## INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

# INCEPTION PAPER

**Programme Evaluation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)**

**26 June 2015**

Assignment No.: **IED-15-003**

# INSPECTION AND EVALUATION DIVISION

## FUNCTION

*"The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organisation. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organisation;" (General Assembly Resolution 48/218 B).*

**Project team members include:**

DEMETRA ARAPAKOS, CHIEF OF SECTION
CLAUDIA IBARGUEN, PROJECT LEADER
ANNA GUERRAGGIO, TEAM MEMBER

## CONTACT INFORMATION

OIOS/IED Contact Information:
phone: +1 212-963-8148; fax: +1 212-963-1211; email: ied@un.org

**DEMETRA ARAPAKOS, CHIEF OF SECTION**
Tel: +1 917-367-6033, Fax: +1 212-963-1211
e-mail: arapakos@un.org

**(EDDIE) YEE WOO GUO, DIRECTOR**
Tel: +1 917-367-3674, Fax: +1 212-963-1211
e-mail: guoy@un.org

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# I. Introduction

1. The Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS-IED) is undertaking an evaluation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). Selection of ECE for evaluation followed a risk assessment undertaken by OIOS to identify Secretariat programme evaluation priorities.

2. The general frame of reference for OIOS is General Assembly resolutions 48/218B, 54/244, 59/272, as well as ST/SGB/273, which authorize OIOS to initiate, carry out and report on any action that it considers necessary to fulfil its responsibilities. The general frame of reference for OIOS-IED evaluation is provided in the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME).[1]

# II. Background

## A. ECE history and mandate

3. ECE was the first regional economic commission to be established in 1947[2], to support the post-war reconstruction of Europe and promote the integration and economic cooperation of European countries.

4. When it was set up, ECE included all the participants in the reconstruction effort, including the United States of America and Canada. However, shortly after, the Cold War divided the countries of Europe into two camps with opposing economic systems. In this scenario, ECE provided a shared forum where East and West could meet to discuss and cooperate on issues of common economic interest. With the end of the Cold War, ECE assumed a role in supporting countries' transitions from centrally planned to market economies and helping their integration into the global economy. Between 1991 and 1995, ECE extended its activities to the Central Asian Republics. Countries of Eastern Europe, South-eastern Europe and the Caucasus also joined as Member States, while Israel was admitted as member of the Commission on a temporary basis. ECE currently comprises 56 Member States.

5. ECE provides a neutral platform to facilitate greater economic integration and cooperation among its Member States, and to promote sustainable development and economic prosperity through:

- Policy dialogue, development and implementation of international legal instruments, norms and standards;
- Development and dissemination of guidelines and best practices within and outside the region; and
- Technical cooperation in countries with economies in transition, with a view to assisting them in acceding to, and implementing, the international normative

[1] ST/SGB/2000/8, p. 12, Regulation 7.1 notes that the objective of evaluation is: (a) To determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the Organization's activities in relation to their objectives; (b) To enable the Secretariat and Member States to engage in systematic reflection, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the main programmes of the Organization by altering their content and, if necessary, reviewing their objectives.

[2] Together with the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE).

framework. ECE technical cooperation activities include policy advice, capacity building, and field projects.

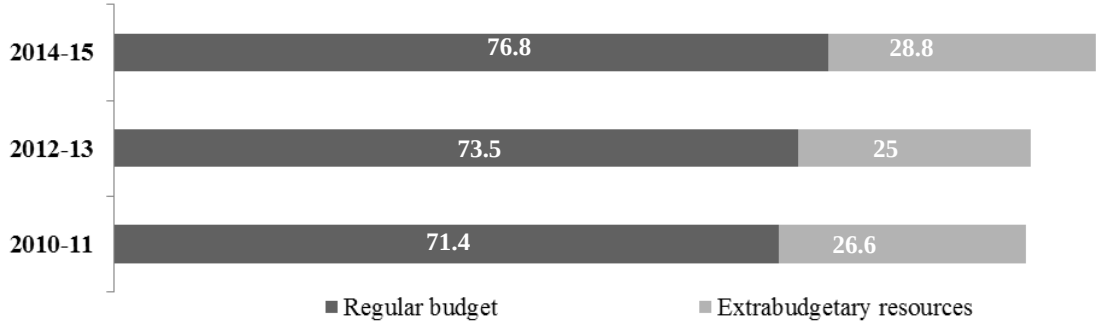
6. In the past seven decades, ECE has worked on connecting its Member States by, for example, harmonizing road signs, developing customs procedures and standards for the transport of dangerous goods, and driving the adoption and implementation of conventions dealing with issues such as air pollution, the protection of watercourses and the trans boundary effects of industrial accidents. ECE has also prioritized the development of statistical data collection and know-how in the region.

## B. ECE resources

7. ECE is funded through the United Nations Regular Budget (RB) and Extrabudgetary (XB) contributions. RB resources originate from three budget fascicles: Economic development in Europe; the Regular programme of technical cooperation, and the Development Account.[3]

8. As illustrated in Figure 1, ECE's projected resources for the 2014-2015 biennium amount to USD 105.5 million, with 73 per cent from the RB. ECE's overall budget[4] for 2014-15 shows a seven per cent increase compared to planned resources in the previous biennium; this is attributable to a 15 per cent increase in projected XB resources, and a 4 per cent increase in RB funds. For the 2014-2015 biennium, ECE has 222 posts: 144 categorized as "professional and higher", and 78 as General Service. Staff resources have decreased by three per cent since 2012-13.

**Figure 1: ECE budgetary resources (USD million)**




## C. ECE governance and strategic framework

9. ECE is ruled by terms of reference and rules of procedure as defined by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).[5] It is governed by the Economic Commission of Europe[6], which reports to ECOSOC on a biennial basis, and encompasses a complex governance structure consisting of:

[3] The Regular programme of technical cooperation and the Development account also finance activities by the other Regional Economic Commissions and other United Nations Secretariat entities.
[4] Including resources from three budget fascicles.
[5] Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic Commission for Europe (2009). E/ECE/778/Rev.5
[6] Referred as "the Commission" in this paper.

- The Executive Committee (EXCOM), which acts on behalf of the Commission between its biennial sessions, and is entrusted with the implementation of the overall guidance established by the Commission;
- Eight intergovernmental sectoral committees, which provide a forum for policy dialogue and direct the work of the ECE Secretariat;
- Twenty-five working parties/meetings of parties/steering committees/world fora, operating under the sectoral committees; and
- Numerous expert groups for specific themes, operating under working parties.

10. ECE's objectives, activities, and indicators of achievement are defined in biennial Strategic Frameworks and Programme Budget documents approved by the United Nations General Assembly. The ECE's strategic direction was adjusted by Member States through the Reform of UNECE in 2005, following an external evaluation[7] requested by Member States to streamline and focus ECE's work in its areas of comparative advantage. At the 2011 Commission session, Member States decided to carry out a review of the UNECE Reform of 2005, which was completed in April 2013[8]. The review looked at the relevance and efficiency of subprogrammes, and stressed the importance of more structured and systematic partnerships to avoid duplication and achieve synergies and complementarity of efforts.

11. Jointly with ESCAP, ECE also manages the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)[9], which was launched in 1998 to strengthen subregional cooperation and facilitate the integration of these countries to the world economy. SPECA activities are overseen by a Governing Council.

12. Although ECE's work is mostly focused on its 56 member countries, many of its instruments are for the global public good and are used worldwide. For example, ECE promotes global conventions and standards on vehicle regulations, trade facilitation, quality of agricultural products, classification of fossil fuels and sustainable development indicators. The Aarhus Convention was negotiated for global coverage, and two of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) served by ECE—the Water Convention and the ESPOO Conventions - are in the process of being opened for accession by countries beyond the ECE region. Further, the UNECE secretariat, and the Transport Division in particular, also provides, at the request of the Secretary-General, secretariat services to the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and its two subcommittees.

## D. ECE structure

13. ECE operates under the overall guidance of its Executive Secretary at the level of Under-Secretary-General. The Executive Secretary is supported by the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) - which includes the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit[10] and the Programme Management Unit -, the Executive Office (Administration and Finance), the Information Unit and the Information Systems Unit. The current Executive Secretary, Mr. Christian Friis Bach, took office in August 2014.

[7] The State of the UNECE, External evaluation report, 2005

[8] The outcome of the review was adopted by the Economic Commission of Europe and endorsed by ECOSOC (E/RES/2013/1)

[9] The countries of SPECA are: Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

[10] Renamed from the Development Policies and Cross-sectoral Coordination Unit (DPCCU) in June 2015.

14. ECE comprises eight substantive subprogrammes implemented by six divisions, as shown in Table 1 below. This table also shows that ECE's subprogrammes are not equally capacitated in terms of (staff and financial) resources: the two largest subprogrammes - Environment and Transport - account for more than half of ECE's financial (including XB) resources[11] and 42 per cent of all ECE staff.[12]

15. All staff is based in ECE Headquarters in Geneva, with the exception of one staff member[13] in a joint team of three to support the SPECA programme in Kazakhstan with ESCAP.

**Table 1: ECE's subprogrammes**

| Subprogramme | Objective | ECE programme resources (2014-15)[14] | | Division | ECE staff[15] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Thousand USD | Share | | Number | Share |
| Environment | To improve environmental governance and performance throughout the region for safeguarding the environment and health | 31,186 | 37% | Environment | 46 | 21% |
| Transport | To promote sustainable transport which is safe, clean and competitive | 16,746 | 20% | Transport | 45 | 21% |
| Statistics | To improve the quality of official statistics and to ensure the coordination of international statistical activities undertaken in the ECE region | 10,480 | 12% | Statistics | 31 | 14% |
| Economic cooperation and integration | To promote a policy, financial and regulatory environment conducive to the sustained economic growth, innovative development and greater competitiveness of economies in the ECE region | 6,633 | 8% | Economic cooperation and trade | 29 | 13% |
| Trade | To strengthen trade facilitation and trade-related economic cooperation in the ECE region and beyond | 8,327 | 10% | | | |
| Sustainable energy | To improve access to affordable and clean energy for all and to | 6,030 | 7% | Sustainable energy | 12 | 6% |

[11] Resources allocated to Executive Direction and Management and Programme Support not included.
[12] ECE staff list (April 2015)
[13] Funded from the regular budget of the Environment subprogramme.
[14] Economic development in Europe; Regular programme of technical cooperation, and Development Account
[15] Percentage of all ECE staff, including the Office of the Executive Secretary

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector in the ECE region | | | | | |
| Forestry and timber | To strengthen sustainable management of forests in the ECE region | 2,556 | 3% | Forests, land, and housing | 11 | 5% |
| Housing, land management and population | To improve the housing, urban, and land governance, and to promote evidence-based formulation and implementation of sustainable population and social cohesion policies in the ECE region | 2,992 | 4% | | | |

# III. M&E assessment and evaluation scoping

## A. ECE M&E capacity and practice

*Monitoring*

16. In line with all Secretariat entities, ECE monitors the achievement of outputs, and reports against its expected accomplishments, as set out in its Strategic Framework, through the Secretariat-wide Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS). According to the Programme Performance Report of the United Nations for the 2012-2013 biennium, ECE implemented 91 per cent of 3,323 mandated quantifiable outputs. In addition, in 2014 ECE launched a Project Monitoring Tool (PMT) that provides information on all projects and activities funded from extra-budgetary resources.

17. The monitoring and evaluation function in ECE is located in the Programme Management Unit (PMU) within the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES). The PMU provides overall coordination of the programme planning, monitoring and evaluation of all ECE activities from the regular budget and extrabudgetary resources.[16] The PMU is staffed with a Director, 3 professional level staff, one of whom is dedicated to evaluation (from September 2014), and a general service level staff.

*Evaluation*

18. Starting from 2004, the Commission requested Sectoral Committees to conduct biennial evaluations of their respective subprogrammes. In 2006, the EXCOM directed the Sectoral Committees to follow specific procedures in the production of these biennial evaluations.[17] It was not until 2010, however, that ECE developed its first evaluation policy formalizing various evaluation processes and providing for two types of evaluation[18]:

[16] ECE Memorandum, 17 March 2011.
[17] Guide for Biennial Evaluations of Sub-Programme Performance by UNECE Sectoral Committees.
[18] United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, ECE Evaluation Policy, 2010

1) internal mandatory evaluation, including monitoring reports[19], self-evaluations[20] and evaluations of United Nations Development Account projects; and 2) external mandatory evaluation, including assessments by external oversight entities such as OIOS and the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), evaluations steered by donors of specific XB funded projects.

19. In 2012, ECE commissioned a review of its evaluation processes and products to assess their value added, cost effectiveness and contribution to organizational performance.[21] The review concluded that ECE's evaluation processes were generally unsatisfactory and its evaluation products, for the most part, below quality standards. This was also reflected in the quality review of ECE evaluation reports conducted by OIOS for its biennial reports to the General Assembly. The review considered the low degree of independence as one of the principal drawbacks of ECE internal evaluation reports, negatively affecting their credibility.

20. In IEDs most recent evaluation scorecards for 2012-2013, ECE is shown as having taken steps to strengthen its evaluation capacity. While it still does not have a dedicated evaluation function, it has one full-time professional staff at the P5 level to support evaluations in ECE. Also, in 2014 ECE updated its evaluation policy[22], produced a support guide for conducting evaluations[23], and committed to making all evaluation reports (after October 2014) publicly available. To better steer evaluation practice, ECE also introduced a biennial evaluation work plan, which includes three self-evaluations at subprogramme level and one corporate evaluation which is approved by EXCOM. All four evaluations now integrate a budget (albeit small)[24] for external consultancy services. Furthermore, the ECE Executive Secretary is now responsible for fostering an enabling environment for evaluation, as reflected in his Senior Management compact.[25]

21. Despite these improvements, the ECE evaluation function is still embedded within a broader programming unit, detracting from the independence of the function. Although evaluations are conducted by independent professional evaluation consultants, these consultants are still managed by, and report to, ECE. According to ECE, the budget for monitoring and evaluation activities decreased from 1.11 per cent of the total budget in the 2010-2011 biennium to .89 per cent in the 2012-2013 biennium and increased again in the 2014-2015 biennium to 1.23 per cent.[26]

[19] Monitoring reports included Programme Performance Reports (PPR) that form a part of the Report of the Secretary General on Programme Performance for the Biennium, and Biennial evaluations of subprogramme performance (BERs) by Sectoral Committees. Since 2014 BERs have been made optional and PMU no longer provides central quality assurance.

[20] Self-evaluations are managed and conducted by ECE staff at the sub-programme level.

[21] Urs Zollinger, Review of ECE's Evaluation Processes 2005-2012. Published May 2013.

[22] UNECE, Evaluation Policy 2014.

[23] The evaluation policy is now in compliance with norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). The support guide is aimed at helping ECE staff tasked with the management or conduct of self-evaluations.

[24] Two of the four evaluations have allotted a budget of USD 10,000 for an external consultant, one 15,000 and one 20,000. Each evaluation also foresees a few months of work of Professional staff (from 1.5 to 3) and some GS staff time (from 0 to 0.5). ECE Biennial Evaluation Work plan 2014-2015.

[25] UNECE Accountability Framework, 2012.

[26] Email communication with ECE, June 26, 2015.

## B. Evaluation and audit coverage

22. At its 59th annual session of the Commission in 2004, Member States commissioned a comprehensive review of ECE. The goal was to assess the role, mandate and functions of ECE given the changes in the European institutional landscape. Apart from the 2005 report, which served primarily to guide reform decisions by Member States, such as reaffirming mandates and streamlining some areas of ECE's work, ECE has produced few evaluations tackling broad programmatic, thematic or strategic issues. A review by the IED team of ECE's nine most recent self-evaluations noted their focus was primarily on processes (seven), rather than on activities or outputs.[27]

23. ECE conducted its first programme-wide strategic evaluation in 2014. The evaluation was managed by PMU and focused on "the role of information and communication in promoting the visibility of the work of the UNECE" (ECE/2015/8). In addition, the work plan for 2014-15 includes the following three evaluations at the subprogramme level:

- The role of UNECE country profiles on Housing and Land Management, and related follow-up activities in development of national housing legislation and programmes;
- UNECE activities under the Espoo Convention and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); and
- Global and regional impact of the United Nations regulations on transport of dangerous good.

These evaluations will be managed by the ECE divisions (with overall quality control by PMU) and conducted by external consultants.

24. ECE has been subject to five audits since 2005.[28] Two audits are planned for the latter part of 2015 and 2016 – one on the statistics subprogramme and the other one on the management of technical cooperation projects.

25. OIOS-IED has not yet evaluated ECE. The JIU has also never conducted a full evaluation of ECE, although it is currently concluding a review of cooperation among regional commissions of the United Nations.[29]

## C. Evaluation scoping process and criteria

26. OIOS-IED undertook a scoping process from April to June 2015, which entailed the following steps:

- comprehensive desk review of documents including: ECE strategic frameworks and programme budgets; programme performance reports, IMDIS data; corporate policies and strategies; evaluations; and Commission documents;

[27] Self-evaluations at the process level tend to consist of feedback reports related to satisfaction on services provided by ECE in the delivery of programme of work. For example, recommendations from participants on how to improve the logistics of forums.

[28] Agreement with the International Road Transport Union, 2005; Risk Assessment, 2007; Strategic Planning and Monitoring, 2009; Comprehensive audit, 2011; Projects in the Energy Division, 2014.

[29] Scheduled to be completed at the end of May 2015. Report of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2014 and programme of work for 2015. A/69/34.

- 28 semi-structured interviews with Member States, United Nations partners and ECE senior managers, including the Deputy Executive Secretary and Executive Secretary;
- development of a Programme Impact Pathway (PIP), shown in Figure 2, which conveys in a summarized visual format the underlying programme logic of ECE[30];
- regular consultations with the evaluation focal point in the Programme Monitoring Unit;
- review of ECE monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity;
- risk assessment by sub-programme, taking into account, among other elements, evaluation coverage and budgetary resources;
- consultations with colleagues from the OIOS Internal Audit Division;
- internal consultations with OIOS-IED colleagues, including an OIOS-IED-wide brainstorming session.

27. Through this process, IED's identification of evaluation topics considered the following criteria:

- coverage of a crucial strategic area of ECE's work;
- criticality to the achievement of ECE's overall objectives and mandate;
- relevance and utility for ECE learning and accountability needs;
- current gaps in evaluation coverage;
- complementarity to past and planned evaluations of ECE, as per the ECE evaluation work-plan; and
- potential for added value of an IED evaluation as an independent oversight body.

**D. Evaluation scope**

28. OIOS-IED will conduct a full programme-wide evaluation of ECE, which will focus on all ECE's` main activities and across its eight subprogrammes. Since the 2005 review of UNECE, the performance of the organization has not been externally assessed from such a comprehensive perspective. The evaluation will provide both and accountability and learning perspective.

29. The evaluation would combine the following high risk topics, within the larger context of ECE's readiness for the post-2015 development agenda:

- *The use and effectiveness of ECE products.* ECE produces a large array of norms, standards, recommendations, guidelines, classifications, databases, statistics, country reviews and publications. Evidence on the use and impact of these outputs, however, is weak. Information gathered through interviews and the document review during the inception phase indicated that there is little evidence on the extent to which ECE products are actually used, and by whom they are used, nor is there any analysis on whether the mode of ECE delivery is the most appropriate to reach its target audience and reach its strategic goals

[30] The PIP maps out the logical sequence of means-ends linkages underlying a programme strategy: from inputs to implementation of activities, to achievement of outputs and outcomes (at different levels), towards realization of impact. The main assumptions and drivers outside the core intervention logic are also identified. The PIP is based on elements from key strategic and planning documents, information from ECE's website and preliminary interviews with staff.

- *Effectiveness of ECE's partnership arrangements*. ECE cooperates with a wide variety of partners such as Member States, United Nations entities, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union, as well as with the private sector and civil society. As a relatively small organization, ECE is well aware of the need to work with partners to enhance the outreach of its work in order to achieve its strategic goals.
- *The extent to which ECE is fit for purpose in the post 2015 development agenda*. The emerging post-2015 development agenda will be ratified in September 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, and ECE - echoing the Secretary-General's report on the post-2015 agenda - upholds the importance of regional efforts in adapting globally agreed goals to specific national realities as well as translating these goals to concrete recommendations, standards and conventions.[31] The Commission's high level statement on the post-2015 development agenda asserted that, while the SDGs will be global, their implementation will be the responsibility of individual countries.
- *The state of extra-budgetary (XB) technical cooperation.* ECE technical cooperation activities are funded both through the United Nations Regular Budget[32] and XB contributions.[33] XB resources represent 81 per cent of the overall budget for technical cooperation[34] and were expected to increase by 15 per cent in the current biennium.[35]

30. The evaluation also identified a further risk areas which may warrant a specific evaluation by ECE in the future:

- *The effect of governance structures and administrative arrangements on ECE's overall effectiveness and efficiency.* ECE has a complex and multi-layered governance structure that poses challenges in efficiency terms for the work of the Commission.

[31] Committing to action on sustainable development in times of change, E/ECE/1473, 26 January 2015; Background note, E/ECE/1474; The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet, Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda, May 2014. And interview with ECE Executive Secretary, New York, May 14, 2015.

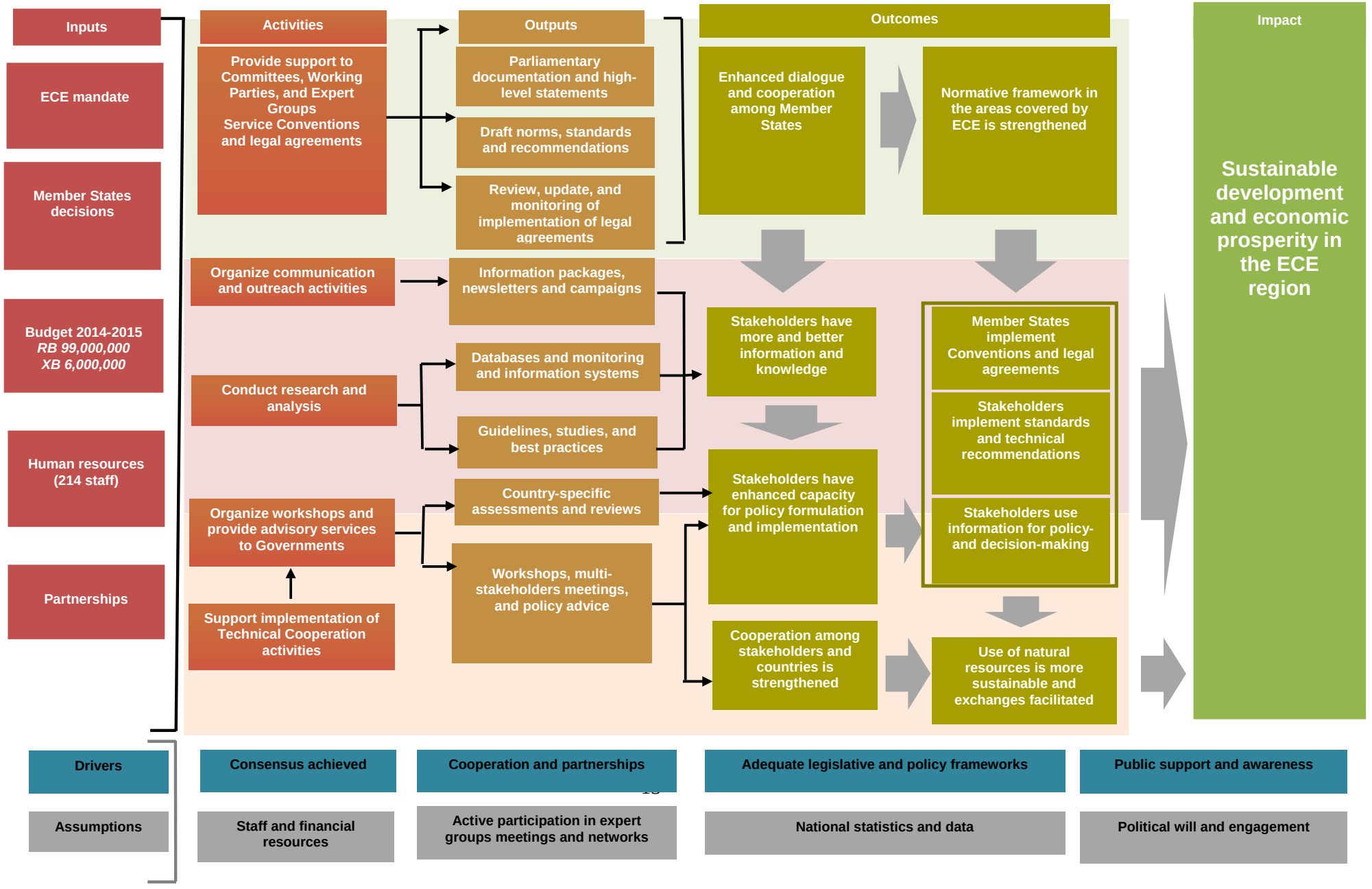
[32] Regular budget resources for technical cooperation fall under sections "Economic Development in Europe," "Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation" (RPTC) and "United Nations Development Account."

[33] Contributions include voluntary contributions from Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the European Commission (EC), and the private sector.

[34] XB contributions reached US$ 14.39 million in 2012, 14.7 million in 2013 and 15.2 million in 2014. ECE Technical Cooperation Activities 2014, Annual Report. Informal document No. 2015/14. Presented at EXCOM meeting, 18 May, 2015.

[35] A/68/6

**Figure 2: ECE's Programme Impact Pathway**



## IV. Evaluation terms of reference

### A. Evaluation objective

31. The overall evaluation objective is to determine, as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance and effectiveness of ECE's work, and the extent to which it is fit for purpose to support Member States in the post-2015 development agenda.

### B. Evaluation approach

32. The evaluation aims to assist Member States, the Secretary-General and ECE in their respective endeavours to maximize the relevance and effectiveness of ECE's programme activities. The evaluation will have a two-fold purpose in terms of accountability and learning. With regard to accountability, it will provide evidence on the effectiveness and relevance of ECE's work in the 2010-2015 period, while also examining the strategies, tools and partnership agreements that contributed towards these results. With regard to learning, the evaluation will focus on providing a critical assessment of the extent to which ECE is prepared to assume its important role in the post-2015 development agenda.

### C. Evaluation scope

33. The evaluation of ECE will be a programme-wide assessment focusing on the relevance and effectiveness of ECE across its eight subprogrammes. Due to the breadth of ECE's thematic areas, the volume of its outputs, and the limited resources and time frame for this OIOS-IED evaluation, the team will follow a two-pronged approach that seeks to: a) answer broad questions about overall relevance and effectiveness of ECE's work, and b) assess to what extent, and how, ECE's products are used and influence policies, decision-making, and practice through a case study approach. The evaluation team will develop specific impact pathways for the selected case studies in order to identify the behavioural changes and higher-level results each aims to achieve.

34. When feasible, the evaluation will assess the efficiency of ECE's work within the context of individual case studies (but not for the full ECE programme). For each case study, which is comprised of a specific ECE area of work, the evaluation will look at costs associated with specific outputs - such as a technical workshop or the development of standards - in relation to outcomes. The evaluation will also attempt to compare ECE costs to those of other entities in the region and other United Nations regional commission undertaking similar activities.

35. OIOS will evaluate ECE's effectiveness and contribution to results in the following four specific areas (as per the ECE Programme Impact Pathway, figure 2):

- Implementation of conventions and legal agreements;
- Use and implementation of standards and technical recommendations;
- Use of publications, guidelines, databases, best practices, and country reviews for policy- and decision-making;
- Capacity development for policy formulation and implementation, and;

- Strengthened cooperation among stakeholders and countries for a more sustainable use of natural resources and enhanced trade exchanges.

36. The evaluation will also evaluate ECE's contribution to enhanced dialogue and strengthened normative framework, primarily through secondary sources.

## D. Evaluation questions

37. The key evaluation questions were developed during the scoping phase based on interviews, document reviews and the development of the PIP. The PIP also helped in identifying factors affecting performance, and tailoring evaluation questions around the most critical areas and processes. The questions cover the key evaluation criteria of relevance and effectiveness.

1) **To what extent has ECE developed a work programme that meets the needs of Member States and maximizes its comparative advantage?**
   a. To what extent has ECE focused on the most relevant sectoral areas?
   b. To what extent has ECE undertaken the most relevant activities given its mandate and Member State needs?
   c. How has ECE targeted the most relevant countries, with regard to where it can add the most value, in its technical cooperation and capacity-building work?
   d. To what extent has there been any duplication with other, both United Nations and non-United Nations, actors in the region?
   e. What are ECE's areas of comparative advantage and value added vis-à-vis other actors in the European institutional landscape?
   f. To what extent has ECE achieved a workable balance between regional and global activities, and regional and global reach of its outputs?
   g. How have linkages between ECE subprogrammes facilitated the achievement of its goals?

2) **What has been the extent and nature of the use of ECE's work?**
   a. Who is using ECE's work outputs?
   b. How has ECE's work been used nationally, regionally and globally?
   c. What role has ECE played in ensuring the use of its work by relevant audiences?
   d. What factors have contributed to higher usage of ECE's work?
   e. How well has ECE leveraged its partnerships, including with the other United Nations Regional Commissions, to maximize the use and outreach of its work?

3) **How effective has ECE been, in terms of:**
   a. Strengthened normative framework in the thematic areas covered by ECE?
   b. Implementation of Conventions and legal agreements and their integration into laws/policies/structures at national level?

c. Implementation of standards and technical recommendations, and changes in Government and private sector practices?
d. Stakeholders' enhanced capacity for policy formulation and implementation?
e. Strengthened cooperation among stakeholders and countries?

**4) How prepared is UNECE to support member States in the post-2015 agenda?**

a. What does it mean for ECE to be "fit for purpose" in the post 2015 development context?
b. What role can ECE play to support the implementation of global sustainable development strategies at national and regional level?
c. What obstacles and challenges will ECE face while supporting Member States in the implementation of the post-2015 agenda?
d. What strategic direction should ECE follow, given its role as a Regional Commission, its strengths, and comparative advantage, particularly with regard to its sectoral focus and its regional versus global reach?
e. To what extent should ECE balance between supporting the development of standards and facilitating their implementation?
f. To what extent do existing partnerships complement ECE support to member States in the post-2015 agenda?

## E. Evaluation methodology

38. OIOS-IED evaluation results are derived from rigorous data collection procedures that stress a mixed (quantitative and qualitative) method approach, and rely on the triangulation of multiple methods, sources and analysts to ensure credibility. The evaluation team will develop a data collection matrix depicting how each evaluation question will be covered through the planned methods.

These methods include:

- **Document review:** assessment of programme and project documents; service delivery records; monitoring information reported in IMDIS; and existing evaluations and audit reports completed by ECE and external entities;
- **Structured content analysis:** secondary data analysis pertaining to the development phase of selected ECE norms, standards and technical recommendations;
- **Interviews:** structured and semi-structured interviews with the following:
  - ECE staff;
  - partner representatives from United Nations entities, the European Union, OECD, and other international and regional organizations;
  - member State representatives at Permanent Missions in Geneva;
  - technical experts involved in the development of ECE products;
  - academics specializing in European institutional studies and
  - end-users of ECE products (policy-makers and private sector);

- **Surveys:** Web-based surveys of ECE staff, and members of ECE Sectoral Committees;
- **Direct observation:** of meetings serviced by ECE in Geneva as well as any relevant events involving ECE participation in New York;
- **Case studies:** Selection of a non-random sample of ten ECE work areas based on pre-defined criteria.[36] Given their large size, IED will select two case studies each from the Transport subprogramme, and the Environment subprogramme, and one from each of the remaining six subprogrammes. The case studies will more comprehensively examine the work of ECE in the ten work areas through the methods identified above (surveys and interviews with concerned stakeholders) and through field visits to selected locations.[37] Subject matter expert consultants will be used to undertake some of the case studies.

39. In order to ensure that the evaluation has maximum utility for ECE, the evaluation team will work in close consultation with the evaluand while still maintaining its independence. The focal point for the evaluation will facilitate ECE's feedback on the inception report, coordinate the provision of key documents, assist with scheduling of data collection missions and interviews, and compile the organization's feedback on the draft report.

## F. Evaluation stakeholders

40. ECE has a very diverse range of stakeholders at regional, national, and global level. These include:

*Member States*

- Intergovernmental bodies with which ECE engages, including: the Economic Commission for Europe, the EXCOM, the Governing Bodies of Conventions and legal agreements, Sectoral Committees and related Working Parties;
- Member States' representatives in Geneva;
- Representatives of national Governments in the capitals; and
- The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

*The United Nations*

- The United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism for Europe and Central Asia;
- The United Nations Regional Commissions' New York Office;
- Other United Nations Regional Economic Commissions, particularly ESCAP with whom ECE shares the management of the SPECA programme;
- United Nations programs and agencies, including: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations

[36] The criteria would include: coverage of all subprogrammes, resources (staff time and financial), substantial work to date (number of outputs, type of outputs, length of interventions), regional coverage, global vs. regional focus, and possibility of observation of meetings in early September in Geneva.

[37] Given resource constraints field visits will not be feasible for all ten case studies. OIOS-IED will select the locations that maximize data collection opportunities. The specific locations will be selected during the data collection phase.

Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), and he International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA);

- United Nations Country Teams.

*Other international and regional organizations*

- The European Commission, specifically its Departments (DGs) working on: agriculture and rural development; climate action; energy; environment; Eurostat; mobility and transport; regional and urban policy, trade, international cooperation, industry, and enlargement negotiations;
- Intergovernmental organizations including: the World Trade Organization (WTO); OECD, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Eurasian Economic Community, and the Organisation of Central Asian Cooperation, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OCSE)
- International financial institutions and development banks, including: the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Eurasian Development Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB); and

  Sectoral agencies and unions, including: the European Environment Agency, the International Road Transport Union, the International Gas Union, the International Renewable Energy Agency, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

*Other partners*

- Private sector companies;
- Representatives of academia and Non-Governmental Organizations; and
- Individual citizens.

## G. Gender and human rights perspective

41. According to several General Assembly resolutions, including 53/120 (para. 3) 60/1 (paras 59 and 66) and 60/251 (para. 126), gender and human rights perspectives must be mainstreamed into all United Nations policies and programmes. Guidance from the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) states “an evaluation that is Human Rights and Gender Equality responsive addresses the programming principles required by a human rights based approach and gender mainstreaming strategy.” In alignment with this guidance, OIOS-IED will ensure that the perspectives of rights-holders and duty-bearers are incorporated into data collection and analysis and it will present sex-disaggregated data where possible.

42. ECE is gradually incorporating a gender perspective in its organization-wide and sub-programme level activities.[38] The evaluation will assess progress in gender mainstreaming at organizational and programmatic level against the targets in the ECE's Gender Action Plans (2012-13 and 2014-15).

## H. Evaluation timeline and work plan

43. The evaluation will be implemented in five phases, as follows:

- **Phase 1: Scoping/planning (through June 2015).** Preliminary review of ECE strategic framework, programme documents, and outputs; discussions with key ECE managers and partners; development of internal work plan and terms of reference for the evaluation;
- **Phase 2: Data collection (July-October 2015).** Development of data collection tools; data collection, as per the evaluation methodology, document review/analysis, interviews, implementation of surveys, visits to ECE HQ and one to two field visits;
- **Phase 3: Data analysis (October – December 2015).** Consolidation and analysis of data;
- **Phase 4: Report writing (November 2015 – January 2016).** Development of evaluation results and recommendations; debriefing with ECE; report drafting and review (internal IED and OIOS);
- **Phase 5: Report finalization (February-March 2016).** Dissemination of draft report to ECE for comments; inclusion of comments into final report; finalization of report.

## I. Evaluation resources

44. Under the guidance of the OIOS-IED Director and direct supervision of the Section Chief, the evaluation will be carried out by a team consisting of a project leader and one project team member. The team will also contract subject area experts as consultants to the evaluation, to collect and analyse data on specific ECE outputs/areas. The evaluation will also contract a Russian language translator to facilitate communication with stakeholders in Russian-speaking countries.

**Table 2: Estimated staff time July 2015-March 2016**

| Team member | Level | Full/Part Time | Work days per month |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 section Chief | P5 | Part time (30 per cent) | 6 |
| 1 team leader | P4 | Full time | 18 |
| 1 team member | P3 | Full time | 18 |
| 1 administrative professional | GS | Part time (30 per cent) | 6 |
| Sub-total | | | 48 |
| **Total for 9 months** | | | **432** |

[38] Efforts to promote gender equality at the organizational level include: incorporating a gender analysis into relevant analytical work; integrating a gender perspective into technical cooperation activities and strengthening the accountability of senior management to support gender mainstreaming. In addition each subprogramme has outlined how it will incorporate gender concerns into its specific work. UNECE Gender Action Plan Key to Regional and Sustainable Development 2014-2015.

45. The evaluation budget is comprised of travel costs, consultancy costs, and translation services. The figures are estimates and may change depending on travel cost fluctuations and specificities of consultants' contractual arrangements.

## J. Evaluation deliverables

46. The evaluation report will be finalised as a programme management report in March 2016.

## K. Plan for dissemination and post-report follow-up

47. OIOS-IED will support learning opportunities through conferences and regular informal exchange with ECE colleagues as they work to address any recommendations. OIOS-IED may use elements of the report for presentations, meetings, and division products.

48. OIOS will follow-up the implementation of the recommendations with ECE according to established procedures. The report, or any product based on it, may be submitted to other bodies, including the Economic Commission for Europe and/or its EXCOM.