



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia (phase 3)

I. Purpose

The primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess the extent to which the objectives of the project “Capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia (phase 3)” (hereinafter “Project”) were achieved. The evaluation will assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project in supporting member States to cooperate on dam safety in Central Asia. The evaluation will also assess progresses on human rights, gender equality results, and disability inclusion in the context of this project.

The results of the evaluation will allow improving services provided to member States through regular technical cooperation as well as for the discussion with donors and partner organizations for any future work by UNECE in the Central Asia region and beyond.

II. Scope

The evaluation will cover the entire period of the project, starting from September 2017 to June 2020, and its extension to December 2020. All beneficiary countries of this project (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) will be included in this evaluation.

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 hydraulic facilities play an important role for the economies of Central Asia. However, concern over the safety of these facilities, located mostly on transboundary rivers, has grown significantly in recent years. Ageing dams and their inadequate maintenance coupled with growing demand in irrigation have resulted in increased risks leading to disastrous consequences often damaging property, environment and even causing human casualties. Central Asian countries presently lack adequate institutional and legal frameworks for the safe management of dams.

The objective of the project was to strengthen national and regional capacities of Central Asian countries for development and implementation of the institutional, regulatory and

technical frameworks for dam safety. The project was implemented by UNECE and was supported by 1 RB (P3) post located in Environment Division

The project supported the expected accomplishments (a) "Improved response to environmental challenges by ECE constituencies" of the Subprogramme 1 "Environment" of the Strategic Framework for 2016-2017 and 2018-2019.¹ Participating countries requested a continuation of support for dam safety activities in the latest regional meeting in Almaty 1-2 March 2017. The dam safety work is part of the Programme of Work of the UNECE Water Convention, as well as the SPECA Working Group on Energy and Water, and has been developed to respond to the official requests from the beneficiary countries.

UNECE regularly supports the beneficiary countries through workshops and advisory services. This project builds on previous phases of the project. Launched in 2006, the project was the first of its nature that initiated a regional dialogue among the Central Asian states on dam safety enabling countries to discuss existing problems and highlighted the need to improve the management of dams. The earlier phases of the project included the following areas: building institutional and human capacities of the national dam safety authorities; improving national regulatory and institutional frameworks for dam safety; setting up the regional cooperative framework on dam safety; improving the monitoring and early warning systems. More details of the results of earlier phases of the project could be obtained [here](#).

The project was expected to deliver on three specific results:

1. Improved inter-state cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia.
2. Improved national capacities in development and implementation of legal, regulatory and technical frameworks on dam safety in Central Asia;
3. Improved safety and transboundary cooperation on individual dams

The budget of the project is USD 302,840 and was entirely financed the Russian Federation.

IV. Issues

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

Relevance:

1. To what extent was the project consistent with the 2030 Agenda and other global and regional priorities and the programme of work of the UNECE, including the Water Convention?
2. To what extent did the project respond to the priorities and needs of the beneficiary countries?
3. To what extent was the project focused on the most vulnerable? Was disability inclusion mainstreamed at all stages of the project cycle? Did UNECE advocate for gender equality in this area of work?
4. How relevant was the project's design and implementation appropriate for meeting the project's objectives?

¹ A/69/6/Rev.1 : <https://undocs.org/A/69/6/Rev.1> and A/71/6/Rev.1 : <https://undocs.org/en/A/71/6/Rev.1>

Coherence:

5. How coherent was the collaboration with other entities in the UN system and other international organizations in the region?
6. Were the activities implemented in the required sequence needed to ensure the greatest impact of the project?

Effectiveness:

7. Did the project achieve the results expected during the project design in terms of the planned activities, outcome, and impact?
8. What were the challenges/ obstacles to achieving the activities objective and expected accomplishments?

Efficiency:

11. Were the human and financial resources allocated to the project used efficiently and commensurate to the project results?
12. Were the resources (financial and human) appropriate to the design of the project?

Sustainability:

15. 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?
16. To what degree the project influenced the practices of beneficiary countries to further pursue cooperation to improve the safe management of dams in the region?

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 or skype) including: relevant Government officials in the beneficiary countries, national agencies responsible for the management of hydrotechnical installations, project consultants, participants of project workshops, Central Asian Regional Environmental Center, OSCE Centers in Dushanbe and Nur-Sultan, GIZ Office in Tashkent, Vodospadarskya Vystavba (dam safety agency of the Slovak Republic), and other relevant stakeholders (final 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 methodology should finally comply with the OIOS COVID-19 Response Evaluation Protocol².

The evaluation report of maximum 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 30 April
- B. Data Collection – by 31 May
- C. Data Analysis– by 30 June
- D. Draft Report (include timing for review) – by 15 July
- E. Final Report – 30 July

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 USD \$6,000 (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 August 2021.

The consultant will be managed by the UNECE Project Manager – Batyr Hajiyev (P-3) – 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;

² <http://www.unevaluation.org/evaluation/reports/detail/15890>

- 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 water cooperation in the UNECE region.

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 and Russian.
- Previous experience in similar activities in Central Asia is highly desirable

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