



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of the Project Capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia Phase 3 (2014-2017, E240, Russian Funding)

I. Background

There is considerable concern over the safety of more than 100 large dams and other water control facilities, located mostly on transboundary rivers in Central Asia. Ageing dams and their inadequate maintenance, coupled with population growth in flood plains downstream from the dams, have resulted in increased risks to life, human health, property and the environment. Failure of a dam may have disastrous consequences in downstream regions and countries and there are precedents of such accidents in the sub-region.

Effective national regulatory frameworks for dam safety and sub-regional collaboration on dam safety are therefore critical in Central Asia. This is why dam safety is part of the work programmes of the UNECE Water Convention and the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). UNECE has supported Central Asian countries in the development of institutions, legislation, capacity building and sub-regional cooperation in three project phases, the latest of which being initiated in 2012. Information on this and other phases of the UNECE dam safety work in Central Asia can be found at <http://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety.html>.

The third project phase was implemented by the Environment Division of UNECE in collaboration with the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, and is funded mainly by extrabudgetary contributions from the Russian Federation. Central Asian Government agencies responsible for the safety of dams and other large hydraulic structures, as well as Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, participate in the project. The project document for 2014-2017 is annexed to these terms of reference.

The third phase of the project started in 2012 and focused on the following directions of work:

1. Legislations and institutions at the national level: Improvement, implementation and enforcement of national legislation, institutional strengthening.
2. Training on the safe operation of hydrotechnical installations: Capacity building of officials and experts as well as of support to development of national training programmes.
3. Regional cooperation: Support to development of harmonised technical documentation, exchange of relevant data and information, early warning systems to ensure preparedness in the case of increased risks for accidents and others.
4. Safer operations of individual dams: Support to bilateral cooperation to ensure the safety of individual dams or dam systems on transboundary rivers.

The focus of this evaluation will be the third phase of the project funded by the Russian Federation and implemented 2014-2017. On the initiative of a previous donor (Finland) the project was evaluated in autumn 2010: http://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety_doc/Evaluation_ENVSEC.pdf

II. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the *relevance* of the project for the beneficiary countries, and its *effectiveness* in reaching relevant outcomes and the intended beneficiaries. In addition, the evaluation will assess the *efficiency* in the use of human and staff resources in reaching project objectives. Resources pending, the evaluation will also consider the *sustainability* of UNECE's work in this area for the sub-region, and the extent to which subregional entities have the capacity to continue this work.

The *relevance* of the project will be important as a basis for the discussion with donors and partner organizations for any future work by UNECE on dam safety. The assessment of the *effectiveness* will frame the development of future sub-regional projects in Central Asia including on dam safety. The evaluation of the effectiveness will further assess, for the benefit of the UNECE Secretariat and the donor, whether the activities and partnership with countries and international organizations have succeeded in achieving the expected accomplishments of the project fully or partly, and indicate if to what extent project activities were implemented in an efficient manner. The down-stream impact of the project may be difficult to assess as the safety of dams is best determined by accidents not occurring, and this may be the case even if the safety level is not optimal. This evaluation does not intend to elaborate a full assessment of project impact but rather of possible indirect evidence of impact to the extent possible. The evaluation report will be considered for discussion by meetings of the UNECE Water Convention, and SPECA meetings.

III. Scope

The evaluation will focus on activities completed during the 2014-2017 part of the third phase of the project *Capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia* (project document annexed) specifically, funded by the Russian Federation (E240). To the extent information is made available in documentation and interviews, activities of partner organizations, any previous relevant reviews or evaluations conducted, and any other information which pertains to UNECE efforts in the successful execution of the project will be included in the evaluation.

IV. Issues

The following issues/questions will provide the basis for the evaluation.

Relevance

1. How relevant was the project for the needs and priorities of countries in Central Asia?
2. How relevant was the design of the third phase of the project, in line with the achievements and outcomes of earlier phases of the initiative?
3. How relevant was the project with respect to the overall objectives of the UNECE regular programme of work?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent were the expected accomplishments of the project achieved?
2. What were the challenges/obstacles to achieving the project objective and expected accomplishments?
3. Give advice (if any) on how the expected accomplishments of the project could have been more effectively achieved?

4. To what extent did implementation of the project support the overall objectives of the UNECE regular programme of work? What were the tangible measures that can be attributed to supporting or enhancing the regular programme?

Efficiency

1. Were the available resources appropriate to the scale of the project and the needs identified by member States in Central Asia on dam safety?
2. Were the human and financial resources allocated to the project used efficiently and commensurate to the project results?

Impact

1. To what extent has this project impacted on the challenge of dam safety, in particular with regard to transboundary rivers, in Central Asia?

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

V. Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation will include the following:

1. Desk study of material found at the UNECE project website (<http://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety.html> : project description, meeting reports, publications etc) and other information provided by the project officer
2. Interviews via skype/telephone
3. Analysis of a survey of project participants and other stakeholders. The survey will be developed by the consultant.

UNECE will provide all documentation, support and guidance to the evaluation consultant as needed throughout the timeline of the evaluation. The consultant shall be provided the UNECE Evaluation Policy, evaluation report templates and checklists as guidance for the requirements for evaluation reports in UNECE.

Based on these terms of reference the evaluation consultant will write a report of maximum 15 pages (plus possible annexes such as the results of the survey) with a 2-page self-standing executive summary of the evaluation results.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

The evaluation schedule follows:

1. Desk review of all documents provided by UNECE to the Consultant 15-31 March
2. Delivery of inception report including design of survey to participants 31 March
3. Feedback on inception report by project manager 5 April
4. Start of survey and analysis 5-25 April
5. Follow-up skype interviews and studies 25 April – 10 May
6. Delivery of Draft Report 10 May
7. Comments back to the evaluator after review by project manager and selected project participants 20 May
8. Delivery Final Report 30 May

VII. Resources

Resources available for the evaluation is 10,000 USD.

The Regional Adviser on environment will manage and provide guidance during the course of the evaluation. The UNECE evaluation focal point will provide support and guidance to the Regional Adviser and consultant where required, on technical evaluation issues and oversight.

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps

The evaluation will be consistent with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. Following the receipt of the final report, UNECE will develop a management response, and action plan for addressing recommendations made by the consultant. The results of the evaluation shall be considered, together with other project evaluations conducted during 2016-17, by senior management in UNECE to address systemic inefficiencies or challenges to effective project implementation in UNECE.

Annex: Project document