ESCAP EVALUATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Evaluation findings, lessons learned and actions taken

December 2019

Strategy and Programme Management Division
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SUMMARY

This biennial report presents key findings, lessons learned and recommendations from evaluations of ESCAP’s work in a more accessible and easier to read format. It covers both internal (commissioned by ESCAP) and external evaluations (conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and Joint Inspection Unit) completed from 2017 and 2018. The internal evaluations include three subprogramme/thematic evaluations covering the work of a division, a regional institution and an intergovernmental platform and eight project evaluations covering the work of four divisions and two subregional offices.

By issuing an updated Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Guidelines in 2017, ESCAP took a significant step towards aligning its evaluation system with the updated UNEG norms and standards for evaluation and increasing the evaluation coverage for activities funded through extrabudgetary resources. ESCAP evaluations were undertaken in close collaboration with divisions, offices and regional institutions as well as partners and stakeholders. To ensure use of evaluation results, ESCAP formulates a management response and follow-up action plan for each evaluation recommendation and supports full implementation of agreed actions.

This report is a tool to promote use of evaluation outputs for organizational learning, informing decision-making processes and promoting accountability.

Subprogramme/thematic evaluations

ESCAP commissioned an independent evaluation of the Social Development Division (SDD) in 2018. It was the first evaluation of SDD subprogramme in recent years. The evaluation found that SDD was effective in creating a neutral space to discuss social development issues and made positive impact in establishing regional consensus and joint positions on various thematic areas. In the area of disability, SDD’s support led to 43 States Parties ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and multiple countries revising their laws to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities. The introduction of innovative platforms, such as the social protection and youth toolboxes, was seen by technical staff of governments and experts at the country level as very useful. However, it was unclear to what extent policymakers were accessing these platforms. The evaluation confirmed that the SDD capacity building activities were very relevant, although in general they were too short and limited in inputs to foster country ownership and sustainability. The evaluation recommended that SDD move towards a programme of work with greater thematic focus,
improve dissemination of its knowledge products, work more closely with UNCTs and SROs and systematically collect data on its results.

The evaluation of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was conducted in 2017. The evaluation recognized the unique advantages of SPECA as the only forum that focuses solely on exchanges between Central Asian countries as landlocked countries in cooperation with Azerbaijan and Afghanistan. SPECA was also seen as the only organization which is Central Asia centric. The evaluation found that SPECA countries displayed limited interest in taking more ownership of the Programme, demonstrated by low level participation in meetings, lack of participation in fund raising for projects and lack of systematic initiatives to set agendas for meetings. The evaluation offered a roadmap for increasing the ownership and meaningful engagement of SPECA countries in order to turn the Programme into a policy coordination platform on key regional SDGs. SPECA countries held an expert group meeting on 11-12 June 2018 in Almaty to review the evaluation report and make recommendations to the Governing Council on strengthening SPECA. On the basis of these recommendations, the Governing Council, at its 13th session held on 21 September 2018 in Almaty, decided to consider the proposed name change of SPECA in its next session, requested SPECA countries to nominate focal points, made adjustments in the Thematic Working Groups, and invited SPECA countries to explore possibilities for financial and/or in-kind contributions for SPECA.

In resolution 71/1, member States decided to review the continued substantive relevance and financial viability of each regional institution every five years. In line with that decision, ESCAP commissioned an independent evaluation of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology in 2018. The evaluation found that the relevance of Centre’s outputs was ensured by giving priority to activities specifically requested by several countries at the sessions of its Governing Council. As a result, APCTT helped enhancing technology transfer capacities of over 3,000 stakeholders through demand-driven training programmes. Its capacity building activities benefited Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. APCTT delivered its capacity building activities efficiently through partnerships to enhance existing services and reduce costs. However, under the current financial and human resource limitations, the effective operations of APCTT could not be sustained in the future. The evaluation provided action-oriented recommendations to enhance the financial and human resources of APCTT through renegotiating the host country agreement, pursuing the implementation of previous Governing Council decision on funding arrangement for the Centre, and developing multi-stakeholder partnerships, including with the private and non-government sectors. At the 75th Commission session in May 2019 in which the APCTT evaluation results were deliberated, the representatives from
the host government announced that their government would double its annual voluntary contributions to strengthen the Centre. Discussions between the Government of India and ESCAP secretariat are ongoing on further increase its contributions to the Centre’s institutional resources to bear the costs of internationally recruited staff to bring it in line with resolution 71/1 and the norm in funding of other regional institutes under the purview of ESCAP.

Project evaluations

ESCAP commissioned 8 project evaluations during 2017-2018. Key recommendations and lessons drawn from those evaluations included:

1. **Emphasizing communication and dissemination to strengthen effectiveness and impact.** Evaluations found that ESCAP projects were effective in generating new knowledge products and creating innovative platforms for information sharing and providing technical advice. Stakeholders, particularly policymakers and technical experts, considered these products and platforms relevant and useful. However, ESCAP projects should emphasize more in communicating and disseminating these outputs to the intended users to increase their outreach and maximize impact. Evaluation recommendations highlighted the need for ESCAP projects to monitor access and use of its knowledge platforms by its target users and integrate appropriate communication and dissemination activities at the design phase and allocate the required budget.

2. **Maximizing synergies through partnerships:** Interagency collaboration for project implementation may face challenges, especially in administrative processes, but can be successful when appropriate modalities and suitable partners with relevant expertise are identified and brought together. Evaluation recommendations highlighted the need for ESCAP to develop, continue and strengthen its multi-stakeholder partnerships to facilitate the participation of subregional and national organizations, private sector and civil society organizations in the implementation of activities.

3. **Continuing capacity building on relevant topics at the country level.** Evaluations found that focus areas of ESCAP projects were mostly relevant to stakeholders at the country level. In many instances capacity development support at the country level was seen to be effective. However, project impact needed to be upscaled and replicated with different modalities of country support. Because ESCAP has limited capacity to work at the national level, it must partner with others that do. Evaluations found that most of ESCAP’s successful projects have involved highly productive partnerships at the country level.
4. Better targeting of countries and customizing delivery to specific needs. It was suggested in a few evaluations to reduce the number of target countries of a project to allow for better customization of project deliverables to suit the specific needs of member States. This can allow ESCAP to identify and focus on its key areas of internal expertise and comparative advantage to translate these into relevant and high-quality deliverables. Prioritization and optimization of resources can also be better achieved with a limited number of target countries.

5. Designing projects that match available human resources and expertise within ESCAP. An evaluation identified that human resources devoted to an ESCAP project, while used in a highly effective manner, were extremely limited to deliver a large number of outputs. Even with additional human resources, the ability of ESCAP to provide focused assistance will be limited by the expertise of project staff to deliver targeted and relevant outputs to member States. Additionally, continuity of expertise needs to be considered to allow for changes and movements of staff, which does not impact the overall ability for ESCAP to sustain its services to member States.

6. Ensuring sustainability beyond the project. Evaluations found that ESCAP projects designed and implemented as part of ongoing and larger programmes of ESCAP in collaboration with regional and subregional cooperation mechanisms tended to continue well beyond the duration of the projects. For example, the El Niño assessment tools and methodologies developed under a Development Account project implemented by IDD were used as part of high impact risk assessment among ASEAN countries under the recently adopted ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management. The evaluation of this project found that the tools and methodologies would continue well beyond ESCAP’s project.

7. Incorporating gender and human rights dimensions. Human rights and gender approaches needed to be emphasized throughout the whole project cycle, from project design to implementation and evaluation. Projects may have these cross-cutting issues addressed in the project design stage, but their implementation is relatively weak.
1. INTRODUCTION

EVALUATION AT ESCAP

The evaluation function at ESCAP contributes to efforts to make ESCAP’s work more relevant, effective, efficient and sustainable. This goal is achieved through effective management of ESCAP evaluations and use of evaluation results for organizational improvement as illustrated below (see theory of change).

Evaluation is defined as a systematic and impartial assessment of a subprogramme, project or thematic area. It analyzes the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results at the outcome level by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability, and gender and human rights mainstreaming.

The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning, and support results-based management. Evaluation aims to understand why and to what extent results were achieved and to analyze their implications.

To support a maximum degree of impartiality and independence of evaluation, external consultants conduct ESCAP evaluations in line with the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation and the ESCAP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Guidelines.
Evaluation focal point

The Strategy and Programme Management Division (SPMD) at ESCAP is responsible for coordinating the monitoring and evaluation function at ESCAP. Within SPMD, the Evaluation Unit provides quality support to evaluations, disseminates evaluation findings and recommendations, and ensures that evaluation tools and knowledge products are updated and relevant to contribute to organizational learning.

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES 2017–2018

Internal evaluations\(^1\) are evaluations that are commissioned by ESCAP and may be subprogramme/thematic or project evaluations, whereas external evaluations are conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)\(^2\) and Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)\(^3\).

Number of evaluations completed in 2017-2018:

- 3 internal subprogramme/thematic evaluations
- 8 internal project evaluations
- 4 external evaluations

Assessment of intergovernmental meetings

Pursuant to resolution 64/1 on the restructuring of the conference structure of the Commission, ESCAP systematically monitors meetings held under the conference structure to enable continuous improvement. Throughout 2017-2018, assessments have been conducted on 9 committee meetings and 2 commission sessions.

Evaluation tools and knowledge management

To ensure that the evaluation function is relevant and responds to the needs of the organization, evaluation tools and knowledge products are regularly updated. Result-based management (RBM) workshops were also organized as part of a project management training package in order to strengthen RBM capacities at ESCAP to put together coherent project proposals with a clear theory of change.

\(^1\) Internal ESCAP evaluation reports can be found on ESCAP website
\(^2\) OIOS reports can be found on OIOS website
\(^3\) JIU reports can be found on JIU website
2. EVALUATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERNAL EVALUATIONS

Evaluation on the subprogramme on social development

BACKGROUND
The subprogramme on social development comprises nine thematic areas and is managed by ESCAP’s Social Development Division (SDD). In 2017, SDD regrouped the themes of its work into 3 sections to align more closely with the SDGs, namely the Sustainable Socioeconomic Transformation Section, Sustainable Demographic Transitions Section, and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Section.

In line with ESCAP Commission Resolution 66/15, the evaluation of the subprogramme on social development has been undertaken in 2018 for the first time.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Positive impact achieved in establishing regional consensus
SDD was effective in creating a neutral space to discuss development issues, some of which can be sensitive, and this can lead to a regional consensus of priorities for common follow-up actions. SDD has made positive impacts in establishing regional consensus and joint positions on various thematic areas. In the area of disability, SDD’s support led to 43 States Parties ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in two programme biennia, multiple countries revising their laws to be more inclusive of persons with disabilities, and countries developing action plans to collect statistical data on disabilities.

Knowledge products are useful for development practitioners
The introduction of the social protection and youth policy toolboxes are innovative platforms for exchanging knowledge and best practices. Technical staff, civil society representatives, programme/project implementers and individual experts find these toolboxes very useful and interesting especially the information on best practices in the region. However, it is not clear to what extent policymakers are accessing these platforms.

Capacity building support responds to countries’ development needs
Most of the technical cooperation country support is provided within the framework of an international convention or regional agreement that is related to one of the thematic areas and is therefore very relevant. In general, the country support is too short and limited in inputs to foster country ownership and eventual sustainability of the intervention. LDCs and the SIDs require longer-term technical and capacity building support.

Effectiveness in mainstreaming gender dimensions
SDD has been very effective in mainstreaming gender equality concerns throughout all the thematic areas and is consistently raising gender equality aspects in the intergovernmental meetings, the regional expert group meetings and in its knowledge products. There are two main factors that contribute to this achievement: firstly, mainstreaming gender into social development themes is perceived to be easier than into others; and secondly, the SDD professional staff have the necessary expertise to mainstream gender into their respective areas of work.
RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Conduct an in-house stocktaking/mapping exercise to identify its comparative advantages and consider reducing its thematic areas.
Action: SDD formulated its work programme for 2020 with greater thematic focus following internal stocktaking and consultations with senior management.

Reduce the number of knowledge products, develop a common template for policy briefs, implement a clear communication and disseminate strategy for knowledge products.
Action: SDD to develop an outreach strategy for stakeholder engagement and for improving the dissemination of its knowledge products.

Reconsider country support mechanism. Work more closely with UNCTs and SROs to identify partners. Maintain its involvement with countries through development of its regional knowledge products or expert group meetings.
Action: An ESCAP medium-term plan to be developed in 2019 will include guidance on ESCAP engagement at the country level.

Improve the quality of its outcome monitoring across all thematic areas
Action: ESCAP conducts outcome-based evaluation of all projects with $250,000 budget and above.

Strengthen collaboration with Bangkok-based UN agencies, coordinate activities at the country level with UN Country Team
Action: SDD emphasized interagency collaboration in its 2020 work programme and continues to work with other UN agencies through the RCM Thematic Working Groups.

Strengthen collaboration with ESCAP subregional offices
Action: SDD maintained regular contact with ESCAP subregional offices in terms of developing and implementing projects at the country and subregional level. During the ESCAP 75th Commission session, meetings were held between SDD and SROs to discuss joint project planning and implementation.
Evaluation on the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia

About SPECA
The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was established by the Tashkent Declaration in 1998. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) jointly provide overall support to the activities under this programme.

Objectives of SPECA
To facilitate regional economic cooperation in Central Asia and the integration of the participating countries in the world economy.

Functions of SPECA
a. Provides a neutral United Nations platform for discussions on strategic issues of regional economic cooperation;
b. Develops, supports and coordinates relevant capacity building activities in SPECA countries;
c. Promotes compliance with relevant international legal instruments, norms, guidelines, standards and recommendations;
d. Stimulates the exchange of best national practices among SPECA countries;
e. Raises funds from multilateral and bilateral donors for capacity-building activities in participating countries

Key Evaluation Findings and Conclusions
SPECA presents a set of unique advantages that could be attractive to Central Asian countries
SPECA is the only forum that focuses solely on exchanges between Central Asian countries as landlocked countries in cooperation with Azerbaijan and Afghanistan, which are economically linked to the region. It is for now the only forum specifically created to bring together only the countries of the sub-region to exchange experiences, build a common vision, and look for common solutions. SPECA is also the only organization which is Central Asia centric. The other regional organizations all include the membership of larger powers from outside the region.

SPECA countries display limited interest in taking more ownership
SPECA countries displayed limited interest in taking more ownership of the Programme, demonstrated by low level participation in meetings, lack of participation in fund raising for projects and lack of systematic initiatives to set agendas for meetings. Reengaging countries more actively so that they take more ownership requires revisiting the rationale of SPECA as an entity and reinvigorating this platform to be used for the national and regional interests of countries. To become more relevant, SPECA should enhance its potential as a platform for aligning policies and initiatives so that countries could achieve the SDGs through regional cooperation.

Limitations in financial resources and commitment
In terms of resource mobilization, the Regional Commissions meticulously raised funds for SPECA activities, but responses by the participating countries were less than optimal. The system of National Coordinators at the very high level to systematically follow up on decisions between meetings was eroded. One of the biggest problems of following-up on SPECA decisions and processes was the high staff turnover in national ministries and the loss of institutional memory. SPECA countries need to contribute more to fundraising efforts together with Regional Commissions.
SPECA as a platform for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
A decision was made at the 10th session of the Governing Council in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in 2015, and reinforced at the 11th session in Ganja, Azerbaijan in 2016, to reinvigorate SPECA as a platform for achieving SDGs and targets which necessitate regional cooperation. While ensuring that SPECA becomes a platform to facilitate the achievement of SDGs through regional cooperation, it would be important not to make these the sole objectives of the programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Based on discussions on the preliminary findings of the evaluation presented during the 12th Session of the Governing Council in Dushanbe in December 2017, SPECA participating countries opted for the option to reform SPECA in order to make it more country-led and country-driven.

They agreed to discuss a proposed roadmap which maps out steps to increase the ownership and meaningful engagement of SPECA countries in order to turn the programme into a policy coordination platform on key regional SDGs. The roadmap raises key issues for consideration by member States:

- **The identity of SPECA**: what should be the added value of SPECA vis-à-vis the myriad of other organizations, programmes and frameworks.
- **Achieving the SDGs through regional cooperation**: Which of the SDGs should SPECA pursue?
- **Themes and functions of TWGs**: How can the rationale and operation of Thematic Working Groups be improved?
- **Structures**: How should the SPECA institutions be restructured?
- **UN support**: In a scenario where country ownership increases, how should the UN Regional Commissions align themselves to provide support?
- **Financing**: How should SPECA continue to finance itself and become sustainable?
- **Relations with other partners and stakeholders** (States, organizations, development banks, etc.): How can SPECA better coordinate with other partners, including UN agencies, IFIs, academics and the business community?

SPECA countries held an expert group meeting on 11-12 June 2018 in Almaty to review the evaluation report and make recommendations to the Governing Council on strengthening SPECA. On the basis of these recommendations, the Governing Council, at its 13th session held on 21 September 2018 in Almaty, decided to consider the proposed name change of SPECA in its next session, requested SPECA countries to nominate focal points, made adjustments in the Thematic Working Groups, and invited SPECA countries to explore possibilities for financial and/or in-kind contributions for SPECA.
Evaluation on the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology

About APCTT
The Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) is a United Nations Regional Institution under ESCAP and was established in 1977 pursuant to ESCAP resolutions 159 and 164.

Key activities
- Strengthening National Innovation Systems
- Evidence-based STI policy making
- Technology transfer capacity building
- Promoting new and emerging technologies (e.g. renewable energy, nanotechnology)
- Promoting regional cooperation and networking on STI & technology transfer

Objectives of APCTT
To assist the members and associate members of ESCAP through strengthening their capabilities to develop and manage national innovation systems; develop, transfer, adapt and apply technology; improve the terms of transfer of technology; and identify and promote the development and transfer of technologies relevant to the region.

KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Relevance of APCTT
The evaluation concluded that the mandate of the APCTT remains relevant in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. APCTT designs activities based on specific requests from countries and delivers them in line with national requirements. Key outcomes of APCTT as cited by member States include: (1) Improved STI policies; (2) Strengthened national innovation systems and (3) Increased technology intelligence of stakeholders.

APCTT work contributes to the formulation of STI policies, national plans and initiatives and promotes regional cooperation
APCTT helped enhancing technology transfer capacities of over 3,000 stakeholders through demand-driven training programmes. Its capacity building activities benefited Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam were supported by APCTT in strengthening their renewable energy policy through demand-driven activities. Iran benefited from the regional cooperation and capacity building activities of the Centre and supported by APCTT to develop national STI capacities in new and emerging technological sectors.

The establishment of a tripartite programme on nanoparticle characterization comparison and nanoparticle size activity between Iran, Thailand and Taiwan province of China under the aegis of Asia Nano Forum was facilitated by APCTT.

APCTT’s programme helped the Philippines in formulating STI policies and strengthened national innovation systems. Its policy recommendation to the Philippines to consider expansion of mandate of the Department of Science and Technology to include agro-enterprise in their portfolio was accepted by the government.

APCTT enabled Bhutan to locally manufacture biological pesticides as part of its organic agriculture roadmap through the establishment of the first ever biological control unit in Bhutan. This APCTT
initiative was undertaken in collaboration with the National Institute of Plant Health Management, India.

Financial and human resources
APCTT delivers its capacity building activities efficiently through partnerships to enhance existing services and reduce costs. However, under the current financial and human resource limitations, the effective operations of APCTT cannot be sustained in the future. It cited the concern raised at the Second Meeting of the ESCAP Committee on ICT STI in August 2018 that “….the current human resources and financial capacities of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology are not satisfactory in terms of carrying out mandated activities and meeting the growing demand for the Centre’s activities” and the request that “non-contributing member States to consider providing voluntary financial contributions, and member countries to enhance their level of voluntary contributions to strengthen support for the Centre.”.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

APCTT should remain at its present location provided that the host government commits to increase its financial contribution to the Centre
Action: ESCAP consulted the host government regarding its financial contribution to the Centre, including through official missions to New Delhi in January 2019 by the Executive Secretary and in October 2018 by the Deputy Executive Secretary. These consultations confirmed that the host government appreciate the work of the Centre and would like to strengthen the Centre within the framework of the host country agreement. The host government has pledged to increase its financial contribution to the Centre during the 75th Commission Session.

Renegotiate the Host Country Agreement to allow the use of funds from host government to recruit international staff
Action: ESCAP continues to engage in bilateral discussions with the Government of India to address the issue of the host country agreement and funding required for internationally recruited staff.

Pursue vigorously the implementation of the 2009 Governing Council decision urging member States to increase institutional support to an annual contribution
Action: ESCAP issued a note verbale to all members of the Commission to seek increased voluntary contribution in line with this recommendation and decisions made by the 2009 Governing Council of the Centre.

Endeavor to develop robust multi-stakeholder partnerships and meaningful engagement with the private and non-government sectors
Action: In 2018, APCTT forged and strengthened institutional partnerships with over 17 agencies.

Give greater focus in the APCTT work programme to the transfer, dissemination and diffusion of emerging and environmentally sound technologies
Action: The Centre’s work programme for 2019 had also been aligned with the recommendation, adding more focus on the transfer, dissemination and diffusion of emerging environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favorable term in delivering capacity development and technical cooperation work.
**Project evaluation (MPFD)**
**Financing strategies for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific**

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<td><strong>Project lead:</strong> Subprogramme on Macroeconomic Policy and Financing for Development</td>
<td>To enhance capacity of selected countries in the Asia-Pacific region to mobilize domestic and international financial resources to improve infrastructure development in support of inclusive growth and sustainable development.</td>
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<td><strong>Project partners:</strong> UN DESA, UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Office, Asian Development Bank, International Finance Cooperation/The World Bank</td>
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<td><strong>Source of funding:</strong> Development Account 9th Tranche</td>
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<td><strong>Project budget:</strong> USD 499,000</td>
<td><strong>Implementation Period:</strong> Sep 2015 – Dec 2017</td>
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<td><strong>Beneficiary Countries:</strong> 35 ESCAP member States</td>
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**Project performance**

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<th>Relevance</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
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<td><strong>Very High</strong></td>
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**Key Evaluation Findings and Conclusions**

**Creation of partnership networks encourage participation**

The project successfully created a robust knowledge base on sustainable financing for development for the region and established high-level regional platform where Ministers from countries are participating. The project also set up a regional network on issues related public-private partnership and tax policy and contributed to an increase in ESCAP’s expertise and knowledge in the area of sustainable financing for infrastructure.

**Detailed stakeholder consultation process ensure uptake at national level**

There was a detailed process of consultation with stakeholders prior to commencing the project and the country level works were seen to be tailored and focused on relevant issues and broader priorities. Some early signs of results at the national level was found. Nepal for instance has integrated the project’s studies in the country national reports on SGD’s focusing on developing SDG baselines as well as costing and financing strategy. In other target countries, the project-initiated discussions among governments on financing issues and created awareness and knowledge on the topic through national workshops.

**Challenges in coordination and sustainability**

There were some coordination issues with national level governments that impacted the efficiency of the project as it resulted in a relatively short amount of time for drafting of national reports as well as delays in scheduling meetings. In terms of sustainability, momentum has been started at an institutional level. However, without ESCAP support, this would fail.

**Challenges in project management**

Human resources devoted to this project, while used in a highly effective manner, were extremely limited. Even with additional human resources, the ability of ESCAP to provide focused assistance will be limited by the expertise of project staff to deliver targeted and relevant outputs to member States. Additionally, continuity of expertise needs to be considered to allow for changes and
movements of staff, which does not impact the overall ability for ESCAP to sustain its services to member States.

Acknowledgement of relevance through supplementary funding
As a reflection of ESCAP’s increasing expertise in infrastructure financing and the potential for further development of this theme, China agreed to provide USD 195,000 in extra-budgetary resources to continue the work initiated in this project. The Korean Development Institute also provided an extra USD 20,000 to conduct an additional study on how PPPs could further contribute to sustainable infrastructure development and regional connectivity.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Preserve and maintain the financing networks established under the project
Action: ESCAP secured a follow-up extra-budgetary project entitled “Strengthening a Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and infrastructure financing network in Asia and the Pacific” whose objective is to preserve and maintain the financing network established under the completed project.

Conduct follow-up country-level capacity building for greater impact
Action: The follow-up project will include hands-on capacity building training of policymakers to undertake PPP projects. This will be done through training modules on subjects, such as PPP project preparation, project operation, PPP case studies and site visits.

Focus follow-up support on areas where it has internal expertise
Action: ESCAP recruited a staff with expertise in infrastructure financing and PPP work to enhance its internal expertise in this area of work.

Work with other agencies (e.g. ADB and World Bank) to create synergies and enhance its support to the member States
Action: ESCAP will work with ADB and the China PPP Centre in implementing follow-up activities of the project.
# Project evaluation (TIID)
## Enhancing contribution of preferential trade agreements to inclusive and equitable trade

### Project details
- **Project lead:** Subprogramme on Trade, Investment and Innovation
- **Project partners:** ECA, ECLAC, UNCTAD, ARTNeT institutional members, IORA, IDEP, ECCAS
- **Source of funding:** Development Account 9th Tranche
- **Project budget:** USD 742,000
- **Implementation Period:** Oct 2014 – Jun 2018
- **Beneficiary Countries:** 14 member States of ESCAP, ECA and ECLAC

### Project objective
To enhance the capacity of governments in selected countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa to use preferential trade agreements to ensure that trade activities contribute towards equitable growth and shared prosperity for all social groups.

### Project performance (rating 5 max)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Gender &amp; human rights</td>
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</table>

### KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Contribution to trade negotiation and trade agreement preparations
The project was found to be highly effective in achieving its objectives. It contributed to the preparation for trade negotiations between the Republic of Korea and Mongolia as a direct result of the capacity building workshops involving Mongolia trade officials. For several countries (Bangladesh, Mongolia, Viet Nam, Costa Rica, Mauritius and Ecuador), learning from project activities were used directly and immediately for trade agreement preparation, in trade negotiations, in undertaking trade policy research and in briefings to Ministers.

#### Practical considerations on inclusivity issues in trade agreements
Project beneficiaries in Bangladesh used new knowledge gained about inclusivity issues such as labor rights and the impacts on women, to inform their research and policy advice on the implications for Bangladesh trade and trade agreements of Brexit.

#### Translating knowledge on trade agreements into increased exports
Guinea private sector businesses, armed with information about trade agreements, expanded their exports, in association with government. Private sector participants in Mongolia used their new knowledge to understand business exports and to inform the wider private sector of trade agreements.

#### Requests for assistance from additional countries
Relevance was also demonstrated through participation of additional pilot countries, including Mongolia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Guinea and Senegal. Honduras and Guatemala also requested and received assistance to help deepen their customs union.

#### Maximizing strengths of regional commissions
The project maximized the different strengths of each of the Commissions enabling the three Commissions (ESCAP, ECA and ECLAC) to work effectively as a team and enhancing project implementation efficiency. Key characteristics of its success were about (i) linking people, resources, data and skills, (ii) creating opportunities for learning, development and impact, and (iii) leveraging relationships, partnerships, knowledge and networks to increase capacity, capability and results.
RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTION

Continue and further strengthen knowledge and capacity building around Inclusivity and equity in trade agreements
Action: TIID will launch two initiatives related to trade agreements and labour standards and/or sustainable development, one with ILO and another one with other ESCAP or ARTNeT-linked partner. These collaborations will explore potential areas to promote knowledge and capacity building around sustainability dimensions, including gender, in trade agreements.

Develop capacity building strategy for future projects to strengthen relevance and effectiveness
Action: TIID will review current procedures for preparing capacity building workshops, including identifying possible improvements and customizing assistance according to the needs of member States.

Enhance sustainability of capacity building projects
Action: TIID disseminated all project knowledge products to its stakeholders, including through ARTNeT, and developed a follow-up project based on lessons learned and knowledge products from the completed project.
KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

**Increased capacity of countries to assess disaster-related risk and damages**
The evaluation found that fourteen (14) countries hit by major disasters, including the 2015 Nepal earthquake and the El Niño 2015/2016, were able to better assess disaster-related risk and damages through various support provided by the project, notably by making available an El Niño risk assessment methodology that these countries were able to use and adapt into the national context.

**Adapting tools and trainings to countries needs**
The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Disaster Management Centre pilot tested the project’s Rapid Assessment for Resilient Recovery in 2015 Gorkha Nepal Earthquake and adapted this guidebook. For countries with critical vulnerabilities, including Cambodia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, the project supported in putting in place strengthened monsoon forums (national climate outlook) to communicate ‘actionable’ disaster risk through downscaled climate outlooks, seasonal forecast and in-season drought monitoring using earth observation satellites.

**Partnerships contribute to effectiveness of project**
Among the factor contributing to effectiveness was the level of consultation with development partners to develop a comprehensive understanding of issues, and wherever possible, exploiting cooperation opportunities and synergies with the partners. The project’s experience in successfully working with SAARC and ASEAN is a good example that should be replicated and further enhanced in future projects.

**Regional networks of technical partners and professionals**
The project put in place necessary institutional arrangements to ensure long-term sustainability. For example, it formed networks of technical partners and like-minded professionals through the implementation of the project activities.
RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Continue and further strengthen capacity building and awareness enhancing on risk-informed development planning or risk-sensitive investment based on the outcome of the current project. Action: IDD developed several proposals under DA and XB funds to take forward the work in risk-informed planning, with a focus on providing climate risk information and second-generation impact-based forecasting to reduce climate-related disaster burdens on the most vulnerable populations.

Develop close cooperation with subregional organizations by delivering programmes and projects on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience in partnership with them. Action: IDD contributed to development and implementation of the Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management under the Risk Awareness Pillar. Through the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Resilience Network (APDRN) at the Fifth Session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction held in October 2017, ESCAP will develop and implement initiatives, programmes and projects on DRR in partnership with subregional organizations.

Leverage off success of this project to establish the Asia-Pacific disaster resilience network in order to further strengthen the secretariat’s work on disaster risk reduction and resilience. Action: In order to operationalized APDRN, IDD prepared a progress report and future programme of work of the network in consultation with member States and other development partners for discussion at the 6th session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction held in 2019.
Project evaluation (IDD)

**Strengthening multi-hazard risk assessment and early warning systems with applications of space and geographic information systems in Pacific island countries**

**Project details**
- **Project lead:** Subprogramme on ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction
- **Project partners:** UNOSAT, WMO, SPREP, SOPAC, SPC, AIT, JAXA, Indonesian Agency for Meteorology, BMGK
- **Source of funding:** The Government of Japan
- **Project budget:** USD 674,539
- **Implementation Period:** May 2016 – Aug 2018
- **Beneficiary Countries:** Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Cook Islands, Vanuatu. Other participating countries: Kiribati, Tuvalu

**Project objective**
To strengthen multi-hazard risk assessment and early warning systems of PICs through enhanced institutional capacity building to use space and GIS, and to promote regional cooperation platforms on sharing of existing and newly built geospatial data for disaster management in the Pacific region.

**Project performance (rating 5 max)**

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<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
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<td>Effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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**KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**Improved disaster management systems in targeted countries**
The project made significant contribution in capacity building within disaster management offices in Pacific island countries, resulting in better weather modeling and forecasting, increased warning lead-times, increased preparedness times and higher warning accuracy. The Solomon Islands have downscaled, high-resolution weather forecasting models, that will contribute to improving their disaster management systems. Micronesia stated that they now have a functioning geoportal with basic training capacity on the operation of the portal, along with GIS analysis.

**Geoportals and geodatabases set up through pilot projects**
Through the project, installation and operation of geoportals have been set up in Fiji, Micronesia, Solomon Islands and Tonga, complemented by capacity building sessions on managing these portals and development of a workplan on geoportal for disaster risk management. These activities were seen to build in sustainability for these systems by enabling the participants to continue managing the portals themselves.

**Good knowledge management facilitated information sharing**
An e-learning platform for disaster risk reduction and space technology was developed for capacity building by the target stakeholders. Two expert group meetings and three regional workshops contributed to the establishment of the Pacific Knowledge Hub strategy to notify and operate existing knowledge hubs, analyze their key structures, benefits, gaps and needs, and explore solutions and suggestions to strengthen their multi-hazard risk assessment and early warning systems in the Pacific island countries.
**Synergies created through collaboration with other organizations**
ESCAP successfully mobilized United Nations entities and regional organizations to participate in the process of the project. These organizations participated in the expert group meetings and regional workshops to develop a regional strategy on knowledge hubs for early warning systems and reviewed the draft strategy based on their own experiences and lessons learned on knowledge hubs. The project also managed to maximize utilization of resources and effectively operationalize the project through partnerships with BMKG and AIT.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

**Continue its support for Pacific counties in strengthening early warning systems**
Action: IDD continued its support to Pacific countries through a UNITAR / UNOSAT project. IDD provided UNOSAT with relevant reports, advisory services and contacts with key partners in the Pacific region. Through the ESCAP Multi-donor Trust Fund, IDD also held bilateral meetings with potential donors to raise funds to support capacity building activities, including those for the Pacific countries.

**Enhance participation of subregional and civil society organizations in future activities**
Action: IDD continued working closely with donors to secure additional funds to continue support for the Pacific countries. Through EPO, it engaged UNCTs and Pacific-based regional organizations and academia in the design of future projects for the Pacific.

**Enhance consultations with project beneficiaries to address their specific needs and requirements**
Action: IDD will incorporate deeper consultation process with target beneficiaries to address their specific needs and requirements in the design of future projects.
Project evaluation (SDD)
Strengthening the capacity of Governments in the ESCAP, ECA and ESCWA regions to respond to the needs of youth in formulating inclusive and sustainable development policies

**Project details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project lead:</th>
<th>Subprogramme on Social Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong></td>
<td>DESA, ECA, ECLAC, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNV, African Union Commission, African Youth Commission, Commonwealth Secretariat, Tandemic, YMCA</td>
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<td><strong>Source of funding:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Project budget:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Implementation Period:</strong></td>
<td>Jun 2014 – Dec 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beneficiary Countries:</strong></td>
<td>Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Jordan, Kuwait, Tunisia</td>
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**Project objective and key outputs**

To increase participation of youth in the formulation of inclusive and sustainable development policies in the ESCAP, ECA and ESCWA regions. Key outputs: Regional analysis on issues related to youth; toolbox for guiding youth policy formulation and implementation; capacity building for youth engagement with policymakers.

**Project performance**

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<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Gender &amp; human rights</td>
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**KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**Needs assessments and extensive consultations ensure relevance**
The project contributed in increasing youth participation in policy formulation in nine countries located in ESCAP, ECA and ESCWA regions. Results include increased capacity of national governments and youth led organizations to implement school to work transition policies and programmes that are engendered and involve young people’s participation. An awareness and means for governments and young people to actively engage in economic, social and political processes was also created, with production of an online toolbox for sharing good practices, training modules

**Development of toolbox to suit the needs of local community**
In Sri Lanka, government introduced an electronic platform to connect with youth and offer training modules for them. It already added content in the project’s toolbox in Sinhala language, and planned to also add Tamil for outreach in all regions of the country. Mongolia and the Philippines would develop advocacy content in the toolbox.

**Improved understanding by policy makers of youth issues**
All policy makers interviewed expressed that the project had created value for them in addressing youth issues. These were the result of a combination of factors: the strategic analyses and consultations at regional level, the additional fact finding and dialogue with youth and policy makers at the national level, and the sharing of good practices from their country and internationally.
Timeliness of implementation despite constraints
Inception delays were experienced during 2015 when the UN finance systems switched from IMIS to UMOJA. ESCAP had to re-evaluate the budget, and also introduce administrative and reporting changes. Despite these challenges, timeliness was rated above average by respondents. Good communications and smooth working relationship between the three regional Commissions was a strong factor in good management of resources, helped to deal with challenges, and facilitated implementation and results.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Continue further development and use of the toolbox, accompanied by regular tracking of use and generating feedback
Action: ESCAP maintained contact and offered technical support to the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Moreover, the project’s toolbox as a concept has been picked up by several professional bodies in the country, such as medical and universities. Under a new Development Account project, the toolbox will be further enhanced by additional content and greater attention to sustainability.

Add country contexts related to status of youth policy development and identify follow up support for targeted countries
Action: ESCAP worked with ECA to refine the content of the toolbox and added more country-level inputs. In addition, members of the Asia-Pacific Interagency Network on Youth would be engaged, such as with the results of the recent mapping of youth organizations across Asia and the Pacific, to supply material for dissemination.

Consider further work on understanding constraints relating to policy and institutional environment shaping youth inclusive development
Action: ESCAP carried out a regional analysis - with a focus on Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste - to identify gaps and good practices in integrating policies to promote youth development and harness the benefits of the demographic dividend into national plans. ESCAP developed a policy brief on the challenges of youth and informal employment and the benefits of expanding formal jobs opportunities. Other policy briefs and working papers were set to follow.

Expand partnerships when undertaking follow up activities
Action: Under a new DA project, partnerships will be developed especially in the three target countries of Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. These will be supported by United Nations inputs from the Asia-Pacific Interagency Network on Youth.
Project evaluation (EPO)

**Strengthened capacity of small island developing States in the Asia-Pacific region with regard to the valuation of environmental capital and the economic cost of gender inequality**

### Project details

**Project lead:** Subregional Office for the Pacific  
**Project partners:** UN Women, UNDP, UNICEF, UNSD, PIFS, IMF-PTFAC, ADB, SPC, World Bank WAVES Project  
**Source of funding:** Development Account 9th Tranche  
**Project budget:** USD 638,000  
**Implementation Period:** Jul 2014 – Dec 2017  
**Beneficiary Countries:** Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu

### Project objective

To develop the capacity of governments in the Asia-Pacific SIDS to integrate economic valuations of environmental capital and gender inequality into sustainable development planning and implementation.

### Project performance

**KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**Development and release of environmental-economic accounts**  
Environmental-economic accounts in four PICs countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Palau and Samoa) and diagnostic readiness assessment reports for System of Environmental Economics and Accounting (SEEA) in five countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Palau, Samoa and Vanuatu) were developed and released. These reports contained data and indicators for identifying key environmental trends and policy implications and would contribute to improving policymaking, resource use and environmental outcomes in the Pacific region.

**Mixed effectiveness for the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) module**  
The GRB side of the project has had more mixed effectiveness with some countries such as Samoa reflecting considerable progress and other countries still in the formative stages of considering GRB approach and tools. Progress towards the integration of gender in national planning and budget making is a positive achievement of the project. The achievement regarding GRB is likely to be enhanced with the availability and use of the GRB tool kit.

**Partnerships contribute to effectiveness of project**  
The partnership with PFTAC has been particularly fruitful with regards to shared expertise and funding. This helped ensure that the project activities in this area were embedded in support for strengthened Public Financial Management (PFM) in the Pacific. The resource commitment of the IMF-PFTAC significantly boosted the project’s capacity to implement and broaden the reach of activities regarding training workshops.

**Relevance and effective coordination are key factors in achievement**  
There was general agreement that integration of planning and budgeting is timely and requires mainstreaming. More specifically environmental valuation using SEEA capacity building has progressed well. Partnerships with UN and non-UN entities helped ensure that a wide range of activities were implemented across all 11 countries. However, reservations were expressed regarding the lack of initial cooperation at the planning stages of the Development Account project as well as lack of coordination with obvious potential partners.
RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Continue collaborative partnerships between relevant UN agencies, regional organizations, development partners and governments to upscale the project and replicate in other PICs.
Action: EPO developed a new proposal to continue this area of work and submitted it for consideration under the UN Peace and Development Fund.

Use the project’s knowledge products in future training workshops and technical advisory missions to strengthen capacity to garner and use evidence in environmental and social areas.
Action: EPO used the knowledge products in further work linking plans to budgets and further consolidation of work on SEEA. These were also available on the EPO website and will continue to be utilized as part of the rollout of EPO’s Knowledge Management Strategy.

Disseminate the Gender Responsive Budgeting Toolkit. There is a continuing need to prioritize GRB if the gender gaps are to be addressed to maintain steady progress to achieving SDG 5.
Action: EPO finalized the toolkit and agreed with PIFS for usage in national assessments.

Engage policy makers at the highest level so that they use the project knowledge products as well as environmental and social evidence for integrated planning and budgeting.
Action: EPO worked with relevant development partners, and through the UN Pacific Strategy to promote and mainstream planning/budget linkages as a key dimension of public financial management and national sustainable development planning programmes.

Maintain and enhance project outcome through follow up workshops, training, peer to peer collaboration and various other supportive activities.
Action: As stated above, efforts were underway to mobilize resources for continuation of this work.

Consider reducing the number of target countries for future interventions with similar resource availability.
Action: EPO will focus on quality planning and implementation, including through adequate needs assessment and ensuring resource allocation is sufficient to generate impact.
Project evaluation (EPO)
Enhancing the capacity of Pacific island countries to address the impacts of climate change on migration

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<thead>
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<th>Project details</th>
<th>Project objective</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project lead:</strong></td>
<td>To increase protection of individuals and communities that are vulnerable to climate change displacement and migration through targeted national and regional policies and to increase regional mobility through well-managed labor migration schemes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu</td>
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**KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**Clear need for understanding the effects of climate change on migration**
At commencement of the project there was a clear need for an understanding of the effects of climate change on migration, especially in light of the Paris Agreement, the effects of climate change being experienced more frequently in the region and in the light of political changes in Tuvalu and Kiribati that saw a trend towards climate change approaches in both countries that emphasizes adaptation and mitigation over “migration with dignity”.

**Efficiency, particularly administrative inefficiency, was by far the weakest aspect**
ESCAP ended up with administrative and financial responsibilities resulting in very significant delays. It took eighteen months to recruit a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) and get the bulk of project activities underway and it was fortunate that some progress could be achieved during this period through the activities implemented by the ILO. Future initiatives in this area should adopt more effective and efficient modalities.

**While there is a range of initiatives in the Pacific around climate change issues, this project identified and occupied a distinct niche**
Key informants noted the various focuses of development partners, none of which overlap the project. For example, while the ILO tends to address labor in relation to migration, the IOM has a focus on migration more generally and to date operates more in the northern Pacific. Several government respondents noted that project activities were entirely complementary to national initiatives, where they existed. Significant outputs include the development of a national employment policy in Nauru and a national labour migration policy in Tuvalu.

**Development of MOU between Tuvalu and Cook Islands**
The study trip organised to the Cook Islands resulted in the development of an MOU between Tuvalu and Cook Islands on the recruitment of Tuvaluans to work in the hotels in the Cook Islands. The discussions also canvassed Tuvalu’s seafarers and the Cook Islands need for observers on the vessels monitoring its relatively newly created marine park.

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<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Gender &amp; human rights</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
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</table>
RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Upscale & replicate national activities in other Pacific island countries
Action: EPO consulted with interested countries on what their areas of needs and national priorities are that are related to climate induced migration and displacement so that a project concept is developed and submitted to potential financing mechanisms.

Consult women at the design stage of any future proposals
Action: EPO continued to promote Pacific women’s participation at all levels.

Add a human rights-based approach to design and implementation of national/regional activities
Action: EPO discussed possible partnership with IOM, ILO, OHCHR for proposed project to include objectives that contributes to adequately addressing the rights of migrants.

Continue Pacific Migration Strategy initiatives flowing from the dialogue in Suva in December 2016
Action: EPO convened meetings with partners to discuss partnership and collaboration to respond to the priority areas of work that have been identified by the countries.

Continue other regional climate change induced migration initiatives
Action: EPO consulted with other regional bodies and initiatives such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement which is the follow up on the work started by the Nansen Initiative.

Support the development of a regional human rights based legal framework on climate change displacement
Action: EPO developed a standalone project concept note on the development of a human rights based legal framework on climate change displacement or package a concept to include the four priority areas identified by the countries.

Implement future climate change and migration projects with the same partners as the current project
Action: EPO discussed possible partnerships with IOM, ILO OHCHR and GIZ.
Project evaluation (SSWA)

**Strengthening connectivity of countries in South and Central Asia, particularly Landlocked and Least Developed Countries, to link with subregional and regional transport and trade networks**

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<tr>
<th>Project details</th>
<th>Project objective</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project lead:</strong> Subregional office for South and South-West Asia</td>
<td>To strengthen the capacities of member States in South and South-West Asia and Central Asia, particularly LDCs and landlocked countries, to plan and implement measures to connectivity and to harness their economic potential for inclusive and sustainable development.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project partners:</strong> ECE, SAARC, ECO, BIMSTEC, ADB, IDB, World Bank</td>
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<td><strong>Source of funding:</strong> Development Account 9th Tranche</td>
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<td><strong>Project budget:</strong> USD 632,000</td>
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<td><strong>Implementation Period:</strong> July 2014 – April 2018</td>
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<td><strong>Beneficiary Countries:</strong> Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan</td>
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**Project performance**

- **Budget utilization:** 72%
- **Activity implementation:** 100%

**KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**Re-energizing ESCAP’s flagship transport connectivity initiatives in South and South-West Asia**

The project made a significant contribution in re-energizing ESCAP’s flagship transport connectivity initiatives in South and South-West Asia and operationalizing important segments of the two transport corridors. This is evident by the launch of the first ever cross-border container train service between India and Bangladesh in 2018. The success of the train service is expected to expand container rail movement along other presently disconnected segments of the corridor.

**Knowledge products demonstrates potential benefits**

The analytical studies and papers prepared under the project were able to present evidence that economic complementary existing between these countries could be significantly exploited by improving their links with existing transport and trade networks and corridors, such as the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway with minimal investments. In interviews and surveys, almost all of the respondents strongly agreed that the project outputs were relevant and useful for their organizations/countries.

**National consultations ensure relevance of project**

The relevance of the project was ensured through national studies and consultations with participating governments to ascertain their needs and priorities and required technical support from the project. The results of the studies and consultations were further discussed through policy dialogues and workshops.

**Challenges in human resources affect efficiency of delivery**

The project managed to deliver all its outputs and planned activities with an extension of six months. The project delivered all its activities with limited human resources, highlighting the need for increased and dedicated staff resources for a priority project of this nature.
Regional convening power of ESCAP unique to bring results
The evaluation revealed the continuing need for ESCAP-SSWA engagement to take the results forward as regional connectivity is a public good which no single country can deliver in isolation. The project highlighted the key role of ESCAP as the sole UN regional entity with the convening power to bring member States together.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Strengthen efforts to mobilize political commitment to connectivity project
Action: SRO-SSWA published an economic assessment report on identified subregional transport corridors, prepared as part of the project in the Development Papers series. Post-publication, the study will be disseminated to key stakeholders & presented at key events.

Formulate and adopt an integrated approach through an Integrated Regional Transport Master Plan
Action: SRO-SSWA organized follow-up discussions with the Transport Division to assess the feasibility of adopting a connectivity master plan approach in the subregion. Consultations were held with key stakeholders.

Strengthen engagement of private sector and other trade associations and bodies in future discussions and negotiations on the development of the transport corridors
Action: SRO-SSWA considered a designated role for private sector bodies in follow-up activities. The final version of the above-cited study report under the project included a section defining private sector’s role as investment facilitator for transport infrastructure projects under various public-private partnership models, and as facilitators of reform proposals.

Incorporate gender and human rights issues in the design of follow-up projects
Action: SRO-SSWA added gender and human rights dimensions of connectivity in the above-cited final study report.

Prioritize and/or devote staff resources to support future activities on transport connectivity
Action: SRO SSWA assigned at least one of its staff members to act as lead focal point for all future activities on the topic of subregional transport connectivity.

Continue capacity development support at the country level
Action: SRO SSWA documented both infrastructural and policy challenges of participating countries in the above-cited forthcoming study report. Subsequent consultations were held with national focal points to identify country-level support requirements.

Expand interagency cooperation and collaboration
Action: SSWA kept track of developments in the transport connectivity projects and programmes led by BIMSTEC, ECO and SAARC, as well as developments in initiatives.
External Evaluation (OIOS)

Triennial review of the implementation of the recommendations from the programme evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

BACKGROUND

The report was submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in accordance with the decision taken (A/37/38, para 362) to review the implementation of recommendations three years after taking decisions on evaluations submitted to the Committee. This triennial review determined the extent to which the recommendations emanating from the OIOS programme evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) were implemented.

EXCERPT RELEVANT TO ESCAP

This triennial review determined that of the four recommendations, three were implemented and one recommendation (recommendation 3) was partially implemented. There was some evidence of positive outcomes resulting from the implemented recommendations.

Recommendation 1 - Implementation of a research and publications agenda
A permanent Editorial Board was established as a platform for joint planning and implementation of biennial publications programmes in line with the Secretariat’s Strategic Direction for 2015-2020 and the role of ESCAP as a regional think tank. The Editorial Board was considered to be fulfilling its purpose.

Recommendation 2 - Improvement in monitoring and evaluation of research and analysis work
Important steps were taken to increase the availability of monitoring and evaluation data. The Institutional Results Framework (IRF) outlined a results chain linking subprogramme outputs to secretariat-wide development results. Research and analysis was included in the IRF results chain, including with specific performance indicators.

Recommendation 3 - Development and implementation of an outreach strategy
This recommendation was only partially implemented given that ESCAP did not yet have a final outreach strategy, nor had it established a single database of all stakeholders.

Recommendation 4 - Implementation of the framework on the working relations between ESCAP sub-regional offices and divisions
In November 2014, a “Guidance Note on Relations between ESCAP Substantive Divisions, Sub-regional Offices and Regional Institutions” was issued. Coordination mechanisms played an important role in reducing uncertainties, ensuring adherence to and internalising provisions of the Note. There was no substantial increase in resources for ESCAP sub-regional work, but this no longer seemed an issue.
External Evaluation (OIOS)

Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives

BACKGROUND

The report assesses the state of evaluation across thirty-one United Nations entities over 2016-2017 in terms of evaluation functions, resources and practice. Compared to previous period, modest improvements were made to evaluation functions in terms of their organizational independence and outputs, including an increase in the overall number and quality of evaluation reports.

EXCERPT RELEVANT TO ESCAP

Key areas of evaluation function and practice were strengthened

ESCAP has a dedicated evaluation unit within a multifunctional division.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of evaluation functions by end of 2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stand-alone evaluation unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPH</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
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<td>UN Habitat</td>
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<td>UN Women16</td>
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</table>

Evaluation budget and report expenditure

ESCAP recorded a high percentage of evaluation expenditure as a proportion of programme budget.

![Graph showing expenditure on evaluation reports as a percentage of programme budget by entity]
The UN-private sector partnerships arrangements in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

BACKGROUND
The review emerged from the widely shared conviction that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides unique momentum for a renewed engagement of the private sector in service of the Sustainable Development Goals. Such a need is not only dictated by the authority of the 2030 Agenda but is also an expression of the changes in conditions for global collective action and the rise of non-governmental entities, which may be able to act more swiftly than multilateral intergovernmental processes. While acknowledging and reviewing the existing safeguards regarding due diligence and risk management, this report places emphasis on making the United Nations system more effective in its cooperation with the private sector to support the 2030 Agenda.

EXEMPLARY RELEVANT TO ESCAP
A majority of private sector entities still need information about and understanding of the nature and the scope of the Sustainable Development Goals, and of the modalities by which they can engage with the Goals. These educational efforts are a major responsibility of the United Nations system as the orchestrator and facilitator of partnerships at regional, national and global levels.

Enhancing ownership and partnership at the regional and country levels
Recommendation 9 called for the Economic and Social Council to invite the Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions, if they have not already done so, to initiate and institutionalize a systematic and regular consultative dialogue with high-level representatives of private sector companies that contribute or have expressed interest in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The recommendations was inspired by the existing practice in ESCAP, which established the ESCAP Business Advisory Council, consisting of executives and representatives from leading businesses in the region.

Streamlining responsibilities within the United Nations Secretariat
The report called for a review to streamline, clarify and strengthen the division of labor and the specific lines of responsibility and accountability within various departments of the Secretariat, in particular the mandate of the United Nations Office for Partnerships to provide advice on, guide and facilitate partnership events and initiatives in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Common standard procedures and safeguards for due diligence
Executive heads of participating organizations should identify and agree on a minimum set of common standard procedures and safeguards for an efficient and flexible due diligence process, to be applied system-wide in a transparent way by the United Nations operational staff engaged in the initiation and implementation of partnerships with the private sector.

Innovation partnerships
Innovation is a key concept for the 2030 Agenda and an essential tool for its implementation. A system-wide coordination on innovation, coherence and cooperation remains to be pursued and the time is ripe to consider more actively encouraging institutional initiatives for the coordination of partnerships for innovation across the United Nations system.
External Evaluation (JIU)

Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system

BACKGROUND

The review followed up on a previous Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report on South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system. As requested by the General Assembly, the objective of the present review is to make an assessment of the progress made on the recommendations in the previous report.

EXCERPT RELEVANT TO ESCAP

This review determined that notable progress has been made in support of SSTC in the United Nations development system in the past years since the JIU report on South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system was published.

Recommendation 6 – Regional positioning of UNOSSC

It was suggested that UNOSSC regional representatives be relocated from the UNDP regional centres to the Regional Commissions so as to enhance the regional presence of UNOSSC and to achieve a more coherent approach at the regional level. This recommendation was not implemented. It was observed that such relocations would deprive UNDP and UNOSSC of the human resources needed to provide more direct support to regional initiatives.

Recommendation 8 – Regional Commissions

The review proposed that the Economic and Social Council request the Regional Commissions to set up strategies and structures and mobilize resources to enhance subregional, regional and interregional SSC. This recommendation is in progress. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has appointed focal points within the Strategy and Programme Management Division. The Regional Commissions have been proactively making use of SSTC modalities both within and beyond their respective regions.

Recommendation 12 – Coordination

This recommendation called for coordination in support of SSTC within the United Nations system organizations at the headquarters, regional and country levels. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs was called to set up an SSTC cluster dedicated to bringing coherence and promoting common approaches to SSTC. However, the consensus reached was that SSTC has already been mainstreamed in the existing thematic clusters and there was no need to add a distinct cluster on SSTC.
3. EVALUATION TOOLS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Evaluation reports

ESCAP evaluation reports are one of the key knowledge products that feed into continuous learning and improvement of programme planning and implementation. Divisions, subregional offices and regional institutions in ESCAP are encouraged to utilize the evaluation findings and recommendations to inform their work. To ensure accountability and accessibility of these information, ESCAP evaluation reports are periodically updated on ESCAP’s website as well as the evaluation unit’s iSeek page.

Monitoring and evaluation policy and guidelines

The document on ESCAP’s monitoring and evaluation system was first issued in 2009. Recognizing the need to reflect new monitoring and evaluation procedures, the document was updated in 2017 to provide an overview of the M&E system in ESCAP, including policies, guidelines and tools. Updates in this new document reflect new M&E procedures, changes in operations brought about by the introduction of Umoja, updates in United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluations, and lessons learned drawn from the findings and recommendations of evaluations at ESCAP.

Results-based management and theory of change training

Results-based management (RBM) is central to ESCAP’s efforts to enhance the effectiveness of its work. Recognizing this, a total of 10 session of RBM training was conducted throughout 2017 and 2018, with an aim to enhance the professional knowledge and skills of ESCAP staff to apply RBM concepts and tools when formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating capacity development projects.

ESCAP aims to build a strong results culture that leads into tangible results at the regional and national levels. Strengthening RBM capacities at ESCAP to put together coherent project proposals with a clear theory of change and focus on results is an essential element in achieving this goal.
**EVALUATION DASHBOARDS**

As part of ESCAP’s efforts to better utilize digital tools and products, the Evaluation Unit is working closely with Division of Administration to develop two online dashboards that feed into ESCAP’s senior management dashboard.

**Evaluation/Audit dashboard**

The evaluation and audit dashboard provides at-a-glance the status of implementation of follow up actions to recommendations of evaluations and audits of ESCAP. Filtering functions are enabled by divisions/offices, status, due date of the actions and internal/external evaluations or audits to allow users to customize information based on its relevance. This dashboard enables senior managers to monitor the status of follow up actions and assess the performance of their divisions.

As of December 2018, ESCAP recorded full implementation of all follow up actions due.

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**Intergovernmental meetings dashboard**

The intergovernmental meetings dashboard provides a snapshot of the performance indicators for ESCAP’s commission and committee sessions.

For the commission sessions, data from 2010-2018 shows that ESCAP hosts on average, 451 participants in each session with an average of 77% member States attending the sessions. For committee sessions, each committee hosts on average, 133 participants with an average of 45% member States attendance.
# 4. EVALUATION PLAN 2019 - 2021

## ESCAP BIENNIAL EVALUATION PLANS

As part of the programme budget process, ESCAP is required to develop a biennial evaluation plan taking into account the strategic priorities of the organization, existing Commission mandates, and inputs from its subprogrammes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation plan 2018-2019</th>
<th>Evaluation plan 2020-2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td><strong>2020</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development Division (SDD)</td>
<td>Subregional Offices of ESCAP (SROs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT)</td>
<td>Trade, Investment and Innovation Division (TIID)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)</td>
<td>Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
<td><strong>2021</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP)</td>
<td>North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM)</td>
<td>Transport Division (TD) with focus on the Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Transport Connectivity (mandated by resolution 73/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM)</td>
<td>Environment and Development Division (EDD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aside from the subprogramme/thematic evaluations that are determined by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP in each biennial plan, all capacity development projects funded through extrabudgetary sources with a budget of at least USD 250,000 are also required to earmark a budget for evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project evaluations (extrabudgetary and development account)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2019</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-South cooperation for science, technology and innovation policies in the Asia-Pacific region (DA 10th Tranche)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovative climate finance mechanisms for financial institutions in the Asia-Pacific region (DA 10th Tranche)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening statistical capacity to achieve SDG 14 in selected ESCAP member Countries (DA 10th Tranche)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based policies for the sustainable use of energy resources in the Asia-Pacific region (DA 10th Tranche)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy connectivity for sustainable development in Asia: Assessing the socio-economic and environmental benefits of transboundary power grid interconnection (XB)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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## Project evaluations (extrabudgetary and development account)

### 2020
- Strengthening connectivity for the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway initiative (XB)
- Strengthening research and studies for improved quality of SDG statistics in Central Asia (XB)
- Regional Programme for the improvement of Economic Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (Phase II) (XB)
- Strengthening the capacities of policy makers for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Helpdesk (DA 10th Tranche)
- Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth Phase III: Green growth policy tools and strategies for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (XB)

### 2021
- Supporting the Countries with Special Needs in Asia-Pacific in meeting the challenge of resource mobilization for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (DA 11th Tranche)
- Fostering inclusive and sustainable development through increased participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in global value chains (DA 11th Tranche)
- Evidence-based innovation policy for effective implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Asia-Pacific region (DA 11th Tranche)
- Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into local action in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific (DA 11th Tranche)
- Addressing the transboundary dimensions of the 2030 Agenda through regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific (DA 11th Tranche)
Please direct enquiries regarding this report to the
Strategy and Programme Management Division
Email: escap-spmd@un.org