



Terms of Reference (TOR)

External evaluation of UNCTAD Subprogramme 5: Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes

1. Introduction and Purpose

The Trade and Development Board, at its sixty-second annual session¹, agreed with the conclusions of its subsidiary organ, the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget from its seventy-first session², which included a request to the UNCTAD Secretariat to conduct an independent evaluation of UNCTAD's Subprogramme on Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes (Subprogramme 5). The Working Party will consider the results of the evaluation at its session in September 2018.

This Terms of Reference outlines the scale and scope of the evaluation of Subprogramme 5. This is a formative in-depth evaluation and will cover the period between 2013 and 2017. This evaluation exercise is meant to ensure ownership, result-based orientation, cost-effectiveness and quality of UNCTAD assistance. By carrying out this evaluation, UNCTAD plans to assess its work, to learn lessons, to receive feedback, appraisal and recognition, as well as to mobilize resources by showing the possible attribution of achievements to the programme.

2. Subprogramme overview

Substantive responsibility for Subprogramme 5 is vested in the Division on Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes (ALDC) of UNCTAD. The Division consists of two Branches (Trade and Poverty Branch and Research and Policy Analysis Branch).

The objective of UNCTAD's Subprogramme 5 on Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes as per the biennial programme plan for 2016-2017 is as follows:

" To promote development of national policies and international support measures to build productive capacities for economic development and poverty reduction in Africa, LDCs and other groups of countries in special situations (LLDCs, SIDS and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies) and to progressively and beneficially integrate them into the global economy." ³

The Subprogramme mandate has been reinforced in the outcome document of the UNCTAD XIV Conference on Trade and Development, which took place in Nairobi in 2016. Paragraph 10 (a) of the

¹ TD/B/62/11, http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/tdb62d11_en.pdf

² TD/B/WP/275, http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/wpd275_en.pdf

³ A/70/6 (Sect.12), http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/6%28Sect.12%29

Nairobi Maafikiano calls for strengthening its special focus on trade and development needs of LDCs across all areas of its mandate and in accordance with the Istanbul Programme of Action and other relevant documents on LDCs. Paragraphs 10 (b) to (e) focus on the remaining countries in special needs that are within the mandate of the Division, namely Africa - including support for the African Union and NEPAD -, the landlocked developing countries - including support for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action - small island developing states (SIDS) - including the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, and lastly the structurally weak and vulnerable small economies. The type of work the Division is responsible for contributes towards the achievement of SDG 1, 8, 9, 10 and 17. The countries in special needs are the battleground on which the 2030 Agenda will be won or lost. This is where shortfalls from the SDG targets are greatest, where improvement has been slowest, and where the barriers to further progress are highest.

UNCTAD is a knowledge-based institution and research and analysis is the backbone of its work on trade and development and interrelated issues in the area of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. The Division is producing two of UNCTAD's flagship reports, namely the Least Developed Countries Report and the Economic Development in Africa Report. The Division aims for its research to be independent, solid, ground breaking and ahead of the curve. Furthermore, the Division is actively producing research papers in the form of trade and poverty research documents, and other various publications on rules of origin, geographical indication and market access.

Intergovernmental meetings are organized and serviced by the Division, which provide a platform for experience-sharing and deliberations on key national and international issues related to countries in needs. The policy recommendations and the findings from the research analysis contained in the Division research work are used as basis to negotiate agreed outcomes.

The Division's technical assistance is implemented in-house and through the Enhanced Integrated Framework. In the first case, the technical assistance is demand-driven, based on the priorities established by the beneficiaries. The Division has been active also in implementing Development Account projects, which provide seed funding to develop an idea/concept/domestic policy to answer to specific needs. In the second case, technical assistance is implemented in a multi-stakeholders setting.

The programme of work of the Subprogramme is presently implemented in accordance with the strategy detailed under Subprogramme 5 of Programme 10-Trade and Development of the United Nations Biennial Programme Plan for the period 2016-2017.⁴ Annex 1 contains the logical framework and strategy of the subprogramme for the 2016-2017 biennium, during which regular budget resources include 20 posts in the professional and above category and 7 general staff posts.⁵

⁴ A/69/6 (Prog. 10), [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/6\(Prog.10\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/6(Prog.10))

⁵ A/70/6 (Sect.12)

3. Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation of Subprogramme 5 was approved by the member States at the Working Party in 2015.⁶ Since the launch of the UNCTAD Evaluation Policy in 2011, UNCTAD has carried out one Subprogramme evaluations per year for full evaluation coverage of UNCTAD's programme of work every 5 years: Subprogramme 1- Globalization, Interdependence, and Development (in 2012/13), Subprogramme 2- investment and enterprise (in 2013/14), Subprogramme 3- International trade (2014/15) and. Subprogramme 4- Technology and Logistics (2015/16). This evaluation will be the fifth and last in the series.⁷

Specifically, the purpose of this in-depth evaluation is to:

1. Independently and objectively assess:
 - a. The quality of the overall Subprogramme concept and design;
 - b. The efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the different programmes under Subprogramme 5 and overall ALDC in achieving the planned objectives;
 - c. The Subprogramme's relevance to identified needs and ability to adapt to any changes, developments;
 - d. Internal and external partnerships and synergies; and
 - e. Whether or not there were any unanticipated results, positive or negative, arising from programme implementation.
2. Identify:
 - a. Lessons learned and good practices arising from Subprogramme 5 for improved continued implementation and future policymaking and planning; and
 - b. Proposals for concrete action and recommendations that will feed into the strengthening of Subprogramme 5.

A key purpose of the evaluation is to help all stakeholders reflect on what has worked well and what has not and thus use lessons learned so far feed into the continued implementation of Subprogramme 5.

4. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation of Subprogramme 5 will cover the period from 2013 - 2017. The evaluation will assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, partnerships, and gender and equity using the evaluation criteria and questions stated in Section 5 below.

The evaluation will have a global coverage, with selected field missions (to be decided jointly between the evaluation team, Subprogramme 5 Management Team and the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit (EMU) of UNCTAD during the Inception Phase.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Relevance

- To what extent and how have the Branches of the Subprogramme been relevant to the needs of its main stakeholders and beneficiaries?

⁶ Report of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget on its seventy-first session, TD/B/WP/275

⁷ There was no evaluation in 2015/16 due to the UNCTAD quadrennial conference.

- To what extent are the Branches of the Subprogramme working as part of a coherent and aligned UNCTAD approach?
- To what extent is the Subprogramme aligned with UNCTAD's mandates and the SDGs, and how well has its management translated the relevant mandates into programme priorities and work plans that support developing countries in achieving the SDGs?
- To what extent does the Subprogramme follow the guidance of the Nairobi Maafikiano?
- What are Subprogramme 5's areas of comparative advantage and value-add in terms of contributing to global, regional and national policy processes and capacity-building?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has Subprogramme 5 achieved its targeted results in 2013-17 (as enunciated in the UNCTAD Biennial Programme Plans for that period)?
- To what extent is there evidence of Subprogramme 5's contributions under UNCTAD's three pillars in global/regional/national policy processes? In particular, to what extent is there evidence of the Subprogramme's inputs in policy instruments adopted by member States, including but not limited to laws, regulations, policy statements, strategies, action plans, and economic instruments?
- What are the key factors that have contributed to, or hindered, the Subprogramme's influence in global/regional/national policy processes?

Efficiency

- To what extent has the Subprogramme been efficient in using its three core modalities of work (i.e., research and analysis, support to consensus-building and technical assistance) in a way to optimise their complementarities?
- Were resources and inputs converted to outputs in a timely and cost-effective manner?
- To what extent are there synergies between the Subprogramme and other UNCTAD Subprogrammes and/or other UNS Organizations and can these be improved further?
- How efficiently were resources utilized in the delivery of Subprogramme mandates?
- To what extent could the recent rollout of minimum requirements of RBM improve the efficiency of Subprogramme 5?

Impact

- What impact has the Subprogramme had on Member States, key stakeholders, in Africa and the categories of countries the Division is focusing on?

Sustainability

- To what extent has the Subprogramme built in sustainability mechanisms into programme design?
- To what extent can the benefits generated through the programme be sustained?
- Did the Subprogramme receive sufficient financial and human resources to adequately meet its objectives and mid and long-term objectives and priorities?

Partnerships (optional)

- How has the Subprogramme advanced or built partnerships with national regional and international development counterparts, civil society, the UN family and/or the private sector?
- To what extent does the Subprogramme communicate with partners in disseminating products, exchanging ideas, good practices etc.?

Gender and equity

- To what extent are gender and equity issues reflected in the Subprogramme?

6. Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation will use methodologies and techniques as determined by the specific needs for information, the questions set out in the TOR and the availability of resources and the priorities of stakeholders. The evaluation will be undertaken through a triangulation exercise of data stemming from desk review, structured interviews, as well as other sources to be established by the evaluator team. These could be primary data coming from focus groups, questionnaires, surveys, or secondary data stemming from other entities. The evaluation will include a stakeholder analysis aimed at ensuring multiple perspectives with clear views and assessments from both within and outside UNCTAD.

All evaluations of the United Nations system are guided by the principles of human rights and gender equality.⁸ It is important that the evaluation assesses and determines the effects of outcomes and impacts (intended or unintended) in different types of duty bearers and right holders in disaggregated fashion with special consideration of the ones in most vulnerable positions.

The evaluation will have the following stages:

- Desk review
- Evaluation design
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Validation of findings
- Drafting and reporting
- Presentation of findings

In terms of data collection, the evaluation will use both quantitative and qualitative methods with an approach that could include, but will not be limited to the following:

1. A preliminary desk review/content analysis of secondary documents, including UNCTAD's mandate, budget fascicles, any performance assessment and evaluation reports; reports of the annual sessions of the Trade and Development Board, the Trade and Development Commission, and other relevant intergovernmental meetings; documents and reports produced by the subprogramme, project documents and reports; mission reports; material used for activities; resource-use information; list of beneficiaries, counterparts and resource persons; existing evaluation reports and feedback (assessments, letters); relevant reports received from other counterparts; Subprogramme 5 UNDA project evaluation reports; and others.
2. Missions to UNCTAD in Geneva to conduct face-to-face key informant interviews/focus group discussions with UNCTAD staff, representatives of UNCTAD's member States, partner institutions, and civil society;
3. Mission to selected countries or regions to conduct face-to-face key informant interviews/focus group discussions with relevant partners and stakeholders. Organization of the visit will be decided in consultation with the EMU based on the initial study of the available

⁸ "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations" by UNEG, <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>

documentary evidence, and taking into account the budgetary provisions for this purpose, and the expectations from the subprogramme on this evaluation.

4. On-line surveys targeted at different groups of stakeholders, as identified in consultation with programme managers;
5. Follow-up telephone interviews as may be required to clarify responses provided through the on-line questionnaire; and
6. Direct observation of meetings or events organized under Subprogramme 5's programme of work during the period of the evaluation.

The evaluators will further elaborate on the evaluation methodology and evaluation questions in the Inception Report, determining thereby the exact focus and approach for the exercise, including developing the stakeholder analysis and identifying the sources and methods for data collection in an evaluation matrix. The methodology should align with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards.

The sampling strategy (based on the stakeholder analysis) should guarantee the highest degree of representation of the portfolio that the evaluation comprises. It is at the evaluators' discretion as to the actual representative programmes to be included for assessment in the evaluation.

The quality of the evaluation 'product' will depend on the methods used to collect and analyse data. The consultant will consider comments received and will reflect them, as appropriate, without compromising his/her independence and impartiality.

6. Structure of the Evaluation Team

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent, external evaluation team composed of one professional evaluator (the team leader), a research analyst⁹ and two experts (delegates from member States) who are familiar with UNCTAD's intergovernmental mandates and programmes, and can bring in the perspectives of donor and beneficiary countries respectively. The evaluation team will work under the methodological guidance of the EMU and the team leader may draw upon EMU expertise for the evaluation as appropriate.

7. Description of Duties

The team leader bears overall responsibility for the evaluation, including:

1. Conceptualizing and operationalizing the evaluation, including the presentation of an inception report that includes a detailed work plan, evaluation matrix and stakeholder analysis;
 - Leading the evaluation team and ensures that each team member is aware of his/her own key roles and responsibilities within the team;
 - Overseeing and undertaking the systematic data collection, stakeholder consultations and analytical and writing assignments conducted by the team, in accordance with the agreed work plan;
 - Triangulating data and testing rival explanations;
 - Leading field missions to conduct interviews with beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders at the country level, and if feasible, to observe the work of the Subprogramme by attending

⁹ Contingent upon the availability of funding.

conferences/ seminars/ workshops organized by the Subprogramme and draft mission summaries;

- Presenting the preliminary findings to UNCTAD management and other counterparts—consider comments received from the audience;
- Ensuring the team adheres to the norms, standards and codes of conduct of the UN system for evaluations;
- Overseeing a timely and high-quality production of the evaluation deliverables in accordance with the processes described in the overall Terms of Reference;
- Sharing ideas, pictures and stories from the evaluation to serve as a communication platform for this evaluation;
- Finalising and presenting the evaluation report to UNCTAD's Working Party in Geneva; and
- Keeping the EMU informed of progress made in the evaluation on a regular basis.

The two member state delegates will contribute to the evaluation design, data collection, data analysis, assessments and reporting. The research analyst will support the evaluation team in data collection and analysis as well as logistical and administration support. The evaluation team will be collectively responsible for the completion of the report and its presentation to the Working Party, which commissioned the evaluation. The evaluation team must take full responsibility for the contents of its report and ensure its independence, accuracy, credibility and utility.

The evaluation team should observe the UNEG guidelines, Norms and Standards¹⁰ for evaluations in the UN system, as well as UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy¹¹ and guidelines, in the conduct of this evaluation.

The experts shall act independently, in line with UNEG Ethical Guidelines and in their individual capacities. Members of the evaluation team must not have been involved in the design and/or implementation, supervision and coordination of and/or have benefited from the Subprogramme under evaluation.

8. Deliverables

On the basis of a preliminary desk review and interviews, the evaluation team should submit an inception report that:

- Explicitly and clearly defines the scope of the evaluation: what will and will not be covered, including, for example, the programmes and activities to be included in the evaluation;
- Specifies the methods for data collection and analysis, including information on the overall methodological design, sampling strategy and draft interview guides/surveys, as appropriate;
- Include a stakeholder analysis aimed at ensuring multiple and diverse perspectives from a wide range of internal and external stakeholders;
- Presents a clear evaluation matrix that outlines comprehensive and tailored sets of evaluation questions (for different stakeholders) and indicators within the framework of the evaluation criteria, the indicators, source of information and data collection method; and

¹⁰ “Norms and Standards for Evaluation” by UNEG, <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

¹¹ “Evaluation Policy” of The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), http://unctad.org/Sections/edm_dir/docs/osg_EvaluationPolicy2011_en.pdf

- Includes the evaluation plan incorporating the key stages of the evaluation process and the evaluation timeline.

The final output of the evaluation is a report of strictly no more than **8,300 words**, composed of four parts, namely: (a) A brief executive summary of important findings and conclusions. (b) Introduction and a brief description of the subprogramme and the evaluation methodology; (c) Detailed findings, assessments and conclusions according to the criteria established in section 5 of this document; and (d) strategic and operational recommendations drawn from the evaluation and assessment. The report will be accompanied by a supplement (annexes) including supporting materials as well as include case studies from Subprogramme 5.

In the report, all the assessments made by the evaluation team must be supported by facts, direct or indirect evidence, and/or well-substantiated logic. It follows that all the recommendations made by the evaluation team should be supported by the assessments. Each recommendation must fulfil the following criteria:

- Clear link to findings;
- Clear and concise formulation;
- Clear application domain and specific recommendation targets mentioned (UNCTAD management, programme management, member States, donors etc.);
- Classified on the basis of priority (i.e. key, important and general); and
- Supported by evidence (sources that substantiate findings).¹²

The evaluation team is required to submit a separate list of those interviewed/consulted for the record.

9. Timetable

The evaluation team will be in place as of November 2017 and will submit the Inception Report on 20 December 2017. The data collection and analysis phase will take place between January and March 2018.

A first draft of the report must be submitted by 23 April 2018 to EMU for quality assurance and relevant stakeholders for verification of factual findings.

The deadline for submission of the final report is 15 May 2018.

The evaluation team will present the report to the Working Party of the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget at its annual session on technical cooperation and evaluation in September 2018, in Geneva, Switzerland.

10. Management of the evaluation process

Management Arrangements

¹² The template evaluation report will include an annexed matrix for evaluation recommendations that will reflect these elements.

The independent evaluation will be carried out in line with UNCTAD's Evaluation Policy and UNEG Norms and Standards. The evaluation team will work closely with EMU.

Evaluation and Monitoring Unit

The evaluation is managed by the EMU, which provides quality assurance through the provision of guidelines, formats, assistance and advice during the evaluation process. EMU further ensures that the evaluation conforms to the UNEG Norms and Standards. In particular, the EMU guides the process of this evaluation, endorses the TOR, selects the evaluation team and liaises closely with the team throughout the entire evaluation process. EMU comments on and approves the evaluation methodology and provides methodological support throughout the evaluation. EMU also comments on the draft report, performs the quality assurance of the final report, supports the process of issuing a management response, if needed, and participates in disseminating the final report to stakeholders within and outside of UNCTAD. EMU coordinates the publishing of this report and the evaluation team's presentation of the evaluation results to the Working Party.

Subprogramme 5 Management Team

The Subprogramme 5 management team is responsible for overlooking and supporting the evaluation process. The Subprogramme will be responsible for the provision of lists of stakeholders of the evaluation, desk review materials to the evaluation team (within the defined timeline), reviewing the evaluation methodology as captured and providing factual clarifications to the Inception Report, liaising with counterparts for logistics arrangement for missions and meetings, as well as reviewing the draft report and developing an implementation plan for the evaluation recommendations.

The Subprogramme will provide support to the Evaluation Team before, during and after the field missions. The required support will include, for example, provision of assistance in setting up meetings with key informants and stakeholders in consultation with the Team Leader, and supporting in all logistical matters (including local translation, in-country travel), with or without the support of local counterparts.

The Subprogramme and its programme managers will be requested to follow-up with stakeholders to ensure their responsiveness to the evaluation team's data collection requests.

The Subprogramme team will also be responsible for drafting the management response.

Annex 1 - Logical framework of Subprogramme 5 for the biennium 2016-2017

Objective of the Organization: To promote development of national policies and international support measures to build productive capacities for economic development and poverty reduction in Africa, least developed countries and other groups of countries in special situations (landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies) and to progressively and beneficially integrate them into the global economy

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat Indicators of achievement

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| (a) Greater awareness of and dialogue on policy options to promote African economic development | (a) Number of Member States indicating the usefulness of UNCTAD research and analysis for the national policymaking process |
| (b) Greater awareness of and dialogue on policy options to address development problems of least developed countries in the global economy, including those in the process of graduation from the list of least developed countries | (b) Number of Member States indicating the usefulness of UNCTAD research and analysis for the national policymaking process |
| (c) Enhanced integration of trade policies and priorities into the national development plans of least developed countries | (c) Number of least developed countries that have made progress in enhancing the integration of trade policies and priorities into their national development plans and have implemented the action matrices of the Enhanced Integrated Framework |
| (d) Improved capacities of landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies to support their economic transformation and resilience-building efforts | (d) Number of landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and other structurally weak, vulnerable and small economies having benefited from UNCTAD analysis and advisory services and other forms of assistance on achieving structural progress |
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