Annex 1

Terms of Reference

Independent Mid-term Evaluation of the "Building capacity for the 2030 Agenda 2.0" project

Background

1. The **United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)** is a principal training arm of the United Nations, with the aim to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in achieving its major objectives through training and research. UNITAR's mission is to develop the individual, institutional and organizational capacity of countries and other United Nations stakeholders through high-quality learning solutions and related knowledge products and services to enhance decision-making and to support country-level action for overcoming global challenges.

2. UNITAR's fifth Strategic Objective calls to "Promote the indivisible and integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda". The sub-objective SO 5.2 "Support coherence and evidence-based policies of the 2030 Agenda" focuses broadly on strengthening capacities of Member States and key partners for implementing and monitoring progress on the 2030 Agenda, with emphasis on enhancing the capacities of countries in special situations in promoting coherent and evidence-based policies and in improving multi-stakeholder engagement at the national level.

3. The project aims to contribute to the transformation of the capacities of countries, institutions and individuals with a view to embedding key SDG principles into their daily analysis and practices, and enabling them to design, implement and review policies, strategies, programmes, actions and initiatives that are both, coherent and highly effective reflecting the complex linkages between all SDGs and that contribute to making sure the world is a better place for all using LNOB as the guiding principle. The project objective and results areas build on the earlier project "Capacity for the 2030 Agenda" (2017-2019).

4. The project uses a combination of tailored support, i.e., advisory services, national and regional pilot learning and Training-of-Trainers (face-to-face) events, with the participation of selected countries who requested this type of cooperation, and the dissemination of knowledge through e-learning and other knowledge products.

5. The project further aims to achieve three result areas:
   - Result Area 1. Promoting greater policy coherence and Leaving No One Behind
   - Result Area 2. Data and evidence to support coherent decision-making and reporting on the SDGs
   - Result Area 3. Spreading the knowledge and building skillsets

6. The project document calls for an independent evaluation initiated at the latest six months before the end of the validity of the agreement.

Purpose of the evaluation

7. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, likelihood of impact and likelihood of sustainability of the project; to identify any problems or challenges that the project has encountered; to issue recommendations, and to identify lessons to be learned on design, implementation and management. The evaluation's purpose is thus to

provide findings and conclusions to meet accountability requirements, and recommendations and lessons learned to contribute to the project's improvement and broader organizational learning. The evaluation should not only assess how well the project has performed, but also seek to answer the 'why 'question by identifying factors contributing to (or inhibiting) successful delivery of the results. The evaluation is also forward-looking to inform decisions on the design and planning of possible future phases and focus areas.

Scope of the evaluation

8. The mid-term evaluation will cover the period from April 2020 to February 2022 of the project. Though the mid-point of the project is reached in August 2021, it was decided that due to adjustments to the activity schedule and COVID-19 delays, the timing of the evaluation would be most strategic to commence in March 2022. Although the scope of the evaluation does not include the previous project "Capacity for the 2030 Agenda" (2017-2019) funded by the governments of Switzerland and Sweden, the evaluator should take the other into account when framing the evaluation's findings and conclusions. In addition to assessing the results achieved from 2020-2022, the evaluation should provide forward-looking recommendations to inform the remaining period of implementation through December 2022.

Evaluation criteria

9. The evaluation will assess project performance using the following criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, likelihood of impact and sustainability.

- ***Relevance:*** *Is the project reaching its intended individual and institutional users and are activities relevant to the beneficiaries' needs and priorities, and designed with quality?*
- ***Coherence:*** *To what extent is the project coherent with relevant policies, complementing other programmes and projects and adhering to international norms and standards?*
- ***Effectiveness:*** *How effective has the project been in delivering results and in strengthening the capacities of countries on integrated and coherent policy design, better planning and partnerships to close data gaps, leveraging data analysis and making countries create more inclusive and agile institutions?*
- ***Efficiency:*** *To what extent has the project delivered its results in a cost-effective manner and optimized partnerships?*
- ***Likelihood of Impact:*** *What are the potential cumulative and/or long-term effects expected from the project, including contribution towards the intended impact, positive or negative impacts, or intended or unintended changes?*
- ***Likelihood of Sustainability:*** *To what extent are the project's results likely to be sustained in the long term?*

Principal evaluation questions

10. The following questions are *suggested* to guide the design of the evaluation, although the criteria applied to the outcomes and the final questions selected/identified will be confirmed by the evaluator following the initial document review and engagement with project management with a view to ensuring that the evaluation is as useful as possible with regard to the project's future orientation.

Relevance

a. To what extent is the project aligned with the UNITAR strategic frameworks (2018-2021 and 2022-2025), the Institute's efforts to helping Member States implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

b. To what extent is the project aligned with policy coherence for sustainable development, including the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report and developments from the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development?

c. How relevant are the objectives and the design of the project to the identified and new capacity needs and priorities of national beneficiaries (i.e., countries, institutions and individuals)?

d. To what extent is the UNSDG:Learn platform relevant to users and implementing partners (e.g., other organisations offering learning products in the platform) needs and priorities, including those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic?

e. How relevant is the project to supporting gender equality and women's empowerment and countries in special situations, in addition to other groups made vulnerable? **(GEEW)**

Coherence

f. How well do the matching funds support the project implementation and how well does the latter contribute to a coherent approach the programming aimed at Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda?

g. How well does the project complement and foster synergies with other existing or new programmes and projects by other actors, such as by UNDESA, UNDP, Paris 21 and the UN Regional Commissions relevant to the project objectives (i.e., aiming at strengthening capacities to improve policy design and implementation, promote evidence-based policy making and leverage data analysis and monitoring and reporting on the SDGs)?

Effectiveness

h. Is the achievement of the project's outputs and objectives on track? What are the factors affecting this performance?

i. To what extent is the project contributing to changed behaviour/attitudes of countries, institutions and individuals and informed decision making in a way that contributes to embedding key SDG principles into daily practices in designing, implementing and reviewing policies, strategies, programmes, actions and initiatives related to SDG implementation?

j. How effective is the project's three result areas structure in achieving the three outcome areas? How well do the project result areas complement each other for achieving the project objectives?

k. Have the project's structure and partnerships been effective, including the performance of possible implementing partners?

l. To what extent are a human rights-based approach and a gender mainstreaming strategy and the "no one left behind" principle incorporated in the design and implementation of the project and more specifically in the selection of direct and indirect beneficiaries and intervention countries? **(GEEW)**

Efficiency

m. To what extent has the project been able to link to other initiatives and leverage matching funds?

n. To what extent has the project produced outputs in a timely and cost-efficient manner (e.g. in comparison with alternative approaches) or is likely to?

o. How environment-friendly (natural resources) has the project been?

p. To what extent and how has the project collaborated with the governments and/or UN country teams in (the Philippines, selected SIDS such as Mauritius and Seychelles and countries from the three regional StaTact workshops?

q. To what extent has the project created benefits of integrating gender equality (or not), and what were the related costs?*(GEEW)*

r. How cost effective were the partnership arrangements, including with implementing partners?

s. To what extent has the project adjusted to the COVID-19 related context and how efficient has it been? How swiftly and flexibly has the project adjusted to the new circumstances to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness? What helped the project to do so, what obstacles did it face?

Likelihood of impact and early indication of impact

t. What observable end-results or organizational changes (*positive or negative, intended or unintended*) have occurred or are likely to occur related to the project implementation and particularly result area 1?

u. To what extent has the project contributed to improved country-level policies, strategies, programmes, actions and initiatives related to SDG monitoring and implementation?

v. To what extent is the project expected to generate impact, globally and in pilot countries in comparison to non-pilot countries?

w. What real difference does the project make in contributing to global efforts to strengthen capacities of Member States, various UNSDG:Learn stakeholders and individual citizens to implement the 2030 Agenda?

Likelihood of sustainability and early indication of sustainability

x. To what extent are the project's results likely to endure beyond the implementation of the activities in the mid- to long-term?

y. What are the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability, including environmental sustainability, of the project?

z. To what extent is the current design likely to contribute to sustained capacity?

aa. What can we learn from the COVID-19 pandemic to inform the future design of similar programming?

Gender equality and women empowerment (GEEW)

The evaluation questions with gender equality and women empowerment dimensions are marked with **"*GEEW*"** in the above.

Evaluation Approach and Methods

The evaluation is to be undertaken in accordance with the UNITAR Monitoring and Evaluation Policy Framework and the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation, and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines The evaluation will be undertaken by a supplier or an international consultant (the "evaluator") under the supervision of the UNITAR Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PPME).

11. In order to maximize utilization of the evaluation, the evaluation shall follow a participatory approach and engage a range of project stakeholders in the process, including the project partners, the UN Country Teams, the participants, the donor and other stakeholders. Data collection should be triangulated to the extent possible to ensure validity and reliability of findings and draw on the following methods: comprehensive desk review, including a stakeholder analysis; surveys; review

of the log frame (reconstructed) baseline data and the theory of change; key informant interviews; focus groups; and, if possible, field visits. These data collection tools are discussed below.

12. It is recommended to look at the different dimensions of capacity development, including:

- **Individual dimension** relates to the people involved in terms of knowledge, skill levels, competencies, attitudes, behaviours and values that can be addressed through facilitation, training and competency development.
- **Organizational dimension** relates to public and private organizations, civil society organizations, and networks of organizations. The change in learning that occurs at individual level affects, from a results chain perspective, the changes at organizational level.
- **Enabling environment dimension** refers to the context in which individuals and organizations work, including the political commitment and vision; policy, legal and economic frameworks and institutional set-up in the country; national public sector budget allocations and processes; governance and power structures; incentives and social norms; power structures and dynamics.

Table 1: Capacity areas within the three dimensions

Individual	Skills levels (technical and managerial skills)	Knowledge
	Competencies	Attitudes, behaviours and values
Organizations	Mandates	Organizational priorities
	Horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms	Processes, systems and procedures
	Motivation and incentive systems	Human and financial resources
	Strategic leadership	Knowledge and information sharing
	Inter/intra institutional linkages	Infrastructure
	Programme management	
	Multi-stakeholder processes	
Enabling environment	Policy and legal framework	Economic framework and national public budget allocations and power
	Political commitment	
	and accountability framework	Legal, policy and political environment
	Governance	

13. The evaluator should engage in quantitative and qualitative analysis in responding to the principal evaluation questions and present the findings qualitatively or quantitatively as most appropriate.

Data collection methods:

Comprehensive desk review

The evaluator will compile, review and analyse background documents and secondary data/information related to the project, including a results framework indicator tracking review. A list of background documentation for the desk review is included in Annex C.

The evaluator should also consider whether [Outcome mapping](#) / [Outcome harvesting / outcome evidencing](#) are suitable tools for answering the evaluation questions.

Stakeholder analysis

The evaluator will identify the different stakeholders involved in the project. Key stakeholders at the global and national level include, but are not limited, to:

- Partner institutions, including donors and other partners such as UNDESA (UNSD), UNDCO, Regional Commissions, UNDP;
- Beneficiaries/participants;
- Trainers/facilitators;
- UN Country Teams;
- Host (local and national) governments;
- Etc.

Survey(s)

With a view to maximizing feedback from the widest possible range of project stakeholders, the consultant will develop and deploy a survey(s) following the comprehensive desk study to provide an initial set of findings and allow the evaluator to easily probe during the key informant interviews.

Key informant interviews

Based on stakeholder identification, the evaluator will identify and interview key informants. The list of contacts is available in Annex A. In preparation for the interviews with key informants, the consultant will define interview protocols to determine the questions and modalities with flexibility to adapt to the particularities of the different informants, either at the global, at the national or local level.

Focus groups

Focus groups should be organized with selected project stakeholders at the local levels to complement/triangulate findings from other collection tools.

Field visit

Due to COVID-19 the data collection does not include a field visit that requires international travel. Local travel for interviews and focus groups is to be considered depending on the residence of the evaluator. Observation may also prove useful if activities are being implemented simultaneously to the local field visit.

The evaluator should be able to undertake data collection entirely remotely should travel restrictions be imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gender and human rights

14. The evaluator should incorporate human rights, gender and equity perspectives in the evaluation process and findings, particularly by involving women and other disadvantaged groups subject to discrimination. All key data collected shall be disaggregated by sex, country status/classification and age grouping and be included in the draft and evaluation report. Though this is a general requirement for all evaluations, this evaluation should particularly put emphasis on gender equality.

15. The guiding principles for the evaluation should respect transparency, engage stakeholders and beneficiaries; ensure confidentiality of data and anonymity of responses; and follow **ethical** and professional standards (UNEG Ethical Guidelines).

Timeframe, work plan, deliverables and review

16. The proposed timeframe for the evaluation spans from March 2022 (initial desk review and data collection) to August 2022 (submission of final evaluation report). An indicative work plan is provided in the table below.

17. The consultant shall submit a brief evaluation design/question matrix following the comprehensive desk study, stakeholder analysis and initial key informant interviews. The evaluation design/question matrix should include a discussion on the evaluation objectives, methods and, if required, revisions to the suggested evaluation questions or data collection methods. The Evaluation design/question matrix should indicate any foreseen difficulties or challenges/limitations in collecting data and confirm the final timeframe for the completion of the evaluation exercise.

18. Following data collection and analysis, the consultant shall submit a zero draft of the evaluation report to the evaluation manager and revise the draft based on comments made by the evaluation manager.

19. The draft evaluation report should follow the structure presented under Annex D. The report should state the purpose of the evaluation and the methods used and include a discussion on the limitations to the evaluation. The report should present evidence-based and balanced findings, including strengths and weaknesses, consequent conclusions and recommendations, and lessons to be learned. The length of the report should be approximately 20-30 pages, excluding annexes.

20. Following the submission of the zero draft, a draft report will then be submitted to Project Management to review and comment on the draft report and provide any additional information using the form provided under Annex G by 27 June 2022. Within two weeks of receiving feedback, the evaluator shall submit the final evaluation report. The target date for this submission is 19 July 2022. Subsequently, PPME will finalize and issue the report, and present the findings and recommendations to Project Management and other invited stakeholders.

Indicative timeframe: March 2022 – August 2022

Activity	March	April	May	June	July	August
Evaluator selected and recruited	■					
Initial data collection, including desk review, stakeholder analysis	■	■				
Evaluation design/question matrix		■				
Data collection and analysis, including survey(s), interviews and focus groups and field visit		■	■	■		
Zero draft report submitted to UNITAR				■		
Draft evaluation report consulted with UNITAR evaluation manager and submitted to Project Management				■		
Project Management reviews draft evaluation report and shares comments and recommendations					■	
Evaluation report finalized and management response by Project Management					■	
Presentation of the evaluation findings and lessons learned					■	■

Summary of evaluation deliverables and indicative schedule

Deliverable	From	To	Deadline
Evaluation design/question matrix	Evaluator	Evaluation manager/Reference Group	22 March 2022

Comments on evaluation design/question matrix	Evaluation manager/Reference Group	Evaluator	29 March 2022
Zero draft report	Evaluator	Evaluation manager	06 June 2022
Comments on zero draft	Evaluation manager	Evaluator	20 June 2022
Draft report	Evaluator	Evaluation manager	27 June 2022
Comments on draft report	Project Management/Reference Group	Evaluation manager	12 July 2022
Final report	Evaluator	Evaluation manager	19 July 2022
Presentation of the evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned	Evaluator/evaluation manager	Project Management/Reference Group	19 July 2022

OPTIONAL: A reference group is considered a good practice in independent evaluations. Members of the reference group could be a representative from project management, from the donor and partners for example. These stakeholders would then be included throughout the evaluation phases and would e.g. be able to provide comments on the draft report.

Communication/dissemination of results

21. The evaluation report shall be written in English. The final report will be shared with all partners and be posted on an online repository of evaluation reports open to the public.

Evaluation management arrangements

22. The evaluator will be contracted by UNITAR and will report directly to the Director of the Strategic Planning and Performance Division and Manager of Planning, Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit (PPME) ('evaluation manager').

23. The evaluation manager reports directly to the Executive Director of UNITAR and is independent from all programming related management functions at UNITAR. According to UNITAR's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, in due consultation with the Executive Director/programme management, PPME issues and discloses final evaluation reports without prior clearance from other UNITAR Management or functions. This builds the foundations of UNITAR's evaluation function's independence and ability to better support learning and accountability.

24. The evaluator should consult with the evaluation manager on any procedural or methodological matter requiring attention. The evaluator is responsible for planning any meetings, organizing online surveys and undertaking administrative arrangements for any travel that may be required (e.g. accommodation, visas, etc.). The travel arrangements, if any, will be in accordance with the UN rules and regulations for consultants.

Evaluator Ethics

25. The evaluator selected should not have participated in the project's design or implementation or have a conflict of interest with project activities. The selected consultant shall sign and return a copy of the code of conduct under Annex F prior to initiating the assignment and comply with UNEG Ethical Guidelines.

Professional requirements

26. The evaluator should have the following qualifications and experience:

- MA degree or equivalent in development, public policy or policy analysis or a related discipline. Knowledge and experience of executive type training, including in areas related to the 2030 Agenda.
- At least 7 years of professional experience conducting evaluation in the field of capacity building. Knowledge of United Nations Norms and Standards for Evaluation.
- Technical knowledge of the focal area including the evaluation of 2030 Agenda related topics.
- Field work experience in developing countries.
- Excellent research and analytical skills, including experience in a variety of evaluation methods and approaches. Experience in evaluation using Kirkpatrick method is an advantage.
- Excellent writing skills.
- Strong communication and presentation skills.
- Cross-cultural awareness and flexibility.
- Availability to travel.
- Fluency in oral and written English.

- **Annexes:**
A. **List of contact points**
B. **Event data available on the UNITAR Event Management System**
C. **List of documents and data to be reviewed**
D. **Structure of evaluation report**
E. **Project logical framework**
F. **Audit trail**
G. **Evaluator code of conduct**

Annex A: List of contact points

Project Management to complete

B: Event data available on the Event Management System from 1.1.2020-28.02.2022

Annex C: List of documents/data to be reviewed

- Annual narrative and finance reports
- Legal Agreement
- Logical Framework and outcome areas
- Project Description
- UNITAR website content
- Event Management System Data
- Documents related to the 2017-2019 earlier project
- UNSDG:Learn platform: UNSDG:Learn – SDG Learners today, SDG Leaders tomorrow! (unsdglearn.org)
- Toolkit on Integrated policies and policy coherence for the SDGs on UNITAR's moodle
- Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 "The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development": https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf and Global Sustainable Development Report .:. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (un.org)
- World Data Forum 2021 : United Nations World Data Forum
- Documents related to other projects (match funding):
- ✓ SFF Sweden 2019-2020 – UNSDG:Learn (USD 159'878) TRSF003
- ✓ SFF Sweden 2019-2020 – Upgrading StaTact (USD 90'268) TARSF003
- ✓ SFF Sweden 2020-2021 – Strengthening SDG competencies in the digital age (USD 100'000) TARSF003
- ✓ UNDESA 2020-2021 – E-course on integrated policies and policy coherence for the SDGs (USD 53'500) TARRD018
- ✓ UNDESA 2020-2021 – E-course on infrastructure for the SDGs (USD 85'944) TARRD020
- ✓ UNEP 2020-2021 – E-course on environmental SDG indicators (USD 78'680) TARRD021
- ✓ European Commission 2020-2022 - Implementing and mainstreaming the SDGs in Cyprus (EUR 400'000) - TARRD019
- ✓ UNESCAP 2021 - 2 additional modules E-course on environmental SDG indicators (USD 42'080) - TARRD022
- Any other document deemed to be useful to the evaluation

Annex D: Structure of evaluation report

i.   Title page
ii.   Executive summary
iii.   Acronyms and abbreviations
1. Introduction
2. Project description, objectives and development context
3. Theory of change/project design logic
4. Methodology and limitations
5. Evaluation findings based on criteria/principal evaluation questions
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations
8. Lessons Learned
9. Annexes
   a. Terms of reference
   b. Survey/questionnaires deployed
   c. List of persons interviewed
   d. List of documents reviewed
   e. Evaluation question matrix
   f. Evaluation consultant agreement form

Annex E: Project Logical Framework and outcome areas

Annex F: Evaluation Audit Trail Template

(To be completed by Project Management to show how the received comments on the draft report have (or have not) been incorporated into the evaluation report. This audit trail should be included as an annex in the evaluation report.)

To the comments received on (*date*) from the evaluation of the "Building capacity for the 2030 Agenda 2.0" project

The following comments were provided in track changes to the draft evaluation report; they are referenced by institution ("Author" column) and track change comment number ("#" column):

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft evaluation report	Evaluator response and actions taken

Annex G: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form*

The evaluator:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. He/she should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. He/she must respect people's right to provide information in confidence and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. He/she are not expected to evaluate individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncovers evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. He/she should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he/she must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. He/she should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom he/she comes in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, he/she should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Is responsible for his/her performance and his/her product(s). He/she is responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form[1]

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant)**: _____**

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation. and I declare that any past experience, of myself, my immediate family or close friends or associates, does not give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Signed at *place* on *date*

Signature: _____

*This form is required to be signed by each evaluator involved in the evaluation.

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[1]www.unevaluation.org/unegcodeofconduct