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ESCWA



Evaluation Brief

ESCWA's Project: "Strengthening Statistical Capacity of Arab Countries (Egypt, Jordan and Palestine) in Producing Energy Statistics and Energy Consumption Surveys"

Background

Energy consumption statistics are a unique source of data for national and sub-regional policy-makers and analysts, as they present an overall picture of the energy sector, providing detailed data on production, trade, conversion and consumption of fuels, by type. In the Arab region, however, the capacity of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to produce high quality energy statistics remains weak.

Building on the achievements and early lessons learnt of a first ESCWA initiative, "Regional project for strengthening statistical capacity for the ESCWA countries in energy statistics and energy balance", which was implemented from 2011 to 2014, ESCWA developed a follow-on project entitled "**Strengthening Statistical Capacity of Arab Countries in Producing Energy Statistics and Energy Consumption Surveys**".

As the first initiative had assessed regional and national energy statistics and balances and identified areas for improvements, the follow-on project was thus created to strengthen the capacity of NSOs in three pilot countries [Jordan, Palestine and Egypt] in developing energy information systems and energy statistics, as well as in measuring energy consumption. The project was implemented 2014 - 2015.

Upon the project's completion, an independent external evaluator conducted a comprehensive evaluation. The evaluator utilized qualitative research methodologies including desk review, semi-structured individual and collective interviews, as well as observation of the final meeting of the project and the launching of project results. The evaluation aimed to assess the project's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability, through field visits to all three pilot countries.

Key Findings

The evaluation found that the project was successful in achieving its stated objectives.

- 1. Relevance:** The project addressed pilot countries' needs in providing reliable quality data on energy consumption in the transportation sector and in building the capacities of NSOs in preparing energy statistics. The initiative was aligned with the project partners' and ESCWA's strategic objectives, as well as with relevant national ministries' needs. Additionally, gender and human rights concerns were addressed as commendable female representation in project activities was obtained by project end, and sex disaggregated data was captured in the administered questionnaires.
- 2. Effectiveness:** The project was able to achieve its stated objectives. Project progress reports, technical assistance collateral, NSO assessments – as well as interviews with project stakeholders – provided sufficient evidence that the project results and objectives were progressively realized.
- 3. Sustainability:** The increased and continued utilization of project tools, through the addition of country-level activities, contributed to the sustainability of the project's achievements.

Key Challenges

1. Given the technical nature of the project, i.e., a survey on energy consumption in the transport sector, the project faced initial difficulties in employing gender and human rights based approaches.
2. Insufficient clarity in the project document's logical results' framework created challenges in monitoring some aspects of the project.

3. Additional time and supporting interventions were requested by project partners in order to better adopt corrective policies and programmes.
4. Despite outreach efforts, the project was not able to work with all relevant governmental bodies.

Recommendations

1. Ensure that the logical results' framework includes objectively verifiable indicators to enable it to monitor performance and make corrective actions along the way.
2. Consider pilot countries' main requests for: i) Support in follow-on activities pertaining to analytical reports of the surveys and policy development; and ii) Continued cooperation in the field of energy statistics and energy consumption.
3. Begin collecting, documenting and sharing project outputs (such as the survey implementation process, best practices and lessons learnt) early in the project's duration.
4. Thoroughly assess and document the needs of NSOs prior to project implementation to maximize an efficient utilization of resources, and to ensure partner's needs are accurately identified.
5. Widen and strategize the circle of national stakeholders from participating countries. A detailed stakeholder analysis should identify stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector. It must also take gender and human rights considerations into account.

Following a joint review of the Evaluation Report, the project team indicated their endorsement of the evaluation process and report.