

Accountability Systems for Sustainable Forest Management in the Caucasus and Central Asia

implemented by the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section

Final Report

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This evaluation was commissioned by UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section

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Abbreviations

APR	Annual Progress Report for Development Account projects
C&I	Criteria and Indicators
CCA	Caucasus and Central Asia
COFFI	UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry
DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FTS	Forestry and Timber Section
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEMAFOR	The System for Evaluation of the Management of Forests
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
UNDA	United Nations Development Account
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
WIPW	Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work for UNECE/FAO

Executive Summary

PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The subject of evaluation is the 10th Tranche UNDA project “Accountability systems for sustainable forest management in the Caucasus and Central Asia”, it was implemented from June 2016 to December 2019 and further extended to December 2020. The project aimed to strengthen the capacity of Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to develop accountability system for sustainable forest management (SFM). It was expected that the project activities would contribute to 1) improvement of the national knowledge on international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting, and 2) enhancement of national capacity to develop reporting and accountability systems.

The purpose of this independent evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project in supporting five beneficiary country governments through learning and capacity building activities. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the DA Evaluation Framework and Guidelines and in line with the specific purpose, scope and questions contained in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1). It used mixed evaluation methodology focusing on the outcomes and accomplishments of the project. Results from the document review, independent literature research, key informant interviews and online survey results were triangulated to produce findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The evaluation used gender-responsive methodology and sought evidence on the extent to which gender as well as vulnerability issues were integrated in the design, implementation and outcomes of the project.

MAIN EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the work performed by the project was relevant to the objective of UNECE and in the context of 2030 Agenda. The project was aligned with the regional and global forest agreements and priorities like UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030, UNFF, FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment and others. The project addressed needs and priorities of five participating countries that were experiencing lack of knowledge and methodology for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting and were in need for development of national accountability system for SFM. The evaluation also found that, while the project objectives were not geared towards the most vulnerable, or referred to disability inclusion, the project successfully advocated for gender sensitive approaches among the Caucasus and Central Asian (CCA) countries.

The project documentation, key informant interviews and online survey results show that the project cooperated with UN and other international or national stakeholders at the regional and local levels. Coherent and well-coordinated events with the FAO, enabled additional knowledge sharing and capacity building activities. Cooperation with the local UN Resident Coordinators offices resulted in financial savings that were allocated for additional capacity building regional workshop. The project also cooperated with the local GIZ offices in all five countries. Interviewed informants as well as online survey participants think that the project was unique, it provided the participants with an opportunity to learn from international best practices on forest measurement, monitoring and reporting and to build skills for developing monitoring and accountability system of Criteria and Indicators (C&I) set and factsheets. The

evaluation verified that the project was revised and extended, accommodating the needs of beneficiary countries and adding more capacity development activities and products.

The evaluation found project to be effective in achieving both project objectives in full. National forestry officials from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan developed sufficient knowledge on international best practices on forest measurement, monitoring and reporting (objective 1). Improved knowledge and understanding helped them in developing C&I set for SFM and factsheets (objective 2) with help of UNECE/FAO FTS project experts. The project experienced challenges related to the frequent changes of local stakeholders and focal points, as well as governmental and ministerial rearrangements in the participating countries. Initially, the project experienced gender disbalance among the beneficiary country participants that was solved due to the successful advocacy efforts of UNECE/FAO FTS staff.

The project achieved its objectives within the allocated budget with 98% of budget implementation rate. 75% of the funds were allocated for experts and consultants of the project, while remaining quarter was spent on staff travel and general operating expenses. Project funds were saved due to in-kind contribution from the UNDP and efficient consumption by UNECE/FAO FTS project. Project's response to COVID 19 global pandemic was effective and efficient as the project activities and budget were readjusted on time. The project extension delivered valuable methodological document and policy briefs for the countries.

The project contributed to the knowledge of national forestry officials from all five countries on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting. It also contributed to the practical knowledge and understanding of C&I process among developed countries. The KIs as well as majority of online survey participants were satisfied with knowledge, workshops, expert's help and printed materials produced during the project lifetime. The country representatives also believed that long-term social, environmental and economic effects will be seen once C&I integrated reports are produced. The project helped to strengthen the application of gender principles throughout the implementation process.

The project countries are still developing methodologies and incorporating C&I process into their national legal acts. Interviewed KIs from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan verified their countries commitment to the process and the project outcomes. C&I document and factsheets are sustainable and flexible instrument that will undergo future adjustments depending on changing priorities and technological advancement in the forest monitoring sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended to continue SFM learning and capacity building assistance involving more countries from the ECE region with the focus on the CCA region.
2. UNECE to advocate for additional GTA resources for the administrative, logistical and coordinating tasks for future capacity building activities funded under the Development Account.
3. UNECE/FAO FTS should continue to advocate for gender equality and equal representation of women in the future capacity building projects, activities, events and publications.
4. UNECE/FAO FTS should proactively sensitize national counterparts on the role of forests in poverty alleviation and economic development of vulnerable communities, groups and individuals that depend on forests and forest products.
5. It is recommended to introduce instruments for measuring knowledge and capacity building activity success, such as pre-post testing of participants on their knowledge around the activity or topic.

Introduction

UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (FTS) project “Accountability systems for sustainable forest management in the Caucasus and Central Asia” was implemented from 2016 until 2020. According to the Terms of reference (ToR) for the project (Annex 1) in Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The project aimed to strengthen the capacity of countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA) to develop accountability system for sustainable forest management (SFM) in the context of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. The beneficiaries included government officials from all five countries. The purpose of this independent evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project in supporting five beneficiary country governments through project activities and outputs. The evaluation took place between December 2020 and February 2021. The primary users of the evaluation are thought to be UNECE/FAO FTS, project partners and stakeholders in all relevant CCA countries covered under the project

Context of the evaluation

The Rio Earth Summit of 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) initiated institutionalization of the Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) processes¹. Since that time, C&I has developed and evolved into powerful policymaking instrument and management tool for SFM in number of UNECE member states. Currently, the most important international C&I processes for SFM are the Montreal Process, the Pan-European Process (FOREST EUROPE), the Low Forest Cover Country Process and the C&I process of The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO). In early 2010s UNECE/FAO FTS team of specialists on monitoring of SMF have developed a System for the Evaluation of the Management of Forests (SEMAFOR), approved at Rovaniemi in 2013. It is useful guiding and methodological tool for developing national and sub-national C&I². UNECE/FAO FTS regularly supports countries in the CCA region with various SFM related programs and interventions. Forestry related capacity building assistance is most relevant for the post-Soviet countries, where the skills related to the forest management, assessment and data collection have been lost since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Countries in the CCA region faced serious challenges related to a proper reporting on the state of their forests, while their national forestry specialists were lacking knowledge and capacity to develop and maintain monitoring and reporting systems at the local level.

Understanding importance of developing forest measurement, monitoring and reporting systems for SFM, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan expressed their need for further capacity building during the 72nd Session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry in 2014. These countries represented either “low forest cover countries” where forest and land degradation pose environmental challenges or “high forest cover countries” where forests are neglected regardless of their

¹ Chapter 40.4 of Agenda 21 (“Indicators of sustainable development need to be developed to provide solid bases for decision-making at all levels and to contribute to a self-regulating sustainability of integrated environmental and development systems.”)

² <https://unece.org/forests/publications/semafor-system-evaluation-management-forests>

potential. The present project, “Accountability systems for sustainable forest management in the Caucasus and Central Asia” builds on the experience, lessons, knowledge and connections established through the previous capacity building project³. Project beneficiary countries - Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were not actively engaged in the international C&I processes, Georgia was in need for capacity building to implement their existing C&I set⁴. While Kyrgyzstan was a member of the Near East C&I Process, no concrete measures or actions have been taken towards establishing C&I at the national level. By 2016, only Georgia and Kazakhstan had initiated national process to develop C&I for SFM. The process for the development of national C&I for SFM in Georgia began in 2014 with the support of GIZ project through an invited expert from Germany. However, the government had no clear vision, practical expertise or methodology to adopt criteria and indicators in the national forestry sector. Kazakhstan collected detailed forestry data, although the government was experiencing difficulties with the relevance and rational behind the data collection methodology and analysis of obtained information. The key stakeholders of the project were Forest monitoring service of the SNCO “Hydrometeorology and monitoring center” in Armenia, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan, State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forestry of Kyrgyzstan and State Forestry Committee on Forestry of Uzbekistan.

Subject of the evaluation

The subject of the evaluation is 10th Tranche Development Account project “1617V: Accountability systems for sustainable forest management in the Caucasus and Central Asia” that aims to strengthen the national capacity of Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to develop accountability system for sustainable forest management. The project tries to achieve this through two major accomplishments:

1. Enhancement of national knowledge (policy makers, national government experts, other stakeholders) of the existing international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting.
2. Enhancement of national capacity to develop reporting and accountability systems.

The project beneficiaries were governments of Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, including specialized agencies responsible for forestry issues among respective government structures. The project stakeholders included FAO HQ and local offices in the participating countries, local UN Resident Coordinator offices, local GIZ representatives, local NGOs, members of academia and research centers, independent consultants and experts representing national forestry sector.

³ The project funded within a framework of the UNDA 8th Tranche on “Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia” implemented during 2013-2015.

⁴ In CCA region, only Georgia participates in the pan-European (FOREST EUROPE) C&I process since 2003 and has an obligation to report on 34 quantitative and 11 qualitative indicators.

Table 1 below outlines the project results framework and lists activities and outputs covering entire project period in five beneficiary countries.

Activity	Output
Objective 1. Enhancement of national knowledge (policy makers, national government experts, other stakeholders) of the existing international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting.	
<i>1.1 One regional inception workshop</i>	Activity took place on 15-18 November 2016 in Yerevan, Armenia and was attended by <u>34 participants (7 females)</u> . The workshop brought together experts from Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Germany, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan to discuss, exchange ideas and experiences, assess needs and formulate recommendation for the future work on C&I sets in the beneficiary countries. Experts presented different C&I processes, among them “Montreal Process”, “Pan-European Process”, “Low Forest Cover Country Process” and the “System for the Evaluation of the Management of Forests, SEMAFOR” followed by the Q&A session.
<i>1.2 National Coaching workshops</i>	National Coaching Workshops were conducted in all five countries in 2017. <u>Kyrgyzstan (3/15-3/17)</u> The workshop included <u>37 persons (8 females)</u> from different organizations to discuss, exchange experiences, assess needs and make recommendations for the future work on C&I for SFM in Kyrgyzstan. <u>Kazakhstan (6/28-6/30)</u> , The workshop was supported by experts who participated in the development of national C&I for SFM in the framework of the Montreal and Pan-European processes. The participating group of experts contributed to the workshop with various presentations and input to the group exercises. <u>28 persons (14 females)</u> participated in the workshop. <u>Uzbekistan (8/2-8/4)</u> , The workshop brought together <u>31 persons (11 females)</u> from different organizations to discuss, share experiences, identify needs, and formulate recommendations for future work on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in Uzbekistan. <u>Armenia (9/13-9/15)</u> <u>35 persons (14 females)</u> from the RA government, regional authorities, NGOs and academia took part in the meeting. The workshop brought together experts from Armenia, Estonia and Georgia to discuss and formulate recommendations for the future work on Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management in Armenia. <u>Georgia (11/29-12/1)</u> This workshop had brought <u>32 persons (12 females)</u> , who discussed the review progress, challenges and lessons with regards to status of forests and SFM, including national and international forest reporting in Georgia.
<i>1.3 Advisory missions</i>	Three-day advisory missions coincided with the national coaching workshops in each participating country. Advisory missions aimed at gaining support for the project implementation. Members of the missions discussed national specifics, needs and challenges with the responsible ministries and the FAO country offices in each country.

Objective 2. Enhancement of national capacity to develop reporting and accountability systems	
<i>2.1 Production of training materials</i>	The preparation of training materials for national stakeholders was concluded in 2017. ECE/FAO Guidelines for the Development of a Criteria and Indicator Set for Sustainable Forest Management, other methodological guidelines, SFM process documents, case studies and relevant presentations were prepared and published on UNECE website. This electronic resource is still available for wide group of stakeholders in English and Russian languages ⁵ .
<i>2.2.0 An Interim Regional Workshop (additional activity)</i>	An interim workshop was conducted upon the request by participating countries, it took place on 20-23 February 2018 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The workshop brought together <u>50 participants (17 females)</u> , among them were experts from the project countries and experts from the UNECE Team of Specialists on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management. 16 international experts from Poland, Estonia, Slovakia, Germany, Norway, Finland, the Russian Federation, etc. shared practical experiences from their countries. Experts provided support and mentoring to the beneficiary country teams, giving them recommendations for the future work on C&I for SFM. The workshop aimed to share and review progress, challenges and lessons regarding the C&I development in individual project countries. The workshop also aimed to strengthen skills on C&I development and drafting process.
<i>2.2 National workshops for drafting criteria and indicator set</i>	Second round of national workshops took place in 2018 in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Georgia, workshop in Armenia took place in February 2019 (see activity 2.6). Second round of national workshops brought together national experts from the government, different organizations and academia. They reviewed achieved results, discussed, exchanged ideas and experiences, assessed existing needs and formulated recommendations for the work on C&I for SFM in individual countries. All workshops were organized by in-kind support from the local UNDP country offices. The following workshops took place: <u>Kyrgyzstan</u> was held on 25-26 April 2018; it was attended by <u>33 national experts (12 females)</u> . <u>Uzbekistan</u> was held on 8-10 August 2018, in Tashkent, it was attended by <u>30 national experts (11 females)</u> . <u>Kazakhstan</u> was held on 26-28 September 2018 in Astana, it was attended by <u>27 national experts (8 females)</u> . <u>Georgia</u> was held on 28 – 30 November 2018 in Tbilisi, it was attended by <u>38 national experts (18 females)</u> .
<i>2.3 Advisory missions to support the development of the indicator sets</i>	Advisory missions to discuss the needs and challenges with the responsible ministries and the FAO country offices in individual project beneficiary countries coincided with the national workshops.

⁵ <https://unece.org/forests/accountability-systems-sustainable-forest-management-caucasus-and-central-asia>

2.4 <i>Concluding workshop⁶ [Forest Congress]</i>	The Forest Congress for the Caucasus and Central Asia took place on 28-31 May 2019 in Kyrgyzstan and had <u>50 participants (17 females)</u> . The congress focused on three main topics - national-level forest monitoring systems, the state of forests in the region and forest landscape restoration.
2.5 <i>Publication on the reporting systems in CCA</i>	There were number of publications created under this activity. “Guidelines for the Development of a Criteria and Indicator Set for Sustainable Forest Management” was published in May 2019. It is available online on UNECE website ⁷ . “State of Forests of the Caucasus and Central Asia” published in May 2019. It is also available online on UNECE website ⁸ . Based on the later, eight individual “Overview of the State of Forests and Forest Management” were published in May 2020, covering Azerbaijan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Georgia. These publications are also available on UNECE website. At a time of evaluation, the concluding publication on “National Reporting on Sustainable Forest Management in the Caucasus and Central Asia” was under final editing phase.
2.6 <i>Revision of the national C&I set and advancement of indicators in Armenia (additional activity)</i>	The workshop was organized on 20-22 February of 2019. It brought together <u>34 national experts (13 females)</u> from different organizations to discuss, exchange experiences, map out the needs as well as formulate recommendations for the future work on C&I for SFM for Armenia. It was organized with the kind support of UNDP Armenia. National C&I set for Armenia was revised and national consultants together with international staff developed an advanced set in July-August 2019.
2.7 <i>Regional workshop to strengthen capacity on methodologies for data collection for indicators (additional activity)</i>	The workshop was planned to take place in Uzbekistan in April 2020, however due to the global pandemic, only remote meeting was possible. An online working meeting was held on December 9, 2020, it included <u>91 participants, (36 females)</u> . The workshop discussed C&I for SFM and guidelines for its development on the national level, C&I and national forest inventory, C&I and Forest Policy and Management Support Information Systems (FPMSIS), C&I and decision making (Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting). All project country representatives had an opportunity to brief experts on their national C&I development process which are also reflected in Table 2 below.
2.8 <i>Preparation of tailored methodologies for the national C&I sets (additional activity)</i>	All five beneficiary countries have identified their specific needs for tailoring methodologies for the national C&I set. The activity took place during 2020. All countries drafted Factsheets and were in different stages of finalization during the evaluation period as discussed in Table 2 below.

Table 1 Project results framework

The budget allocated for this project was USD 591,000 and was funded from the 10th tranche of the UN Development Account that was made available in three installments. The project implementation was supported by one P4 (2 months per year), one P2 and one P1 (2-3 months per year), one G5 (one month per year).

⁶ According to the original project document this event was meant to be a concluding workshop, although, since the programme was extended, the concluding workshop was held in 2020 (see activity 2.7)

⁷ <http://staging2.unece.org.net4all.ch/index.php?id=51695>

⁸ <http://staging2.unece.org.net4all.ch/index.php?id=51705>

Evaluation scope, objectives and questions

The evaluation covers the entire period of the project, starting from June 2016 to December 2019 and its extension to December 2020. All beneficiary countries of this project - Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan are included in this evaluation.

As stipulated in the ToR for the evaluation (see Annex 1), the primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the objectives of the project were achieved. The evaluation also assessed progresses on human rights, gender equality results, and disability inclusion in the context of this project.

Evaluation questions, outlined in Table 3 below, follow the pre-defined criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability:

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question
RELEVANCE	1. Was the project relevant to the objective of UNECE to support member States in achieving sustainable forest management? 2. To what extent were the activities consistent with the 2030 Agenda and other global and regional priorities and the programme of work of the UNECE? 3. To what extent did the project respond to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries? How relevant was it to the target groups' needs and priorities? Was there a focus on the most vulnerable? Was disability inclusion mainstreamed at all stages of the project cycle? Was the project's design and implementation appropriate for meeting the project's objective? 5. Did the project apply gender and rights-based approaches in the design, implementation and results of the activities? 6. Did UNECE advocate for gender equality in this area of work?
COHERENCE	7. How coherent was the collaboration with other entities in the UN system and other international organizations? 8. How does the project compare with other similar efforts from other actors in the UN System (if any)? 9. Were the activities implemented according to the planned timeframe? 10. Were the activities implemented in the required sequence needed to ensure the greatest impact of the project?
EFFECTIVENESS	11. Did the project achieve the results expected during the project design in terms of the planned activities, outcome, and impact? 12. What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the activities objective and expected accomplishments? 13. To what extent are the outputs consistent with, and relevant to the overall objective and expected accomplishments?
EFFICIENCY	14. Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources? 15. How could the use of resources be improved? Would you propose any alternatives to achieve the same results? If yes, which ones? 16. Were the resources sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes?
IMPACT	17. To what extent has the project contributed to the extension of general knowledge in the project area (national reporting and accountability systems for SFM)? 18. What are the potential long-term social, environmental and economic effects of the project? 19. Has the project helped to strengthen the application of

	gender mainstreaming principles and contribute to substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the most vulnerable groups?
SUSTAINABILITY	20. To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries 'own' the outcomes of the work? 21. To what extent the products developed through this activity can be maintained and implemented? Could the activity be replicated in the UNECE region or in other regions? 22. To what extent has the project contributed to enhance national capacity among national stakeholders to develop national reporting and accountability systems?

Table 2 Evaluation criteria and questions

Methodology of the evaluation

This evaluation was conducted in line with the specific purpose, scope and questions contained in the ToR, using mixed evaluation methodology, focusing on the outcomes and accomplishments of the work undertaken during 2016-2020 on the delivery of the project objective. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the project design, its implementation and results were relevant, coherent, efficient, effective, made an impact and are sustainable. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Development Account Evaluation Framework⁹ and Development Account Evaluation Guidelines¹⁰. The evaluation methodology complied with the revised UNEG norms and standards and with the OIOS COVID-19 Response Evaluation Protocol¹¹. Results from the document review study, independent literature research, Key Informant Interviews (KII) and online survey results were triangulated to produce findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The evaluation used gender-responsive methodology and sought evidence on the extent to which gender as well as vulnerability issues were integrated in the design and implementation of the project.

Based on the evaluation criteria and the specific question provided in the ToR for this evaluation, an Evaluation Matrix was constructed containing the key evaluation questions, proposed methods for data collection and expected evaluation challenges. The Evaluation Matrix is contained in Annex 5 of this Report.

The methodology of the evaluation included following data collection tools:

1. Document review study of secondary information related to the project. These include the project documents, project APRs and financial information obtained from the UNECE/FAO FTS. In addition, various other sources such as reports, publications, workshop agendas, presentations, individual C&I and factsheets, other related publications and websites were examined. Reviewed documentation is listed in the Annex 2.
2. Key informant interviews (KII) with the selected stakeholders through online communication. Interviews with the selected Key Informants (KIs) focused on in-depth qualitative information on the

⁹ [http://www.un.org/development/desa/da/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/da-project-management-documents/2256_1571321768_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Framework%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.un.org/development/desa/da/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/da-project-management-documents/2256_1571321768_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Framework%20(Final).pdf)

¹⁰ [http://www.un.org/development/desa/da/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/da-project-management-documents/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.un.org/development/desa/da/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/da-project-management-documents/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20(Final).pdf)

¹¹ https://oios.un.org/sites/oios.un.org/files/covid-19_response_evaluation_protocol_-_october_2020.pdf

project design, implementation, outcomes and recommendations that followed the evaluation questions as outlined on Table 3 above. There were separate set of questions designed for UNECE/FAO FTS project implementing team members, project experts and the beneficiary country representatives. KIs included relevant project staff, country focal points, government officials among the beneficiary countries and project expert. Interviews were conducted in English and Russian languages. The evaluation interviews were confidential, and participants gave voluntary informed consent to participate in the evaluation. list of KIIs with corresponding dates is enclosed in the Annex 3, questions for KIs are listed in Annex 4.

3. Online survey was self-administered among a wide pool of project stakeholders or participants. Survey included 7 multiple-choice quantitative and 3 open-ended questions for qualitative analysis. The online survey was administered using Google Forms, survey questions are listed in the Annex 4. Online survey questions were available in English and Russian languages. Survey data was disaggregated by country and gender. The survey was administered to more than 250 project participants and stakeholders from all project countries and beyond from December 30, 2020 to February 16, 2021¹². Total of 26 responses were received. Among the respondents 19 were male and 7 female, majority (17 out of 25) had more than 15 years of experience in the forestry. Below figure 3 lists online survey participants per country.

Country / country or region of your expertise/ Страна / страна или регион вашей компетенции
26 responses

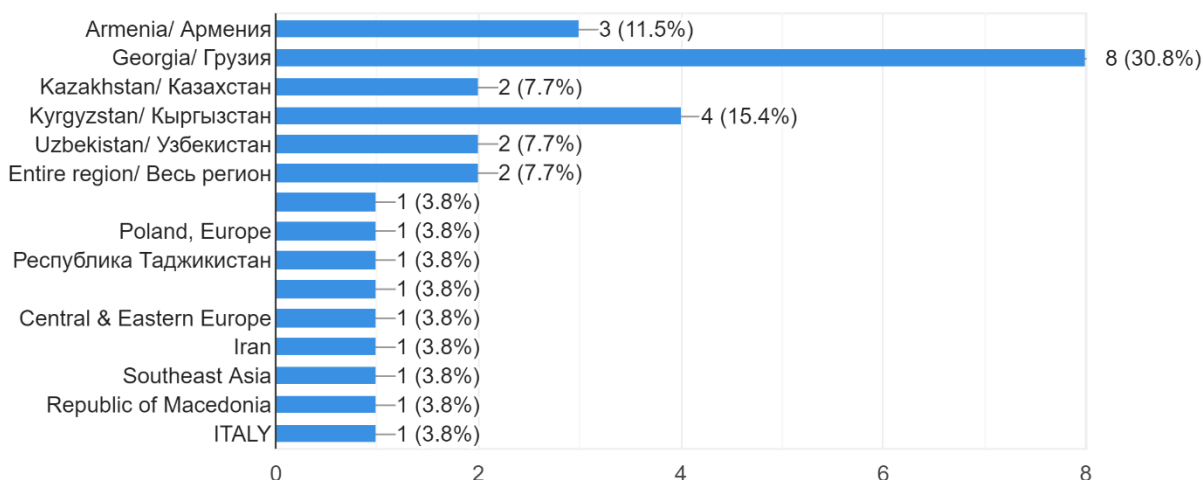


Table 3 Online survey participants according to their country or region of expertise

Limitations

Lower response rate was expected for both key informant interviews and online survey due to the COVID-19 lockdowns and extended holiday season in the CCA region. In order to mitigate the potential negative effect of low responses, email reminders were sent to the stakeholders several times. The deadline for

¹² Approximately 50 emails from over 250 were either bounced back as undeliverable or email addresses no longer existed, likely due to person no working for the same organization or government entity. Survey link was emailed on 12/30/2020 with two reminders in mid and end of January 2021.

final report was extended, so that relevant key informants could be interviewed in the first half of February 2021 and more stakeholders could participate in bilingual online survey.

Recall bias: Number of questions raised during the interviews dealt with events that took place before the project initiation. Some interviewers were either unaware or uninformed on issues prior to the project initiation, these events were recreated through documentation and independent research.

Findings

Findings based on the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, are disused below.

Relevance

1. Was the project relevant to the objective of UNECE to support member States in achieving sustainable forest management? 2. To what extent were the activities consistent with the 2030 Agenda and other global and regional priorities and the programme of work of the UNECE? 3. To what extent did the project respond to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries? How relevant was it to the target groups' needs and priorities? Was there a focus on the most vulnerable? Was disability inclusion mainstreamed at all stages of the project cycle? Was the project's design and implementation appropriate for meeting the project's objective? 5. Did the project apply gender and rights-based approaches in the design, implementation and results of the activities? 6. Did UNECE advocate for gender equality in this area of work?

According to its mandate, UNECE aims to facilitate economic integration and promotion of sustainable development through policy dialogue, negotiation of international legal instruments, development of regulations and norms, exchange of best practices and technical expertise¹³. The UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), a principal subsidiary body of the UNECE, constitutes a forum for cooperation and consultation between member countries on forestry, the forest industry and forest product matters. Joint session of COFFI and FAO European Forestry Commission adopted the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work (WIPW) for the period of 2018-2021, which is also reflected in the PoW of subprogramme 7 of Programme 17 (ECE) for the same period¹⁴. The WIPW is structured around four Work Areas. The primary objectives of the project - to enhance national knowledge on forest measurement, monitoring and reporting, as well as national capacity to develop reporting and accountability systems, are in line with the several Work Areas¹⁵. With regards to Work Area 1 on "Data, monitoring, reporting and assessment", the project helped beneficiary countries to develop more capacity for collection and validation of forestry related data and statistics (1a), analysis and assessment (1b) and

¹³ UNECE Objectives and Mandate <https://unece.org/objectives-and-mandate>

¹⁴ Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018-2019 <https://undocs.org/en/A/71/6/Rev.1> and Proposed programme budget for 2020, Part V, Regional cooperation for development, Section 20, Economic development in Europe, Programme 17. [https://undocs.org/a/74/6\(Sect.20\)](https://undocs.org/a/74/6(Sect.20))

¹⁵ The Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work 2018-2021 <https://unece.org/DAM/timber/meetings/20171009/wipow-2018-2021.pdf>

cooperation and contribution to international SFM processes (1c). With regards to WIPW Work Area 4 on “Capacity-building”, the project contributed to the development of national systems for forest monitoring and statistical reporting (4a). The outputs of this project are also in line with Work Area 4 outputs, which are publications, capacity-building workshops, training material and recommendations, technical assistance and provision of specific and targeted expertise.

The project is also linked with Goal 15 of the 2030 Agenda to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss” and its related targets. As interviewed KIs from all participating countries have remarked, the project workshops, guidelines, other printed materials and interactions with forestry experts, contributed to better understanding and increased knowledge on reporting of national SDG 15. The detailed analysis of project documentation and KIIs identified links of forests and forest management with almost all SDGs, in addition to the SDG 15. However, the importance of other SDGs may vary depending on the national context and situation. The project contributes to the improved monitoring of countries’ performance against SDG15 and other SDG’s, notably to SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all; SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The project is also linked with United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030. In particular, the Global Forest goal 5 on promoting “governance frameworks” to implement criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (sub-goal I) and Global Forest goal 6 to “enhance cooperation, coordination, coherence and synergies” on initiatives among criteria and indicator processes (sub-goal g)¹⁶. In addition, the project design is linked with the activities and outcomes of United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). The forum encourages its member states to develop forest monitoring systems and invites international institutions to assist with data sharing and streamlining reporting on forests. The project was also aligned with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) objectives through cooperation with “Global Forest Watch: monitoring forests in near real time”¹⁷ project, that aims to assist member states to better manage and conserve forest landscapes through an interactive online forest monitoring system. As indicated by individual country representatives¹⁸, the project also contributed to the reporting of FAO global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) through capacity building workshops, shared knowledge and established networks between experts and the relevant government representatives.

The project addressed needs and priorities of the beneficiary countries. As discussed under the Context section, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan expressed their need for capacity building on forest monitoring during the 72nd Session of the UNECE COFFI in 2014. KIs from Individual countries explained that no proper or meaningful forest measurement processes existed since the collapse of the Soviet Union and there was a gap in measurement, monitoring and collection of forest related data and its use. According to the KI with Georgian representative, this country developed C&I

¹⁶ United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 <http://undocs.org/E/2017/10>

¹⁷ <http://www.globalforestwatch.org/>

¹⁸ KIs with the representatives from Caucasus and Central Asian countries

document in 2014 but the government “still didn’t understand the real benefits of C&I and didn’t know how to apply existing criteria and indicators to the forest sector in real settings”. Kyrgyzstan also planned to initiate C&I process through FAO support. Armenia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were not actively engaged in any international C&I processes. As interviewed UNECE/FAO FTS project staff member explained, the project helped countries to “catch up with processes that are already taking place in developed countries, like deeper policymaking and thoughtful regulations in the forestry sector”. Capacity building assistance with the C&I process initiation was relevant to the needs and priorities of participating CCA countries.

While C&I process mainly focuses on the ecological indicators, social and economic criteria and indicators are equally important for developing SFM at a national and local level. The 2030 Agenda reflects the needs of vulnerable children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants in connection with Sustainable Development Goals¹⁹. The evaluation inquired with KIs and among the online survey participants regarding the vulnerability and disability criteria inclusion in the C&I national sets and forestry sector in general. Georgian representative noted that the local forests play significant role in the economic life of rural vulnerable population, however, there are no existing indicators that reflect the forest benefits for vulnerable groups in the country. Representative of Kazakhstan also pointed to isolated and vulnerable rural population in his country that entirely depend on the local forests. Currently, there are no specific indicators that would capture benefits of forestry to the vulnerable groups in the national C&I set of Kazakhstan either. An online survey made inquiry into how the rights of vulnerable groups, including the disabled were addressed in the national C&I sets. As demonstrated on figure 4, half of responders (11 out of 22) marked the rights of vulnerable groups and disable as well addressed in the draft national C&I sets, while almost third of the respondents marked it as poorly addressed (5) or not addressed at all (3).

How well are the rights of vulnerable groups, including the disabled, addressed in Criteria and Indicator set in your country? / Насколько хоро...ях и индикаторах установленных в вашей стране?

22 responses

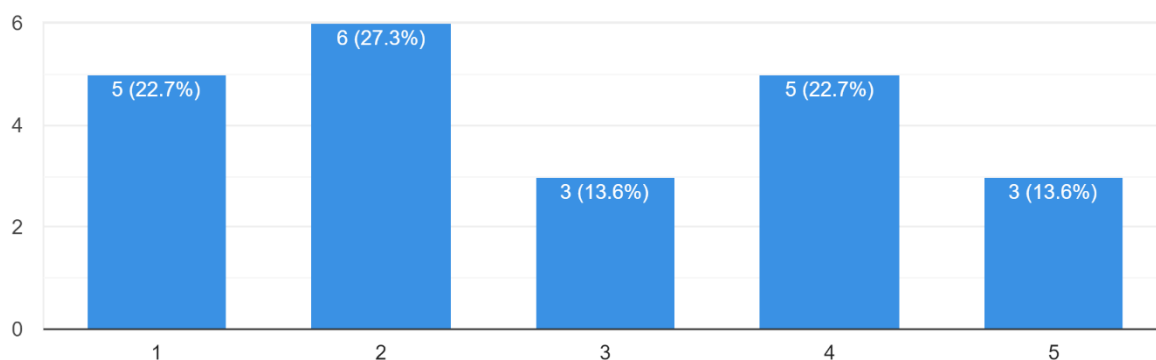


Table 4 How well are the rights of vulnerable groups, including the disabled, addressed in Criteria and Indicator set in your country? (1 - well addressed, 5 - not addressed at all)

While there are no specific provisions for vulnerable groups in national C&I sets, the future collection may include communities, including vulnerable ones, who depend on the local forest products. As interviewed

¹⁹ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/1>

expert who helped countries in drafting of C&I and factsheets explained “C&I are primarily concerned with forests and forestry, most of indicators are ecological. Sets also include social indicators that provide age and gender segregated information on the national forest workforce on the country level. That is the only indicator that directly relates to people in present C&I sets in all five countries”. Therefore, the evaluation cannot verify a focus on the most vulnerable, neither was disability inclusion mainstreamed at any stage of the project cycle.

The project documentation was considered for answering the evaluation question on appropriateness of the project’s design and implementation for meeting objective. The design of the project, as narrated on Table 1 above, consisted of activities that supported two primary objectives on 1) enhancement of national knowledge (policy makers, national government experts, other stakeholders) of the existing international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting and 2) enhancement of national capacity to develop reporting and accountability systems. The project results, discussed throughout the findings section of this evaluation, together with the project outputs shown on Table 12 below, attest to the relevance of project’s design and its implementation for strengthening the national capacity of countries in the CCA region to develop accountability system for SFM.

It was a nice surprise to see the real, professional engagement of women from the Caucasus and Central Asian countries in the project.
International expert

The evaluation examined gender and rights-based approaches in the design, implementation and results of the project and whether UNECE/FAO FTS advocated for gender equality in this area of work. UNECE/FAO joint program document WIPW gives due consideration to “making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its activities, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not

perpetuated”²⁰. According to the same document, gender mainstreaming is a central part of UNECE and FAO’s strategic frameworks and their policies and programs. However, as one project staff member explained “it is difficult to find female experts and representatives in the forestry field at the national and field level, especially in countries of CCA region”. All interviewed country representatives agreed, that while there were some female government workers at the headquarters level, the gender imbalance is very significant on the regional and field level.

UNECE/FAO FTS staff encouraged female participation from project countries in the regional and national workshops, it was “almost a precondition to participation” as one interviewee explained. An invitation letter to the regional or national workshops was delivered through the host country UN Mission, encouraging national authorities to nominate female participants. Additionally, UNECE staff would negotiate inclusion of female participants when male only lists were presented. As a result of gender-oriented advocacy efforts, all beneficiary countries promoted more female participants to national and regional workshops and meetings. As underlined in Table 1 above, there was a sizable representation of female forestry specialists and government workers during various UNECE/FAO FTS organized workshops. Proportion of Females during the regional and national workshops was following: Initial regional workshop 20% of female participants, Interim regional workshop 34%, Forest Congress 34%, Concluding workshop 40%; 1st round of individual national workshops 23%, 50%, 35%, 40%, 37%; 2nd round of national

²⁰ The Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work 2018-2021, p. 26

workshops 36%, 37%, 30%, 47%, 38%. On an average, every third participant (31.75%) to the regional workshops and meetings was female, slightly more females were present on an average during the first and second rounds of national workshops (37%). Considering, that forestry sector is traditionally dominated by man, sizable female participation during the project workshops or regional events represents good practice that this project advocated among the forestry sector representatives in the CCA countries.

C&I guidelines used for drafting national C&I sets included social aspects and advised national authorities to collect gender and age segregated data for the forest sector workforce²¹. Evaluation examined the individual country factsheets and found that Armenia and Georgia have already applied gender desegregation principle in forest sector workforce data collection methodology. Online survey participants were asked how well gender equality was addressed in the national C&I sets. As shown on Figure 5 below, more online survey respondents believe that gender is well addressed in the national C&I. As interviewed government forestry worker from Georgia explained, “once C&I data gets collected and reported, we will be able to better analyze female access to forestry related jobs and opportunities and make relevant policy adjustments and incentives if necessary”.

How well is the gender equality addressed in Criteria and Indicator set in your country? /

Насколько хорошо учтены вопросы гендерного р...а в критериях и индикаторах в вашей стране?

22 responses

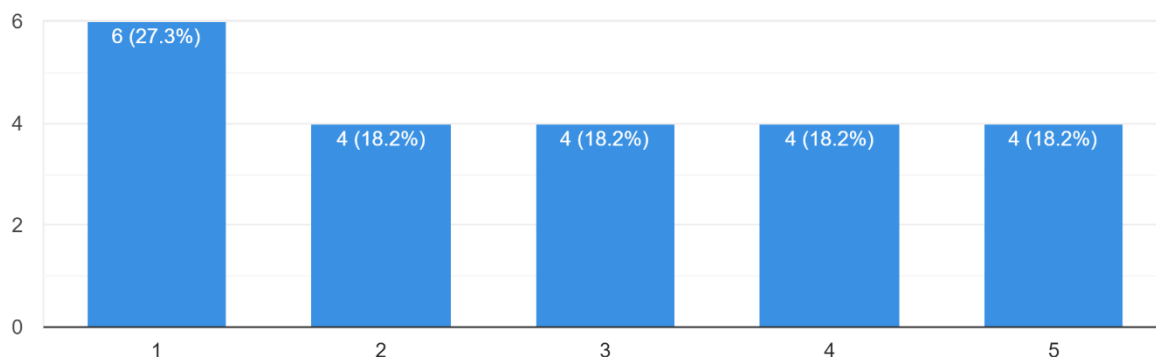


Table 5 How well is the gender equality addressed in Criteria and Indicator set in your country? (1 - well addressed, 5 - not addressed at all)

²¹ Guidelines for the Development of a Criteria and Indicator Set for Sustainable Forest Management, p. 30, 68. <https://unece.org/DAM/timber/publications/DP-73-ci-guidelines-en.pdf>

- The project was found to be relevant to the objective of UNECE and in line with the WIPW for the UNECE/FAO FTS.
- Implemented activities served to strengthening of the countries capacity to report on Agenda 2030 SDG 15 as well as other linked SDGs like 6, 7, 8, 12, 13 ad 17. The project was found to be also linked with United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 through Global Forest goal 5 and other important global or regional forest initiatives.
- The project addressed needs and priorities of five participating countries that were experiencing lack of knowledge and methodology for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting.
- The project objectives were not geared towards the disable or vulnerable population groups, although the project team advocated for gender sensitive approaches among the project beneficiary countries.
- Gender sensitive approach was integrated in the project implementation that increased the female representation from participating countries.

Coherence

7. How coherent was the collaboration with other entities in the UN system and other international organizations? 8. How does the project compare with other similar efforts from other actors in the UN System (if any)? 9. Were the activities implemented according to the planned timeframe? 10. Were the activities implemented in the required sequence needed to ensure the greatest impact of the project?

The project document review showed that collaboration with UN entities and other international organizations was undertaken through every stage of the project implementation. The project Annual Progress Reports (APR) and interviews with the UNECE/FAO FTS staff attest to the coherent cooperation that the project developed with the FAO headquarters and individual FAO missions in the countries of CCA region. This cooperation enabled wider representation of local forestry stakeholders as well as increased involvement of international experts in the project workshops.

As one project staff member recalls, some events were organized back-to-back with the FAO workshop on Global Forest Assessment, providing an opportunity to national forest government representatives and experts to “mix and learn” from the international experts in the forestry sector. Coherent and well-coordinated events enabled project participants to attend multiple workshops, gain more knowledge and establish more contacts with the forestry colleagues and experts. Specialists representing UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) were also actively engaged in the project events. UNFF helped the project to establish working relations with the national government representatives, international and local forestry organizations.

The project APRs and KIs also point out to coherent collaboration between UNECE/FAO FTS and local UN Resident Coordinators (UNRC) offices in the project participant countries. This collaboration resulted in financial savings, due to free workshop venue and free translation equipment provided by UNDP Armenia. Saved funds were used for additional regional workshop in 2018 which was advocated by project beneficiary country representatives. According to the interviewed stakeholders from all five countries, the

local UNRC offices provided an in-kind support with the venue, equipment and logistical arrangement during the national workshops as well. The project also collaborated with local GIZ offices in all five countries, that are actively involved in the forest sector reform and establishment of SFM practices in the countries of CCA region. Experts from this organization actively supported and participated in the UNECE/FAO FTS project workshops. In case of Kyrgyzstan, local representatives of the World Bank were also engaged during the workshops.

As UNECE/FAO FTS project staff member observed, coherent collaboration with relevant stakeholders provided a possibility to learn and network for the representatives of project beneficiary countries. Individual country representatives also highlighted the importance of collaboration between the government representatives, international and local NGOs, academia and experts that UNECE/FAO project has brought together. Aligning the project events with the other UN or international agency events also helped to bring the C&I to the local decisionmakers attention.

The evaluation inquired with individual country representatives if and how UNECE/FAO FTS project compares with the other similar efforts in their country. The question was asked during KIIs and in the online survey. Most of KIIs agreed that the project was unique and one of a kind in the forestry sector assistance that they have experienced. All country representatives agreed that forestry related projects implemented by other

Sustainable Forest Measurement training offered by UNECE/FAO was the first time for me. During training people from different units of forest administration as well as other Technical Cooperation project staff had chance to meet discuss forest monitoring issues and develop indicators jointly, thus it was good opportunity to receive feedback and provide inputs from different stakeholders.

An online survey participant expert from Uzbekistan

donors, FAO, GIZ, the World Bank being leading organizations in the CCA region, are more country specific and focus on field-based technical assistance and capacity development. In case of Georgia, GIZ initiated the process of creating C&I for SFM. The document was drafted in 2014 with no further actions taken or planned. UNECE/FAO FTS project helped Georgia to initiate the process, provided more advance understating and technical knowledge on C&I process, including its benefits. According to Armenian representative, because of the project, the government “got an access to the expert knowledge that we wouldn’t be getting from any other project”. The online survey participants also gave their feedback on this evaluation question. Some of the most interesting and relevant responses stated that this was a “very unique and strategically adjusted” project. One international expert observed that unlike other trainings and workshops in the forestry sector, UNECE/FAO FTS workshops “tried to engage all participants fully in an engaging and dynamic way, this helped internalize lessons and build skills in a way that kept participants energized throughout”. For most country representatives, this project was a unique opportunity to learn international best practices on forest measurement, monitoring and reporting.

The evaluation inquired whether the activities were implemented according to the planned timeframe. As shown on the Table 1, the project provided capacity building through regional and national coaching workshops, advisory missions and services, guidelines, training methodology, country studies and other printed materials. Skills and knowledge that were developed among the targeted forestry officials helped countries to define and draft national C&I for SFM and corresponding factsheets. Coaching workshops capacitated countries in understanding of the importance and benefits of C&I, it also helped them to

identify relevant criteria and indicators, assuring that each indicator was backed by verifiable and collectable data source. The country level stakeholders worked effectively between workshops, some countries also cooperated with wide range of national agencies, institutions, academia and NGOs in the process of defining and drafting of the national C&I set. All five countries finalized their national C&I documents, all of them also initiated the process of drafting factsheets for C&I. Factsheets will help relevant authorities to clearly define and develop methodology for each criteria, indicator and sub-indicator, define data source and responsible government unit and link C&I with the international reporting obligations.

The project APRs discuss several revisions that the project underwent throughout the implementation, some were due to the advocacy of individual countries to have additional activities and others to the government or pandemic related delays. According to the initial proposal document²² the project was planned to start in the summer of 2016. The first regional workshop by the end of 2016 would bring together international experts and forestry specialists from all participating countries to discuss the challenges and facilitate learning from international best practice on C&I processes for SFM and on the monitoring and reporting systems. National coaching workshops would take place during 2017 and involve local stakeholders at national level. The advisory missions would support coaching workshops. Development of national SFM C&I drafts would be discussed during second round national workshops in 2018, supported by advisory missions. The final regional workshop would commence in 2019, enabling learning and sharing of lessons among the participating countries.

As shown in the results framework on Table 1 and documented in the project APRs, implementation of project was extended until the end of 2020. The project extension allowed production of individual country Factsheets for the collection of C&I related data. This methodological document was praised by all participants and characterized as extremely important for the implementation of national C&I process. The project extension also allowed rescheduling of the final workshop to 2020. Two major revisions were reported in the project APRs. An additional regional workshop held on 20-23 February 2018, was suggested during the first regional workshop in November 2016. This event would allow participants to check on the progress, discuss challenges and solutions on drafting of national C&I. The workshop would also stimulate implementation of national level activities. The UNECE/FAO FTS secretariat supported the suggestion, additional workshop (activity 2.2.0.) was funded from the savings made during the initial regional workshop (activity 1.1), already reported above.

Due to the frequent changes and restructuring in government of Armenia, authorities responsible for the forestry sector have also changed frequently, delaying 2nd national workshop in this country. As an additional project activity (activity 2.6) national workshop in Armenia was organized and held later than planned, in February of 2019. Another additional activity was required for the concluding regional workshop that was postponed due to the global pandemic and was held online in December 2020 (activity 2.7). As reported, participating countries needs for tailoring national C&I methodologies was addressed by drafting of factsheets (activity 2.8). The activity took place during the project extension period in 2020, its results were highlighted on Table 2 above.

²²https://unece.org/DAM/timber/Forest_Policy/Capacity_building/1617V_Forestry_QAG_26_February_2016_FINA_L-website.pdf

The evaluation was also interested whether activities were implemented in a sequence that would ensure greatest impact of the project. Figure 6 below illustrates initially planned major project activities, while figure 7 shows major activities, including additional ones, that were implemented in a chronological order. Sequence of regional and national workshops and advisory missions, including additional regional workshop, the first round of national coaching workshops, ensured achievement of the primary project objectives. The beneficiary country representatives had an opportunity to fully participate in the conceptualization and planning of additional activities that were most beneficial for them. Some country KIs mentioned, that additional workshop helped them to share technical or conceptual challenges and gave more clarity to the C&I process in their countries. The evaluation verified that activities were implemented in a sequence that ensured greatest impact on the project outcomes.

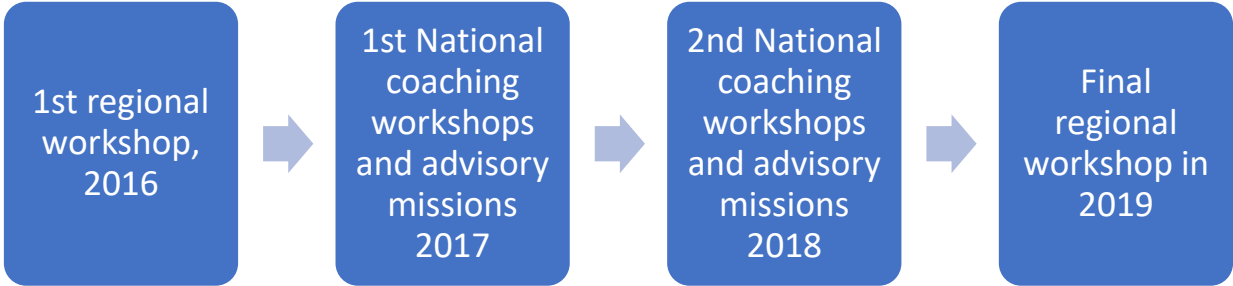


Table 6 UNECE/FAO project planned activities



Table 7 UNECE/FAO project Implemented activities

- The project documentation as well as individual interviews attest to the coherent cooperation between the project and the UN Resident Coordinators offices, FAO and other international organizations and regional forestry platforms.
- This project gave its beneficiaries an opportunity to learn from the international best practices on forest measurement, monitoring and reporting and to build skills for developing monitoring and accountability system of C&I and factsheets.
- The project was revised and extended, accommodating the needs of the beneficiary countries by adding more capacity activities and products.
- The evaluation also verified that activities were implemented in a sequence ensuring greatest impact on the project outcomes.

Effectiveness

11. Did the project achieve the results expected during the project design in terms of the planned activities, outcome, and impact? 12. What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the activities objective and expected accomplishments? 13. To what extent are the outputs consistent with, and relevant to the overall objective and expected accomplishments?

According to the Logical framework in project proposal document, the project had two objectives with corresponding indicators and means of verification.

Objective 1 Enhanced national knowledge (policy makers, national government experts, other stakeholders) of the existing international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting. *First indicator* for achievement of this objective was to enable 5 countries to conduct gap analysis on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting at national level. *Second indicator* for achieving this objective was to confirm an increased knowledge of the existing international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting among 80% of trained officials.

Objective 2 Enhanced national capacity to develop national reporting and accountability systems (national SEMAFOR). *An indicator* for achievement of this objective was to enable at least 4 out of 5 countries to develop national SFM C&I proposals and enable at least 3 out of 5 countries to develop national forest management, reporting and accountability systems.

With regards to the Objective 1, the evaluation found that all project countries conducted two rounds of national workshops as shown on Table 1. Project documentation, as well as individual presentations from national and regional workshops suggest that countries have developed capacity and knowledge to conduct gap analysis on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting at national level. Each project workshop was evaluated through UNECE evaluation forms that were shared and examined by the evaluation. These forms ask questions on format and organization of the meeting, if the meeting met participants objectives, quality of presentations, quality of discussions, overall meeting quality, format and organization of side events, the quality and relevance of side events. Evaluation forms thoroughly measure the quality of workshops, its format, presentations and content from all regional and national workshops. An average percent of satisfaction is well above 90%. However, these evaluation forms can not verify “increased knowledge of the existing international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting among 80% of trained officials” as stipulated in the initial project proposal. Trained officials were not asked whether they have more knowledge or better understanding of the topics discussed during the workshops. Nevertheless, all countries did draft and agreed on the national C&I set, indicating that the relevant national forestry officials did develop sufficient knowledge on international best practices on forest measurement, monitoring and reporting. Enhanced knowledge was also reported by individual country representative KIs and online survey participants, as discussed below.

With regards to Objective 2, the desk review and KIIs confirmed that all project beneficiary countries have developed C&I for SFM and corresponding factsheets, as shown on Table 2 above, thus meeting the

planned objective and attesting to the effectiveness of the project design and its delivery. Interviewed KIs considered the project activities and its outcome to be highly effective.

Online survey participants were asked if the project helped to enhance national knowledge on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting in their country. As shown below (Figure 8) the majority of responders (16 from 25) thought that it helped or helped significantly.

Has the project helped to enhance national knowledge on Sustainable Forest Measurement, monitoring and reporting in your country? / По...ти устойчивого лесопользования в вашей стране?
25 responses

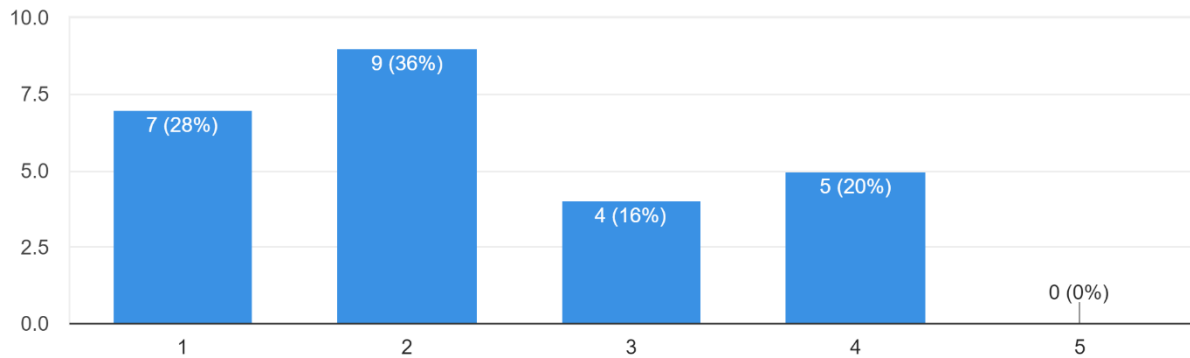


Table 8 Has the project helped to enhance national knowledge on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting in your country (1 - Helped significantly, 5 - didn't help at all)

Online survey also inquired whether the project helped to enhance national capacity to develop forestry reporting and accountability systems in their country (figure 9). Majority (15 out of 25) agreed that the project provided help that enhanced national capacity to develop forestry reporting and accountability.

Has the project helped to enhance national capacity to develop forestry reporting and accountability systems in your country? / Укреп... и подотчетности в лесоводстве в вашей стране?
25 responses

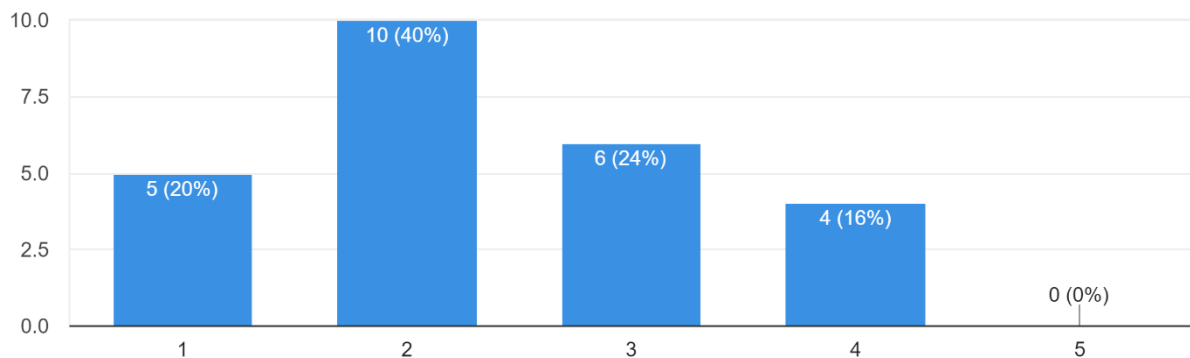


Table 9 Has the project helped to enhance national capacity to develop forestry reporting and accountability systems in your country (1 - Helped significantly, 5 - didn't help at all)

Most of the online survey participants also confirm the effectiveness of national and regional workshops as well as training materials published as a part of the project. As shown on figure 10, majority of survey participants (19 out of 26) expressed satisfaction with the national and/ or regional workshops.

How satisfied are you with the national and / or regional workshops that took place under this project? / Насколько вы удовлетворены национ...нарками, проведенными в рамках этого проекта?
26 responses

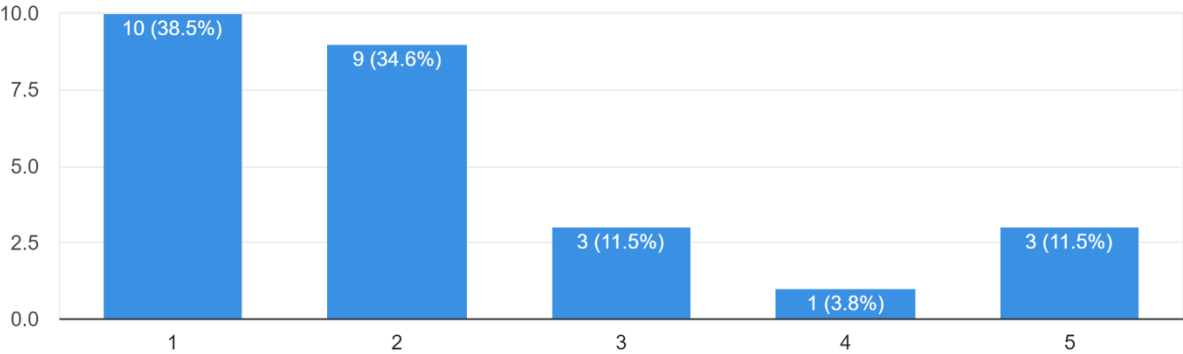


Table 10 How satisfied are you with the national and / or regional workshops that took place under this project? (1- very satisfied, 5- very unsatisfied)

Majority, 20 out of 25 online survey participants, were also satisfied with the training materials, guidelines, policy briefs and other publications that were produced during the project lifetime (figure 11).

How satisfied are you with the training materials, guidelines and other publications created during the project implementation? / Насколько вы удо...ими публикациями, созданными в ходе проекта?
25 responses

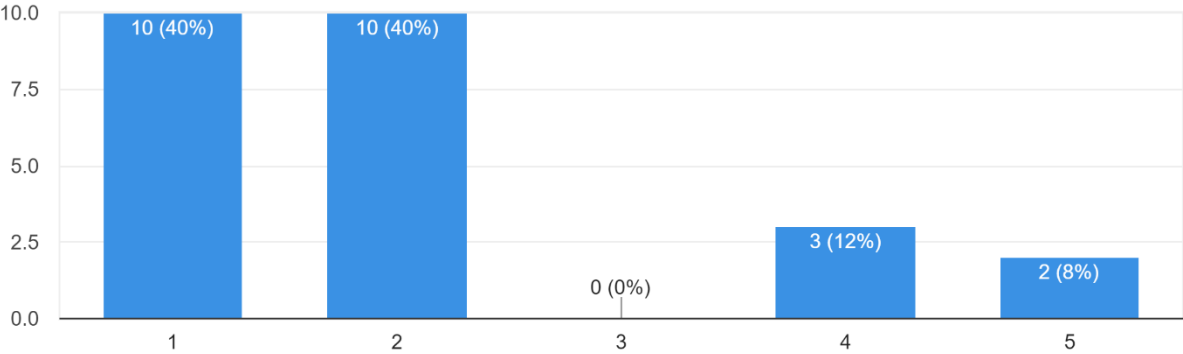


Table 11 How satisfied are you with the training materials, guidelines and other publications created during the project implementation? (1 - very satisfied, 5 - very unsatisfied)

The evaluation analyzed project documentation and inquired with the KIs and online survey participants regarding the challenges during the project implementation. Project APRs list several challenges that were met and overcome through proper planning and advocacy of UNECE/FAO FTS project staff.

Initial project APR from 2016 discusses the lack of national consultant candidates with good command of English language. This was also felt throughout the project implementation, as one project staff member explained “UNECE/FAO FTS had to make an extra effort in language editing and checking of documents that were received from number of participating country focal points”.

The initial project APR also makes point on underrepresentation of women in the project activities. As verified from the project documentation, the regional inception workshop (activity 1.1) had low number of female participants, only 7 females among 34 attendees. In response, FTS successfully advocated inclusion of more female forestry specialists in the regional and national workshops, good practice of gender sensitive advocacy was felt throughout the project implementation.

The project APRs from 2017, 2018 and 2019 mention challenges related to frequent changes of the project focal points and stakeholders at the national level. Project partners and focal points changed three times in Georgia from 2016 to 2017 due to governmental and ministerial rearrangement. As FTS staff member explained “there was at least one change in each country, and it took some time for new focal point to understand the entire process”. Political changes and government reorganization in Armenia delayed the project implementation, 2nd national workshop on C&I was held later and additional effort was made for updating newly appointed focal point on project activities and implementation modalities. Delays were also caused by Institutional arrangement of C&I approval procedures in Kazakhstan.

The individual country KIs thought that lack of quality data for C&I, initial difficulties with the C&I methodology and adaptability to the local practice, as well as frequent changes in the government were main challenges during the project implementation. Online survey included an open-ended question on challenges that project participants have experienced during the implementation. Common themes around the answers were understanding of need for the C&I process, cost and benefit of national indicators and their practical application, linking C&I to national forest policy and strategy documents, frequent changes of the country representatives and focal points, weak links with regional and field-based forest managers, forest information data gaps, gender disbalance and unequal access to the forestry related information and services.

The evaluation also verified that the project outputs - national and regional workshops, advisory missions and printed publications listed in Table 1, were all consistent with and relevant to reaching of the overall objective and expected accomplishments. The project managed to effectively deliver more products and services than initially planned, that is voiced throughout this evaluation.

- The evaluation found that two major project objectives were effectively achieved by developing capacity and extending knowledge of the national forestry officials from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. These countries developed C&I document and corresponding factsheets. The project effectively delivered more products and services than initially planned
- The project challenges were related to the changes of the project stakeholders, national governmental rearrangements. Initially, the project experienced gender disbalance among the project participants, that was solved with successful advocacy efforts of UNECE/FAO FTS project staff.

Efficiency

14. Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources? 15. How could the use of resources be improved? Would you propose any alternatives to achieve the same results? If yes, which ones? 16. Were the resources sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes?

The project had a total budget of USD 591,000 and was funded from the 10th tranche of the UN Development Account that was made available in three installments. According to the relevant project documentation, all objectives were met within the allocated budget. Almost 75% of the funds were allocated for experts and consultants who traveled to different project beneficiary countries to share the knowledge on international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting during the regional or national workshops in all five countries. The remaining 25% of consumable funds were allocated for staff travel and other general operating expenses. According to the budget document shared by UNCEC/FAO FTS, the rate of the budget implementation stood at 98% at the end of 2020. It should be noted that the project funds were saved due to an In-kind contribution from the UNRC offices in all beneficiary countries. As one FTS interviewed staff member explained, UNDP provided free venue, a conference spaces in all five countries, as well as translation and conference equipment that was also provided free of charge during the regional and national workshops.

Efficient management of the funds by UNECE/FAO FTS staff also helped to improve the use of budget resources. As already discussed, funds that were saved during the initial regional workshop were allocated for additional capacity building interim regional workshop further benefiting the overall process. According to the project documentation and staff interviews, funds were saved by purchasing cheaper than expected travel tickets and renting more moderately priced accommodation during their multiple field trips to the project participating countries.

The project APRs mention challenges related to access to funds. According to 2018 APR the project was unable to access funds “due to technical issues”, as funding was distributed on biannual basis, the 2018-2019 transfer was delayed that resulted in postponement of some consultancies and other work by a few weeks. The technical issue was resolved together with UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). Another APR from 2019 narrates on the budget freeze, arising from the liquidity crisis of the UN regular budget, that delayed the project implementation during the second half of 2019, subsequently, an alternative plan for implementation was developed.

According to UNECE/FAO FTS, the project implementation had following staffing arrangements: one P4 (2 months per year), one P2 and one P1 (2-3 months per year), one G5 (one month per year). A single regional consultant was contracted for the implementation of the project. There were five national consultants contracted for the 1st round of national workshops (2016-2018 period) and six national consultants for the 2nd round of national workshops (2017-2020 period). Seven consultants were contracted for developing of national C&I factsheets (2019-2020 period) and five national consultants for drafting and review of final study (2020). In addition, the project contracted following international consultants: two consultants for writing C&I guidelines, two for final publication, one editor, five consultants for policy briefs and two consultants for revising individual country Factsheets.

According to UNDA concept note guidelines²³, Development Account has a budget share cap of 5% for the General Temporary Assistance that is used for responding to “short-term, interim needs of the implementing entity in carrying out the project’s activities”. Because of shortage in human resources, as one project staff member recalled, they often had to perform on top of their other important daily tasks. According to the same KI, the project required work of senior manager, administrator, coordinator and logistical specialist as “there are lot of individual contracts to be made, as well as organizing and booking international travel for all project consultants and experts”. Due to staffing needs, senior management had to put extra efforts to search within existing resources for administrative and logistical support. Another staff member also suggested that more resources for secretariat would be helpful in the process of the project implementation. As interviewed project staff member recalled “there was a high demand for additional workshops and capacity building activities among the participating countries, but with our limited budget and human resources, it was impossible to add more activities to the project”. Individual country KIs from four countries also mentioned that they would have benefitted from additional joint events and meetings for capacity building and networking.

In response to the COVID 19 global pandemic, the project readjusted its activities and reorganized budget to meet the global challenges. Meeting in April 2020 was canceled, and budgeted funds were reallocated for the publication of eight individual policy briefs covering Azerbaijan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Georgia.

The publication “Overview of the State of Forests and Forest Management” in eight countries provides information on the forest sector and resources, challenges and opportunities in the forest sector, existing forest policies and sectoral institutions. The individual studies attempt to cover all dimensions of SFM, publication is a useful resource for forestry managers, policymakers, government workers, national and international experts. The final meeting was conducted online in December 2020, it had twice as much participants as any average in-person meetings of this project. This example shows that some important regional or national meetings in the future can also be arranged online, majority of forest sector national and international experts, government workers and other concerned stakeholders are well equipped and able to collaborate online. This can significantly reduce the project consumable funds allocated for travel and accommodation of experts and workshop participants.

- The evaluation found that the project achieved its objectives within the allocated budget and had 98% implementation rate.
- UNECE/FAO FTS efficiently used budget funds through cheaper travel and accommodation options as well as by securing in-kind contributions through national UN Resident Coordinator’s offices.
- KIs with the UNECE/FAO FTS showed that there was a need in additional help at times, as there was more demand for capacity development activities and workshops that the project couldn’t add due to the fixed budget and human resources
- The project effectively and efficiently responded to the COVID 19 global pandemic by readjusting of the project activities and budget. Important methodological document and policy briefs were developed during the project extension.

²³UNDA Concept Note Guidelines – T13 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/da/static-guidance-public/>

Impact

17. To what extent has the project contributed to the extension of general knowledge in the project area (national reporting and accountability systems for SFM)? 18. What are the potential long-term social, environmental and economic effects of the project? 19. Has the project helped to strengthen the application of gender mainstreaming principles and contribute to substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the most vulnerable groups?

All project beneficiary country representative KIs highlighted the importance of knowledge that they received through this project on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting. Representative from Kyrgyzstan remarked that the country needed to “catch up with the standards that developed countries have” and this project gave them good knowledge and practical expertise on C&I process. According to the representative from Kazakhstan “the workshops helped forest officials to see how forestry is developing worldwide and how they can also reform and rethink strategy and methodology for national forests”. While Georgia was more advanced in the national C&I process “workshops and lessons from the developed countries were extremely important for making correct decisions for our national C&I process”.

As shown on Table 1, contents of the initial workshop included separate and thorough presentations and Q&A on important processes in the forestry sector, among them were “Montreal Process”, “Pan-European Process”, “Low Forest Cover Country Process” and the “System for the Evaluation of the Management of Forests, SEMAFOR”. During the second regional workshop 16 international experts from Poland, Estonia, Slovakia, Germany, Norway, Finland, the Russian Federation, etc. shared practical experiences and knowledge from their national C&I processes. Experts were discussing relevant forestry measurement, monitoring and reporting related practices during two rounds of individual country workshops.

While there is no evidence of increased knowledge among the trained government officials, knowledge generated during the workshops contributed to the achievement of the overall project objective. Online survey participants were asked if the project helped to enhance national knowledge on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting in their country. Demonstrated on Figure 9, majority of responders (16 from 25) thought that it helped or helped significantly. Online survey participants (19 from 26) expressed their satisfaction with the national or regional workshops (figure 11) and majority (20 from 25) were also satisfied with training materials, guidelines, policy briefs and other project publications (figure 12).

Evaluation inquired with the KIs about their opinion on the potential long-term social, environmental and economic effects of the project in their countries. As interviewed expert explained, if the countries start monitoring their forestry based on developed C&I “they will have very good overview of forests and forestry sector and they can also fulfill reporting obligations towards different organizations”. Georgian representatives explained that the C&I is a long-term process in their country and the information generated in the C&I process will provide practical help with number of forestry related challenges, like illegal logging and understanding the economic value of local forest products. Representative of Uzbekistan also remarked that while presently the C&I process is under the government review, they hope

to see its benefits once it gets approved and implemented in practice. Same expectation was voiced by the representative of Kyrgyzstan “the government is very interested in national forest assets and its economic potential, if we adopt C&I and collect the data, it will help decisionmakers in the ministry and in government in general to better understand gaps and challenges in the forestry sector”. Kazakh representative also hopes that showing the bigger picture of the national forestry sector will help to mobilize more attention and funds for the national SFM. The representative of Armenia also explained that in the long term, C&I will help policymakers to better understand “if national forest policies are effective or not, C&I set can help to understand it faster and better”.

Evaluation also inquired whether the project made any impact in gender mainstreaming principles and changes for vulnerable groups. As already discussed before, the project helped to strengthen the application of gender principles throughout the project implementation. The project staff encouraged and advocated inclusion of female participation in the national and regional workshops through successful advocacy efforts throughout the project implementation. This practice has contributed to increased female representation among the project workshop participants. As interviewed international expert recalled she was “surprised to see how many females were representing the forestry sector from Caucasus and Central Asian countries on regional and national workshops and meetings”. According to Kazakh representative, because of encouragement from UNECE/FAO FTS project staff “we tried to involve females and looked for them in the forestry sector all over the county”. Contributing to substantial and meaningful changes for the most vulnerable groups is beyond the scope or focus of this project.

- The project documentation as well as individual interviews show that the project activities contributed to the knowledge of national forestry officials from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting. Activities also contributed to the practical knowledge and understanding of C&I process among developed countries.
- All beneficiary country representative KIs and majority of the online survey respondent were satisfied with the knowledge and capacity that project workshops, meetings, printed analytical and methodological documents that were produced by this project.
- Individual country KIs are well aware of long-term social, environmental and economic effects that C&I integrated reports will produce.
- UNECE/FAO FTS staff successfully advocated inclusion of female participants in the national and regional workshops that contributed to growing number of female forestry representatives from all project beneficiary countries.

Sustainability

20. To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries ‘own’ the outcomes of the work? 21. To what extent the products developed through this activity can be maintained and implemented? Could the activity be replicated in the UNECE region or in other regions? 22. To what extent has the project contributed to

enhance national capacity among national stakeholders to develop national reporting and accountability systems?

As already discussed, countries are still in the process of incorporating C&I process into their national legal acts on forestry or environment. Their commitment to the process indicates the strong sense of ownership of the project outcomes. According to the KIs in all five implementing countries C&I document and factsheets are in the process of approval. The table 12 below shows progress on drafting and adopting of national C&I set and factsheet and related developments in each project implementing country.

Country/ forest cover	Progress with C&I and factsheets²⁴
Armenia 328.470 ha/ 11.2%	Developed 7 criteria and 43 indicators were developed that will be institutionalized and added to the Forest Code. Further legal procedures and approvals are anticipated during the 2020. Factsheets were drafted and commended by international experts in 2020. C&I will be incorporated in the local forest code once the law is amended by the legislative body.
Georgia 2.800.000 ha/ 40%	Georgia joined the “Forest Europe” reporting process in 2003 and uses Pan-European questionnaire for national reporting. Existing Georgian C&I set is closely related to the Pan-European C&I set and includes 4 principles, 15 criteria with corresponding indicators, the C&I set was developed and approved in 2014. The factsheets for existing C&I set were developed and commended by international experts during 2020. Georgia plans to integrate C&I and factsheets with the Forest Monitoring and Information System
Kyrgyzstan 637.000 ha/ 3.2%	C&I set with 6 criteria and 58 indicators were developed and needs further discussions at the national level, that will be followed by approvals and institutionalization. Factsheets were drafted and comments and revisions by international experts are still ongoing.
Kazakhstan 30.056.700 ha/ 11 %	Developed 4 criteria and 13 indicators were developed based on the Montreal Process. Factsheets were drafted and comments and revisions by international experts are still ongoing. Kazakhstan is affiliated with The Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) regional forest cooperation process and is committed to a large-scale reforestation.
Uzbekistan 3.200.000 ha/ 7.2%	Developed 7 Criteria and 29 Indicators, further discussions and approval process by the Cabinet of Ministers is underway. Factsheets were drafted in 2020 and is undergoing the process of commenting and adjustment.

Table 12 Individual country progress with C&I and Factsheets

Individual KIs revealed that in Armenia C&I set was coordinated with and approved by wide range of government agencies and specialized NGOs, once the forest code amendments are approved, C&I will be endorsed by the decision of minister of environment. Georgia is adjusting the C&I and factsheets with the Forest Monitoring and Information System; in this long-term process the country hopes to produce its first C&I integrated reports by 2025. In Uzbekistan, the C&I approval will be based on a decree of the cabinet of ministers, local and regional actors will be capacitated with the collection and analysis of data based on factsheets. In Kyrgyzstan, local forests were on a low priority, however there is growing interest in the forest assets and forestry driven employment, KI suggested that C&I may be adopted once all the authorized ministries are appointed. In Kazakhstan, the President had advocated for the reforestation of

²⁴ As per reviewed project documentation and individual interviews

the country, according to the KI, latest C&I set is “very realistic and follows monitoring data that already exists, we could pilot it as the relevant government workers understand the benefits of C&I”. Government forestry workers in all five countries have worked on researching, collecting and drafting of C&I instrument. As one KI explained “we only had few regional and national meetings, but there was a lot of internal work going in the ministry between these meetings for drafting C&I and factsheets”. Other KIs also felt that this was a unique national process involving the entire forestry sector of the government, NGOs and academia.

We are developing forest related legislative change that also considers C&I process, we believe that processes need legal or formal endorsement to be sustainable.
 Representative of Georgian government

Results of the online survey question on rating existing forest monitoring and information in their countries (Figure 13), show that participants are not satisfied with present forest monitoring system in their counties. Majority (19 from 25) rated their national forest monitoring system as more unsatisfactory, pointing to a need for adoption and institutionalization of C&I system developed through UNECE/FAO FTS project.

How would you rate the existing forest monitoring and information systems in your country? / Как бы вы оценили существующие системы мониторинга и информации о лесах в вашей стране?
 25 responses

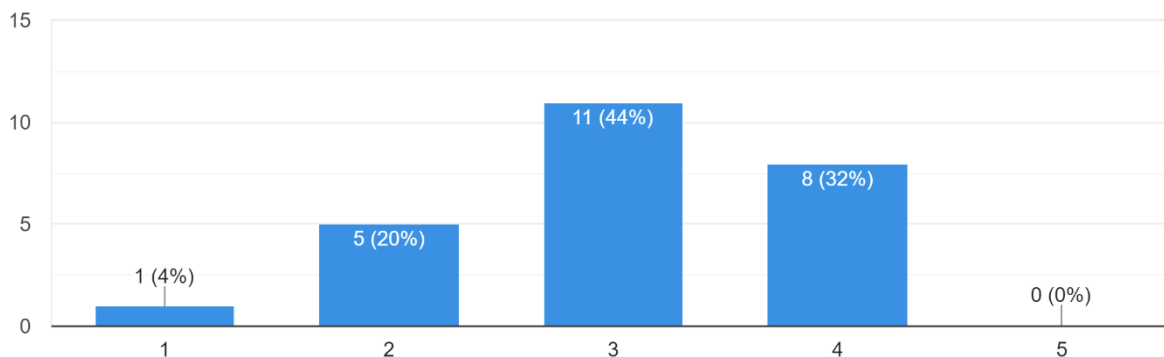


Table 13 How would you rate existing forest monitoring and information systems in your country? (1 - excellent, 5- poor)

Evaluation inquired with the KIs on maintenance of C&I and factsheets in the future. While the guidelines for development of C&I were drafted with CCA countries in mind, this is a flexible and adaptable tool that has a potential for changes as well as broad application well beyond the region. C&Is are developed in a participatory manner that assures inclusion of all different voices and concerns of the national forestry agencies in different countries. Two KIs from Armenia and Kazakhstan referred to the C&I and factsheets as “live documents” that have undergone numerous changes since the beginning of the project implementation. To illustrate, in Kazakhstan, initial 6 criteria and 40 indicators after the workshops and internal discussions were reduced to 4 criteria and 13 indicators. As KI explained, the C&I set “will change again and get upgraded reflecting technological advancements, country priorities and development of new local strategies”.

The project expert thinks that guidelines for C&I process can be replicated to other regions, she recalled that an expert from Poland replicated and used guidelines for developing a similar national C&I set. From numerous meetings and networking, it also became evident that other countries, like Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan maybe interested in adopting their own national C&I sets. Interest to participate in criteria and indicator process goes beyond the ECE region. According to the project expert, countries in south east Asia, as well as near east (Lebanon and Egypt were named) could use C&I guidelines for their own needs, however “while there is a lot of interest, there are not enough resources to implement it everywhere”. As project implementing staff member as well as project expert think, replication of C&I process will be relatively easy in other countries, based on experience and lessons generated during the current project.

As already explained earlier in the report, the project contributed to enhancement of national capacity to develop national reporting and accountability systems through workshops, Q&A sessions, individual contact with the subject experts, and by providing printed guidelines and other printed or online materials.

- The evaluation found that the beneficiary countries have developed C&I sets and corresponding factsheets. Presently these tools are being incorporated into the national legal acts.
- The KIs from all participating countries have expressed governmental commitment to the C&I process, noting that the document will be adjusted to the future needs and priorities of the national forestry sector.
- The Government forestry officials developed strong sense of ownership of the C&I mechanism that was created in accordance with the local needs and priorities through collaboration with the created local agencies, NGOs, academia and other stakeholders in the forestry sector.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the information collected through document review, interviews with key informants and the online survey, below are the main conclusions following the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Relevance

The project objective, its design and implemented activities are relevant to the objective of UNECE and in line with the Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work for the UNECE/FAO FTS. The project is also relevant in strengthening capacity of beneficiary countries to develop monitoring and accountability system for SFM in the context of 2030 agenda, while focusing on SDG15, it also made links with other SDGs like 6, 7, 8, 12, 13 and 17. The project is also linked with United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 through Global Forest goal 5, UNFF, UNEP, FAO global Forest Resources Assessment and other organizations, regional or global UN and non-UN led forest initiatives in the CCA region. The project addressed needs and priorities of five participating countries that was voiced during the session of the UNECE COFFI in 2014. Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were experiencing lack

of knowledge and methodology for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting and were in need for development of national accountability system for SFM. While the project objectives were not geared towards the most vulnerable, or referred to disability inclusion, the project implementing team successfully advocated for gender sensitive approaches among the project beneficiary countries. The evaluation confirmed that Gender sensitive approach has been sufficiently integrated in the project, assuring the female representation from underrepresented countries during the national or regional workshops.

Coherence

The project documentation, interviews with KIs and online survey show that the project cooperated with UN and other international or national stakeholders at the regional and local levels. Coherent and well-coordinated events with the FAO, enabled the project beneficiary country representatives to attend multiple workshops, gain more knowledge and establish more contacts with experts and colleagues. Cooperation with the local UN Resident Coordinator offices resulted in financial savings that were allocated for additional capacity building workshop in benefit of participant countries. The project also cooperated with the local GIZ offices in all five countries. According to the KIs and online survey results, the project was unique and one of a kind, unlike country specific and targeted technical assistance programs that number of donor organizations are implementing in the forestry of CCA countries. This project gave participants an opportunity to learn international best practices on forest measurement, monitoring and reporting and to build skills for developing monitoring and accountability system of C&I and factsheets. The evaluation verified that the project was revised and extended, accommodating the needs of beneficiary countries and adding more capacity development activities and products. The evaluation also verified that activities were implemented in a sequence that ensured greatest impact on the project outcomes.

Effectiveness

The evaluation found that both objectives of the project were achieved in full. National forestry officials from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan developed sufficient knowledge on international best practices on forest measurement, monitoring and reporting (objective 1). That in turn, helped them to develop C&I for SFM and factsheets (objective 2). KIs and online survey participants expressed their satisfaction with enhanced national knowledge on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting that was provided through project activities and products. The project implementation did experience challenges related to the frequent changes of the project stakeholders, changes in the governments and national ministerial rearrangements in the participating countries. Initially, the project experienced gender disbalance among the beneficiary country participants, however the problem was solved due to the persistent advocacy efforts of UNECE/FAO FTS project staff.

Efficiency

The project achieved its objectives within the allocated budget and had an implementation rate of 98% at the end of 2020. Almost 75% of funds were allocated for experts and consultants of the project, while remaining quarter was spent on staff travel and general operating expenses. Project funds were saved due to in-kind contribution from the UNDP. Efficient use of funds by UNECE/FAO FTS through cheaper travel and accommodation options, ensured improved use of limited budget resources. The project experienced shortage in human resources due to 5% cap on allowable staff resources under the UNDA

guidelines. Allocated GTA limited the potential of the project to meet increasing demand for knowledge and capacity development of individual countries. It would be desirable if sufficient staff resources were allocated in the project budget proposal. UNECE/FAO FTS staff response to COVID 19 global pandemic was effective and efficient, the project activities and budget were readjusted. The project extension delivered valuable methodological document and policy briefs for the beneficiary countries. More project stakeholders participated in the final workshop.

Impact

The project contributed to the knowledge of national forestry officials from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting. It also contributed to the practical knowledge and understanding of C&I process among developed countries. The KIs as well as majority of online survey participants were satisfied with knowledge, workshops and printed materials produced during the project lifetime. The country representatives also believed that long-term social, environmental and economic effects will be seen once C&I integrated reports are produced. The project helped to strengthen the application of gender principles throughout its implementation. The project staff encouraged and advocated inclusion of female participation in the national and regional workshops that contributed to increased numbers of female forestry country representatives among the project workshop participants.

Sustainability

The project countries are still developing methodologies and incorporating C&I process into their national legal acts. Interviewed KIs verified the commitment of Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to the process and project outcomes. C&I document and factsheets are a “live” and flexible instrument that will undergo future adjustments depending on changing priorities and technological advancement in the forest monitoring sector. The Government forestry officials in all five countries collaborated with local agencies, NGOs, academia and other stakeholders in the drafting process of C&I and factsheets and have developed strong sense of ownership of this mechanism.

Lessons learned / good practices

The project produced number of lessons learned and generated good practices during its implementation from 2016 until 2020. According to the project staff interview, official communication between UNECE/FAO FTS and participating governments was very slow as it had to go through the country UN mission and the Foreign Ministry before reaching responsible party. Process sometimes delayed simple decisions or confirmations for months. The lesson learned from communicating with the countries in the CCA region is to ensure enough time for official structures to process and react by establishing necessary lines of communication well in advance and allowing extra time for the delivery and response. Another lesson that can be learned from the project implementation is to ensure that the workshop evaluation forms are designed in a way that reflects and verifies changed or increased capacity and knowledge among the beneficiaries of particular activity. The evaluation learned that the project stakeholders are well equipped and able to collaborate online, indicating that some important regional or national meetings in

the future can also be arranged online. Meetings arranged this way can significantly reduce the project funds.

Interviewed project stakeholders and online survey participants also made suggestions on lessons that were learned on a national level during the project implementation. Among them were to ensure early inclusion of the representatives from the field level in order to incorporate all local voices and concerns on national forestry sector in different countries; the project also proved the need for practical and purpose driven national forest inventories and related data.

As previously mentioned, the project successfully advocated for gender sensitive approaches with regards to the female participation in the project activities. This eventually resulted in the increased number of female forestry specialists during the regional and national project workshops and is a result of good practice by UNECE/FAO FTS staff. A good example for ensuring increased female participation from the CCA region was done through encouragement of the national authorities to nominate more females through official invitation letter delivered to the host country UN Mission. Good example of coherent cooperation with the other UN agencies were the project events that were jointly arranged with the FAO, providing additional benefits and opportunities to the national forest government representatives.

As another example of good practice, the project also ensured efficient spending of the project consumable funds, that were saved through coherent collaboration with the UNDP. UNECE/FAO FTS project staff also pursued efficient budget spending practices by choosing cheaper travel and accommodation options throughout the project implementation. Saved funds were allocated for interim regional workshop that benefited the knowledge and capacity building efforts of the project. The rate of the project budget implementation was 98% that also reflects a good budgeting practice.

Recommendations

These recommendations are based on analysis of the project findings and conclusions, as well as suggestions made by KIs and online survey participants related to this project as well as to the possible follow-up activities.

1. While some countries are more advanced in the national C&I process, there are still others experiencing challenges and delays with implementation of local sustainable forest monitoring and accountability systems. While forests have been on a low governmental priority among countries of CCA, it is important to keep SFM related services and systems running and maintained. Country representatives, as well as online survey participants highlighted the need for a follow-up project to support piloting of C&I sets in real local settings and receive more coaching on forest economy or where the most reforms are needed. It is recommended to continue SFM learning and capacity building assistance involving more countries from the ECE region, with the focus on the CCA region.
2. As UNDA projects have 5% cap on staff resources, it will be desirable for UNECE to advocate for additional GTA resources for the administrative, logistical and coordinating tasks for future capacity building activities funded under the Development Account.

3. It is important to ensure female involvement in decision-making process, inclusion in the forestry sector management and empowerment of local community females who depend on the forest economy. Therefore, UNECE/FAO FTS should continue to advocate for gender equality and equal representation of women in the future capacity building projects, activities and events.

4. UNECE/FAO FTS should proactively sensitize national counterparts on the role that forests can play in poverty alleviation and economic development of vulnerable communities, groups and individuals that depend on forests and forest products.

5. In order to measure increased knowledge and developed capacity among the beneficiaries, it is recommended to introduce instruments for measuring success of training, knowledge and capacity building activity, like pre-post testing of participants on their knowledge around the activity or topic.

Annex 1



TERMS OF REFERENCE

1617V: Accountability systems for sustainable forest management in the Caucasus and Central Asia

I. Purpose

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the objectives of the project “Accountability systems for sustainable forest management in the Caucasus and Central Asia” (hereinafter “Project”) were achieved. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project in supporting member States to develop and implement accountability systems for sustainable forest management. The results of the evaluation will allow improving services provided to member States through regular technical cooperation as well as the development and implementation of similar future projects and activities by the joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section.

II. Scope

The evaluation will cover the entire period of the project, starting from June 2016 to December 2019 and its extension to November 2020. All beneficiary countries of this project (Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan) will be included in this evaluation.

The evaluation report will take into consideration all parameters relevant to the Development Accounts, such as the project design, programme architecture, budget, as well as human and technical capacities.

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated at all stages of an evaluation, in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group’s revised gender-related norms and standards. Therefore, the evaluation will assess how gender considerations were included in the process and it will make recommendations on how gender can be included better in the process.

III. Background

The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia to develop accountability system for sustainable forest management in the context of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. The project is implemented jointly by UNECE and FAO through their Forestry and Timber Section in Geneva, with the UNECE as the lead agency.

The project supports the expected accomplishments (1) improved monitoring and assessment of the forest sector to support sustainable forest and (2) increased national capacity of countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe in sustainable forest management of the Subprogramme 7 “Forestry and Timber” of Programme 17 (UNECE) for 2016-2017²⁵. The project is aligned with the Joint Programme of Work of the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, in particular to Work Area (1) Data, monitoring and assessment; Work Area (2) Policy dialogue and advice; and Work Area 3: Capacity building.

UNECE regularly supported countries of the project in their participation to international (primarily Global Forest Assessment) forest reporting through workshops and advisory services. The 10th Tranche UNDA project, builds on the experiences gained from the UNDA 8th Tranche Project “Sustainable Forest Management for Greener Economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia” (implemented in 2013-2015, with participation of all countries covered by the 10th Tranche Project).

The project is expected to:

(EA1). Enhance national knowledge (policy makers, national government experts, other stakeholders) of the existing international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting.

(EA2). Enhance national capacity to develop national reporting and accountability systems.

The following activities and outputs, including those approved in its extension, are covered by the project:

(A1.1) One regional inception workshop.

(A1.2) Five coaching workshops/sessions (one per country).

(A1.3) Five advisory missions.

(A2.1) Training materials for national workshops, including participatory methods for workshops and the publication of guidelines on the development of criteria and indicators sets.

(A2.2) Five national workshops to review and finalize the draft criteria and indicator set for all project countries.

(A2.3) Five advisory missions, that further supported the development of the indicator sets.

(A2.4) The concluding regional forest reporting workshop.

(A2.5) The publication on the reporting systems in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

(Additional Activity 2.6) Revision of the national C&I set and advancement of indicators in Armenia.

(Additional Activity 2.7) Regional workshop to strengthen capacity on methodologies for data collection for indicators.

(Additional Activity A2.8) Preparation of tailored methodologies for the national C&I sets (main indicators).

The budget of the project is USD 591,000 and was entirely financed from the 10th tranche of the UN Development Account.

²⁵ A/69/6/Rev.1 : <https://undocs.org/A/69/6/Rev.1>

IV. Issues

The evaluation criteria are relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability:

Relevance:

1. Was the project relevant to the objective of UNECE to support member States in achieving sustainable forest management?
2. To what extent were the activities consistent with the 2030 Agenda and other global and regional priorities and the programme of work of the UNECE?
3. To what extent did the project respond to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries? How relevant was it to the target groups' needs and priorities? Was there a focus on the most vulnerable? Was disability inclusion mainstreamed at all stages of the project cycle? Was the project's design and implementation appropriate for meeting the project's objective?
5. Did the project apply gender and rights-based approaches in the design, implementation and results of the activities?
6. Did UNECE advocate for gender equality in this area of work?

Coherence:

7. How coherent was the collaboration with other entities in the UN system and other international organizations?
8. How does the project compare with other similar efforts from other actors in the UN System (if any)?
9. Were the activities implemented according to the planned timeframe?
10. Were the activities implemented in the required sequence needed to ensure the greatest impact of the project?

Effectiveness:

11. Did the project achieve the results expected during the project design in terms of the planned activities, outcome, and impact?
12. What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the activities objective and expected accomplishments?
13. To what extent are the outputs consistent with, and relevant to the overall objective and expected accomplishments?

Efficiency:

14. Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources?
15. How could the use of resources be improved? Would you propose any alternatives to achieve the same results? If yes, which ones?
16. Were the resources sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes?

Impact:

17. To what extent has the project contributed to the extension of general knowledge in the project area (national reporting and accountability systems for SFM)?
18. What are the potential long-term social, environmental and economic effects of the project?
19. Has the project helped to strengthen the application of gender mainstreaming principles and contribute to substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the most vulnerable groups?

Sustainability:

20. To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries 'own' the outcomes of the work?
21. To what extent the products developed through this activity can be maintained and implemented? Could the activity be replicated in the UNECE region or in other regions?
22. To what extent has the project contributed to enhance national capacity among national stakeholders to develop national reporting and accountability systems?

V. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted based on:

1. Desk study of project materials: all relevant project documents, including project descriptions, reports, publications, workshop agendas, list of participants for workshops, etc... and other information will be provided to the evaluator.
2. Interviews with key stakeholders (via telephone and skype) including: relevant Government officials in the beneficiary countries, project consultants, participants of project workshops, and other relevant stakeholders (list of contacts and details to be provided by the project manager).
3. An electronic survey of internal and external stakeholders, in English and Russian, will be developed by the consultant to assess the perspective of main stakeholders; results of the survey will be disaggregated by gender.

UNECE will provide all documentation, support and guidance to the evaluation consultant as needed throughout the timeline of the evaluation.

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the ECE Evaluation Policy. A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data techniques are selected. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

The evaluation report of maximum 15-20 pages will summarize findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. An executive summary (max. 2 pages) will summarize the methodology of the evaluation, key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

- A. Preliminary research – by 10 November

- B. Data Collection – by 10 December
- C. Data Analysis– by 20 December
- D. Draft Report (include timing for review) – by 15 January
- E. Final Report – 31 January

Comment: Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator. The timing above is indicative.

VII. Resources

The resources available for this evaluation are 2% of the total budget of the project which is USD \$11,800 (inclusive of all costs). This amount will be paid to a hired external evaluation consultant identified through the UNECE evaluation roster upon satisfactory delivery of work by 1 November 2020.

The consultant will be managed by the UNECE project manager – Roman Michalak (P4) – who will provide support by ensuring the provision of all necessary documentation needed for the desk review, guiding the evaluator on the recipients for the questionnaire and for follow-up interviews, as well as by ensuring communication with the evaluator during the evaluation period.

The UNECE Programme Management Unit will provide guidance to the project manager and the evaluator, as needed on the evaluation design, methodology for the evaluation, and for quality assurance of the draft report

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps

Findings of this evaluation will be used to:

- improve direct project's follow up actions, implementation of products by project beneficiaries and dissemination of the knowledge created through the project;
- assess the gaps and further needs of countries in the area of this project;
- formulate a tailored capacity building projects in extension of this activity;
- induce new project ideas, improving the planning and design of future capacity building activities and projects on sustainable forest management in the UNECE region.

The outcomes of the evaluation will be available on the project webpage (<https://www.unece.org/forests/areas-of-work/capacity-building/unda2016-2019.html>) and will contribute to broader lessons learned.

A management response to the evaluation will be prepared by ECE, and relevant recommendations implemented as scheduled in the management response. Progress on implementation of recommendations will be available on the ECE public website.

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, gender analysis and human rights due diligence
- 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. Knowledge of another language (for example Russian) may be desirable depending on the countries included in the project (for the purpose of being able to seek inputs from national authorities in their native tongue).

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

Annex 2

List of documents

Project documentation:

- The project proposal
- Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019
- Financial report for project 1617V
- Regional Inception Workshop report and presentations (November 2016 Armenia)
- National coaching workshop reports and presentations (Mar 2017 Kyrgyzstan, June 2017 Kazakhstan, August 2017 Uzbekistan, September 2017 Armenia, Nov-Dec 2017 Georgia)
- Regional Interim Workshop report and presentations (Feb 2018 Georgia)
- 2nd national workshop reports and presentations (Apr 2018 Kyrgyzstan, Aug 2018 Uzbekistan, Sep 2018 Kazakhstan, Nov 2018 Georgia, Feb 2019 Armenia)
- Forest Congress report and presentations (May 2019 Kyrgyzstan)
- Draft Factsheets for Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan
- Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management
- Draft factsheets from all project countries
- The Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work 2018-2021
- Individual country government websites, resources on UNECE website
- the Development Account Evaluation Framework, Development Account Evaluation Guidelines, UNDA Concept Note Guidelines

Annex 3

List of interviews:

Name, title, organization, country	Interview date
Mr. Roman Michalak, UNECE Economic Affairs Officer	1/13/2021
Ms. Roksolana Shelest, UNECE Associate Economic Affairs Officer	1/13/2021
Dr. Stefanie Linser, Senior Researcher, Institute of Forest, Environment and Natural Resource Policy, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU) and European Forest Institute, Forest Policy Research Network	1/15/2021
Mrs. Yeva Danielyan, Leading Specialist at Forest Monitoring Center SNCO, the Republic of Armenia	1/20/2021
Mr. Vardan Malikyan, former Deputy Minister of Environment of the Republic of Armenia	1/25/2021
Ms. Natia Tskhovrebadze, Specialist at Forest Policy Division at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	1/18/2021
Mr. Carl Amirgulashvili, Head of Forest Policy Service at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	2/1/2021
Mr. Nurlan Raimkulov, Project manager, Biodiversity Conservation Fund of Kazakhstan	1/28/2021
Mrs. Siuzanna Seideeva, Chief Specialist, Department of Sustainable Forest Management Department of Forest Ecosystems Development of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan	1/28/2021
Mr. Abduvokhid Zakhadullaev, Head of Department on International relations, export and ecotourism. State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan	2/5/2021

Annex 4

Evaluation questions

Illustrative questions for UNECE/FAO staff (online face-to-face interviews)

1. What issues will you highlight as biggest success of this project?
2. What were the main challenges and lessons learned during the project implementation?
3. How did UNECE ensure mainstreaming of gender equality and focus on disability and most vulnerable groups?
4. How will C&I set affect individual participating countries on the long-term?
5. In your opinion, how sustainable are the results and outputs of the project?
6. Can you briefly describe the cooperation of UNECE FTS with other actors in the UN System, NGOs or forums on SFM covering the ECE South-East area (esp. beneficiary countries).
7. In your opinion, were all activities budgeted adequately? Were human resources sufficient for implementing this project? did technical difficulties related to funding and budget affected the project implementation?
8. Going forward, what is the capacity of UNECE to support potential follow-up activities among the participating countries or to replicate project results in additional countries or regions?

Illustrative questions for Key Informant Interviews (online face-to-face interviews)

1. Was the project design, its activities and outcome relevant for achieving sustainable forest management, did it address needs and priorities of your country/ country of your expertise? / Соответствовали ли дизайн проекта, его мероприятия и результаты достижению устойчивого лесопользования, соответствовали ли он потребностям и приоритетам вашей страны?
2. Did the project contribute to the implementation of SDGs, your country's other international obligations, agendas or agreements with regards to forestry? If so, which ones? / Способствовал ли проект реализации ЦУР, других международных обязательств, повесток дня или соглашений вашей страны в отношении лесного хозяйства? Если да, то какие?
3. Did UNECE advocate for gender equality in the forestry? Could you also tell us if and how is the gender/ disability/ vulnerability mainstreamed in the forestry of your country?/ Выступала ли ЕЭК ООН за гендерное равенство в лесном хозяйстве? Не могли бы вы также рассказать

нам, учитываются ли гендер / инвалидность / уязвимость в лесном хозяйстве вашей страны и каким образом?

4. How did the project collaborate with other UN agencies or other donor organizations in your country? if so, how does this project compare with similar efforts from other actors, organizations or donors that are helping your country?/ Как проект сотрудничал с другими агентствами ООН или другими донорскими организациями в вашей стране? Если да, то как этот проект соотносится с аналогичными усилиями других участников, организаций или доноров, которые помогают вашей стране?
5. What were the challenges and lessons learned in achieving the main objectives and accomplishments of this project?/ Какие проблемы и уроки были извлечены при достижении основных целей и достижений этого проекта?
6. Did the project contribute to the knowledge on national reporting and accountability systems for sustainable forest measurement in your country? If so, please describe how? / Способствовал ли проект развитию знаний о национальных системах отчетности и подотчетности для УЛП в вашей стране? Если да, опишите, как?
7. What are the potential long-term social, environmental and economic effects of this project and its outcomes in your country?/ Каковы потенциальные долгосрочные социальные, экологические и экономические последствия этого проекта и его результатов в вашей стране?
8. How well are the C&I set and monitoring mechanism incorporated in the forestry of your country? does the government feel the ownership of this mechanism? / Насколько хорошо набор КИИ и механизм мониторинга интегрированы в лесное хозяйство вашей страны? Чувствует ли правительство свою принадлежность к этому механизму?
9. How can the products (monitoring mechanisms, guidelines etc.) be implemented, maintained, and further developed in your country? /Как можно внедрять, поддерживать и развивать продукты (механизмы мониторинга, руководящие принципы и т.д.) в вашей стране?
10. What are the next steps, further needs for development or institutionalization of the project results? / Каковы следующие шаги, дальнейшие потребности для развития или институционализации результатов проекта?
11. Do you have any comment or a recommendation for UNECE FTS?/ Есть ли у вас какие-либо комментарии или рекомендации для ЕЭК ООН?

Online Survey for individual country beneficiaries, experts and stakeholders.

Accountability systems for sustainable forest management in the Caucasus and Central Asia / Системы отчетности для устойчивого управления лесами на Кавказе и в Центральной Азии

This questionnaire is created for the purpose of evaluating a joint UNECE/FAO project "Accountability systems for sustainable forest management in the Caucasus and Central Asia" that was implemented in

Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan during 2016-2020. The project had two major objectives -

1. To enhance national knowledge of the existing international best practice for sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting.
2. To enhance national capacity to develop reporting and accountability systems.

We are interested to know your honest opinion regarding this project. You are free to decline answers to any/ all questions. However, your active participation is encouraged, and your replies will be used to improve the work of UNECE-FAO in the future.

Этот вопросник создан с целью оценки совместного проекта ЕЭК ООН / ФАО «Системы отчетности для устойчивого управления лесами на Кавказе и в Центральной Азии», который был реализован в Армении, Грузии, Казахстане, Кыргызстане и Узбекистане в течение 2016-2020 годов. У проекта были две основные цели -

1. Повысить уровень национальных знаний о существующей передовой международной практике устойчивого измерения, мониторинга и отчетности в отношении лесов.
2. Усилить национальный потенциал по развитию систем отчетности и подотчетности.

Нам интересно узнать ваше честное мнение об этом проекте. Вы можете отказаться от ответа на любой / все вопросы. Тем не менее, ваше активное участие приветствуется, и ваши ответы будут использованы для улучшения работы ЕЭК ООН-ФАО в будущем.

Your name, organization and title/ Ваше имя, организация и должность

Your Gender/ Ваш пол

Male/ Мужской

Female/ Женский

Average years of experience in forestry/ Средний стаж работы в лесоводстве

up to 5/ до 5 / 5-15/ 15+

Country / country or region of your expertise/ Страна / страна или регион вашей компетенции

Armenia/ Армения / Georgia/ Грузия / Kazakhstan/ Казахстан / Kyrgyzstan/ Кыргызстан/
Uzbekistan/ Узбекистан / Entire region/ Весь регион

Has the project helped to enhance national knowledge on sustainable forest measurement, monitoring and reporting in your country? / Помог ли проект расширить национальные знания по мониторингу и отчетности в области устойчивого лесопользования в вашей стране?

Helped significantly/ Значительно помогло – 1 – 5 - Didn't help at all/ Совсем не помогло

Has the project helped to enhance national capacity to develop forestry reporting and accountability systems in your country? / Укрепил ли проект национальный потенциал по развитию систем отчетности и подотчетности в лесоводстве в вашей стране?

Helped significantly/ Значительно помогло – 1 – 5 - Didn't help at all/ Совсем не помогло

How satisfied are you with the national and / or regional workshops that took place under this project? / Насколько вы удовлетворены национальными и / или региональными семинарами, проведенными в рамках этого проекта?

Very satisfied / Очень доволен 1 - 5 Very unsatisfied / Очень недоволен

How satisfied are you with the training materials, guidelines and other publications created during the project implementation? / Насколько вы удовлетворены учебными материалами, руководящими принципами и другими публикациями, созданными в ходе проекта?

Very satisfied / Очень доволен - 1 – 5 -Very unsatisfied / Очень недоволен

How would you rate the existing forest monitoring and information systems in your country? / Как бы вы оценили существующие системы мониторинга и информации о лесах в вашей стране?

Excellent/ превосходный – 1 – 5 -Very poor / очень плохой

How well is the gender equality addressed in Criteria and Indicator set in your country? / Насколько хорошо учтены вопросы гендерного равенства в критериях и индикаторах в вашей стране?

Well addressed/ Хорошо учтены - 1 – 5 - Not addressed at all/ Вообще не учтены

How well are the rights of vulnerable groups, including the disabled, addressed in Criteria and Indicator set in your country? / Насколько хорошо учитываются права уязвимых групп, включая инвалидов в критериях и индикаторах установленных в вашей стране?

Well addressed/ Хорошо учтены -1 – 5 - Not addressed at all/ Вообще не учтены

In your opinion, what were the challenges and lessons learned during the implementation of the project? / По вашему мнению, какие вызовы и уроки были извлечены во время реализации проекта?

Have you experienced similar trainings/ workshops offered to your country on Sustainable Forest Measurement, if so, how does UNECE/FAO project compare to them?/ Были ли у вас подобные тренинги / семинары, предлагаемые вашей стране по устойчивому измерению лесов, и если да, то как проект ЕЭК ООН / ФАО сравнивается с ними?

Kindly let us know your further comments, suggestions or recommendations for UNECE/ FAO
Пожалуйста, дайте нам знать ваши дальнейшие комментарии, предложения или рекомендации для ЕЭК ООН / ФАО

Annex 5

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	Collection methods and sources	Evaluation Challenges
Relevance	1. Was the project relevant to the objective of UNECE to support member States in achieving sustainable forest management?	1. Desk review of programme documents, including, UNECE Objectives and Mandate, Biennial programme plan and priorities for the period 2018-2019, proposed programme budget for 2020, The Warsaw Integrated Programme of Work 2018-2021. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	2. To what extent were the activities consistent with the 2030 Agenda and other global and regional priorities and the programme of work of the UNECE?	1. Desk review of programme documents, the 2030 Agenda and theSDGs, United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	3. To what extent did the project respond to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries? How relevant was it to the target groups' needs and priorities? Was there a focus on the most vulnerable? Was disability inclusion mainstreamed at all stages of the project cycle? Was the project's design and implementation appropriate for meeting the project's objective?	1. Desk review of programme documents, including the project proposal, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert. 3. Online survey	Limited information on gender and vulnerability in the project documentation. Limited availability of key informants for interview and limited response to the online survey due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	5. Did the project apply gender and rights-based approaches in the design, implementation and results of the activities?	1. Desk review of programme documents, including the project proposal, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.

		2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	
	6. Did UNECE advocate for gender equality in this area of work?	1. Desk review of programme documents, including The project proposal, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert. 3. Online survey	Limited availability of key informants for interview and limited response to the online survey due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
Coherence	7. How coherent was the collaboration with other entities in the UN system and other international organizations?	1. Desk review of programme documents, including The project proposal, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	8. How does the project compare with other similar efforts from other actors in the UN System (if any)?	1. Desk review of programme documents, project partner websites and publication. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries. 3. Online survey	Limited availability of key informants for interview and limited response to the online survey due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	9. Were the activities implemented according to the planned timeframe?	1. Desk review of programme documents, including The project proposal, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	10. Were the activities implemented in the required sequence needed to ensure the greatest impact of the project?	1. Desk review of programme documents, including The project proposal, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.

Effectiveness	11. Did the project achieve the results expected during the project design in terms of the planned activities, outcome, and impact	1. Desk review of programme documents, all APRs, Regional Inception Workshop report and presentations, National coaching workshop reports and presentations, Regional Interim Workshop report and presentations, 2nd national workshop reports and presentations, Forest Congress report and presentations, Draft Factsheets and C&I documents from all 5 countries. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert. 3. Online survey	Limited availability of key informants for interview and limited response to the online survey due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	12. What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the activities objective and expected accomplishments?	1. Desk review of programme documents, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	13. To what extent are the outputs consistent with, and relevant to the overall objective and expected accomplishments?	1. Desk review of programme documents, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
Efficiency	14. Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources?	1. Desk review of programme documents, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	15. How could the use of resources be improved? Would you propose any alternatives to achieve the	1. Desk review of programme documents, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and

	same results? If yes, which ones?	2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	extended winter holiday season.
	16. Were the resources sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes?	1. Desk review of programme documents, Annual Progress Reports for 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
Impact	17. To what extent has the project contributed to the extension of general knowledge in the project area (national reporting and accountability systems for SFM)?	1. Desk review of programme documents, all APRs, Regional Inception Workshop report and presentations, National coaching workshop reports and presentations, Regional Interim Workshop report and presentations, 2nd national workshop reports and presentations, Forest Congress report and presentations, Draft Factsheets and C&I documents from all 5 countries. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert. 3. Online survey	Limited availability of key informants for interview and limited response to the online survey due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	18. What are the potential long-term social, environmental and economic effects of the project?	1. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	19. Has the project helped to strengthen the application of gender mainstreaming principles and contribute to substantial and meaningful changes in the situation of the most vulnerable groups?	1. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	Limited availability of key informants for interview and limited response to the online survey due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.

Sustainability	20. To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries 'own' the outcomes of the work?	1. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	Limited availability of key informants for interview and limited response to the online survey due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	21. To what extent the products developed through this activity can be maintained and implemented? Could the activity be replicated in the UNECE region or in other regions?	1. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert.	Limited availability of key informants for interview due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.
	22. To what extent has the project contributed to enhance national capacity among national stakeholders to develop national reporting and accountability systems?	1. Desk review of programme documents, all APRs, Regional Inception Workshop report and presentations, National coaching workshop reports and presentations, Regional Interim Workshop report and presentations, 2nd national workshop reports and presentations, Forest Congress report and presentations, Draft Factsheets and C&I documents from all 5 countries. 2. Interviews with UNECE/FAO FTS staff, Key informants from 5 countries and the project expert. 3. Online survey	Limited availability of key informants for interview and limited response to the online survey due to the pre-holiday busy season and extended winter holiday season.