



TERMS OF REFERENCE

EVALUATION OF UN DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT 9th TRANCHE PROJECT 1415-AF

“Strengthening national capacity in the most vulnerable UNECE countries for the sustainable development of statistics”

I. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the implementation and assess the extent to which the objectives of the UN Development Account project “Strengthening national capacity in the most vulnerable UNECE countries for the sustainable development of statistics.” (hereinafter “Project”) were achieved. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in enhancing the capacity of the project countries with regards to the sustainable development of statistics.

The results of the evaluation will support improvement of the future technical cooperation projects and activities implemented by UNECE, and in particular, activities which are global in nature (involving several regions and cooperation with several Regional Commissions)

II. Scope

The evaluation will be guided by the objectives, indicators of achievement and means of verification established in the logical framework of the project document. The evaluation will consider the extent to which the Project built the capacities of beneficiary countries to ensure the sustainable development of statistics. The evaluation will include the full period of implementation from 2014 to 2018.

III. Background

Since 1992, UNECE has been promoting the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (ECE C(47)) which provide the basis for a sound legal and institutional framework for national statistical systems. In 2013, ECOSOC endorsed the Fundamental Principles and noted the critical role of high-quality official statistical information for informed decision-making in support of sustainable development (E/RES/2013/21). The Global Assessments of national statistical systems assess the adherence of countries to the Fundamental Principles.

Providing timely, reliable and internationally comparable statistics was identified as a major challenge for the producers of official statistics in the region. To overcome the challenge, the development of national statistical capacities and a series of adjustments on the institutional, organizational and technical levels are required.

The project was implemented from 2014 to 2018. UNECE led on the execution of the project. Project activities included 8 beneficiary countries: Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, either through national, regional or intergovernmental activities.

The objective of the project was to enhance the national capacity of the most vulnerable UNECE countries for sustainable development of statistics through the implementation of recommendations from the Global Assessments of national statistical systems.

IV. Issues

The evaluation should review the following aspects of the project implementation and results:

- *Relevance:*
To what extent was the project relevant to the objective of the UNECE to enhance the national capacity of the most vulnerable UNECE countries for sustainable development of statistics through the implementation of recommendations from the Global Assessments of national statistical systems?
To what extent did the project respond to the specific needs of member States covered by the project's activities?
Was the project design and implementation appropriate for meeting the project's overall objectives?
While the project was conceived and designed prior to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda by Member States in 2015, the evaluation will consider the contribution of the project as per the Sustainable Development Goals where feasible.
- *Effectiveness:*
Did the project achieve the results expected during the project design in terms of the planned activities, outcome, and impact?
What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the project objective and expected accomplishments?
- *Efficiency:*
Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources?
Were the resources (financial and human) appropriate to the design the project?
Were the activities implemented according to the planned timeframe?
Were the activities implemented in the required sequence needed to ensure the greatest impact of the Project?
- *Sustainability:*
To what extent will the benefits of the project continue after completion of the project?
How is the stakeholders' engagement likely to continue?
How will the capacity built ensure that institutions will take over and sustain the benefits of the project?

V. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted on the basis of:

1. A **desk review** of all the relevant documents obtained from project files including:
 - Programmes and materials (presentations, background documents) developed for national and regional workshops as well as lists of participants; reports of workshops; Meeting webpages; Global Assessments of National Statistical Systems of those beneficiary countries that have requested the; Publications developed in the framework of the project; and Yearly interim progress reports (for 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017).
2. An electronic **questionnaire** will be developed by the consultant to assess the perspective from member States targeted by the project, after consultation with UNECE. The questionnaire will be available to participants in both English and Russian.
3. This questionnaire will be followed up by **selected interviews** (methodology to be determined by the evaluator in consultation with UNECE) with key internal and external stakeholders. The interviews will take place via phone and Skype. The UNECE project manager will provide the list and contact details.

The project manager will also guide the evaluator on the appropriate recipients for the questionnaire, and for follow up interviews, and ensure that the necessary communications with these recipients are introduced by the secretariat.

The report will summarize the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. An executive summary (of no more than 2 pages) will briefly summarize the project, the methodology of the evaluation, key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The final report will be a maximum of 20 pages (excluding annexes).

All material needed for the evaluation, will be provided to the consultant: project document and reports, meeting reports and publications, list of involved experts that can be interviewed by telephone. The UNECE project manager will be contacted to obtain clarifications and any missing data. He will provide support and further explanation by Skype and phone to the evaluation consultant when needed.

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. The evaluation will comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, including due consideration of the gender aspects of the project's design and implementation. UNECE will provide all documentation as needed throughout the timeline of the evaluation. UNECE will provide support and further explanation to the evaluator as needed.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

- Desk review of all documents provided by UNECE to the evaluator (by 10 December 2018)
- Delivery of inception report including design of survey (by 10 December 2018)
- Feedback on inception report by the project manager and PMU (by 15 December 2018)
- Launching the survey (15 December 2018)
- Conducting in-person and telephone interviews (by 15 January 2019)
- Analysis of collected information (by 25 January 2019)
- Draft report (25 January 2019)
- Comments back to the evaluator after review by the project manager and the PMU (5 February 2019)
- Final report (15 February 2019).

VII. Resources

The requirement for an external evaluation is specified in the project document. An external evaluation consultant identified through the UNECE Evaluation Consultants' Roster will be hired and managed by the project manager (Steven Vale). The project manager will also guide the evaluator on the appropriate recipients for the questionnaire, and for follow up interviews, and ensure that the necessary communications with these recipients are introduced by the secretariat.

The UNECE Programme Management Unit will provide guidance on the evaluation requirements, design, and review of the draft evaluation report.

The resources available for this evaluation are USD 11,000 (all inclusive). Payment will be made upon satisfactory delivery of work.

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps

The evaluation will be consistent with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. The results will be used in the planning and implementation of future similar projects in the region and possibly beyond. The findings of the evaluation will inform follow up actions and guide initiatives already started and required to disseminate the knowledge created and

enhance its use. The outcomes of the evaluation will also contribute to the broader lessons learned of the UNDA, by being made available on the UNECE public and internal websites, as well as submitted to UN DESA in UNHQ.

IX. Criteria for Evaluators

Evaluators should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in relevant disciplines
- Specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, statistics, statistical capacity development.
- Demonstrated relevant professional experience in design, management and conduct of evaluation processes with multiple stakeholders, survey design and implementation, and project planning, monitoring and management.
- Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations.
- Fluency in written and spoken English and Russian languages.

Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to UNECE before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any point where such conflict occurs.