



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Evaluability Assessment of UNIDO's Contribution to SDG 9**

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## Table of Contents

I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT .....	3
II. PURPOSE .....	4
III. SCOPE AND APPROACH .....	4
IV. EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS .....	5
V. EA WORK PLAN.....	5

## I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is at its half-way point. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit in September 2023 will be taking stock of progress made to achieve the SDGs. The 2023 Special Edition Report of the Secretary-General (SG) provides an update on progress made since 2015 against the global SDG indicator framework and makes recommendations on how to accelerate implementation between now and 2030 “for Member State consideration in advance of the SDG Summit”<sup>1</sup>.
- The UN development system (UNDS), responds to these calls by the SG and Member States to strengthen the system’s offer to support countries in delivering their national SDG ambitions. Some areas that are at the forefront of multilateral action include reforming the international architecture, going beyond GDP, strengthening digital cooperation, boosting youth participation in decision-making, transforming education, establishing an emergency platform, and advancing a new agenda for peace<sup>2</sup>.
- As a result of the UNDS reform, more emphasis is placed on reporting and measuring the system’s joint results toward achieving the SDGs<sup>3</sup>. Member States, through the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment (OAS), are briefed annually on progress made in the implementation of the reform and the UNDS’s offer to support countries’ SDG implementation<sup>4</sup>.
- The IDB calls on the Director-General to report progress towards the 2030 Agenda (GC.15/Res.1; GC.16/Res.2; PBC 2016/6 and IDB.44/Dec.9(e)(I)), and the Director General responds to these global high-impact initiatives with a set of thematic priorities as laid out in the MTPF 2022-2025 midterm update (IDB.51/10-PBC.39/10).
- Past UNIDO evaluations, particularly on the MTPF 2020-2023 (2022), transformational change (2022), and the synthesis evaluation (2023) have shared findings regarding UNIDO’s contribution to the SDGs and 2030 Agenda.
- UNIDO Member States have already emphasized the need for UNIDO to deliver results as outlined in the RBB P&B<sup>5</sup> and following the SDG Summit in September 2023, Member States will start planning for what comes after the 2030 Agenda. At some point in the not-too-distant future, UNIDO will have to provide evidence of how well it has performed in supporting countries to implement SDG9 (and other SDGs), and possibly make recommendations on how to frame UNIDO’s role in a future Beyond 2030 Agenda. Information on what worked and what didn’t, and why, will be pertinent.
- A full-fledged evaluation to assess UNIDO’s contribution to SDG9 would be technically complex, and also time-consuming and expensive. Therefore, as a first step, an evaluability assessment will be undertaken, to assess the extent to which data, information and sources of evidence are or

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<sup>1</sup> Advance Unedited Version. A/78/XX-E/2023/xx. Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet. Report of the Secretary-General (Special Edition): [https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/SDG\\_Progress\\_Report\\_Special\\_Edition\\_2023\\_ADVANCE\\_UNEDITED\\_VERSION.pdf](https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-04/SDG_Progress_Report_Special_Edition_2023_ADVANCE_UNEDITED_VERSION.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Measuring the UN contribution towards the SDGs. <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/2022/2022-UNSDG-Chair-Report-Annex3-System-Wide-results-Advanced-unedited-version.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. UN GA Resolution A/RES/75/233

<sup>5</sup> The UNIDO Programme and Budgets, 2024–2025: from a programmatic approach to results-based budgeting: additional information. PBC.39-CRP.9

would be available for considering a substantive review of UNIDO's contribution to SDG9 and other SDGs.

## II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluability assessment (EA) is to determine to what extent UNIDO's contribution to SDG9 can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion<sup>6</sup>. More specifically, the EA will examine three inter-related aspects of evaluability<sup>7</sup>:

- (i) Whether there is a logical and clear theory of change that spells out how and under what conditions interventions influence particular processes of change that contribute to SDGs?
- (ii) Whether UNIDO has sufficient information and the quality, scope, and depth of data required to conduct the evaluation. Which data, including progress reports, annual reports, internal and external data sets, policy, and academic literature, are available that can be used in assessing the merit and worth of the intervention?
- (iii) Whether the timing for the evaluation in 2023 is right, and whether institutional resources are available. Is the timing right to influence strategic decisions with regard to UNIDO's contribution to SDG9 and the Agenda 2030? And is the timing right with regard to allocation of scarce evaluation resources for this particular intervention.

## III. SCOPE AND APPROACH

The EA's scope will encompass UNIDO's more recent reorientation of thematic priorities under the new Director-General since December 2021 and cover the period of 2015-2023, including the ongoing MTPF 2022-2025. The EA will be based on both secondary and primary sources of data and information, via the reviewing of documentation and conducting interviews related to UNIDO's contribution to the implementation of SDG9 under the 2030 Agenda.

It should be noted that the key assumption of this EA is that most of what UNIDO does somehow relates to one SDG or another. The central issue to explore in a SDG9 evaluation is hence not whether UNIDO's activities are relevant and useful for SDG implementation. But whether the current approach and mechanisms in place are "fit for purpose" to accelerate SDG implementation – in line with the SDG Summit's rescue plan -, and how UNIDO is positioned as a key development partner in the lead up to the Beyond 2030 Agenda negotiations.

More specifically, the EA will:

- 1) Undertake a thorough desk review and data analysis to:
  - identify information sources;
  - compile a list of relevant documents to be reviewed (policy, reports);
  - identify a list of key stakeholders, including related roles and responsibilities
  - gather a list of data required from monitoring and information systems; and,

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6 OECD-DAC:2010:21

7 Evaluability Assessments in Austrian development cooperation, Guidance Document, March 2022, p.7

- Conduct interviews, focus groups, and review literature and policy documents to:
- describe the implementation arrangements of SDG9 in place, partner agency, and coordination strategy and outline UNIDO's role as custodian of six SDG9 indicators;
- describe the relationship between SDG targets and UNIDO's Theory of Change as articulated in its MTPF and IRPF;
- unpack UNIDO's support to achieve the SDGs and describe UNIDO's roles as presented in various policy documents or reports, i.e., at global, regional, national, and local levels; in a planning, monitoring or pilot role; or, as described in UNIDO's core functions;
- assess the extent to which data and information is supported by evidence
- map UNIDO's work in support of achieving SDG9 and identify which UNIDO units contribute to which SDG(s). UNIDO's recent synthesis evaluation has done a preliminary mapping, which will form the basis for this task. UNIDO's custodianship of several indicators will feature prominently in this mapping exercise as well as a selection of global, high-profile programmes, which contribute to globallevel UN initiatives (Our Common Agenda; SDG Summit high impact initiatives; Financing for Development report and task force; Science, Technology, and Innovation task force; etc.)
- identify data and other information gaps and make suggestions on filling data gaps prior to the evaluation. Review relevant past evaluations and assessments and summarize relevant lessons learnt and recommendations that are useful for the SDG9 evaluation.

2) Provide a conceptual framework, which analyses the feasibility of having a SDG9-focussed evaluation and pronounce its limitations. The EA has two pillars: the engagement of stakeholders, and the application of the checklists. Stakeholder engagement is crucial to determine the level of expectations and perceived usefulness of an SDG evaluation. A two-dimensional Power-Interest Matrix will help inform the scope and expectations of a potential consequent SDG evaluation. As regards the application of checklists, the findings from interviews with stakeholders along with the checklist outlines will be summarized and prioritized.

The methodology used for the EA is qualitative and includes methods such as interviews, desk review and focus group discussions..

#### IV. EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The EA will make use of the checklists corresponding to each of the inter-related aspects in section II above, as provided by the ADA Guidance Document (see footnotes). The checklists will be fine-tuned during the preparatory phase to provide more tailor-made questions.

#### V. EA WORK PLAN

This EA will take place from August to October 2023 with the aim to provide a basis for decision-making on whether a full-fledged evaluation to be considered in EIO Evaluation work plans for 2024-25. The EA will be conducted by staff of EIO/IEU.

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Tasks</b>
August 2023	Desk review and data analysis
August/September 2023	Interviews and literature review
September 2023	Development of a conceptual framework
September/October 2023	Draft report and review with key stakeholders
October 2023	Final report and debriefing of UNIDO stakeholders