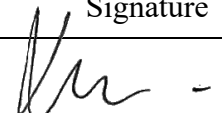
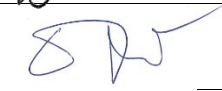



MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Evaluation Title:	Evaluation of UNECE Project E317 “Promoting innovation policy capacities in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus”		
Period of Review:	2018 - 2023		
Date of Evaluation Report:	19/09/2023		
Approved by	Chief, a.i., PMU Nicolas Dath-Baron	Date	Signature
		20/11/2023	
Cleared by:	Director of Division Elisabeth Tuerk	20/11/2023	
Prepared by:	Project Manager Jakob Martin Fexer	20/11/2023	

Recommendation 1:

Given its high relevance, it is recommended to i) seek continuation funding to support further Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus countries (especially for ensuring sustainability and continuity); ii) seek new funding to replicate this project for other subregions, such as the Western Balkans or Central Asia. At the same time, this can raise donor visibility and complement investments into the European Union’s (EU’s) Eastern Partnership (in the case of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus). UNECE’s governance-focused approach using evaluation, accountability, and transparency also aims to reduce corruption and informality in the EESC region, where this issue is of great relevance.

Priority: high, next six months for new project designs

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Liaise with Sida and write proposal on follow-up funding for EESC
- Ibid for Western Balkan and SPECA countries

Responsibility: Jakob Fexer, OiC, IPDS

Timeline: 30 June, 2024

Recommendation 2:

Increase awareness among national stakeholders in Member States about the importance of the *Leave No One Behind* approach across policy-making, for example, by adding relevant indicators in the project results framework, and supporting ongoing national processes such as the upgrading of online procurement platforms for reading impaired persons, with a focus on gender, disabilities, and human rights (keeping in mind that the latter two were not included in the project document).

Priority: medium, next 6-12 months for new project designs

Management Response:

UNECE partially accepts the recommendation

While we recognise the importance of the approach, we stress that activities should be demand driven and that our efforts to mainstream it should take place within that context. However, we see innovation broadly as a means to create opportunities, diversification, and jobs for all: and demand for labour will also benefit those facing challenges.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Include and strengthen the LNOB approach into the updated methodology for the Innovation Policy Outlook
- Ibid for the I4SD review methodology
- Include the approach into project proposals (bilateral and regional)

Responsibility: Jakob Fexer, OiC, IPDS

Timeline: 30 June, 2024

Recommendation 3:

In a context where donors increasingly focus on short-term results after 12 or 24 months, UNECE should encourage Sweden and other donors to continue investing in projects with a systems change approach, leading to the implementation of research recommendations as a means to ensure the sustainability of results. A project duration of 5 years is recommended for projects with such an approach.

Priority: medium, next 6-12 months for new project designs

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Upgrade the IPO and review methodology to reflect the new policy principles aiming to create institutions that learn from, adapt to, and try out ways to influence systems change and creating a growing “innovation commons”
- In the podcast series Innovation Matters, explore topics clearly related to systems change, such as flexible regulation
- For EESC continuation (with Sida funding), link activities clearly to support efforts to put review and IPO recommendations into practice
- For all work, especially Western Balkans (where EU funding dominates), ensure that recommendations guide also other donor-funded activities on-going or in planning systematically.

Responsibility: Jakob Fexer, OiC, IPDS

Timeline: 30 June, 2024

Recommendation 4:

Building on the good practices of this project, using local experts to gather intelligence on the ground is recommended for similar future projects at the country level. At the same time, national focal points should continue to be appointed for centralized project coordination in project countries.

Priority: medium, next 6-12 months, for new project designs

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Stress this aspect in Sida and other potential project proposals
- Increase engagement of both local experts and focal points

Responsibility: Jakob Fexer, OiC, IPDS

Timeline: 30 June, 2024

Recommendation 5:

As a follow-up to this project, UNECE should use its limited regular budget resources to monitor the implementation of recommendations and keep engaging with the network of focal points to share good practices for developing and implementing national innovation-related strategies and policies.

Priority: high, next 6 months for new project designs

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Conduct regular IPO policy dialogue sessions with EESC countries to review progress and explore issues related to recommendations with leading experts and practitioners
- Dedicate part of the annual meetings of ToS-ICP and CICPPP to EESC and other member states reporting on progress on implementation (next ToS session in November)

Responsibility: Jakob Fexer, OiC, IPDS

Timeline: 30 June, 2024

Recommendation 6:

Senior management should use this evaluation report as a robust evidence base to lobby for replicating the project approach in other sub-regions, for example, the Western Balkans, with high relevance for donors like the EU and Sweden. This should be done, as explained in Recommendation 1 by i) seeking continuation funding to support further EESC countries (especially for ensuring sustainability); ii) seeking new funding to replicate for other regions, such as the Western Balkans or Central Asia.

Priority: very high, next 3-6 months for new project designs

Management Response:

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Follow-up to the September meeting on IPO and related engagement with Western Balkan countries
- Further engage with potential donors
- Promote similar engagement around the IPO through SPECA

- Systematically explore opportunities to participate in related regional events, such as those of RCC in the Western Balkans, and the OECD Eurasia week (December)
- Engage the director of ECTD and contribute to or suggest opportunities and input for missions and speaking roles for the ES and the DES

See also responses to recommendations 1, 3 and 4.

Responsibility: Jakob Fexer, OiC, IPDS

Timeline: 30 June, 2024