Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Europe

Standing Working Group on Ageing

Sixteenth meeting
Geneva, 20–22 November 2023
Item 8 of the provisional agenda
Evaluation of the Ageing – Phase III project

Evaluation outcomes and follow-up

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The project E345 "Improve capacities of UNECE member States in developing evidence-based policy measures to meet their commitments under the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS) and the 2017 Lisbon Ministerial Declaration: Ageing Phase III" was implemented between 2020–2023 to support he implementation of the Programme of Work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing (SWGA) and evaluated in April–July 2023 to assess its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The terms of reference for the evaluation,[1] the evaluation report[2] and a short evaluation brief[3] are available on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) website.

The evaluator made a number of recommendations presented in this document together with the follow-up actions proposed by the secretariat to address them in 2023–2025.

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[1] See https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/E345_ToRs Evaluation_final 24.3.2023.pdf.
[2] See https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/E345_Evaluation Report final_website .pdf.
[3] See https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/E345_Evaluation Brief final_website.pdf.

Recommendation 1

Strengthen the role and engagement of national focal points on ageing in activities of the Standing Working Group on Ageing, including through the development of Terms of Reference for national focal points on ageing to strengthen clarity on their roles and responsibilities, including in their respective national institutions.

Management Response

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities

The secretariat will propose the development of terms of reference for national focal points on ageing to the Standing Working Group on Ageing at its sixteenth meeting in November 2023, responding to this recommendation. If agreed, terms of reference will be developed in 2024 and tabled for adoption at the seventeenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing in November 2024.

Responsibility: Ms. Lisa Warth, Chief, Population Unit.

Timeline: 31 December 2024.

Recommendation 2

Further enhance the usefulness of project outputs (policy briefs, policy seminars and guidelines for mainstreaming ageing) to national policymakers by: (a) providing more guidance on practical issues and challenges related to policy implementation and more details on the good practice examples shared; (b) providing a summary version of policy briefs with key messages to facilitate dissemination; (c) encouraging translation of policy briefs/summaries into national languages; (d) developing a checklist for mainstreaming ageing into policies.

Management Response

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities

The secretariat will undertake the following actions:

(a)   Consult members of the Standing Working Group on Ageing regarding how this recommendation can be addressed in the new Programme of Work 2023–2027.

(b)   Prepare summary versions of policy briefs highlighting key messages.

(c)   Encourage members of the Standing Working Group on Ageing to translate policy briefs and summaries into national languages at the sixteenth meeting of the Standing Working Group on Ageing.

(d)   Propose to the Standing Working Group on Ageing to include a checklist for mainstreaming ageing in the toolkit based on the UNECE Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing. If approved by the Standing Working Group on Ageing in 2023, the checklist will be developed in 2024.

Responsibility: Ms. Lisa Warth, Chief, Population Unit.

Timeline: 31 December 2024.

Recommendation 3

Strengthen the MIPAA/RIS review process to become a stronger accountability mechanism for Governments, by: (a) simplifying/standardizing the reporting process further, for example by considering to focus the reporting guidelines and data collection on fewer priority issues if possible and appropriate; (b) leveraging the UNECE Ageing Policies Database for continuous monitoring and reporting on MIPAA/RIS implementation to support the next MIPAA/RIS review and appraisal process and highlight synergies between MIPAA/RIS and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; (c) enhancing the engagement of permanent missions in Geneva in the review process and ministerial conference preparations to ensure high-level participation at the ministerial conference and accountability.

Management Response

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities

Preparations for the next MIPAA/RIS review process will commence in 2025, when the modalities for the next review will be developed and approved by SWGA. The recommendations made by the evaluation will inform this process.

Responsibility: Ms. Lisa Warth, Chief, Population Unit.

Timeline: 31 December 2025.

Recommendation 4

Include cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability, human rights and climate change in the programming cycle more systematically by: (a) mainstreaming these issues in situation analyses and, e.g. integration of specific gender-sensitive results and performance measures; (b) encouraging disaggregated data collection and monitoring by Governments and civil society; (c) ensuring that policy briefs and policy discussions take systematically account of regional diversity and cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability, human rights, climate change by developing checklists for authors and project staff encouraging an approach that mainstreams cross-cutting issues.

Management Response

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities

The secretariat will continue to mainstream cross-cutting issues such as gender, disability, human rights and climate change. Actions will include: (a) explicitly addressing cross-cutting issues in road maps for mainstreaming ageing and policy recommendations; (b) including cross-cutting issues in any data-related work undertaken by the secretariat/SWGA to monitor population ageing and the situation of older persons as well as the implementation of MIPAA/RIS; (c) developing a checklist for policy brief authors and event organizers on how to address regional diversity and cross-cutting issues, as appropriate, including gender, disability, human rights and climate change.

Responsibility: Ms. Lisa Warth, Chief, Population Unit.

Timeline: 31 December 2024.

Recommendation 5

Address the instability of the staffing and budget situation in the secretariat to ensure continuity and efficient use of the know-how of current staff and engage in fundraising for additional resources earmarked for "the work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing and its secretariat".

Management Response

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities

The secretariat will continue to engage in fundraising to ensure continuous capacity of the secretariat to support the programme of work of the Standing Working Group on Ageing. This will be done through follow-up projects on ageing to which member States can pledge financial support.

Responsibility: Ms. Lisa Warth, Chief, Population Unit.

Timeline: 31 December 2025.

Recommendation 6

Increase the sustainability of project results by encouraging members of the SWGA Bureau, national focal points on ageing and partner organizations to undertake follow-up activities and continue working on processes already initiated to enhance ownership and ensure more sustainability of its work.

Management Response

UNECE accepts the recommendation.

Follow up actions and responsibilities

The secretariat will encourage members of the Standing Working Group on Ageing to implement products developed by the Standing Working Group on Ageing in their respective countries, including through translation of knowledge products and capacity-development materials into national languages and their dissemination and use at the national level. In addition to the policy briefs already covered under recommendation 2(c), this also applies to the translation of Guidelines for Mainstreaming Ageing, the online course on mainstreaming ageing and its integration into national learning platforms, and the organization of national training or expert workshops, using the workshop materials developed by the Standing Working Group on Ageing.

Responsibility: Ms. Lisa Warth, Chief, Population Unit.

Timeline: 31 December 2025.