



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Terms of Reference for the Review of the Role of Information and Communication in Promoting the Visibility of the Work of UNECE

2008 - 2014

I. Purpose

The evaluation will assess the extent to which UNECE's communication strategies and practices have contributed to the visibility of the organisation's work to its key stakeholders including member States of the region, and the broader global UN membership. The results of the evaluation will include key opportunities for increasing the organisation's visibility, and be used to inform the design of UNECE's future communications and outreach efforts in responding to the needs of member States.

II. Scope

The evaluation will assess the information and communication practices conducted throughout the organization, including the work of the Office of the Executive Secretary, UNECE's eight subprogrammes, thematic areas, and ad hoc activities during the period. The review will include the public UNECE websites, traditional and routine methods of information sharing with delegations in Geneva, and communications with other key stakeholders throughout the region. The review will focus primarily on UNECE's external communications during the period 2008-2014.

III. Background

The need for better communication was recognized during the Reform of the UNECE (2005). An external evaluation of UNECE¹ highlighted the need to enhance the effectiveness of communication of UNECE's work, recognising the challenge of communicating highly technical work outputs to political decision-makers. This review noted the importance of highlighting the visibility, and political profile of the work of the organization, and recommended that UNECE invest additional resources in public relations. The report further identified the need for creating a stronger corporate image to restore the organisation's credibility with government and other international organisations and impact favourably on fundraising efforts.

EXCOM has since regularly encouraged enhanced communication of UNECE's efforts. In 2011, member States included reviewing ways of improving communication and public outreach² at both the subprogramme and institutional levels, in the modalities of the review of the Reform process. A survey of the perceptions and needs of secretariat staff was also conducted by the OES. An internal Communications Taskforce was established with representatives of all subprogrammes. The focus of the Taskforce was to develop a UNECE Communications Strategy, which was adopted by Directors in October 2012. The purpose of the strategy was to "emphasise the practical benefits of UNECE work for the quality of everyday life, demonstrate the contribution of UNECE to the global United Nations agenda, enable UNECE staff to speak with one voice and foster a stronger sense of corporate identity."³

The outcome of the review of the UNECE Reform of 2005 (April 2013) noted the Communications Strategy "which aims at making communication materials more adapted to targeted audience and a better use of the Internet, suggest a more client-oriented approach and proposes ways to electronically enhance the visibility of UNECE products and services beyond the UNECE region. Member States expect that the Strategy will help to further improve UNECE's image, attract more attention to its achievements and allow the secretariat to enhance its communications, public relations, and contacts with the media."⁴

¹ The State of the UNECE, 30 June 2005.

² Commission decision A(65) Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE, 10(g).

³ UNECE Communication Strategy, 19 October 2012, para 2.

⁴ Commission decision A(65) Outcome of the review of the 2005 reform of ECE, para 28.

The Taskforce identified a number of areas to be strengthened. In addition to the Communications Strategy, a series of activities have been implemented since 2011, including:

- Production of “expert opinions” in specialist areas posted on the UNECE website;
- A survey of permanent missions in Geneva on the communication methods utilised by UNECE;
- Standardization of templates for powerpoint presentations, posters and publications;
- Production of a video on the work of UNECE, which is continuously streamed outside the OES; and
- Launching a end-of-year networking event to enable informal communications between EXCOM delegates and staff of the secretariat.

In 2014, the UN Office in Geneva launched the International Geneva Perception Change Project. Together with the United Nations system in Geneva and partner organizations, the project aims to change the perception of International Geneva by communicating more effectively on how entities such as UNECE makes a contribution, every day, everywhere.

In line with continued efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of UNECE’s outreach, the organisation is seeking an objective assessment of the relative contributions, value added, and efficiency of the various communication activities. The results of the evaluation will be used to enhance the impact of resources used to promote UNECE’s work, identify new strategic opportunities and practices for reaching key stakeholders, and engage member States and UNECE staff in defining and strengthening the organisation’s corporate identity.

IV. Issues

The evaluation will focus on the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of UNECE’s information and communications efforts in delivering a consistent and compelling representation of the organisation’s work.

A. Current practices

An assessment of the existing strategies and practices throughout the organization will provide information to identify potential new opportunities, technologies and improvements. The evaluation will assess:

- All information, communications and outreach activities implemented by the Office of the Executive Secretary, subprogrammes, and the Communications Taskforce;
- Practices, procedures, and approaches in the use of technology and human resources; and
- The perception of key stakeholders on the corporate identity of UNECE.

B. Gap analysis

A gap analysis will identify the current efforts of UNECE and the needs of key stakeholders for external information and communications from the secretariat. The evaluation will:

- Identify the key stakeholders of UNECE information and communications efforts; and
- Assess the priority needs of these stakeholders, and how they use the information they receive from and on UNECE’s work.

C. Identify Priority Areas

Based on the gap analysis, the review will identify:

- Strategic opportunities for maximising the delivery of UNECE’s information, communications and outreach efforts; and
- To implement this approach, what can be done with current resources (financial and staff) and what additional resources (financial and staff) are required.

V. Methodology

The evaluation will build on existing reviews and relevant information gathered previously to minimize duplication in the data-gathering phase.

A. A **desk review** will be conducted of:

- Previous evaluations and relevant reviews (external evaluation of UNECE in 2005, the UNECE Reform of 2005, and the review of the UNECE Reform in 2013, survey of permanent missions conducted by the Communications Taskforce in 2011, internal survey of UNECE staff in 2011, and other relevant reports);
- IT platforms and services used for communications and outreach (including the UNECE Website, UNECE accounts on social media platforms, extranet systems, etc.);
- Products and templates (publications, newsletters, advocacy and awareness raising materials, letterheads, business cards, email signatures, presentation products including powerpoint etc).

B. **New data** will be gathered from both internal, and external stakeholders:

- A follow up **survey of permanent missions in Geneva** will assess the continued relevance of the findings from the 2011 survey;
- A **selective survey of key stakeholders at the national level** will identify how technical users of UNECE information receive and apply UNECE products to their work; and
- A **survey of all UNECE staff** will gather information on what tools they currently use, as well as their opinions and ideas on improving both internal and external information sharing and communications.

C. **Interviews** with selected internal and external stakeholders will be conducted by telephone/skype to explore trends arising from the data collected from the desk review and surveys. These interviews will, resources permitting, include both individual and group discussions, based on a methodology to be defined by the evaluator.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

<i>A. Preliminary research:</i>	November 2014
<i>B. Data Collection:</i>	December 2014 – 15 January 2015
<i>C. Data Analysis:</i>	January – February 2015
<i>D. Draft Report:</i>	14 February 2015
<i>E. Final Report:</i>	28 February 2015

VII. Resources

An expert evaluation consultant will conduct the evaluation under the management of the Programme Management Unit. One P5 staff will manage the exercise, working in collaboration with relevant staff from the OES, subprogrammes, and interested member States. The client team will comprise the Executive Secretary, the Deputy Executive Secretary, and the Chief of the Information Unit.

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps

The results of the evaluation will be used to enhance the impact of resources used to promote UNECE's work, identify new practices of reaching key stakeholders, and engage member States and UNECE staff in defining and strengthening corporate identity for the organisation.

Provisional Timetable for the Review ⁵

Week beginning	Action
6 October 2014	Launch of ToR process with OES
13 October 2014	Draft ToR discussed at Directors' Meeting
14 October 2014	ToR posted on evaluation networks with closing date of 31 October
29 October 2014	PMU briefs the joint meeting of the UNECE Communications Taskforce and Perception Change Team (UNOG)
3 November 2014	Consultant selected and contract signed
24 November 2014	PMU briefs evaluator and finalizes the evaluation methodology as contained in a brief inception report
1-12 December 2014	Evaluator conducts desk review
1-12 December 2014	Secretariat schedules prepares interview schedule with member State representatives
12 December 2014 - 20 January 2015	Evaluator undertakes data collection (including interviews, surveys etc) and conducts analysis
14 February 2015	Evaluator submits draft report to PMU
19 February 2015	Draft report shared with Directors for comments
23 February 2015	Evaluator finalizes the report
By 28 February 2015	Evaluator submits final report to PMU
6 March 2015	Management response prepared by PMU, shared with Directors for comments, and approved by Executive Secretary and
March-April 2015	Management response and report are submitted to EXCOM for information.

⁵ Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator.