

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Review of UNECE engagement with the private sector

I. Purpose

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of UNECE engagement with the private sector for the period 2017-2021. The evaluation will also assess progresses on human rights, gender equality results, and disability inclusion in the context of this engagement.

II. Scope

This strategic forward-looking evaluation is intended to strengthen UNECE's understanding of how to better engage and partner with the private sector for the benefit of its member States, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The analysis of what is working/not working internally and externally aims to inform organizational strategy development.

The scope of the evaluation is UNECE's engagements with the private sector during the period 2017 to 2021, beyond procurement activities, focusing on fundraising and UNECE mandated activities. For the purpose of this evaluation, the private sector (or business sector) is understood as: "either for-profit, and commercial enterprises or businesses; or business associations and coalitions (cross-industry, multi-issue groups; cross-industry, issue-specific initiatives; industry-focused initiative); including but not limited to corporate philanthropic foundations." Partnership is defined as "a voluntary and collaborative agreement or arrangement between one or more parts of UNECE and the business sector, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to coordinate their respective responsibilities, resources, and benefits." ¹

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality will be integrated at all stages of an evaluation, in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group's revised gender-related norms and standards.

III. Background

Resolution 70/1² "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", adopted on 25 September 2015, defines Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 as: "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development". In the following years, Goal 17 has revealed as a central instrument for capturing expertise and knowledge and mobilizing financial as well as in-kind resources from multiple sources, including the private sector.

¹ Same definitions were used in the JIU report entitled *The UN system – Private sector partnerships arrangements in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, [JIU/REP/2017/8](#)

² <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

In 2017, the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled “The UN system – Private sector partnerships arrangements in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” examined the supporting framework provided by the United Nations system to facilitate the contribution of the private sector to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In its resolution 73/254 entitled “Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the UN and all relevant partners”, adopted on 20 December 2018, the General Assembly took note of the JIU report and requested the Secretary-General to “continue to promote effective implementation of the Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to the Cooperation between the UN and the Business Sector.”

Resolution 73/254 also recalled the Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to the Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector and their alignment with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework³.

At UNECE level, the Executive Committee (EXCOM) at its ninety-second meeting on 27 June 2017 requested the Secretariat to develop a framework for engagement with private sector entities for its consideration⁴. The UNECE Framework for the Engagement with the business sector⁵ was adopted by the EXCOM at the ninety-third meeting of 26 September 2017⁶.

Subsequently, at the ninety-fifth meeting of 11 December 2017, EXCOM approved the Biennial Evaluation Plan for 2020-2021 which included one programme-level evaluation, to review UNECE engagement with the private sector. The General Assembly further approved the evaluation theme via approval of the Programme Budget for 2021 (A/75/6 (Sect.20)⁷ para. 20.14) in its resolution 75/252.

IV. Issues

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

Relevance:

1. Was the UNECE engagement with the private sector relevant to the needs of member States, and UNECE’s mandates, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
2. To what extent has UNECE’s engagement with the private sector improved UNECE’s ability to strengthen programme results and promote UNECE mandates at global, regional and national levels?
3. To what extent did UNECE engagement with the private sector contribute to gender equality, disability inclusion and to an increased focus towards the most vulnerable?

³ <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/17/31>

⁴ https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2017/93Excom-26-September_17/Item_2-Chair_s_conclusions-23.06.2017.pdf

⁵ https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2017/93Excom-26-September_17/Item_3-2017_40_Framework_business_sector.pdf

⁶ https://unece.org/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2017/94Excom-6_Nov-17/Chair_s_conclusions-EXCOM93.pdf

⁷ [https://undocs.org/a/75/6\(Sect.20\)](https://undocs.org/a/75/6(Sect.20))

4. Is UNECE engagement with the private sector aligned with the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights?

Coherence:

5. To what extent is UNECE engagement with the private sector coherent with the practices of other UN Secretariat entities and UNECE's mandates and modus operandi?
6. Has UNECE been responsive to the changes in the UN System following resolution 73/254 to keep enhancing its engagement with the business sector?
7. What are the approaches and models that are used by other UN entities within the UN Secretariat in partnership with the private sector? What factors influence successful engagement? What lessons can be learned?

Efficiency:

8. What have been the benefits of UNECE engagement with the private sector?
9. Taking in consideration UNECE's overall funding, are these budgets sufficient to fully engage with the private sector?
10. To what extent does the UNECE Framework for the Engagement with the business sector support an efficient use of resources in UNECE?
11. Have the risks of UNECE engagement with the private sector been mapped and adequate mitigation plans put in place?

Effectiveness:

12. Was UNECE successful in engaging with the private sector? In what ways?
13. In which areas were the strongest results and most progress made? In what institutional areas did we see the least progress?
14. What factors, tools or strategies contributed to engagement with the private sector and what factors inhibited this engagement?
15. How and what should UNECE do to better position its engagement with the private sector?
16. How effective was UNECE engagement with the private sector to contribute to gender equality, disability inclusion and to an increased focus towards the most vulnerable?

Sustainability:

17. Which results are not likely to be sustained without continued investment, either technical, financial, or through other activities?
18. What conditions have been put in place to ensure that engagement with the private sector is sustained beyond individual staff and management? How effective are these processes after staff and leadership transitions?

V. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the ECE Evaluation Policy and in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group's revised gender-related norms and standards.

The evaluation will be conducted based on:

1. A desk review of all relevant documents;
2. Electronic survey to be sent to relevant stakeholders, as specified underneath. The consultant will manage the electronic platform. The survey shall be prepared in English, French and Russian, UNECE will help with the translation.
3. In-depth in person or skype interviews;

The document review will consider:

- i. UNECE and its subsidiary bodies mandates and terms of reference;
- ii. All relevant EXCOM decisions and approved documents, including the UNECE Framework for the Engagement with the business sector;
- iii. Case study examples of private sector engagements;
- iv. Approaches and models used by UN Secretariat entities to engage with the private sector;
- v. The UNECE Programme plan for 2018-2019, 2020 and 2021; as well as related intergovernmental discussions (in the Fifth Committee, in the Committee for Programme and Coordination);
- vi. Relevant decisions of UN & UNECE member states and other documents promoting engagement with the private sector;
- vii. Other documents as relevant.

The survey and the interviews will target:

- i. UNECE Management, and all UNECE staff to assess actual engagement in the respective subprogrammes and identify future opportunities.
- ii. Member States, through EXCOM delegations, as well as stakeholders involved in case studies of private sector engagements
- iii. Private sector partners to be identified.
- iv. Focal points from UN Secretariat entities, as appropriate

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

Interviews with selected internal and external stakeholders will be identified through discussions between the evaluation managers (PMU) and the evaluation consultant.

Data collection activities and protocols should be gender sensitive and evaluators should ensure equitable participation regardless of gender, status, and other social identities. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations should reflect a gender analysis.

The methodology should finally comply with the OIOS COVID-19 Response Evaluation Protocol⁸.

⁸ <http://www.unevaluation.org/evaluation/reports/detail/15890>

VI. Provisional Schedule for the Review⁹

Timeline	Action
5 February 2021	TOR approved by the Executive Secretary
19 February 2021	Evaluator selected by PMU
12 March 2021	Contract signed. Evaluator starts the desk review
12 April 2021	Evaluator begins survey development – and distribution
Mid-April – Mid-May 2021	After Commission Session, evaluator conducts interviews with staff and relevant stakeholders.
31 May 2021	Evaluator submits draft report and draft evaluation brief to PMU
14 June 2021	Final draft report and Evaluation brief shared with UNECE Directors for comments
25 June 2021	Evaluator submits the final report and Evaluation brief to PMU
6 September 2021	Management response is approved by ES
October 2021	Management response and report are submitted to EXCOM for information

VII. Resources

An independent consultant will be engaged for a period of 105 days to conduct the evaluation, within a budget of US\$ \$18'000 (inclusive of all costs).

An expert consultant with experience in reviewing engagement with the private sector will conduct the evaluation under the management of the PMU. The P-4 Programme Officer in PMU will manage the consultant and coordinate requests for information from the subprogrammes.

VIII. Intended Use/Next Steps

The results of the evaluation will be used to enhance UNECE engagement with the private sector. The evaluation will assess what approaches have been successful to date and develop recommendations on how to better engage with the private sector to achieve UNECE mandates and support member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

A management response to the evaluation will be prepared by UNECE. Progress on implementation of relevant recommendations will be monitored by the PMU every six months until final closure of the recommendations. The final evaluation report, the management response and the progress on implementation of the recommendations will be available on the [UNECE public website](#).

⁹ Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator. The contract of the evaluator ends after the submission of the final report.

IX. Criteria for Evaluators

Evaluators should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in evaluation
- Specialized training in areas such as evaluation, collaboration between private sector and UN entities, project management, gender analysis, human rights.
- Advanced skills in 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.
- 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.