

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### UN DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECTS IN UNECE

#### *“Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains”*

#### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the UN Development Account project “Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains” (hereinafter “Project”). The results of the evaluation will improve the implementation of UNECE projects in the future.

#### **II. Scope**

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the objective, expected accomplishment and indicators of achievement established in the logical framework of the project document were achieved. The evaluation will consider the impact of the project on the capacity of all target countries (UNECE region: Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Kosovo<sup>1</sup>; UNESCAP region (Bangladesh, Nepal, Lao PDR, Cambodia and/or Myanmar) to integrate into cross-border agricultural supply chains. The evaluation will cover the entire time of the project delivery (from Q2 2014 to Q4 2017).

The project was initially conceived as an agricultural trade facilitation project. Owing to an internal restructuring in UNECE, the project was split into two parts: one focused on agricultural trade facilitation and implemented by UNESCAP and one re-designed to focus on quality and quality standards for cross-border trade, implemented by UNECE. As a result of this re-design, project funds were received much later than initially scheduled which delayed the delivery of outputs. In the evaluation, this should be considered.

#### **III. Background**

In 2014, the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of UNECE together with UNESCAP Trade, Investment and Innovation Division launched a project under the United Nations Development Account (UNDA). It was a continuation of previous successful collaborations in the capacity building for enhanced agricultural trade and trade facilitation in the UNECE and UNESCAP regions through other UNDA projects. A complimentary approach to these two aspects was taken to include both normative work on produce quality and safety and its practical implementation as well as trade facilitation and electronic tools to further facilitate trade in agricultural commodities. Particular attention during the project implementation was given to ensure sustainability of the project beyond its life span through additional fund raising, collaborating with donor agencies and other international organizations as well as the development of training material.

UNECE led the overall execution of the project, with UNESCAP as cooperating and implementation partner. The beneficiary countries were in four target sub-regions of the two Regional Commissions: Western Balkans, Central Asia, South Asia, and South East Asia. All project workshops were opened to member states of all Regional Commissions and drew participation from at least 10 countries around the world in addition to the beneficiary countries (including ~~New Zealand, ZL~~, Australia, Kenya, Brazil, South Africa, Afghanistan, Chile, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Tanzania)

The objectives of the project were to:

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<sup>1</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)

(a) Enhance the understanding and increase the capacity among public and private sector stakeholders to apply standards and best practices for an efficient regulation, information exchange and agricultural food quality in the development of national and sectoral strategies to improve access to sustainable international agricultural food supply chains and increase export opportunities.

(b) Strengthen the capacity of policymakers and practitioners to exchange experiences and best practices for facilitating enhanced agricultural food supply

#### **IV. Issues**

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

Relevance:

- How relevant was the project to the objectives of UNECE and UNESCAP regular programme of works?
- How relevant was the project design to the needs of the targeted countries, and beneficiary sub regions?

Effectiveness:

- Was the project design and implementation appropriate for meeting the project's objective?
- To what extent were the expected accomplishments of the project achieved? What were the challenges to achieving the objective of the project and the expected accomplishments?

Efficiency:

- Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of staff resources?
- Were the activities implemented according to the planned timeframe?
- Were the available resources appropriate to the scale of the project and planned results?

Impact

- To what extent has the project strengthened the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains?
- To what extent has the project had a notable impact beyond the original stated objective?

The evaluation will assess how gender considerations were included into the project design, execution and results. It will make recommendations on how gender can be included in the design of future projects.

#### **V. Methodology**

The methodology for evaluation will include the following:

- 1) a desk review of all the relevant documents obtained from Project files including:
  - official records (including progress reports);
  - reports on the questionnaires administered to participants of training workshops in project development, finance and business planning (as well as the raw data from these questionnaires);
  - case studies, published material, training programmes/materials and seminars/workshops programmes compared with the logical framework of the Project
  - documented output of the activities and monitoring reports as well as any other relevant report
  - conclusions and recommendations of case studies
- 2) A questionnaire will be developed by the evaluator for dissemination to representatives from e.g. trade and agricultural ministries, standardization agencies, trade facilitation related agencies, trade associations, donor agencies and collaborating international organizations in the main target

countries –UNECE region (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Kosovo<sup>2</sup>) and ESCAP region (Bangladesh, Nepal, Lao PDR, Cambodia and/or Myanmar).

- 3) Selected interviews via skype/ phone with key stakeholders of the project (informed by UNECE and UNESCAP offices).

All material needed for the evaluation, will be provided to the consultant.

UNECE and UNESCAP project staff will be contacted to obtain clarifications and any missing data).

The evaluation consultant will write a report of maximum 40 pages (excluding annexes). The report will summarize the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation in line with the requirements for evaluations in UNECE. The report will include an executive summary (2 pages) which will briefly summarize the evaluation results.

## **VI. Evaluation Schedule**

- Desk review of all documents provided by UNECE to the consultant: 27 November - 4 December 2017
- Delivery of inception report including design of survey – 15 December 2017
- Feedback on inception report by project manager and the Programme Management Unit: 21 December 2017
- Start of survey and analysis: 22 December 2017 – 19 January 2018
- Follow-up skype/ telephone interviews: 19 – 26 January 2018
- Delivery of draft report: 1 February 2017
- Comments back to the evaluator after review by project manager and the Programme Management Unit : 15 February 2018
- Delivery of the final report – 28 February 2018

## **VII. Resources**

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent external evaluator. The evaluator will be managed by the project manager who will provide support to the consultant by ensuring the provision of all necessary documentation needed for the desk review. The staff member will answer queries, 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 Programme Management Unit will provide advice and support to the project manager for designing the evaluation methodology and reviewing the draft report.

The requirement for an external evaluation is specified in the project document. The resources available for this evaluation are USD 9,000. The payment of USD 9,000 will be made upon satisfactory delivery of work on 28 February 2018.

## **VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps**

The evaluation will be implemented in line with the UNECE Evaluation Policy (2014). Following the

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receipt of the final report, UNECE will develop a management response and action plan for addressing recommendations made by the consultant.

The findings of the evaluation will inform follow up actions and initiatives required to continue activities and further projects in the areas covered by the Project; disseminate the knowledge created and enhance its use. The evaluation is also expected to provide guidance on how to further enhance the impact of the Project. The advice provided may include recommendations on how to continue cooperation and increase capacity on agricultural quality and trade related issues among the United Nations Regional Commissions. 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.

## **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 another language (for example Russian) may be desirable depending on the countries included in the project (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.