



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/ECE/1415/Add.1
28 January 2004

ENGLISH ONLY

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Fifty-ninth session
(24-26 February 2003)
(Provisional agenda item 9)

WORK OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE PROGRAMME OF WORK

At its meeting on 26 January 2004, the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW) adopted the following text concerning evaluations in the UNECE and requested that this be submitted to the Commission for its consideration and endorsement.

“GEPW welcomes and supports the efforts of a number of the Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs) and their subsidiary bodies who already undertake internal work evaluations. GEPW believes that regular evaluations should become an integral part of each PSB’s work programme.

Various evaluations are carried out across UNECE’s work programme. The type, and standard, of these varies enormously. The GEPW considers that it is not necessary at this stage to compile a rigid list of rules for each evaluation, and do not want to stop some of the in-depth evaluations that are already taking place, but feels there is a need to improve the efficiency and impact of evaluations and to streamline methodologies. Therefore it would be useful to recommend a set of best practice guidelines and methodologies that could be adopted by each PSB, and their subsidiaries, and incorporated into their own evaluation process.

Why evaluate?

UNECE has a large and varied work programme. All the various UNECE work programmes should contribute to the UNECE meeting its overall mandate. Evaluations are an effective way of ensuring this. They help identify: whether objectives have been achieved; what effects given measures have had; highlight potential problems within work programmes; and whether results stand in reasonable proportion to the efforts involved. Although the evaluation will be on the activities, its results may help the PSB to optimise its structures.

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We believe that evaluations will benefit UNECE and member States. PSB's should aim to meet the following basic objectives when undertaking evaluations:

- improving the quality of work;
- assessing the impact of the work programmes;
- maximize the impact, effect and targeting of resources;
- being able to be used as a learning tool;
- allow UNECE to respond better to the needs of member States;
- assist in raising the profile of the work programmes across UNECE.

Best practice for the evaluation of the activities of the UNECE

The GEPW considers that the PSB's should play a key role in the evaluation process. Therefore we recommend that all PSB's should put in place steps to evaluate their subsidiary bodies and their programme of work/activities.

In this context, consideration should be given as to who should undertake these evaluations, and to whether it would be necessary to employ an external evaluator.

To assist in these evaluations the GEPW recommends that all evaluations carried out within UNECE should include:

- Advice on who carried out the evaluation and who was consulted as part of the evaluation;
- A brief description of the activities carried out during the period evaluated;
- Evaluate the set objectives and targets (both qualitative and quantitative) that have been agreed for the work programme during the period of the evaluation;
- Cover the interrelationship between the work programme and the actual activities conducted under the PSB.

To facilitate PSB's in carrying out evaluations the GEPW recommends that the secretariat provide a basic guide on evaluation methods from which each PSB could then base its own evaluation.

In terms of frequency the GEPW favours a synchronised approach. Each PSB should ensure that an evaluation is carried out on a biennial basis. Such a frequency will fit in with the budget cycle.

The PSB's should collate all evaluations and a report about the steps taken following the results of the evaluation should be presented to the Commission at the end of every evaluation cycle. The secretariat should also prepare an overview of results of the evaluations carried out by the PSBs.

The Commission will have an opportunity to discuss these at the Annual Session.

Concerning the activities of the secretariat that are not under the supervision of a PSB, the above outlined best practice should be applied *mutatis mutandis* by the secretariat under the responsibility of the Bureau of the Commission.

Global evaluation of the UNECE's role

In view of the important changes in the UNECE region in recent years the GEPW will invite the Commission to consider whether an evaluation of the UNECE's role, scope and performance should be carried out. To enable the Commission to decide on this issue, the GEPW will pursue their deliberations and will submit in due course to the Commission a detailed outlined of possible objectives and core elements of the terms of references of such an evaluation.”