

TERMS OF REFERENCE

E267: International Centre of Excellence on Public-Private Partnerships: development and implementation of PPP standards and recommendations

I. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the extent to which the objectives of the UNECE project E267 “International Centre of Excellence on Public-Private Partnerships: development and implementation of PPP standards and recommendations” were achieved.

The evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in (i) developing and agreeing on policy-oriented international Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) standards and recommendations aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in different sectors, and in (ii) strengthening national capacities of UNECE member States (in particular, programme countries) to implement these standards and recommendations and to identify bankable infrastructure PPP projects that contribute to achieving SDGs.

The evaluation will also assess any impacts the project may have had on progressing human rights, gender equality, 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, where relevant, UNECE’s COVID-19 early response through this project.

II. Background

The project aimed to develop and implement international standards and recommendations on PPPs to support the achievement of SDGs through sustainable affordable infrastructure. The project targeted low and middle-income countries, where there is a lack of capacities to identify and prepare bankable PPP projects. The project produced 10 policy-oriented international PPP standards, guidelines and tools in various sectors and topics relevant to the SDGs, such as women’s empowerment, health, transport, energy, environmental resilience, housing and urban development aimed at further developing the UNECE PPPs for the SDGs approach. The project also supported the organisation of 6 International PPP Forums and 9 targeted policy advisory activities to raise awareness and showcase best practices on PPPs for the SDGs. The project resulted in improved dialogue, strengthened national capacity and increased investment in infrastructure PPPs that contributed to the SDGs.

III. Evaluation objectives, 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 document. The evaluation will be conducted in Q2-Q3 of 2023. It will cover the full implementation of the project, from April 2016 to June 2023 in UNECE member States, in particular Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

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

- Determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project results in light of its goals and objectives.
- 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 of the subprogramme.

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

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

Relevance

1. To what extent did the project respond to the priorities and needs of policy makers and government officials in ECE member States and particularly those in the beneficiary countries (i.e. low and middle-income countries)? How relevant were the project activities to the countries' needs and priorities, as well as to ECE mandates?
2. To what extent was the establishment of an International Centre of Excellence valuable for ECE member States?
3. What takeaways are there for ensuring relevance of future UNECE projects, and International Centres of Excellence in particular?
4. To what extent was the project aligned with the SDGs?
5. To what extent were gender, human rights and disability perspectives integrated into the 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?

Effectiveness

6. To what extent were the project objectives and expected results achieved?
7. To what extent did the project improve the competencies of policy makers and government officials in the beneficiary countries to using public-private partnerships to deliver sustainable, affordable and high-quality infrastructure in support of the SDGs?
8. To what extent are the project activities coherent and harmonized with those of other partners operating within the same context, particularly those of other UN system entities and IFIs?
9. What were the challenges/obstacles (including COVID-19) to achieving the expected results? How successfully did the project overcome these?
10. What (if anything) has prevented the project from achieving the desired results?

Efficiency

11. Were the resources adequate for achieving the results and what was the additional cost of managing the International Centre of Excellence?
12. Were the results achieved on time and were all activities organized efficiently?
13. To what extent were the resources used economically and how could the use of resources be improved?

Sustainability

14. What measures were adopted to ensure that project outcomes would continue after the project ended and to what extent have these measures addressed the existing risks for sustainability?
15. To what extent do the partners and beneficiaries 'own' the outcomes of the work? How is the stakeholders' engagement likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated, or institutionalized?

IV. Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with: the ECE Evaluation Policy¹; the Administrative instruction guiding Evaluation in the UN Secretariat²; and the United Nations Evaluation Group

¹ [UNECE Evaluation policy](#)

² ST/AI/2021/3

(UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation³. Human rights and gender equality considerations will be integrated at all stages of the evaluation⁴: (i) in the evaluation scope and questions; (ii) in the methods, tools and data analysis techniques; (iii) in the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the final report. The evaluator will explicitly explain how human rights, gender, disability, SDGs, and climate change considerations will be taken into account during the evaluation.

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 evaluator shall conduct online surveys and interview a wide range of diverse stakeholders from both the private and the public sector, academia, international organisations, and, where applicable, the diaspora and civil society. To ensure representativeness, the evaluator shall speak to a large sample of stakeholders including high-level government interlocutors whom UNECE has worked with.

The evaluation should be conducted based on the following mixed methods to triangulate information:

1. A desk review of all relevant documents, including the project document and information on project activities (monitoring data); materials developed in support of the activities (agendas, plans, participant lists, background documents, donor reports and publications); proposed programme budgets covering the evaluation period; project reports to the donor.
2. Online survey of key stakeholders and beneficiaries: the survey will be developed by the consultant on her/his preferred platform.
3. Interviews (in-person and/or by telephone/video): the evaluator shall interview a wide range of diverse stakeholders and beneficiaries from both the private and the public sector, academia, international organisations, and, where applicable, the diaspora and civil society. To ensure representativeness, the evaluator shall speak to a large sample of stakeholders including high-level government interlocutors whom UNECE has worked with.
4. Remote observation of virtual workshops and meetings, including recordings of meetings.

The evaluator will further elaborate on the evaluation methodology in the Inception Report that will among others include the survey questions, travel plans and whether any of the six countries will be selected for an in-depth assessment. The evaluation report will be written in English, will consist of approximately 30 pages and will include an executive summary (max. 2 pages) describing the evaluation methodology, key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The evaluator will also produce an Evaluation Brief summarizing key evaluation findings, lessons learned and recommendations, including through images and infographics.

V. Evaluation schedule⁵

May 2023	ToR finalized
May 2023	Evaluator selected
Early June 2023	Contract signed. Evaluator starts the desk review
June 2023	Evaluator submits inception report including survey design
June 2023	Launch of data gathering, including survey and interviews
July 2023	Evaluator submits draft evaluation report and evaluation brief
August 2023	Evaluator submits final evaluation report and evaluation brief

VI. Resources and Management of the evaluation

An independent consultant will be engaged to conduct the evaluation under the management of the Programme Management Unit (PMU). Payment will be made upon satisfactory delivery of work.

³ [UNEG 2016 Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)

⁴ In line with UNEG Guidance contained in [Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#)

⁵ Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator

The 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 Project Manager and evaluator as needed on the evaluation design and methodology; Clearance of the final report after quality assurance of the draft report.

The Project Manager, 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.

VII. Intended use / Next steps

The results of the evaluation will be used in the planning and implementation of future activities of the UNECE Economic Cooperation and Integration Subprogramme. Findings of this evaluation will be used when possible to:

- Improve direct project's follow up actions, implementation of products by project beneficiaries and dissemination of the knowledge created through the project.
- Assess the gaps and further needs of countries in the area of this project.
- Formulate tailored capacity building projects to strengthen the national capacity in enhancing innovation.

The results of the evaluation will be reported to the inter-governmental Team of Specialists on Public-Private Partnerships and the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships, as well as with the Executive Committee if required.

Following the issuance of the final report, the Project Manager 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.

VIII. Criteria for evaluators

The evaluator should have:

1. An advanced university degree or equivalent background in relevant disciplines.
2. Knowledge of and experience in working on private sector engagement: experience on infrastructure finance desirable.
3. 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.
4. Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations, including demonstrated experience in conducting questionnaires and interviews.
5. 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.