

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Evaluation of implementation of the UNECE project “Enhancing usage and uptake of standards for sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls” (2019–2022)**

#### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the implementation and assess the extent to which the objectives of the UNECE project E330 “Enhancing usage and uptake of standards for sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls” (2019-2022) (hereinafter “the project”) were achieved. The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in increasing the understanding of the role of standards in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and strengthening cooperation for the achievement of sustainable development, gender equality and inclusive economic growth across standards bodies, national governments and the United Nations system. The evaluation will also assess any impacts the project may have on progressing human rights, disability inclusion, climate change and disaster risk reduction in the context of this engagement. The evaluation will finally look at the activities repurposed to address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, and assess, to the extent possible, UNECE’s COVID-19 early response through this project.

The evaluation should identify lessons learned from the implementation of the project and areas that need further attention and provide practical recommendations on how to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of future work on similar topics. The results of the evaluation will allow improving the quality of the services provided by the secretariat of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) as well as the planning and implementation of future subprogramme projects and activities.

#### **II. Scope of activities for evaluation**

The evaluation will cover the project activities carried out by UNECE over the full period of project implementation from September 2019 to June 2022.

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality will be integrated into all stages of the evaluation, in compliance with the United Nations Evaluation Group’s revised gender-related norms and standards. Therefore, the evaluation will assess how the project activities contributed to gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as the realization of human rights, with an emphasis on ‘leaving no one behind’ and, if needed, it will make recommendations on how these considerations can be better addressed in future activities.

#### **III. Background**

The objective of the project is to enhance the usage and uptake of the standards by policymakers as a vital tool to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Standards are a foundation for: global resource efficiency in consumption and production; the decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation and full and productive employment as well as gender equality. Policymakers must be enabled and empowered to adopt and implement standards as part of their strategies for sustainable development.

The project is a direct extension of project on “Enhancing usage and uptake of the standards for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals” (2018–2019)”, through which an approximate 1,600 standards were ‘mapped’ to the SDGs; serving as a proof of concept, and revealing the demand amongst standards developers and standards users to progress the mapping and continue the development and dissemination of best practice.

In addition, the 2019–2022 project further builds on the commitments of over 60 national, regional, and international standards bodies to create gender action plans, which aim to empower women and girls in the standards development process. The gender action plans – a commitment of signatories to the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development (launched in May 2019) – provided an initial evidence base, informed initial best practice, and demonstrated the further need for UNECE to support policymakers in the implementation and adoption of standards for SDGs.

#### **IV. Issues**

The evaluation will answer the following questions:

##### *Relevance*

1. Are the activities carried out under the project relevant for achieving increased understanding of the role of standards in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and strengthened cooperation for the achievement of sustainable development, gender equality and inclusive economic growth through the use of gender-responsive standards?
2. How relevant was the project to the needs and priorities of the UNECE region?
3. How relevant was the project to the work and mandates of UNECE?
4. How relevant are the activities of the project to furthering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and attaining its Sustainable Development Goals?
5. To what extent have the activities of the project contributed to the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as the realization of human rights, with an emphasis on “leaving no one behind”?
6. Did the project apply gender, rights-based and disability inclusion approaches in the design, implementation, and results of the activities?
7. How relevant was the project with regards to climate change and disaster risk reduction?

##### *Effectiveness*

8. To what extent were the objective of the project achieved?
9. To what extent did the planned activities contribute to achieving the objectives and the expected accomplishments, notably the training on gender-responsive standards?
10. How effective was the support of the secretariat of WP.6 in servicing the activities?
11. What were the challenges/obstacles to achieving the expected results?

##### *Efficiency*

12. Did the project achieve its objectives within the anticipated budget and allocation of resources?
13. Have the available resources been used efficiently to deliver expected outputs?
14. Were there sufficient resources to achieve the intended outcomes? How could the use of resources be improved?

## *Sustainability*

15. To what extent will the benefits of the project continue after the completion of the project?
16. How likely is stakeholders' engagement to continue?
17. To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries 'own' the outcomes of the work?

## **V. Methodology**

The evaluation will adopt a theory-driven, utilization-focused and gender and human rights responsive approach. 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.

The evaluation will be conducted on the basis of:

1. A desk review of all relevant documents over the period including:
  - Materials developed in support of the activities (agendas, plans, participant lists, background documents, final reports and publications)
  - Reports of the WP.6 and its Bureau; Reports on annual work programme implementation
  - Proposed programme budgets covering the evaluation period
  - Relevant United Nations and UNECE resolutions on the matter.
2. A tailored questionnaire will be developed by the evaluator in consultation with UNECE to assess the views of stakeholders (e.g. from experts, current and former UNECE staff, standards development organizations).
3. The questionnaire will be followed by interviews of selected stakeholders (methodology to be determined by the evaluator in consultation with UNECE). These will be carried out via phone or other electronic means of communication. The results of the survey will be disaggregated by gender.

The report will summarize the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. An executive summary (max. 2 pages) will sum up the methodology of the evaluation, key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

All material needed for the evaluation, will be provided to the consultant. In addition to the documents mentioned above, the programme manager will provide the list of persons to be interviewed. UNECE will provide support and further explanation to the evaluator as needed.

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the [UNECE Evaluation Policy](#). A gender-responsive methodology, methods and tools, and data techniques will be selected. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations will reflect a gender analysis.

## **VI. Evaluation schedule<sup>1</sup>**

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|--------------|--|
| 27 May 2022  | ToR finalized  |
| 3 June 2022  | Evaluator selected   |
| 24 June 2022 | Contract signed. Evaluator starts the desk review          |
| 24 July 2022 | Evaluator submits inception report including survey design |

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<sup>1</sup> Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator.

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|-------------------|--|
| August 2022       | Launch of data gathering and conduct of interviews |
| 29 September 2022 | Evaluator submits draft report                     |
| 14 October 2022   | Evaluator submits final report                     |

## **VII. Resources**

The resources available for this evaluation are USD 8,000 (all inclusive). Payment will be made upon satisfactory delivery of work.

The Programme Management Unit (PMU) will manage the evaluation and will be involved in the following steps: Selection of the evaluator; Preparation and clearance of the Terms of Reference; Provision of guidance to the Secretary, Aarhus Convention and to the evaluator as needed on the evaluation design and methodology; Clearance of the final report after quality assurance of the draft report.

The Secretary, Working Party 6, in consultation with the Division Director, will be involved in the following steps: Provide all documentation needed for desk review, contact details, support and guidance to the evaluation consultant as needed throughout the timeline of the evaluation; Advise the evaluator on the recipients for the questionnaire and for follow-up interviews; Process and manage the consultancy contract of the evaluator, along the key milestones agreed with PMU.

## **VIII. Intended use / Next steps**

The evaluation will be consistent with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. The results of the evaluation will be used in the planning and implementation of future activities of the Trade Subprogramme in support of the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

Following the issuance of the final report, the Secretary, Working Party 6, in consultation with the Division Director, will develop a management response for addressing the recommendations made by the evaluator. The final evaluation report, the management response and the progress on implementation of recommendations will be publicly available on the UNECE website.

## **IX. Criteria for evaluation**

The evaluator should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in relevant disciplines, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management and social statistics.
- Knowledge of and experience in working with standards development process and/or gender mainstreaming.
- Relevant professional experience in design and management of evaluation processes with multiple stakeholders, survey design and implementation, project planning, monitoring and management, gender mainstreaming and human-rights due diligence.
- Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations.
- Fluency in written and spoken English.

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