

External evaluation of the project **“Competitiveness, innovative policies and public-private partnerships: capacity building for civil servants and business associations”** (May 2019)

Final Progress Report as at 31 December 2020

#	Recommendation	Management response	Responsibility	Target date/deadline	Date of implementation/comments
1	In order to facilitate future evaluations, the project documents should entail (besides the established results-based-management principles) a Theory of Change, explaining how the outputs will generate outcomes and – eventually – an impact. In case this is not possible, at least a logical framework, with performance indicators, baseline values and targets both for output and outcome levels should be mandatory. This set of data will support in measuring correct performance of the project and provide realistic assessment of the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of future similar projects (eventually sustainability could also be assessed).	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The project document referred to one specific expected accomplishment in the Strategic Framework of Subprogramme 4 for the biennium 2014-2015 (A/67/6/Prog.17), continued in 2016-2017 A/69/6/Prog.17). The target values set for this specific indicator have been met at the subprogramme level. This being said, UNECE agrees that the project document does not explain fully how each of the activities and outputs contribute to the expected results.</p> <p>A theory of change and logical framework with performance indicators, baseline values and targets will be included in future extra-budgetary projects. The project manager (Ralph Heinrich) will share the recommendation with the donor of the present project and with all professional staff in the Partnerships Development section and the Innovative Policies Development section in June 2019 to explain the need for and benefits of doing this in future projects.</p>	Innovative Policies Development Section		Implemented as of December 2019 The project manager shared the recommendation with all professional staff in the two sections concerned and explained how including a theory of change and logical framework with baseline and target indicators in future project documents will significantly facilitate monitoring project progress during implementation and also ex-post project evaluation, thereby facilitating learning from projects and thus enhancing the quality of future projects. The project manager also shared the recommendation with the donor by e-mail and agreed to implement it in any future projects.

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2	<p>UNECE should carefully plan the adoption of the innovation and competitiveness principles by the member States (governments and private sector). By increasing capacities of policy makers and popularizing “people-first” principles in PPPs, UNECE plays the “facilitator” role between the public and the private sector in the region and creates the premises for a sustainable economic and social development. The operationalization of the principles should be further guided by UNECE, in consultation with the member States.</p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>UNECE has a mandate to adopt innovation and competitiveness principles and has been operationalizing “people-first” PPP principles. UNECE also has been increasing the capacities of policy makers in this area and has played the role of facilitator between the public and private sectors and will continue to do so. UNECE will create a task force on innovation and competitiveness principles at the 2019 annual session of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies (December 2019). UNECE will continue to guide the operationalization of people-first PPP principles in consultation with member States.</p>	<p>Cooperation and Partnerships Section & Innovative Policies Development Section</p>	<p>Implemented as of December 2020</p> <p>Principles on innovation policies for sustainable development for six member States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) were adopted by silence procedure following the informal consultations of the members of the Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies on 10 December 2020.</p> <p>On 2 December 2020 the Working Party on PPPs welcomed the People-first PPP Evaluation Methodology for the SDGs and agreed that it should be used on a pilot basis in 2021. This is a concrete tool to implement the People-first PPP outcomes by scoring and evaluating infrastructure projects against the SDGs. Member States decided not to go ahead with the proposed project facilitation hub.</p>	
3	<p>Future projects should record exactly how many participants benefitted from financial support, for how long and what were the incurred costs. These data can be used to assess more appropriately the efficiency of the spent funds. On a voluntary basis, also the outcomes of the support could be traced, and a resources/results ratio could be calculated or at least approximated.</p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The number of participants benefitting from financial support and the associated costs have been recorded exactly in the present project. This practice will be continued in future projects. In future projects, questionnaire responses will be collected from the participants of all capacity-building events. Moreover, the contact details of all participants will be collected in order to facilitate tracing outcomes during future evaluations.</p> <p>The recommendation is already being</p>	<p>Cooperation and Partnerships Section & Innovative Policies Development Section</p>	<p>Implemented as of December 2019</p> <p>Numbers of participants benefitting from financial support and the associated costs have been recorded for all capacity building events in currently active projects. Questionnaire responses have also been collected from the participants, as well as lists of participants.</p>	

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		implemented in currently ongoing projects. The responsibility for implementing the recommendation will be with the respective project managers and event organizers in the Innovative Policies Development Section and the Partnership Development Section, under the responsibility of the Chiefs of Sections of the two section (Anders Joensson and Geoffrey Hamilton).			
4	UNECE should streamline gender and human rights considerations in the evaluation framework of future projects. This is more important as UNECE's work has a high potential impact on the beneficiaries, especially when considering the "people-first" PPPs.	UNECE accepts the recommendation. Gender and human rights considerations will be incorporated in the theory of change, logical frameworks, performance indicators, baseline values and targets of future projects. The project manager (Ralph Heinrich) will share the recommendation with the donor of the present project and with all professional staff in the Partnerships Development section and the Innovative Policies Development section in June 2019 to explain the need for and benefits of doing this in future projects.	Innovative Policies Development Section	Implemented as of December 2019 The project manager shared the recommendation with all professional staff in the two sections concerned and explained how adding gender and human rights considerations in the theory of change and logical framework with baseline and target indicators in future project documents will ensure that projects contribute to SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on justice, peace and strong institutions. The project manager also shared the recommendation with the donor by e-mail.	
5	Future similar projects should foresee communication tools in order to communicate the project achievements in a broader way. This recommendation relates to the importance of ensuring accountability and attracting extra-budgetary funds to finance similar projects. The tools can rely on modern	UNECE accepts the recommendation. More could have been done to communicate project activities and results. Communication efforts were constrained by the fact that the project did not include any funding for this purpose. In future projects, budgets for communication will be included subject to agreement with the respective donors. Such funding would make it possible to create and actively maintain blogs or newsletters or to create webinars.	Innovative Policies Development Section	Implemented as of December 2019 The project manager shared the recommendation with all professional staff in the two sections concerned and discussed how better communication about project activities and results in future project can enhance project impact, as well as facilitating additional resource mobilization. The project manager also shared the recommendation with the donor by e-mail. The program manager and two other professional staff met with the chief of the Information Unit and one of his staff and discussed ways to	

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	communication technology (blog, newsletter, webinars, databases, interactive platforms).	<p>Irrespective of funding, press releases on project achievements will be prepared more systematically, national project partners will be encouraged to communicate nationally and to share national media coverage with UNECE, and existing communication efforts (PPP videos on Youtube, tweets) will be maintained.</p> <p>The project manager (Ralph Heinrich) will share the recommendation with the staff of the Innovative Policies Development Section and the Partnerships Development Section and with the donor of the current project in June 2019. The project manager will meet with the UNECE Information Unit in June 2019 to identify ways to make communication about future project achievements more visible.</p>			make communication more visible. The Information Unit offered additional advice and support on drafting press releases, news items and tweets. More sophisticated means of communication, such as videos, would have to be produced externally subject to funds being available in future projects.
7a	UNECE could re-think some of the events organized in the region. While the nature of (semi)official meetings needs to maintain an etiquette (for governmental representatives), at least for practitioners “warm-up” activities could be considered. During a two-days standard event, participants break the ice by the time when the event is over. The participants’ fluctuation prevents from creating informal networks. Hence an online database of “who’s-who” could be created,	<p>UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>In future projects, hospitality budgets will be included subject to donor agreement. Tours de table for participants to introduce each other will be included in all capacity building events. Small group breakout sessions with report-back will be included where feasible, i.e. where there are no language barriers or where additional interpretation can be provided as necessary.</p> <p>To implement the recommendation is ongoing work. The responsibility falls within the remit of the Innovative Policies</p>	Innovative Policies Development Section		<p>Implemented as of December 2019</p> <p>Tours de table have been held at all capacity building events in 2019. Hospitality has been provided at most events, sometimes through pro bono contributions by host organizations. A small group interactive training on innovation policy was held in March 2019 back to back with the annual session of the Committee on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies with 10 participants from Central Asia and the Caucasus and in cooperation with UNCTAD. The feedback from the participants was positive, and a similar but larger event is planned for the Southern Balkans in the first quarter of 2020.</p>

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	in order to facilitate networking in the region.	Development Section (Anders Joensson) and the Partnerships Development Section (Geoffrey Hamilton).			