

Thematic review from Independent Evaluations of UNIDO renewable energy projects

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(January 2020)

Background

For the last few years, UNIDO Member States and Senior Management have called for a greater emphasis on reporting and demonstrating the results and performance of UNIDO's Technical Cooperation activities at corporate level in a more systematic and aggregated manner. The *Strategic Guidance Document* on the future of UNIDO in 2013 asked the UNIDO Secretariat to "... provide consolidated reports at regular intervals ..." to demonstrate development impact¹. In 2015, the medium-term programme framework, 2016-2019 introduced an innovative tool, the integrated results and performance framework (IRPF) to help UNIDO manage for results and demonstrate its results and performance at corporate level². In 2017, the medium-term programme framework, 2018-2021 emphasized the importance for "... the Organization to monitor, respond to and demonstrate tangible results ... and to analyse and report the progress in organizational performance at all levels of the Organization" based on the IRPF as the corporate long-term results framework³. This gap for results and performance at corporate level has also echoed the findings from a number of independent evaluations by the UNIDO Independent Evaluation Division (EIO/IED) in the last years. To contribute to the efforts, EIO/IED will prepare a thematic review from independent evaluations of UNIDO renewable energy projects. The resulting lessons, findings and key recommendations will enable EIO report the learnings to the UNIDO Executive Board (EB) and to management of the respective thematic area.

Some of such thematic clusters that could be reviewed may include renewable energy (RE), Clean Tech (GCIP), POPs, Mercury, Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP), Ozone-depleting Substances (ODS), National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), Fisheries, Leather to mention a few and subject to availability of reasonably sufficient number of project evaluation reports.

Since 2010, UNIDO evaluation function has consistently taken stock of past independent evaluations and has consolidated key findings and lessons into synthesis reports to promote learning at UNIDO and an independent and systematic aggregated overview of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact and other cross-cutting dimensions of UNIDO programmes and projects evaluated. Building on

¹ UNIDO 2013, Strategic Guidance Document: https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2013-06/idb41_24e_0.pdf

² UNIDO 2015, Medium-term programme framework, 2016-2019. https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2015-04/pbc31_9en_0.pdf

³ UNIDO 2017, Medium-term programme framework 2018-2021 Proposal on "Strengthening knowledge and institutions". https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/2017-05/IDB.45_8_Add.2_2__E_Medium-term_programme_framework_2018-2021_1703143E_20170522__0.pdf

those past efforts to aggregate and provide synthesis learnings, this exercise aims to look at independent evaluations with focus on specific **thematic clusters** for informing UNIDO and to further contribute to improve the organization's programmatic performance and impact by identifying and capturing accumulated knowledge on UNIDO's work, with a more strategic or systemic manner. Synthesizing existing evaluation reports, together with latest research thinking allows evaluation evidence to feed into UNIDO's decision-making process in a more effective way.

The output document of these reviews may substitute individual summary briefs of Independent Project Evaluation reports to EB since they will provide a strategic/corporate perspective.

Objectives, scope and key questions

The purpose of the study is to synthesize key findings, lessons learnt and recommendations from existing independent evaluations conducted in **the renewable energy** thematic cluster. The output document will facilitate learning and wider use of evaluation findings by identifying and capturing accumulated knowledge from independent evaluations.

The report has the following objectives:

1. To review and synthesize the performance, lessons learnt and recommendations from eleven (11) RE projects evaluated between 2016 and 2019;
2. To identify key lessons, areas for improvement and systemic issues on that thematic area. (e.g. monitoring and evaluation of RE projects, UNIDO reporting needs (IRPF));
3. To generate recommendations and possible actions to help UNIDO senior management and the concerned substantive department(s) to further improve its performance and results.

The scope of the exercise will cover eleven independent project evaluations conducted by UNIDO EIO/IED between 2016 and 2019. The total budget of the 11 projects is around USD 20.6 million, nine of them funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), one by the EU and one by Japan (see the full list in Annex 1).

The primary audience of the report is the EB and the management of the Department of Energy (PTC/ENE).

The report will seek to answer the following questions:

1. Which are the reiterative areas that work well in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, design, M&E and gender mainstreaming? Which doesn't? why?

2. What have been the key features of RE projects related to results (output, outcome and impact)? The analysis includes, but is not limited to the following questions:
 - i. Did the project utilize UNIDO's strategic assets and to what effect? (e.g., CPCs, ITPOs, Technology centers).
 - ii. Did the project contribute to long-term capacity building of the country and what systems put in place for that purpose?
 - iii. How did the projects ensure sustainability of results?
 - iv. Did the projects mobilize/leverage funds/investments as planned?
 - v. What is the contribution of the projects towards partnerships development?
 - vi. What is the contribution of the project towards policy development?
 - vii. What was the nature of UNIDO F/O and PMU arrangement/relationship?
 - viii. Any best practices on project ownership and stakeholder relations.
3. To what extent do the completed projects achieve their expected results? What are the systemic issues?
4. What are the external factors enabling or hindering progress towards impact?
5. What is the quality of project M&E⁴? To what extent did M&E of evaluated projects help the project management to manage for results? What good M&E practices are evident from UNIDO projects? What are the factors promoting or hindering a good M&E system at project level?
6. To what extent the thematic area aligned with UNIDO's mandate (ISID) and with SDGs?
7. What are the systemic opportunities, lessons, learning opportunities and issues emerging from the evaluations?

Approach and methodology

The study will be undertaken by means of a desk review of the Independent Evaluation reports of the renewable energy projects issued between 2016 and 2019.

Team composition

Under the overall guidance of the Chief of the Independent Evaluation Division (EIO/IED), an assigned Evaluation Officer will undertake this task. He/she will be supported by colleagues in EIO/IED as needed.

⁴ The emphasis will be on Monitoring, Reporting and Review by project management.

Work Plan

The synthesis review will take place from February to March 2020.

1. Desk review
2. Data analysis and draft output document preparation for review
3. Preparation and finalization of knowledge product and dissemination

Tentative timeline

Timelines	Tasks
End of January 2020	Draft ToR
1 st Week February 2020	ToR cleared by Director, EIO
February 2020	Desk and literature review, Zero draft Output and peer reviews
Mid-March 2020	Submit draft report to Chief, EIO/IED for review
End of March 2020	Send final draft to Chief, EIO/IED for submission to Director EIO for final review and clearance

Annex 1. List of projects evaluated (2016-2019)

#	Project ID	Title of evaluation report	Year of publication	Country	Budget (USD)	Donor
1	100184	Independent terminal evaluation. SPWA-CC: Promoting renewable energy-based mini-grids for rural electrification and productive uses in Chad	May-16	Chad	2,401,343	GEF
2	100186	Independent terminal evaluation. Promoting renewable energy-based grids in rural communities for productive uses in Côte d'Ivoire	Aug-16	Côte d'Ivoire	854,547	GEF
3	120182	Promoting ultra low-head micro hydropower technology to increase access to renewable energy for productive uses in rural India	Dec-16	India	1,224,659	Japan
4	103023	Independent terminal evaluation. Promoting renewable energy-based mini grids for productive uses in rural areas in the Gambia	May-18	Gambia	1,809,012	GEF
5	100261	Mini-grids based on small hydropower sources to augment rural electrification in Tanzania	Apr-19	Tanzania	3,381,385	GEF
6	100264	Overcoming policy, market and technological barriers to support technical innovation and south-south technology transfer: The pilot case of ethanol production from cassava	Aug-19	Thailand	2,640,981	GEF
7	100223	Climate change related technology transfer for Cambodia: Using agricultural residue biomass for sustainable energy solutions	Oct-19	Cambodia	1,690,000	GEF
8	100332	Promoting market-based development of small to medium-scale renewable energy systems in Cape Verde	Oct-19	Cape Verde	1,805,722	GEF
9	140341	Climate change, clean energy, and urban water in Africa. Promoting market-based deployment of clean energy technology solutions in municipal waterworks: Pilot initiative in South Africa	Oct-19	South Africa	1,736,000	EU
10	130012	Promoting investments in small to medium scale renewable energy technologies in the electricity sector	TBD	Guinea Bissau	2,087,161	GEF
11	100258	Promoting Small Biomass Power Plants in Rural Thailand for Sustainable Renewable Energy Management and Community Involvement	TBD	Thailand	994,198	GEF