

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 2016-2017¹. 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.

IV. Issues

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

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

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.