

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of the project:

“Implementation of the National Water and Health Targets in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan through National Policy Dialogues” funded by the Government of Finland

I. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to review the implementation and assess the extent to which the objective of “Implementation of the National Water and Health Targets in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan through National Policy Dialogues” projects (hereinafter “Project”) was achieved. The evaluation will assess the relevance of the project for the beneficiary countries, *effectiveness* in reaching relevant outcomes, *efficiency* in the use of human and staff resources in reaching project objectives, *sustainability* of UNECE’s work, *impact* on the water and health cooperation between the beneficiary countries and in Central Asia in general and *coordination, synergies and complementarities* with other ongoing UNECE projects funded by Finland. The results of the evaluation will support improvement of the future technical cooperation project and activities implemented by UNECE. The results of the evaluation will be important for the discussion with donors and partner organizations for any future work by UNECE in the area of water resources management and related health outcomes in the Central Asia region and beyond.

II. Scope

The evaluation will be guided by the objective, outcomes, activities and indicators of achievement established in the logical framework of the original and revised project document. The evaluation will consider to what extent the project contributed to enhance the capacities of Governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in implementation of the selected policy-related national water and health targets. The evaluation will cover the full period of project’s implementation.

The evaluation will assess how gender considerations were included the projects’ design, execution and results. It will make recommendations on how gender can be included in the design of future projects in UNECE.

The full project documentation includes project design, monitoring reports, progress reports to donors, partnership arrangements with relevant actors. All relevant information will be made available, including documentation and interviews, activities of partner organizations, any previous relevant reviews or evaluations conducted, and any other information which pertains to UNECE efforts in the successful execution of the project will be included in the evaluation.

III. Background

Improving access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation has been a major challenge for Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan where adverse effects of water-related diseases have been posing threats to human health and well-being. According to the 2017 World Bank report on water supply, sanitation and hygiene conditions in Tajikistan, only 57 percent of urban and 31 percent of rural households have access to safely managed water. The report also mentions that concentrations of chlorine are too low to comply with international or national health guidelines, which forces the population to resort to boiling as one of the main water treatment methods. Kyrgyzstan has significant water resources which are sufficient to meet the long-term needs of the population for drinking water. Nonetheless, the country still experiences issues with regular supply of drinking water in

the required volume and quality. For both countries, the situation is especially challenging in rural areas but also in the urban ones where affordability concerns come into play. The overview of the Water Sector of Kyrgyzstan for 2013 noted, for instance, that there is a number of water-related diseases, particularly enteric infections that predominantly affect the rural population due to the poor quality of water resources. The statistics of the global WHO/UNICEF database on drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene indicates that access to safely managed drinking water is available to 66 percent of the total population in Kyrgyzstan. The two countries lack modern legal and governance approaches, human capacity and financial resources for infrastructure development that would be required to improve this situation. A comprehensive framework and holistic approach offered by the UNECE-WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health allows to look at the water resources management, water supply and sanitation and the related health outcomes in an integrated manner in order to allow protecting human health and well-being by better water management and by preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases.

The project “Implementation of national water and health targets in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan through National Policy Dialogues” (September 2015 – 30 June 2018) was signed by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and UNECE on 9 October 2015 with the overall objective to enhance capacities of the Governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in the implementation of the selected policy-related national water and health targets set under the Protocol. A no-cost extension of the project duration until 31 December 2018 was agreed between UNECE and the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs on 5 July 2018 and the respective amendment of the initial agreement was signed by both parties. The extension of the project will allow additional time to ensure effective dissemination of project results and communication of project achievements. The project is expected to result in revised national water and health targets in Tajikistan and adopted national action plans to implement the targets set in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Implementation of the targets is to be supported by the legal acts and institutional arrangements in both countries.

The ultimate purpose of the project is to reduce water-related diseases, as well as to improve the sustainable management and use of water resources in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The project contributes to the achievement of this objective through better planning of national water and health objectives and through support to implementation of selected targets set under the Protocol in both countries.

In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, national water and health targets previously set in the context of the Protocol in 2013 have been reviewed and revised by a group of national experts through a consultative process with key stakeholders and endorsed in late 2016 by the Steering Committees of the National Policy Dialogues in both countries. Also, within the reporting period, action plans to achieve the targets set were developed in both countries and endorsed by the respective NPD Steering Committees. Both countries are now considering the adoption of the targets and related action plans through the official channels.

Since both countries are not yet Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health, it was a challenge to ensure full and continuous political support to the project in the beginning of its implementation. However, the commitment of high level decision makers and continuous active involvement of main stakeholders has guaranteed the achievement of the project results as planned. In particular, in Tajikistan, following active engagement of UNECE with the relevant high-level authorities, political support for the finalization of the revision of targets and their subsequent adoption has been secured. For instance, at the margins of the recently held Conference on the International Decade for Action Water for Sustainable Development (Dushanbe, 20-22 June 2018), this matter was discussed at the UNECE bilateral meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Health and Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources. These officials confirmed their overall support to the adoption of the revised Tajik targets. At the moment, the internal consultation process is ongoing and possible options for adoption are being discussed, i.e. through the Government Resolution or through a Joint Order of two focal ministries. In Kyrgyzstan, water and health are becoming the highest priority for the Government and there is therefore an increased understanding among the government officials regarding the usefulness of having national targets on water and health that follow the model of the Protocol. In this context,

it is worth noting a recent statement of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Sooronbay Jeenbekov, which underlined that providing the population with clean drinking water was a priority for the country's development and its Government policies and development of the state. UNECE will continue its efforts to promote the formal adoption of the revised targets and action plan at the level of the Kyrgyz Government.

The project also benefited from the commitment of both countries to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). In Tajikistan the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 is being promoted at highest level which often facilitated support from the decision makers for the project activities and plans. The Dushanbe Conference was largely organized around the SDG 6 and its targets, confirming the contribution the International Decade for Action Water for Sustainable Development is expected to make to the achievement of this Goal. The Protocol on Water and Health was featured prominently at the Conference, e.g. at the Action Panel on Water and Sanitation, chaired by the Minister of Health of Tajikistan and organized by WHO. Actions related to the Protocol on Water and Health were included in one of the outcome documents of the Conference – Call for Action and Partnership, whose draft has been recently shared by the Conference secretariat. In Kyrgyzstan, the NPD Steering Committee recommended that the revised targets and action plan are incorporated or taken into account to the extent possible in the programme to implement the Kyrgyz 2040 Sustainable Development Strategy which is to be adopted by the Government in 2018. This innovative approach has been promoted as a good practice among other countries working in the framework of the Protocol in order to ensure approximation and coherence of the work under the Protocol and implementation of the water, sanitation and health targets of the 2030 Agenda, thus extending the project impact to the regional level.

IV. Issues

The following issues/questions will provide the basis for the evaluation.

Relevance

1. How relevant was the project to the national needs and priorities of beneficiary countries?
2. How relevant was the design of the project, in line with the achievements and outcomes of other initiatives?
3. To what extent was the project design and development interventions relevant for meeting the projects objective?
4. To what extent the project was relevant to the UNECE regular programme of work?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent were the expected accomplishments (outcomes) of the project achieved?
2. What were the challenges/obstacles to achieving the project objectives and expected accomplishments (outcomes)?
3. Has the project improved capacity of key stakeholders?
4. To what extent were the planned activities sufficient to achieve the expected accomplishments (outcomes) and project objective?
5. To what extent implementation of the project supported the expected accomplishments of the UNECE regular programme of work under the Subprogramme 1 "Environment"?
6. To what extent the implementation of the project contributed to the overall objectives of the Protocol on Water and Health?
7. To what extent the implementation of the project was effectively supported by and contributed to the National Policy Dialogue processes in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan? What were the synergies that the project brought along?

Efficiency

1. Were the available resources appropriate to the scale of the project and the needs identified by beneficiary countries?
2. Were the human and financial resources allocated to the project used efficiently and commensurate to the project results?
3. Were the resources (financial and human) appropriate to the design of the project?
4. Were the activities implemented according to the planned timeframe?

Sustainability

1. To what extent will the results of the project continue after completion of the projects in the beneficiary countries?
2. To what degree the project influenced the policies of beneficiary countries to further pursue cooperation to improve the quality of water shared water resources?
3. To what degree the project outcomes were upscaled, e.g. national water and health targets used in government authorities' discussions with donor community?
4. Where the measures to enhance sustainability of project results given sufficient attention during the preparation and implementation phases?

Impact

1. To what extent has the project impacted the legal, institutional and technical capacity challenges at the national and regional levels to effectively address regional water quality problems?
2. What policy packages were or were not successful and why (criteria, success factors)?
3. To what extent the project impacted effective decision-making and information exchange between the countries on water quality and related health outcomes?
4. To what extent the project resulted in increased ownership of key stakeholders allowing them to lead and drive the implementation of the targets beyond the project finalization?

V. Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation will include the following:

1. Desk study of project materials: all relevant project documents, including project descriptions, reports, publications, etc. and other information will be provided to the evaluator.
2. Interview with 10-15 key external stakeholders, including representatives of the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources and Ministry of Health of Tajikistan, the Department of Water Resources in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Melioration and the Ministry of Health of Kyrgyzstan, international and local experts and donors (face-to-face, via telephone and skype, list of contacts to be provided).
3. Interviews with internal stakeholders including the project team and the UNECE Environment Division.
4. Some of the interviews, in particular with representatives of water management authorities, will be conducted by the evaluator in Dushanbe, Tajikistan and at the FINWaterWEI II Regional Conference planned for 26-27 September 2018, Bishkek and Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the event will provide an opportunity to meet and discuss the project implementation and results with donor and partner organizations dealing with the water management issues in the region.
5. An electronic survey of internal and external stakeholders, conducted in both English and Russian.

UNECE will provide all documentation, support and guidance to the evaluation consultant as needed throughout the timeline of the evaluation. The consultant shall be provided the UNECE Evaluation Policy, evaluation report templates and checklists as guidance for the requirements for evaluation reports in UNECE.

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the UNECE Evaluation Policy. The evaluation will comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, including due consideration of the gender aspects of the project's design and implementation. UNECE will provide all documentation as needed throughout the timeline of the evaluation. UNECE will provide support and further explanation to the evaluator as needed.

The evaluation report of maximum 15-20 pages will summarize the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation (with annexes including summaries from data gathering). An executive summary (max. 2 pages) will summarize the methodology of the evaluation, key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

VI. Evaluation Schedule

The evaluation schedule follows:

1. Desk review of all documents provided by UNECE to the Consultant: 25 September – 10 October 2018
2. Developing and preparing interviews: 25-30 September 2018
3. Participation in Bishkek and Issyk-Kul Conference, interviews 26-27 September 2018
4. Follow-up interviews and studies, travel to Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and Geneva, Switzerland, as needed 1-30 October 2018
5. Delivery of Draft Report 30 October 2018
6. Comments back to the evaluator after review by project manager and selected project participants 15 November 2018
7. Delivery Final Report 30 November 2018

VII. Resources

Resources available for the evaluation of the project “Implementation of the National Water and Health Targets in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan through National Policy Dialogues” are USD 7,000 exclusive of travel costs.

The UNECE Project manager will oversee and provide guidance during the course of the evaluation. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) will provide guidance to the Project 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 UNECE Evaluation Policy. Following the receipt of the final report, UNECE will develop a management response, and action plan for addressing recommendations made by the consultant. The results of the evaluation shall be considered, together with other project evaluations conducted during 2018, by senior management in UNECE to address systemic inefficiencies or challenges to effective project implementation in UNECE.

IX. Criteria for Evaluators

Evaluators should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent background in relevant to the projects disciplines;
- Minimum 10 years of relevant experience; Working experience related to projects or issues in water management in Central Asia is highly desirable;
- Specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, social statistics, advanced

- statistical research and analysis;
- Demonstrated relevant professional experience in design, management and conduct of evaluation processes with multiple stakeholders, survey design and implementation, and project planning, monitoring and management;
 - Demonstrated methodological knowledge of evaluations, including quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for end-of-cycle project evaluations;
 - Fluent in written and spoken English and Russian.
 - Good computer skills (especially Microsoft office applications).

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

Annex: Project documents