

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT:

Strengthening the implementation of the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia

I. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the implementation and assess the extent to which the objectives of the project “Strengthening the implementation of the ECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) “, funded by the Russian Federation (hereinafter “Project”) were achieved. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in the implementation and ratification of the Convention and its protocols through increased cooperation and information exchange between the countries and the scientific centres to the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP), expansion of emission inventories, monitoring and modelling activities in the ECE region, in particular in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The results of the evaluation will support improvement of future technical cooperation projects and activities implemented by UNECE.

II. Scope

The evaluation will be guided by the objectives and expected accomplishments established in the project document. The evaluation will consider the extent to which the project: strengthened capacities of the beneficiary countries to develop emission inventories in accordance with the Guidelines for estimating and reporting emission data under the Convention and the EMEP/EEA Air pollutant emission inventory guidebook (EA 1); promoted the ratification and implementation of the Convention and its key Protocols (EA2); and enhanced the outcomes of the work of the Coordinating Group on the promotion of actions towards implementation of the Convention in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central (EA 3). The evaluation will cover the full period of implementation from 2014 to 2018.

III. Background

Air pollution emissions have been considerably reduced in the ECE region over last decades in part by relying on integrated air pollution management strategies that were developed jointly under the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols. However, the progress is uneven across the region: it was less prominent in countries with economies in transition, in particular in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, and mainly driven by economic downturn rather than by consistent and integrated air pollution management. The expected increase in energy production, industry growth and urban development demands higher attention to the issue. High levels of emissions are causing severe health and environmental damage not only within the sub-region, but also outside of it due to transboundary fluxes of pollutants.

Active involvement of all ECE countries is crucial for regional effectiveness of the Convention as an instrument for protection of human health and environment. The result of strengthened national air quality management is the reduction air pollution and its negative impacts on human health and environment through improved accession to and implementation of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols among the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The initially agreed start date of the project was postponed due to the request by the Russian Federation to

amend one of the project components. The implementation of the project started in mid-2015, with support to meetings on information exchange of the Coordinating Group for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. However, the full roll-out of the project activities was only started in 2016, as agreed with the Russian Federation. As a result of the postponed start date, the project implementation period was extended until December 2018 (and not mid-2018, as initially planned).

The project aimed to strengthen the implementation and ratification of the Convention and its protocols through increased cooperation and information exchange between the countries and the EMEP scientific centres, expansion of emission inventories, monitoring and modelling activities in the ECE region, in particular in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. A similar project, entitled “Support to the implementation of the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) in the Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region“, co-funded by the European Commission, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland was carried out in parallel from 2013 to 2018.

At its thirty-second session the Executive Body for the Convention adopted its 2014-2015 workplan (ECE/EB.AIR/122/Add.2)¹, which includes a section on capacity-building to promote ratification and implementation in the region. Subsequent workplans also included a section on capacity-building (2016-2017: ECE/EB.AIR/133/Add.12 and 2018-2019: ECE/EB.AIR/140/Add.13). The Executive Body and the Steering Body to the Cooperative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP) have been evaluating the progress under the project at their annual sessions.

On the basis of priority needs identified by EECCA countries, several activities were implemented, such as workshops on the development of emission inventories, sub-regional workshops on a) projections development and emission reduction targets estimation and b) steps towards ratification and implementation, and support to the activities of the Coordinating Group aimed at capacity-building or information exchange among its participating countries. The Project contributed to the Sustainable Development Goal targets related to air quality management, i.e. target 3.9, target 11.6, and 12.

Activities were implemented in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The project was implemented by UNECE. The Air unit in the UNECE Environment Division was a leader and project coordinator.

IV. Issues

The evaluation will answer the following questions:

Relevance

1. How relevant was the project to the specific needs and priorities of the beneficiary countries in the area of the air quality management?
2. To what extent was the project related to the UNECE programme of work?

¹ See: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/air/eb/ECE_EB.AIR_122_Add.2_advance_version.pdf

² See : http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2015/AIR/EB/ece.eb.air.133_add1_E.pdf

³ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2018/Air/ece.eb.air.140.add.1-Final-Advance_copy.pdf

3. To what extent was the project design and development intervention relevant for meeting the project objective?

Effectiveness

4. To what extent were the expected accomplishments of the project achieved?
5. What were the challenges/obstacles to achieving the project objective and expected accomplishments?
6. To what extent did the implementation of the project support the expected accomplishments of the UNECE regular programme of work under the Subprogramme 1 “Environment”?
7. To what extent did the implementation of the project contribute to the overall objective of the Air Convention?

Efficiency

8. Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources?
9. Were the resources (financial and human) appropriate to the design the project?
10. Were the activities implemented according to the planned timeframe?

Sustainability

11. To what extent will the results of the project continue after completion of the project in the beneficiary countries?
12. How is the stakeholders’ engagement likely to continue in the beneficiary countries?
13. To what extent the key national air quality management institutions are ready to take over and have required capacities to sustain the project results?

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;
 - Project webpage;
 - Data reported under the Convention;
 - Progress reports (for 2015, 2016 and 2017).
2. An electronic **questionnaire** will be developed by the consultant to assess the perspective of the beneficiary countries, after consultation with UNECE.
3. This questionnaire will be followed by **selected interviews** (methodology to be determined by the evaluator in consultation with UNECE). The interviews will take place via phone and Skype. The UNECE project manager will provide the list and contact details.

The evaluation report of maximum 15-20 pages (excluding annexes) will summarize the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. An executive summary (max. 2 pages) will summarize the methodology of the evaluation, key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. The consultant shall be provided the evaluation report templates and guidance for the requirements for evaluation reports in UNECE. The evaluation will comply with the 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

1. Desk review of all documents provided by UNECE to the evaluator (15 December 2018)
2. Delivery of inception report including design of survey (2 January 2019)
3. Feedback on inception report by the project manager (7 January 2019)
4. Launching the survey (10 January 2019)
5. Conducting in-person and telephone interviews (10 January - 10 February)
6. Analysis of collected information (10-28 February 2019)
7. Draft report (10 March 2019)
8. Comments back to the evaluator after review by the project manager and the PMU (20 March 2019)
9. Final report (25 March 2019).

VII. Resources

An independent consultant will be engaged for a period of 30 days to conduct the evaluation, within a budget of USD\$8,700 (2% of 435,000 USD). Ms. Ketevan Kordzakhia, the project manager, will support the evaluation in consultation with the senior programme manager, Krzysztof Olendrzynski. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) will provide guidance to the Project Manager and evaluator as needed on the evaluation design, methodology and quality assurance of the final draft report.

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps

The evaluation results will be used in the planning and implementation of future similar projects. 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 UNECE projects, by being made available on the project website (UNECE sub-page).

The evaluation will be consistent with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. Following the receipt of the final report, UNECE will develop a management response, and action plan for addressing recommendations made by the consultant. The results of the evaluation shall be considered, together with other project evaluations conducted during 2018, by senior management in UNECE to address systemic inefficiencies or challenges to effective project implementation in UNECE.

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, social statistics, advanced statistical research and analysis.
- 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.
- Fluent in written and spoken English. Knowledge of Russian is desirable (for the purpose of being able to seek inputs from national authorities in their native tongue).

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

Annex: Project documents