



EVALUATION MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND FOLLOW-UP PLAN

“ESCAP commits to addressing the findings and recommendations of each evaluation through a management response and follow-up action plan.” (ESCAP Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and Guidelines 2023)

Title of Evaluation: Evaluation of the DA13 project ‘Navigating policy in Asia-Pacific with data to leave no one behind’

Date of completion: May 2025

General Remarks by Management

ESCAP management welcomes the evaluation findings, which confirm the project’s relevance, effectiveness, and overall value in helping participating countries strengthen their national statistical systems and respond to the data demands of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are particularly encouraged by the evaluation’s recognition of the project’s tailored capacity building, facilitation of South-South cooperation, and use of open-source tools and partnerships to enhance efficiency.

We take note of the identified areas for improvement, including clearer articulation of results frameworks, and sustained attention to country-level capacity constraints. We endorse the recommendation to continue holistic and systems-based approaches to capacity development and agree on the importance of engaging regional training institutions, expanding efforts on Big Data and AI, and improving the design and monitoring of results.

ESCAP management will ensure that the lessons and recommendations from this evaluation inform the design of future projects and ongoing support to national statistical systems.

Recommendations	Management Response	Follow-up Actions	Indicator of Completion for Follow-up Actions
1. Continue holistic and systems-based approaches to supporting national capacity development, with NSOs as a leading actor, and look to further strengthen all parts of the data ecosystem.	Agree. As the formulation of the recommendation implies, SD is already following an holistic and systems-based approach as, for example, evidenced by the work in Mongolia (the review covered the whole national statistical system, and not only the NSO) and the Maldives (where many ministries and government agencies were involved in the formulation of the roadmap for the development of environment statistics).	In addition, SD to work on data governance that looks to further strengthen the overall national data ecosystem (i.e., beyond the national statistical system) through, other among, the project “The Power of Data – strengthening the capacity of selected countries in Asia and the Pacific to use data for policy and investments in the transformative entry points for achieving the SDGs.”	Evidence of capacity building activities completed for other parts of the national data ecosystem than the national statistical system.
2. Incorporate a systematic approach to building the capacity of national training institutes which may be able to play a regional role in capacity building as part of South-South cooperation while also exploring methods for sharing experiences and practical examples both formally and informally.	Agree. In addressing this recommendation, ESCAP will focus on strengthening regional cooperation among national training institutions through peer-to-peer learning and sharing of best practices.	SIAP to organise meetings with national training institutes to facilitate peer to peer learning and sharing of best practices which in turn will help in capacity building of training Institutes.	Evidence of at least one e-meeting held annually with the national training institutes.
3. Future projects adopting a similar approach tailored to each target country should consider and document the theory of change of their interventions, including for the mapping of data provision and	Partially agree. The current project aimed at the strengthening of the capacity of selected LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, i.e., in general members and associate members with lesser developed statistical capacity. The project has supported project countries with filling	SD to develop a theory of change for new project proposals that reflect country level interventions, as appropriate.	Evidence of a theory of change of interventions developed for new project proposals.

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analytical capacities in national statistical systems, whilst bearing in mind the need for a proportionate approach given the relatively small scale of funding for each target country.	immediate capacity gaps. As the formulation applies, care must be taken that any development of a theory of change will not take an overwhelming amount of time away from the identification and implementation of project activities.		
4. Identify areas where countries could be supported in producing data for SDG indicators that are relevant to supporting human rights and disability inclusion, in the context of new projects and in line with national priorities.	Agree. This is already happening to an extent but depends on the parameters of donors in calls for proposals.	SD to prepare project proposals in which donors prioritize human rights and disability inclusion.	Evidence of project proposals developed for supporting countries in producing data that are relevant to human rights and disability inclusion.
5. Build upon NSO interest and seek opportunities to promote greater sharing and understanding of use cases for Big Data and artificial intelligence in national statistical systems, particularly in the context of low-resource environments.	Agree. This is already underway, amongst others through the implementation of the project “The 2030 Data Decade - Strengthening the institutional capacity of national statistical offices in Asia and the Pacific to use innovative, new and big data sources for official statistics in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.	SD to conduct capacity building activities to enhance understanding on big data and artificial intelligence in national statistics system under the project mentioned above.	Evidence on completion of capacity building activities to enhance understanding of big data and artificial intelligence.
6. Review and update templates and guidance for results-based management, particularly for the review and quality assurance of results statements and performance indicators, particularly at the outcome level. Flexibility could be	Agree. This recommendation has been addressed in the progress report guidelines and templates issued by DA PMT for 2024. The guidelines require including country-specific action plans that have been agreed upon with the countries. It also includes	No further action is required.	

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provided within the scope of Development Account and ESCAP processes to allow for such a scheduled 'update' of the project results, without going through lengthy revision and approval processes.	updated realistic outcomes for each target country. With these new guidelines, the project results at the outcome level for the country level interventions can be updated or refined without going through lengthy revision and approval processes. For further information, refer to the Guidelines for Annual Progress Reports for 2024 .		