

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Subprogramme-level evaluation of regular budget activities on the United Nations Framework Classification for Resources and the United Nations Resource Management System (Subprogramme 5, Sustainable Energy)

I. Purpose

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNECE subprogramme 5 regular budget activities on the United Nations Framework Classification (UNFC) for Resources and the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS) for the period 2020-2023.

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 the 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.

The results of the evaluation are expected to contribute to a longer-term vision for the intergovernmental work under the Committee on Sustainable Energy and its subsidiary bodies and to raise awareness on these activities.

II. Scope of activities for evaluation

The evaluation will look at the sustainable resource management activities under the ECE Sustainable energy subprogramme 5, as reflected in the approved programme budgets for [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#) and [2023](#). The activities are serviced by the Sustainable Energy Division.

This evaluation is complementary with the evaluation of the ECE 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)*, conducted in parallel by the same evaluator.

The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to 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 sustainable resource management 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'. If relevant, recommendations on how these considerations can be better addressed in future activities will be formulated.

III. Background

The United Nations Framework Classification for Resources (UNFC), which has been under development since 1995 and available since 1997, and the United Nations Resource Management System (UNRMS), which has been under development since 2018 and available since 2022, are two complementary tools that aim to support the sustainable management of natural resources in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. UNFC is a generic and flexible classification system

that covers all types of energy and mineral resources, including minerals, petroleum, nuclear fuels, renewable energy, injection projects, anthropogenic resources, groundwater, and hydrogen. UNRMS is a dynamic framework that provides guidance and best practices on sustainable resource management in different contexts and sectors, considering environmental, social, and economic aspects. Both UNFC and UNRMS have been endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for global application and have been adopted by a range of countries, regions, and organizations worldwide.

The work on UNFC and UNRMS has grown and evolved significantly since 1997 when ECOSOC endorsed the first version of UNFC for solid fuels and mineral commodities (Decision 1997/226). In the early 2000s, UNFC was broadened to encompass petroleum and nuclear fuel resources and was endorsed again by ECOSOC in 2004 (Decision 2004/233). In 2009, the Expert Group on Resource Classification was created (renamed in 2017 as the Expert Group on Resource Management) as a subsidiary body of the Committee on Sustainable Energy to develop and promote UNFC and UNRMS. Since 2010, UNFC has expanded to include renewable energy resources such as bioenergy, geothermal, solar, wind, injection projects and anthropogenic resources. Work is underway to include groundwater and hydrogen as well. In 2015, UNFC started building additional guidelines to align resource management to the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, such as the social and environmental project evaluation guidelines and the bridging document for climate-smart resource management. Attention was also focussed on gender quality, youth engagement and the protection of human rights.

In 2019 and 2020, the Expert Group focused on the sustainable management of natural resources, noting its fundamental role in achieving the SDGs and supporting inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. ECE called on ECE and non-ECE Member States, international organizations, industry, and regional commissions to deploy and develop UNFC and UNRMS. The Expert Group responded by delivering its mandated activities and updating the UNFC Category and Sub-category definitions to facilitate global application and deployment. At its 29th session, the Committee also endorsed the updated UNFC Update 2019 and requested the secretariat to publish the updated version in the six UN languages. The Committee requested the accelerated development of UNRMS. Moreover, the Committee recommended strengthened collaboration with other ECE subprogrammes on the sustainable use of natural resources. It noted the enhanced applicability of UNFC and UNRMS to the sustainable management of critical raw materials required for energy transitions. ECE also proposed developing a platform to coordinate the International Centres of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management (ICE-SRM) being established worldwide to disseminate UNFC and UNRMS and sought extrabudgetary funding to support the activities.

To take stock of the developments in this area of work, in 2022, after consultation with the Committee on Sustainable Energy, the secretariat proposed to undertake in 2024 a subprogramme-level evaluation. The theme was approved by ECE EXCOM at its 126th Meeting of 13 January 2023, included in the 2024 Proposed programme budget of Sect.20 and subsequently approved by the General Assembly through resolution 78/252 of 23 December 2023.

IV. Issues

The evaluation will answer the following questions:

Relevance

1. How relevant were ECE activities on sustainable resource management with regards to supporting its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
2. To what extent were gender, human rights, climate change, disability and other cross-cutting perspectives mainstreamed in these activities? How could this be improved?

Coherence

3. To what extent were ECE deliverables, including its intergovernmental meetings, coherent with those of other UN entities and international organizations working in the same area, including at country level?
4. How coherent was ECE intergovernmental work on sustainable resource management vis-à-vis the technical assistance projects and activities in the same area but supported by other funding sources?
5. How coherent was the overall communication on sustainable resource management?

Effectiveness

6. How effectively did ECE activities on sustainable resource management contribute to strengthening the mechanisms for sustainability and resilience in natural resource management within ECE member States?

Efficiency

7. How efficiently were the resources (financial, human, and technological) allocated and utilized on sustainable resource management?
8. How could the use of resources be improved? Would you propose any alternatives to achieve the same results?

Sustainability

9. What measurable improvements were observed on sustainable resource management in the ECE region, as a result of ECE work in this area?
10. To what extent did ECE seek collaboration and partnerships that could sustain efforts for sustainable resource management in the coming years?

V. 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 (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, 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 developed during the period, including but not limited to: UNFC and UNRMS documents, parliamentary documents and publications from the Sustainable energy subprogramme.
 - Deliverables implemented by the Sustainable energy subprogramme and reflected in the Umoja application.
 - Proposed programme budgets covering the evaluation period.

¹ [UNECE Evaluation policy](#)

² ST/AI/2021/3

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

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

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 Committee on Sustainable Energy and relevant subsidiary bodies, 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 ECE 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.

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. ECE 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 schedule⁵

1 February 2024	ToR finalized
1 March	Contract signed
15 March	Evaluator submits inception report including survey design
1 April	Launch of data gathering
15 April	Stakeholder interviews start
15 May	Evaluator submits draft report
15 June	Evaluator submits final report

VII. Resources

Ms. Charlotte Griffiths, Chief, Resources Management Section, Sustainable Energy Division, will manage the evaluation with the support of the Sustainable energy division. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) will provide guidance to the Programme Manager and evaluator as needed on the evaluation design, methodology and quality assurance of the final draft report.

VIII. Intended use / Next steps

The evaluation will be consistent with the ECE 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 the Paris Agreement. The Committee on Sustainable Energy will be briefed on the outcome of this evaluation.

⁵ Final timetable to be agreed following engagement of the evaluator

A management response to the evaluation will be prepared by ECE, and relevant recommendations implemented as scheduled in the management response. Progress on implementation of recommendations will be available on the ECE public 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 sustainable energy.
- Knowledge of and experience in working with intergovernmental processes, and energy policies.
- 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 ECE before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any point where such conflict occurs.