



Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Extra-budgetary Project Removing Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

I. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the implementation and assess the extent to which the project “Removing Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan” (hereinafter “Project”) achieved its intended objectives. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in supporting the removal of major regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (hereinafter “beneficiary countries”). The results of the evaluation will be used to inform decisions on improving technical cooperation projects and activities implemented by the UNECE, particularly under the UNECE Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards.

II. Scope

The evaluation will be guided by the objectives, indicators of achievement and means of verification established in the logical framework of the project document. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project strengthened capacities of the beneficiary countries to remove regulatory and procedural barriers to trade. The evaluation will cover the full period of the project’s implementation from 1 May 2016 to 31 October 2018. The evaluation should also be gender-responsive. It will, therefore, assess the usefulness of the project results to female owned enterprises and traders.

III. Background

Consistent with its mandate on Trade¹ and, upon the request of the Governments, the UNECE conducted national assessment studies of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Belarus (2011), Kazakhstan (2012) and Kyrgyzstan (2014).² The studies identified major regulatory and procedural trade barriers in the respective countries and provided action-oriented recommendations, which were born out of discussions with public and private sector stakeholders.³

This project was launched to assist the Governments of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in implementing key recommendations emerging from the studies. It was financed from the extrabudgetary financing by the Russian Federation to support UNECE technical cooperation in CIS countries, and aimed at supporting the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the three countries. Project activities and outputs were identified in consultation with the respective Governments.

¹ In 2010, the UNECE inter-Governmental sectoral committee overseeing the Trade Sub-programme’s work (the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, which succeeded the Committee on Trade in 2015 following EXCOM decision ECE/EX/2015/L.6) was tasked by EXCOM with carrying out demand-driven national trade needs assessment studies in countries with economies in transition, with a view to helping these countries address non-tariff trade barriers (Recommendation 6.a in document ECE/EX/5 dated 1 April 2010). The findings and recommendations emerging from the studies are also intended to serve as a basis for: (i) discussions among member states during the Steering Committee’s annual sessions; (ii) decisions by national governments concerned and their development partners on targeted interventions; and, (iii) decisions by member States on the Steering Committee’s programme of work.

² The studies are available at: <https://www.unece.org/tradewelcome/studies-on-regulatory-and-procedural-barriers-to-trade.html>

³ The findings and recommendations are discussed during stakeholder meetings.



The project was implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Development Programme in Kyrgyzstan. This evaluation is proposed following the conclusion of project activities to take stock of the deliverables and their contribution to supporting the removal of main regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the three countries. End of project evaluations are conducted for all projects in UNECE according to the UNECE Evaluation Policy.

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 relation to removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade?
2. To what extent was the project related to the UNECE programme of work - under Subprogramme 6. "Trade"?
3. To what extent was the project development consistent with the beneficiary countries' national and regional priorities?
4. To what extent was the project design and intervention relevant for meeting the project objective?

Effectiveness

5. To what extent were the expected accomplishments of the project achieved?
6. What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the project objective and expected accomplishments?
7. Has the project contributed to improving the beneficiary Government's ability to remove regulatory and procedural barriers to trade? To what extent have the regulatory and procedural barriers to trade been reduced in each of the three countries?
8. To what extent were the planned activities sufficient to achieve the expected accomplishment and project objective?

Efficiency

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

Sustainability

12. To what extent will the results of the project continue after completion of the project in the beneficiary countries? Do each of the three countries have a plan for further reductions in regulatory and procedural barriers to trade as a result of this project?
13. Have the beneficiary countries acquired new expertise knowledge on best practices, particularly evidence-based methodologies, for monitoring regulatory and procedural barriers?
14. To what extent has ownership of the project results by the beneficiary countries been achieved?

V. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted on the basis of:



1. Desk study: background documents will be made available to the evaluator to ensure an understanding of the design and context of the project;
2. An electronic survey to solicit feedback from internal and external stakeholders in Russian and English;
3. Interviews with key internal and external stakeholders, namely:
 - a. Representatives from the Permanent Missions of the beneficiary countries based in Geneva (by phone/skype, in person where feasible)
 - b. Representatives of the donor, from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation in Geneva (by phone/skype, in person where feasible)
 - c. Government representatives involved in the project in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and UNDP in Kyrgyzstan (by phone/skype)
 - d. All stakeholders in Belarus, through a field visit to conduct in-depth interviews (Belarus was chosen because activities covered additional components);
 - e. Relevant staff from UNCTAD (by phone/skype, in person where feasible).

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the UNECE Evaluation Policy.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

1. Preliminary research

The Consultant will carry out preliminary research that includes a review of the background documents provided by the UNECE (October 2018)

2. Data Collection

Following the desk review, the consultant will propose a methodology for the evaluation. This may include electronic questionnaires for different groups of beneficiaries, interviews with relevant internal and external stakeholders, and one field visit (October 2018).

3. Data Analysis & and Draft Report

The Consultant will analyse the data collected and prepare a draft report for review by the evaluation manager and the Programme Management Unit. The report should comply with UNECE's template for evaluation reports (December 2018)

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4. Final Report

The final report, addressing the comments from UNECE will be and submitted to the evaluation manager (XX January 2019)

VII. Resources

The requirement for an external evaluation is specified in the project document. An independent evaluation consultant will be engaged for a period of 40 days to conduct the evaluation, within a budget of up to USD \$15,000 (inclusive of travel to two beneficiary countries). The consultant will be identified through the UNECE Evaluation Consultants' Roster.

The evaluation manager will manage the evaluation in consultation with the Chief of the Market Access Section. The evaluation Manager will guide the evaluator on the appropriate recipients for the questionnaire, and for follow up interviews, and ensure that the necessary communication with these recipients is established. The UNECE Programme Management Unit will provide guidance on the



evaluation requirements, design, and review of the evaluation. Payment will be made in one lump sum upon satisfactory delivery of work.

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps

1. The evaluation manager will share the findings to the secretariat, the donor and the Steering Committee on Trade capacity and Standards.
2. The secretariat is expected to improve its implementation process for future follow-up projects to the studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade based on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation;
3. The donor is invited to review its contribution in funding follow-up projects in order to better incorporate the needs of the beneficiary countries; and
4. The Steering Committee will be invited to support projects in additional countries (and/or sub-regions) where the studies have been successful based on the recommendations of this evaluation.

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 and Russian.

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