



## Terms of Reference (TOR)

### **External Evaluation of UNCTAD's Development Account 7<sup>th</sup> Tranche Project Strengthening Capacities of Developing Countries in Africa and Asia to Support Their Effective Participation in Negotiating Bilateral, Regional and Multilateral Trade Facilitation Arrangements**

#### **1. Introduction and Purpose**

The project implemented by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), entitled: “Strengthening Capacities of Developing Countries in Africa and Asia to Support Their Effective Participation in Negotiating Bilateral, Regional and Multilateral Trade Facilitation Arrangements”, will end in December 2013. In compliance with the requirements of the Development Account, which supports this project (7th tranche), the project will need to undergo an external evaluation.

This evaluation should assess, systematically and objectively, the project framework and design, project management, and project performance. The evaluation should provide information that is credible, useful, and practical as well as constructive and forward-looking recommendations are made in order to strengthen the work of UNCTAD in this area.

The primary audiences of the evaluation report are UNCTAD management and programme officers, the Capacity Development Office/Development Account of DESA project stakeholders, UNCTAD's member States, and other stakeholders.

#### **2. Background**

Trade facilitation has become one of the priority issues on the national trade development agenda in many LLDCs in Africa and Asia. Regional trade agreements and inter-regional trade agreements contain elaborate trade facilitation measures and have to be implemented in a coherent manner. There would be risks of potential discrimination and divergence resulting from multiple Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) if trade facilitation measures are not designed, managed and applied properly. There is the need to carefully analyze trade facilitation measures under different RTAs and put in place mechanisms at the national and regional levels that would integrate regional trade facilitation commitments into national trade facilitation policies frameworks in a coherent manner.

The goal of this Development Account project is to enhance the capacity of nine landlocked and transit developing countries in East Africa and South Asia to design, manage and implement regional trade facilitation commitments to ensure the commitments are coherent with trade facilitation measures contained in the negotiated WTO agreement on trade facilitation and are aligned to national policies and frameworks.

The nice selected countries are: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, India, Kenya, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

More specifically, as enunciated in the project document, the project will be implemented through a sequence of activities aimed at enhancing national human and institutional capacities. The expected accomplishments are as follows:

- (i) Increased skills of policy makers and trade negotiators in the six countries to design policies and frameworks to adopt regional and multilateral trade facilitation arrangements.
- (ii) Establishment of new and/or reinforcing existing national and regional trade facilitation collaborative platforms among the public and private sector stakeholders in the six countries.

The main activities of this project include fact-finding missions, national workshops, cluster meetings and onsite visits, inter-regional forum, the development of training materials, and an online best practice sharing tool.

This project is aligned with the objective of sub-programme 4- Technology and logistics, within the scope and priorities of the Biennial Programme Plan of UNCTAD (2010-2011), to have “Improved efficiency of trade logistics of developing countries through, inter alia, strengthening of management of transport operations, coherent transit systems and trade facilitation, development and implementation of appropriate institutional and legal frameworks, and active participation of developing countries in transport and trade facilitation negotiations”. It also supports UNCTAD’s mandate under paragraph 166 of the Accra Accord to “continue to provide capacity-building and technical assistance to policymakers and other stakeholders in developing countries on such issues as..., developing and implementing appropriate institutional and legal frameworks, and devising and implementing national and international actions to promote transport and trade facilitation, including transit corridors.”

The project will contribute to Millennium Development Goals (MDG) number 8<sup>1</sup> as it promotes partnerships and collaborative platforms among the trade facilitation stakeholders both at the national and regional levels, targeting especially landlocked and/or transit developing countries.

The project started in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2011 and is expected to finish by 1st quarter 2014. It has been executed by UNCTAD, in close collaboration with relevant governmental counterparts and collaboration with UNECA, UNESCAP, and UNECE. Synergies have been created with another project implemented by UNCTAD, financed by the European Union and Norway, that aims at assisting developing countries in the development of their national Trade Facilitation implementation plans.

### **3. Scope of the Evaluation**

The evaluation will consider all activities that have been implemented under this project that were financed from the development account. It should examine the performance of

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<sup>1</sup> MDGs GOAL 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

Target 8.A: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system; Target 8.B: Address the special needs of least developed countries; Target 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

the project in accordance with its logical framework. More specifically, the evaluation should address the following issues:

**a) *Relevance***

- Whether the project design and choice of activities and deliverables have properly reflected and addressed the needs of the beneficiaries, taking into account UNCTAD's mandates, and alignment with the objectives of the Development Account;
- Whether the planned and actual activities and outputs of the project were consistent with the intended outcomes and impact;
- What is UNCTAD's comparative advantage in this area of work;

**b) *Effectiveness***

- Whether the activities have achieved planned objectives as enunciated in the project's logframe and produced beneficial results;
- What were the main factors influencing the outcomes of this project, either negatively or positively; what are the lessons to be learned for a replication of the project approach to other locations;

**c) *Efficiency***

- Have resources and funds been used efficiently, leveraging in-house expertise, previous interventions and other resources to optimize the project outcomes;
- Have the project activities been delivered in a timely manner;

**d) *Sustainability***

- Whether the activities have been designed and implemented in such a way to ensure maximum sustainability of their impact, for instance, whether beneficiary country stakeholders were actively involved in the initiation, design and implementation of the project;

**e) *Impact***

- Whether there is initial evidence that the beneficiaries' capacity in designing, managing and implementing regional and national trade facilitation solutions (including undertaking trade negotiations) has been enhanced;

#### **4. Deliverables and Expected Output**

The evaluation, on the basis of its findings and assessments made on the above criteria, should draw conclusions, make recommendations and identify lessons learned from the implementation of this project.

More specifically, the evaluation should:

- Highlight what has been successful and can be replicated elsewhere;
- Indicate shortcomings and constraints in the implementation of the project while, at the same time, identifying the remaining challenges, gaps and needs for future courses of action;
- Make pragmatic recommendations to suggest how UNCTAD's work under this area and related projects can be strengthened. In particular, the evaluator should include recommendations on:
  - subsequent actions needed to improve the effectiveness of the project logframe;

- other actions conducive to ensuring successful attainment of the expected accomplishments of the project.

Three deliverables are expected out of this evaluation:

- 1) An inception report;
- 2) A first draft evaluation report; and
- 3) The final evaluation report.

The inception report should outline the evaluator's understanding of the issues under evaluation including an evaluation framework, and a detailed work plan with the timeframe. The evaluation framework should include a matrix relating evaluation issues and questions to evaluation criteria, indicators, sources of information and methods of data collection.

The first draft report should be presented to the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit and relevant stakeholders for quality assurance and factual corrections, if any.

The final output of the evaluation is a report that must compose below key elements:

- 1) Executive summary (maximum 2 pages);
- 2) Introduction of the evaluation background and a brief description of the project, the budget utilization and the project activities and outputs;
- 3) A clear description of the methodology used;
- 4) Findings and assessments according to the criteria listed in Section 3 of this ToR;
- 5) Conclusions and recommendations drawn from the assessments.

In the evaluation report, all the assessments made must be supported by facts and findings, direct or indirect evidence, and/or well-substantiated logic. It follows that all the recommendations made should be supported by the assessments made.

The evaluator is required to submit a separate final list of those interviewed, for the record. If necessary, the report may be accompanied by a supplement including supporting materials. If English is not the native language of the evaluator, he/ she is requested to ensure that the final report be copy edited before submission to UNCTAD.

## **5. Methodology**

The evaluator must use a mixed-method approach to triangulate all available data sources to reach conclusions and findings. Such evaluation methodology may include but is not limited to the following:

- Review of relevant project documents and relevant materials;
- Interviews with relevant UNCTAD staff;
- Personal or Telephone interviews with direct beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders;
- Surveys of workshop participants and project partners, as may be required;
- Analysis of the data collected.

All relevant materials will be provided to the evaluator including but not limited to: Project documents and reports; mission reports; progress reports, self-assessment reports, publications, documents and/or reports produced through the project, material used for activities; training materials; resource-use information; list of beneficiaries and workshop/meeting participants, counterparts and resource persons; existing feedback (assessments, letters, surveys, etc.).

## 6. Description of Duties

The evaluator reports to the Chief of the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit. He or she will undertake the evaluation exercise under the guidance of the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit and in coordination with the project manager. The evaluator will be responsible for the evaluation design, data collection, assessment and reporting. The evaluator must take full responsibility for the contents of the report generated and ensure its independence and accuracy.

The evaluator should observe the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines, standards<sup>2</sup>, and norms<sup>3</sup> for evaluations in the UN system, as well as UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy<sup>4</sup>, in the conduct of this assignment.

## 7. Timetable

The total duration of the evaluation is equivalent to 21 days of work and will take place between 14 October, 2013 and 13 January, 2014.

Activity	Days*
Desk research and study of relevant documentation	4 days
Preparation of data collection tools	2 days
Interviews with UNCTAD staff (TBC)	1 day
Observation of project event and interviews with event participants (28, 29 NOV, Geneva) **	2 days
Further follow-up with beneficiaries and stakeholders	4 days
Data analysis and draft report write up	5 days
Final report write up	3 days

Note:

\*: \*\*: *The evaluator needs to make himself / herself available during the week of 25 November to conduct interviews or a focus group discussion with participants at the final event organized by this project. The tentative date for the focus group discussion is scheduled to be on Thursday and Friday, 28- 29 November, 2013.*

## 8. Monitoring and Progress Control

The evaluator must keep the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit informed of the progress made in the evaluation on a weekly basis. The evaluator will also present the draft report to the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit and the project manager before the final submission, giving sufficient time for the verification of factual findings as well as its compliance with the ToR (approximately 1 week). To this end, a draft of the report must be presented by 16 December 2013 for verification by the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit and the project manager, before submission of the final report.

The deadline for submission of the final report will be 13 January 2014.

<sup>2</sup> "Standards for Evaluation in the UN System" by UNEG, UNEG/FN/Standards (2005);

<sup>3</sup> "Norms for Evaluation in the UN System" by UNEG, UNEG/FN/Norms (2005);

<sup>4</sup> "Evaluation Policy" of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), December 2011.

## **9. Qualifications and Experience**

- **Education:** Advanced university degree in economics, or related field.
- **Experience:** At least 5 years of experience in conducting evaluations, preferably on interventions in the areas of trade-related technical assistance and capacity building. It is also preferable that the evaluator has a good understanding of WTO matters, and of trade facilitation;
- **Language:** Fluency in oral and written English.

## **10. Conditions of Service**

The evaluator will serve under a consultancy contract as detailed in the applicable United Nations rules and regulations. The evaluator will not be considered as staff member or official of the United Nations, but shall abide by the relevant standards of conduct. The United Nations is entitled to all intellectual property and other proprietary rights deriving from this exercise.

The evaluator needs to complete in advance the mandatory online trainings required for the mission to Geneva.

## **11. Applying for the consultancy**

Applicants are required to submit an expression of interest to undertake the assignment/consultancy and include the following:

- Cover letter stating why you are suited for this work, your available start date and work experience, especially evaluation experience;
- Detailed CV

A sample of a recent evaluation report should be submitted as a reference.

Applications with the above details should be sent to [evaluation@unctad.org](mailto:evaluation@unctad.org)

**The deadline for submitting the applications is extended to 18 September 2013.**