Draft TERMS OF REFERENCE
Evaluation of UNDA Project 2023AA
Building Urban Economic Resilience during and after COVID-19

I.   Purpose

The main purpose of this evaluation is organizational learning, namely to contribute to lessons learnt on the implementation and results of the project, as well as developing the existing knowledge base; improving evidence for future decision making by providing credible and reliable evidence on ways to improve developmental outcomes; and promotion of accountability for results.

The evaluation will provide an assessment of the results attained by the project (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and coherence), as well as on project design, project management, implementation, partnerships, contribution to SDGs, the extent of gender and human rights mainstreaming and disability inclusion; it will also identify good practices and lessons for future implementation of similar projects.

The primary audiences of the project evaluation are the implementing entities and project partners (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, UN-Habitat and UNCDF). The findings of the evaluation will also feed into the programme-level evaluation of the DA's response to COVID-19, scheduled to be initiated in late 2022, for which the primary audiences will include the DA Steering Committee and the DA-Programme Management Team (DA-PMT). The results of the programme-level evaluation will also be presented to the General Assembly, through the biennial progress report on the implementation of the DA.

II.   Evaluation scope and questions

The evaluation will be guided by the objectives, indicators of achievement and means of verification established in the logical framework of the project documents. The evaluation will cover the duration of the project from May 2020 to 30 April 2022, encompassing all clusters of the project.

This final evaluation of the project has the following specific objectives:

–   Determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and coherence of the project results in light of its goals and objectives;

–   Document the results and achievements in each of the clusters of the project, as well as at the project level (including synergies built across the clusters);

–   Assess the response delivery and external coordination[1], including appropriate gender and human rights dimensions; and

–   Identify good practices and lessons learned from the project and formulate action-oriented, forward-looking recommendations addressed to the implementing entities for improving future interventions.

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[1] The OIOS COVID-19 response evaluation protocol identifies the following three cross-cutting focus areas: 1) response delivery; 2) external coordination (or "Delivering as one"); and 3) business continuity. "Response delivery" is further defined as consisting of delivery of: 1) the existing mandate needed to implement previously mandated activities in the new environment created by the pandemic; and 2) the COVID-19 specific response (health and non-health) needed to address the pandemic specifically. See OIOS (October 2020), "COVID-19 Response Evaluation Protocol", para 3-4.

The evaluation criteria are relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, coherence, gender and human rights.

Relevance:
1. To what extent was the response designed to target the new needs and priorities of developing country Member States' local authorities as a result of COVID-19, including those enunciated in the country's COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP)[2]?
2. To what extent was the response, including its activities and modality, relevant to the new environment created by the pandemic?
3. To what extent were gender and human rights perspectives integrated into design and implementation of the project? What results can be identified from these actions? How can gender and human rights perspectives be better included in future projects design and implementation?
4. To what extent have the activities of the project taken into account the rights of persons with disabilities and the perspective of vulnerable groups?

Efficiency:
5. How well coordinated was the response internally, both among the entities implementing the joint project (at project level) and among the implementing entities (at programme level)?

6. Was the response implemented according to plan? If not, was timely corrective action taken where necessary? Was additional support identified or provided to overcome implementation challenges?
7. To what extent did the programme and project governance and management structures and processes enable, or hinder, the efficient implementation of the joint project and its results achievement?

Effectiveness:
8. To what extent has the response effectively addressed the new priorities of Member States' local authorities that emerged as a result of COVID-19?

9. What were the significant results and achievements of the project?

10. What difference did the project make to the local governments' responses to COVID-19?

11. What innovative approach or tool, if any, did the response use, and what were the outcomes and lessons learned from its application?

12. To what extent did the programme and project governance and management structures and processes enable, or hinder, the effective implementation of the joint project and its results achievement?

Sustainability
13. What measures were adopted to ensure that outcomes of the response would continue after the project ended?

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[2] Plans can be accessed from: https://data.uninfo.org/Home/_DocumentTracker

14. To what extent was the project complementary to, and coordinated with, other work undertaken by the implementing entities?

15. To what extent has the DA's response to COVID-19 been coordinated with, and complementary to, that of other UN entities (Secretariat and non-Secretariat) in delivering socio-economic support to Member States, including the work financed by the UN COVID-19 Response & Recovery Multi-Party Trust Fund (MPTF) and the UN Country Teams (UNCTs)?

III. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation will adopt a theory-driven, utilization-focused approach. It will be guided by the project-results framework and ensure a gender and human rights responsive evaluation[3]. The evaluator is required to use a mixed-method approach, including qualitative as well as quantitative data gathering and analysis as the basis for a triangulation exercise of all available data to draw conclusions and findings.

In view of the current global pandemic situation, innovative methods for data collection are required.

Methods for data gathering for this evaluation may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Desk review of project documents and relevant materials;
- Collection and analysis of relevant web and social media metrics related to the outputs of the project;
- Observation and/or watching of the recordings of a sample of virtual meetings, webinars and other activities to be implemented by the project, as appropriate;
- Virtual focus group discussions;
- Telephone/virtual interviews with project teams and a balanced sample of project participants, project partners and other relevant stakeholders;
- Online surveys of beneficiaries of the project, and other stakeholders, as may be required; follow-up interviews as may be necessary;
- In case travel is possible, missions to a sample of participating countries may be envisaged, as appropriate.

The evaluator will further elaborate on the evaluation methodology in the Inception Report, determining thereby the exact focus and approach for the exercise, including selecting one city per region for an in-depth assessment, in consultation with project managers, developing tailor-made questions that target different stakeholders (based on a stakeholder analysis), and developing the sampling strategy and identifying the sources and methods for data collection. The evaluation team is to ensure a wide representation of stakeholders, bearing in mind the need to include those in a disadvantaged or minority position as appropriate. Inception Report Guidelines will be provided to the Evaluation Team.

The evaluation will be conducted in line with the UNEG and Development Account Evaluation Guidelines and will strive to employ development best practices with regard to promoting **gender equality** and a **human rights-based approach**, including the **rights of persons with disabilities**. The evaluator will explicitly explain how human rights, gender, disability, SDGs, and environmental considerations will be taken into account during the evaluation.

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[3] With reference to [Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation: Towards UNEG Guidance](#)

IV. Management of the evaluation (roles and responsibilities)

The independent final project evaluation will be led by ECE and ECA Evaluation Units, in coordination with an **Evaluation Management Committee** (EMC) that comprises a representative of each of the evaluation units of the partner entities (ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, UN-Habitat and UNCDF). ECE and ECA Evaluation Units will serve as secretariat of the EMC and ensure that the key milestones of the evaluation are met on time. The EMC primarily serves a quality assurance function. Specific responsibilities of the EMC include:

- Review and approve the evaluation TOR;
- Agree on the selection of the evaluation consultant(s) based on recommendations made by ECE and ECA Evaluation Units to ensure that the selection is based on the required skills and qualifications;
- Approve the Inception report, including proposed survey and interview questions; and
- Review, comment on, and clear the final evaluation report.

An **Evaluation Reference Group** (ERG) consisting of a representative from each UN partner entity (usually the project focal points), the DA-PMT, and if possible and appropriate, at least two representatives of participating governments will review[4] and contribute inputs to key steps in this evaluation such as the TOR and draft final report. More specifically, ERG members will be expected to:

- Review the draft evaluation report and provide substantive feedback, including coordinating feedback from other sections, units and offices from headquarters and from the field to ensure accuracy, quality and completeness;
- Participate in the validation meeting of the final evaluation report with the EMC;
- Play a key role in disseminating the findings of the evaluation and implementation of the management response, in coordination with their evaluation units as appropriate.

Both the EMC and the ERG commit to submitting substantive comments and additional supporting evidence on a timely basis. Comments will be invited on a 'non-objection' basis (no response=agree) so that the process is not delayed for an unnecessarily long time.

An **evaluator** will be recruited to undertake this assignment. ECA Evaluation Unit will administrate the consultancy contract. The evaluator is responsible for conducting the evaluation, applying the methodology as appropriate and for producing the evaluation report. The evaluator will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, online workshops, and will lead the evaluation, writing the final draft and final report. The evaluation report will be prepared based on the DA project evaluation report outline. The evaluator will develop its own evaluation tools and framework, within the available timeframe and resources. The evaluator is fully responsible for the report, which may not reflect the views of any of the implementing entities of the project. The evaluation report is subject to quality control and clearance by the EMC, as set out above.

The evaluator should possess a mix of evaluation skills and technical or sectoral/thematic knowledge relevant to the evaluation, including gender analysis and human-rights due diligence.

The evaluator will be provided by the Project Manager(s)/Project Design Team full access to all project reports, documentation, and stakeholder lists and contact information.

The Project Steering Committee will be expected to:
- Review the draft evaluation ToR and provide substantive feedback;

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[4] Possibly representatives of the cities selected for an in-depth assessment.

- Provide access to the evaluator to relevant project documentation and stakeholders from their respective entities;
- Submit to the evaluator project documentation, including data and information residing with the other participating entities, immediately following the completion of the project;
- Collect and consolidate other requested data and information from their respective entities, as requested by the evaluator;
- Support the evaluation process, including through facilitating the evaluators' access to the project's beneficiaries and other key stakeholders;
- Provide an updated list of stakeholders, and facilitate the administration of questionnaires;
- Provide contacts, references, information about activities and logistical support to the evaluator as requested at the start of the evaluation and during the evaluation;
- Participate in the ERG;
- Coordinate the preparation of a response to the evaluation recommendations directed to the implementing entities, including an action plan;
- Facilitate the cooperation and contribution of the relevant colleagues in their respective entities to the evaluation process, as requested;
- Review the draft evaluation report and provide substantive feedback to the EMC when requested.

V. Evaluation timeline

Taking into consideration the significant coordination requirements for an evaluation of this project that involves seven entities and many distinct clusters/workstreams, planning of the evaluation was initiated more than three months before the project completion date.
The independent final evaluation of the project will be completed within nine months of the end of the project after the agreed-upon project completion date.
- Completion of the project – 30 April 2022
- Delivery of the final (project) report – No later than 31 July 2022
- Delivery of the terminal evaluation report – No later than 31 January 2022

The provisional timeline of the evaluation is as follows[5]:

Timeline	Action
March 2022	TOR approved by the Evaluation Management Committee (EMC)
April 2022	Evaluator selected by the EMC
May 2022	Contract signed. Evaluator starts the desk review
June 2022	Evaluator submits inception report for clearance by the EMC
July 2022	EMC clears the inception report
July 2022	Evaluator launches data gathering and conducts interviews
September 2022	Evaluator submits draft report to the EMC
October 2022	EMC provides feedback on draft report
October 2022	Evaluator submits final report and Evaluation Brief and presents the report to the EMC

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

VI. Resources

An independent consultant will be engaged to conduct the evaluation, within a budget of US$ $25'000. This amount will cover all costs related to the evaluation, including evaluation consultancy contract, travel, translation, dissemination and communication costs.

VII. Intended Use/Follow-up and dissemination plan

Upon finalization of the evaluation report, the project management team will be responsible for coordinating the preparation of a response to the recommendations, including an implementation plan. The results from the evaluation including key lessons learned, best practices and recommendations will be shared widely with participating entities, partners and stakeholders, and member States. In particular, the following modes of communication could be used:

- A workshop with all relevant stakeholders to present the key findings, recommendations and lessons learned;

- A copy of the final evaluation report will be published on the Development Account website and the websites of the implementing entities, as appropriate;

- An Evaluation Brief will be produced presenting a brief summary of the key evaluation findings, highlighting the results of the project in particular, and lessons learned.

VIII. 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, including within the UN system, survey design and implementation, project planning, monitoring and management.
- Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations.

- Possess a mix of evaluation skills and technical or sectoral/thematic knowledge relevant to the evaluation, including gender analysis and human-rights due diligence.
- Demonstrated knowledge in the areas of urban development policies, urban planning and management.
- Expertise in local government and urban contexts
- Fluent in written and spoken English. Knowledge of another official UN language desirable 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.