

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Supporting UNECE member States in the development and implementation of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC) and the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS) (E357)

I. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the extent to which the objectives of the UNECE project (E357) "[*Supporting UNECE Member States in the development and implementation of the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources \(UNFC\) and the United Nations Resource Management System \(UNRMS\)*](#)" were achieved. The objective is to ensure alignment with set objectives and ascertain the project's

The evaluation will assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project in contributing towards sustainable resource management and socio-economic advancement within UNECE member States.

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.

As per ECE Evaluation policy, the evaluation aims to (i) Promote organizational learning, by identifying lessons learned and best practices; (ii) Contribute to improvement of programme performance; (iii) Ensure accountability of the Secretariat to member States, senior leadership, donors, and beneficiaries.

II. Evaluation scope

The evaluation of the project will follow the established objectives, indicators of achievement, and means of verification outlined in the project's logical framework. The scope will cover the entire implementation period from August 2020 to July 2024, in the 56 UNECE countries.

III. Background

This project directly derives from the objectives of UNECE Subprogramme 5, Sustainable Energy¹, and aligns with the [Expert Group on Resource Management's \(EGRM\)](#) work plan. It was approved by UNECE Executive Committee on 2 June 2020².

The project core objective is to improve the resource management capacities of UNECE member States by leveraging the UNFC and UNRMS frameworks. These systems offer a consolidated, comparable, and coherent approach to assess and manage resources across governmental, statistical, corporate, and financial domains, serving as pivotal tools for sustainable development.

Driven by the imperative link between natural resource management and socio-economic advancement, the project aligns with the Expert Group on Resource Management's mandate to develop universally applicable classification schemes for energy and mineral resources. This includes recent advancements in UNFC, encompassing resources including solar, geothermal, wind, bioenergy, and anthropogenic resources, with ongoing efforts to extend this classification to hydro, marine energy, groundwater resources and potentially hydrogen. The project's foundation in UNFC and UNRMS serves as an integrated toolkit for countries, aiding them in aligning natural resource management with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹ UNECE Proposed programme budget for 2020 ([A/74/6\(Sect.20\)](#)), p.26

² [Technical Cooperation Project Form](#)

The project's activities are multifaceted, spanning the refinement and development of specifications, guidelines, best practices, and case studies for UNFC. Simultaneously, it emphasizes the establishment and maintenance of fundamental principles, concepts, structures, and data standards for UNRMS. Additionally, the project aims to support the implementation of these frameworks by synthesizing relevant knowledge, organizing outreach meetings, facilitating expert engagement, conducting capacity-building workshops, and disseminating toolkits and policy resources. Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, and 13, the project envisions improved resource classification, enhanced management capabilities, strengthened mechanisms for sustainability and resilience, and an amplified understanding of sustainable resource production and consumption across UNECE member States and beyond.

The target audience encompasses senior officials from ministries dealing with natural resources, mining, energy, water, industry, EU geological surveys, national experts, and financial institutions within the UNECE region.

IV. Issues

The evaluation will answer the following questions:

Relevance

1. How aligned were the project's activities with the identified needs and priorities of UNECE member States regarding sustainable resource management?
2. To which extent this project allowed ECE to support its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
3. Were the project's objectives and activities consistent with the overarching goals of the UNECE subprogramme on sustainable energy and the Expert Group on Resource Management?
4. To what extent were gender, human rights, climate change, disability and other cross-cutting perspectives mainstreamed in project? How could this be improved?

Coherence

5. To what extent was this project coherent with those of other UN entities and international organizations working in the same area, including at country level? Has the coherence improved over the course of the project?
6. Was the project design and implementation appropriate for meeting the project's logical framework?
7. How coherent were the outcomes of the project (UNFC and UNRMS specifications, capacity-building workshops, guidelines, toolkits, best practices, and case studies) with respect to the diverse needs of UNECE member States?
8. How coherent was the communication strategy of the project?

Effectiveness

9. To what degree did the project successfully enhance the capacities of UNECE member States in implementing and utilizing UNFC and UNRMS for resource classification and management?
10. How effectively did the project contribute to strengthening the mechanisms for sustainability and resilience in natural resource management within UNECE member States?
11. Did the project's activities significantly improve the understanding of opportunities and challenges related to sustainable resource production and consumption among UNECE member States and other involved stakeholders?
12. Did the project adequately consider and respond to the emerging challenges and risks, especially those accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic, during its life cycle?

Efficiency

13. How efficiently were the resources (financial, human, and technological) allocated and utilized throughout the project's implementation phase?
14. How could the use of resources be improved? Would you propose any alternatives to achieve the same results?
15. How effectively did the project manage time constraints and deadlines while ensuring quality outputs and deliverables?

16. Were the activities implemented most efficiently compared to alternatives? In particular, how do resources' costs and use compare with similar projects (within UNECE, other regional commissions, other UN agencies, or other organizations and initiatives)?

Sustainability

1. What measurable improvements were observed in the globally harmonized classification of natural resources, as facilitated by UNFC, following the project's interventions?
2. What measures were implemented to ensure the continued relevance and applicability of UNFC and UNRMS beyond the project's duration?
3. How well were the principles of sustainability integrated into the fundamental concepts and structures of UNFC and UNRMS for long-term viability?
4. To what extent did the project foster collaboration and partnerships that could sustain efforts for ongoing resource management beyond the project's conclusion?

V. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with: the ECE Evaluation Policy³; the Administrative instruction guiding Evaluation in the UN Secretariat⁴; and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation⁵. Human rights and gender equality considerations will be integrated at all stages of the evaluation⁶: (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, youth, SDGs, and environmental considerations will be taken into account during the evaluation.

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:
 - All relevant documents including materials developed in support of the activities (UNFC and UNRMS documents, agendas, plans, participant lists, background documents, final reports and publications)
 - Reports and briefs prepared under the project implementation
 - Proposed programme budgets covering the evaluation period.
2. A tailored questionnaire will be developed by the evaluator in consultation with the project manager to assess the views of stakeholders. These stakeholders will include members of the UNECE Expert Group on Resource Management (EGRM), representatives from the participating UNECE member States, experts engaged in developing UNFC and UNRMS, and representatives from governments, international organizations, industry, academia and NGO sectors utilizing and/or testing/reviewing these frameworks.
3. The questionnaire will be followed by interviews of selected stakeholders (methodology to be determined by the evaluator in consultation with the UNECE Programme Management Unit and the Project Manager). These will be carried out via phone or other electronic means of communication. Results of the survey will be disaggregated by gender.

³ [UNECE Evaluation policy](#)

⁴ ST/AI/2021/3

⁵ [UNEG 2016 Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)

⁶ In line with UNEG Guidance contained in [Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#)

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 in 1), the Project Manager will provide the list of persons to be interviewed by telephone. UNECE will provide support and further explanation to the evaluator as needed.

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the [ECE 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 schedule⁷

1 December 2023	ToR finalized
5 December 2023	Evaluator selected
31 December 2023	Contract signed.
15 January	Evaluator starts the desk review
15 February 2024	Evaluator submits inception report including survey design
1 March 2024	Launch of data gathering
15 March 2024	Stakeholder interviews start
22-26 April 2024	Annual EGRM meeting, evaluator to present preliminary results
1 May 2024	Evaluator submits draft report
1 June 2024	Evaluator submits final report

VII. Resources

The resources available for this evaluation are USD 37,000 (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, Expert Group on Resource Management 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 Project Manager, Sustainable Energy Division, 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 Sustainable Energy subprogramme in support of the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Paris Agreement.

Following the issuance of the final report, the Project Manager, Sustainable Energy Division, 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.

⁷ Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator

IX. Criteria for the 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.
- Specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, social statistics, advanced statistical research and analysis.
- Knowledge of and experience in working with intergovernmental processes, energy policy, environmental policy, natural resource management policy, and/or sustainable energy concepts.
- 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. Knowledge of another language may be an advantage.

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