

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review of the UNECE efforts to promote cross-sectoral collaboration and an integrated approach to sustainable development work

I. Background

1. In the outcome document of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE, adopted at sixty-fifth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)¹, member states emphasized the important role of the Office of the Executive Secretary (OES) in promoting synergies among the eight subprogrammes. In the same document (paragraph 24), member states further emphasized the importance for UNECE of “a more structured and systematic cooperation with other relevant United Nations programmes and agencies, as well as other relevant organizations, to achieve synergies and complementarity of efforts, and to avoid possible overlap and duplication.”
2. In 2015, the Office for Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations undertook a programme-wide evaluation of the UNECE to assess, *inter alia*, the use and effectiveness of UNECE products, the effectiveness of UNECE’s partnership arrangements, and the extent to which UNECE is fit for purpose for the post-2015 development agenda. The final report of the evaluation noted that UNECE’s need to work across numerous thematic committees hinders cross-sectoral collaboration and recommended that the UNECE secretariat should conduct a mapping of inter-sectoral and interdivisional initiatives and activities in order to identify opportunities to strengthen collaboration between its main functions and subprogrammes. This mapping exercise was presented to the 87th meeting of EXCOM on 18 November 2016.
3. According to the UNECE Strategic Framework for 2018-19, the overarching objective of the programme is to “ensure the effective follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To this end, the programme will further enhance synergies and linkages between its eight subprogrammes.” Moreover, the Strategic Framework stresses that UNECE will “also pursue system-wide coherence in its programme delivery to avoid overlap, reduce duplication, multiply effect, increase impact and ensure sustainability of its work in the region. To this end, it will draw upon the work of other United Nations entities and relevant organizations”. Inter-sectoral cooperation and synergies are also promoted in the strategies for each subprogramme.
4. While examples of cross-sectoral cooperation exist in UNECE, they have mostly been in response to a particular mandate, more than the result of a strategic approach to inter-divisional and cross-sectoral partnership. It is therefore necessary to assess the effectiveness of the UNECE efforts to respond to the multifaceted dimension of sustainable development through cross-sectoral cooperation, taking into account the results of the OIOS Evaluation of the UNECE (2015). Examples of projects or activities of a cross-sectoral nature will be natural case studies for assessing both what works well, and what synergies exist for new opportunities to embed cross-sectoral cooperation in UNECE in line with the 2030 Agenda to work in a more integrated manner. Due consideration will be made to gender as a cross-cutting issue in all UNECE work.
5. To this end, the review of UNECE’s efforts to promote cross-sectoral collaboration and an integrated approach to sustainable development work was included in the 2016-2017 Biennial Evaluation work plan and approved by the UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) in 2015.
6. In addition, at its 86th meeting on 16 September 2016, EXCOM agreed to cancel the “Review of UNECE work on measuring sustainable development and related areas”, as it was superseded by an OIOS evaluation on the statistical work of Regional Commissions. EXCOM agreed that inter-divisional aspects of the statistical work promoting cross-sectoral collaboration and an integrated approach to sustainable development work would be addressed and highlighted in the context of the ‘Review of the UNECE efforts to promote cross-sectoral collaboration and an integrated approach to sustainable development work’.

¹ A(65) Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE

II. Purpose

6. This evaluation will assess UNECE cross-sectoral cooperation across subprogrammes, through well-established case studies, to identify opportunities for increasing the complementary efforts in implementing the Commission's mandate. The evaluation is scheduled for 2017 to provide practical proposals on how to implement recommendations from member states mentioned above and to shape the ways in which UNECE will capitalise on a wide range of policy expertise in supporting member States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

7. The evaluation will assess the current situation and identify gaps and key opportunities for enhancing an integrated approach to UNECE's work. These results will be used to facilitate synergies between subprogrammes, and thereby to increase the impact of the UNECE efforts to promote sustainable development in the region through a more regular and sustained multidisciplinary approach.

III. Scope

8. The evaluation will assess the existing cooperation among the eight subprogrammes of UNECE (and six divisions) with a focus on up to five case studies of existing inter-divisional arrangements. The evaluation will involve UNECE Management, staff and external stakeholders with a role in decision-making and/or execution of UNECE work. It will focus on UNECE's cross-sectoral cooperation during the period 2011-2016.

9. Gender and human rights aspects will be considered by the evaluation, taking into account guidance provided by the UN Evaluation Group on the matter (available <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980> and <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452>)

IV. Issues

10. The evaluation will assess the:

- **Effectiveness** of cross-sectoral cooperation between subprogrammes, and if/how enhanced and integrated approach to sustainable development in UNECE;
- **Effectiveness and efficiency** of existing cross-sectoral mechanisms (outputs and resources); and
- **Relevance** of cross-sectoral cooperation to the work of UNECE, and potential synergies for improving such cooperation in line with UNECE's mandate.

The key questions the evaluation seeks to answer are:

Effectiveness:

- How were opportunities for cross-sectoral cooperation identified and pursued? Who initiated them and how were they organized? (both internal and external)
- How did cross-sectoral cooperation between subprogrammes contribute to enhancing an integrated approach to sustainable development in UNECE?
- How did internal cooperation contribute to system-wide coherence and increasing the impact of UNECE's work?

Efficiency:

- Were there additional costs and/or savings for subprogrammes and UNECE more broadly as a result of cross-sectoral cooperation?
- Were there additional challenges, or bottlenecks experienced which limit the potential of cross-sectoral cooperation in UNECE?
- Were internal cooperation arrangements implemented in an efficient manner? What role has UNECE management played in creating an enabling environment for such arrangements?

Relevance:

- To what extent did internal cooperation respond to, and were in line with UNECE mandates and priorities?

The review will identify:

- Opportunities for initiating or strengthening synergies and developing cross-sectoral cooperation arrangements between subprogrammes;
- Potential new cooperation initiatives which could enable a greater impact from UNECE's work;
- Opportunities and methods for promoting synergies and reduce bottlenecks or challenges which limit cross-sectoral cooperation; and
- Modalities to enhance cooperation, based on success stories.

V. Methodology

11. The evaluation will build on existing practices and relevant information to be gathered through:

A. A desk review will consider:

- Case study examples of cooperation and synergies between subprogrammes, indicatively being:
 - The methodologies and approaches upon which the UNECE Series of Reviews are devised and implemented (e.g. Environmental Policy Reviews, Innovation Performance Reviews, Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade, Road Safety Performance Reviews, Country Housing Profiles);
 - Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP);
 - Joint Taskforce on Environmental Statistics (Statistics and Environment); and
 - Regional Coordination Mechanism/UNDG Europe and Central Asia.
- The Strategic Framework, and terms of reference and workplans for cross-sectoral activities
- Relevant decisions of UN & UNECE member states and other documents promoting cross-sectoral cooperation (e.g. Commission and EXCOM decisions, previous relevant evaluations, etc.); and
- Current policies/mechanisms for cooperation between subprogrammes.

B. Surveys of:

- i) UNECE Management, Directors, and all UNECE staff to assess internal perceptions of cross-sectoral cooperation in identify opportunities for improving cooperation in the future;
- ii) Member States, through EXCOM members, as well as stakeholders involved in the case studies.

These surveys will:

- Assess existing situation and needs, and identify potential synergies between subprogrammes;
- Assess the arrangements/approach of the various case studies to better understand how the mechanisms were designed and operate, needs and potential for strengthening cooperation, including challenges and issues related to cross-sectoral cooperation; and
- Gather the collective opinion of EXCOM and member State representatives on existing synergies, perceived gaps and opportunities for strengthening existing synergies and new UNECE initiatives

D. Interviews with selected internal and external stakeholders to further explore their opinion and suggestions. Individuals to be interviewed will be identified through discussions between the evaluation managers (PMU) and the evaluation consultant.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

See below

VII. Resources

12. An expert consultant will conduct the evaluation under the management of the Programme Management Unit. The P4 Evaluation Officer in PMU will manage the consultant and coordinate requests for information from the subprogrammes.

VIII. Intended use/Next Steps

13. The results of the evaluation will be used to enhance the effectiveness of existing synergies and identify opportunities for new internal cooperation arrangements. The evaluation will assess what approaches have been successful to date, and develop recommendations on how to further promote synergies across the organization.

A management response to the evaluation will be prepared by the UNECE management team, and relevant recommendations implemented by end of 2018. Progress on implementation of recommendations will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the PMU. The final evaluation report and the progress on implementation of the recommendations will be available on the UNECE public website.

IX. Criteria for Evaluators

Evaluators should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in relevant disciplines, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, social statistics, advanced statistical research and analysis.
- Relevant professional experience in design and management 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.
- Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to UNECE before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any point where such conflict occurs.

Provisional Timetable for the Review²

Week beginning	Action
Mid January 2017	Launch of ToR process
March 2017	Draft TOR discussed at Directors' meeting
15 April 2017	Evaluator selected and contract signed
Early May 2017	PMU brief evaluator and finalizes the evaluation methodology as contained in a brief inception paper
May 2017	Evaluator conducts desk review
End May 2017	Evaluator conducts interviews with staff and relevant organizations, and undertakes data collection (including interviews, surveys, etc) and conducts analysis
Mid July 2017	Evaluator submits draft report to PMU
End July 2017	Draft report shared with Directors for comments
Early August 2017	Evaluator finalizes the report
10 August 2017	Evaluator submits the final report to PMU
Start of September 2017	Management response prepared by PMU, shared with Directors and OES for comments, and approved by ES
EXCOM meeting	Management response and report and submitted to EXCOM for information

² Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator