitaliy	Finance Officer
PSM/HRM/HPD	RAABE, Sylvia	Human Resources Officer
PTC/EMB/WMU	STUCKI, Jerome	Industrial Development Officer
PTC/MPB/SFU	STYRSKY, Susanne	Project Assistant
RSF/RFO/ASP	THAMPI, Theruvil	Senior Programme Clerk
PTC/BIT/CBL	WEISERT, Natascha	Industrial Development Officer