

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the UNECE project “Competitiveness, innovative policies and public-private partnerships: Capacity building for civil servants and business associations”

I. Background

The UNECE project “Competitiveness, innovative policies and public-private partnerships: Capacity building for civil servants and business associations” was funded by the Russian Federation and was implemented from September 2014 to October 2017, with member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as the beneficiaries. The main objective of the project was to strengthen the capacity of CIS countries to advance innovation, competitiveness and public-private partnerships (PPPs). The project aimed at (i) enhancing national capacity, including new knowledge and practical skills, to advance innovation, competitiveness and new business models such as PPPs; and (ii) strengthening regional cooperation and networking among CIS practitioners, involved in the advancement of innovation, competitiveness and PPPs.

The major planned outputs of the project were:

1. Organization of seminars, workshops, training courses and other capacity-building events on innovation and PPPs for CIS countries;
2. Provision of substantive support to the work of the SPECA Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development and other SPECA related meetings;
3. Development of training materials and modules for capacity-building activities on promoting innovation, competitiveness and PPPs;
4. Preparation of policy-oriented documents for the promotion of innovation, competitiveness and PPPs in CIS countries;
5. Provision of targeted policy advisory services related to concrete measures or practical steps regarding the promotion of innovation, competitiveness and PPPs in CIS countries;
6. Financial support to cover travel of CIS delegates to the meetings of the SPECA Thematic Working Group on Knowledge-based Development and other SPECA related meetings;
7. Financial support to cover the travel of CIS experts so that they are able to provide input and participate in intergovernmental and expert meetings (Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs, Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies, Team of Specialists/ Working Party on PPP, and the International PPP Forums).

II. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the project for strengthening the capacity of CIS countries to advance innovation, competitiveness and PPPs, and for the ability of the UNECE secretariat to deliver on the mandates of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs and of the SPECA Thematic Working Group on Knowledge-based Development.

The results of this evaluation will be used to improve future UNECE projects.. All UNECE projects funded by the Russian Federation are subject to an end of project evaluation according to the UNECE Evaluation Policy

III. Scope

The evaluation will cover the entire project period from September 2014 to October 2017, and all activities planned in the project as defined by the project document.

Gender aspects will be also covered by the evaluation, taking into account guidance provided by the United Nations Evaluation Group on the matter (available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980> and <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452>).

The evaluation process will engage international and national experts, policy makers from relevant national ministries and agencies, representatives of relevant international organizations, including UNDP, as well as any other entities involved in project implementation.

The evaluation will be consistent with the UNECE evaluation policy.

IV. Issues

The evaluation will seek to report on the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the project. Key questions that the evaluation seeks to answer include:

Effectiveness

1. To what extent did participants in capacity-building and policy advisory activities financed by the project improve their capacities to advance innovation, competitiveness and public-private partnerships? To what extent were they able to apply newly gained knowledge in their work?
2. To what extent were participants financed by the project able to contribute their own experiences to the inter-governmental meetings? To what extent were those experiences reflected in meeting outcomes?
3. To what extent did the project contribute to a policy dialogue on innovation, competitiveness and PPPs that reflected the diversity of experiences across the UNECE region?
4. To what extent did the project contribute to the dissemination and application of UNECE good practices, policy recommendations and standards among national policy makers and practitioners?
5. What were the challenges/obstacles to achieving the project objective and expected accomplishments?
6. Give advice (if any) on how the expected accomplishments of the project could have been more effectively achieved?

Efficiency

1. Were the resources allocated in the project appropriate to the scale of the project?
2. Were the human and financial resources allocated to the project used efficiently and commensurate to the project results?
3. Were policy advisory and capacity building activities implemented in an efficient manner?
4. Was financial support for participating in inter-governmental meetings provided in an efficient manner?

Relevance

1. To what extent were the project's major achievements consistent with the UNECE mandate to promote a policy, financial and regulatory environment conducive to economic growth, innovative development and higher competitiveness, particularly in countries with economies in transition?
2. To what extent did the project serve the needs of its main beneficiaries, i.e. policy makers and other civil servants and business associations in CIS countries?
3. To what extent were the project's objectives achieved? To what extent were the project outputs relevant to strengthening the capacity of CIS countries to advance innovation, competitiveness and PPPs?
4. To what extent did the country-level activities under the project build on the results of the inter-governmental processes?

5. To what extent were the topics of policy advisory and capacity building activities aligned with national priorities of CIS countries?
6. To what extent were the topics of the substantive segments of inter-governmental meetings relevant for the national policy priorities of CIS countries?

V. Methodology

The evaluation will be carried out by an independent evaluation consultant, who will be responsible for the design of the evaluation methodology. This may include:

1. Desk review of all documents related to the work programme and the project . The project manager will ensure that the evaluator receives all relevant documentation to enable a thorough desk review.
2. An electronic **questionnaire** will be sent to all participants from CIS member states in the activities supported by the project, and to the UNECE staff involved in the project. The questionnaire will be prepared by the evaluation consultant, and will be reviewed by the UNECE project manager. It will seek information that would allow addressing the questions listed in section IV.
3. **Interviews with selected relevant staff and stakeholders of the project** will take place via phone and skype. The UNECE project manager will provide the list with contact details.

The UNECE project manager will provide support and further explanation to the evaluation consultant when needed.

The evaluation consultant will prepare **a report** on the results of the evaluation based on these terms of reference. The draft report will be submitted to the project manager, and the PMU, for comment and quality assurance.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

Develop a timetable for the following phases of the evaluation:

<i>A. Preliminary research:</i>	January 2018
<i>B. Data Collection:</i>	-February 2018.
<i>C. Data Analysis:</i>	February-March 2018
<i>D. Draft Report:</i>	19 March 2018
<i>E. Comments on Draft report:</i>	24 March 2018
<i>F. Final Report:</i>	By 31March 2018

VII. Resources

An external evaluation consultant identified through the UNECE evaluation roster will be hired and will be managed by the UNECE project manager. The UNECE Programme Management Unit will provide guidance on design and quality assurance of the evaluation. .

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps

The results of the evaluation will be used in the planning and implementation of new capacity building projects and policy advisory services in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in the future, including through the follow-on projects “Strengthening the capacity of CIS countries in innovative development to improve competitiveness and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals” and “Strengthening the capacity of CIS countries in PPPs for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”.

IX. Criteria for Evaluators

The evaluator should have:

- Good knowledge and experience of evaluation, project management, social and demographic statistics
- Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations
- Proficiency of written and spoken English
- Experience in the Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asian sub-regions
