

Annex 7. Evaluation Report Template and Quality Standards

This **evaluation report template** is intended to serve as a guide for preparing meaningful, useful and credible evaluation reports that meet quality standards. It does not prescribe a definitive section-by-section format that all evaluation reports should follow. Rather, it suggests the content that should be included in a quality evaluation report. The descriptions that follow are derived from the UNEG ‘Standards for Evaluation in the UN System’ and ‘Ethical Standards for Evaluations’.⁶⁶

The evaluation report should be complete and logically organized. It should be written clearly and understandable to the intended audience. In a country context, the report should be translated into local languages whenever possible (see Chapter 8 for more information). The report should also include the following:

Title and opening pages—Should provide the following basic information:

- Name of the evaluation intervention
- Time frame of the evaluation and date of the report
- Countries of the evaluation intervention
- Names and organizations of evaluators
- Name of the organization commissioning the evaluation
- Acknowledgements

Table of contents—Should always include boxes, figures, tables and annexes with page references.

List of acronyms and abbreviations

Executive summary—A stand-alone section of two to three pages that should:

- Briefly describe the intervention (the project(s), programme(s), policies or other interventions) that was evaluated.
- Explain the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the audience for the evaluation and the intended uses.

66 UNEG, ‘Standards for Evaluation in the UN System’, 2005, available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/uneqstandards>; and UNEG, ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’, June 2008, available at <http://www.un-eval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines>.

- Describe key aspect of the evaluation approach and methods.
- Summarize principle findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Introduction—Should:

- Explain why the evaluation was conducted (the purpose), why the intervention is being evaluated at this point in time, and why it addressed the questions it did.
- Identify the primary audience or users of the evaluation, what they wanted to learn from the evaluation and why, and how they are expected to use the evaluation results.
- Identify the intervention (the project(s) programme(s), policies or other interventions) that was evaluated—see upcoming section on intervention.
- Acquaint the reader with the structure and contents of the report and how the information contained in the report will meet the purposes of the evaluation and satisfy the information needs of the report’s intended users.

Description of the intervention—Provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results. The description needs to provide sufficient detail for the report user to derive meaning from the evaluation. The description should:

- Describe **what is being evaluated, who seeks to benefit, and the problem or issue** it seeks to address.
- Explain the **expected results map or results framework, implementation strategies**, and the key **assumptions** underlying the strategy.
- Link the intervention to **national priorities**, UNDAF priorities, corporate multi-year funding frameworks or strategic plan goals, or other **programme or country specific plans and goals**.
- Identify the **phase** in the implementation of the intervention and any **significant changes** (e.g., plans, strategies, logical frameworks) that have occurred over time, and explain the implications of those changes for the evaluation.
- Identify and describe the **key partners** involved in the implementation and their roles.
- Describe the **scale of the intervention**, such as the number of components (e.g., phases of a project) and the size of the target population for each component.
- Indicate the **total resources**, including human resources and budgets.
- Describe the context of the **social, political, economic and institutional factors**, and the **geographical landscape** within which the intervention operates and explain the effects (challenges and opportunities) those factors present for its implementation and outcomes.
- Point out **design weaknesses** (e.g., intervention logic) or other **implementation constraints** (e.g., resource limitations).

Evaluation scope and objectives—The report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation’s scope, primary objectives and main questions.

- **Evaluation scope**—The report should define the parameters of the evaluation, for example, the time period, the segments of the target population included, the geographic area included, and which components, outputs or outcomes were and were not assessed.
- **Evaluation objectives**—The report should spell out the types of decisions evaluation users will make, the issues they will need to consider in making those decisions, and what the evaluation will need to achieve to contribute to those decisions.
- **Evaluation criteria**—The report should define the evaluation criteria or performance standards used.⁶⁷ The report should explain the rationale for selecting the particular criteria used in the evaluation.
- **Evaluation questions**—Evaluation questions define the information that the evaluation will generate. The report should detail the main evaluation questions addressed by the evaluation and explain how the answers to these questions address the information needs of users.

Evaluation approach and methods⁶⁸—The evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis; the rationale for their selection; and how, within the constraints of time and money, the approaches and methods employed yielded data that helped answer the evaluation questions and achieved the evaluation purposes. The description should help the report users judge the merits of the methods used in the evaluation and the credibility of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The description on methodology should include discussion of each of the following:

- **Data sources**—The sources of information (documents reviewed and stakeholders), the rationale for their selection and how the information obtained addressed the evaluation questions.
- **Sample and sampling frame**—If a sample was used: the sample size and characteristics; the sample selection criteria (e.g., single women, under 45); the process for selecting the sample (e.g., random, purposive); if applicable, how comparison and treatment groups were assigned; and the extent to which the sample is representative of the entire target population, including discussion of the limitations of the sample for generalizing results.
- **Data collection procedures and instruments**—Methods or procedures used to collect data, including discussion of data collection instruments (e.g., interview protocols), their appropriateness for the data source and evidence of their reliability and validity.

67 The evaluation criteria most commonly applied to UNDP evaluations are relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

68 All aspects of the described methodology need to receive full treatment in the report. Some of the more detailed technical information may be contained in annexes to the report. See Chapter 8 for more guidance on methodology.

- **Performance standards**⁶⁹—The standard or measure that will be used to evaluate performance relative to the evaluation questions (e.g., national or regional indicators, rating scales).
- **Stakeholder engagement**—Stakeholders’ engagement in the evaluation and how the level of involvement contributed to the credibility of the evaluation and the results.
- **Ethical considerations**—The measures taken to protect the rights and confidentiality of informants (see UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators’ for more information).⁷⁰
- **Background information on evaluators**—The composition of the evaluation team, the background and skills of team members and the appropriateness of the technical skill mix, gender balance and geographical representation for the evaluation.
- **Major limitations of the methodology**—Major limitations of the methodology should be identified and openly discussed as to their implications for evaluation, as well as steps taken to mitigate those limitations.

Data analysis—The report should describe the procedures used to analyse the data collected to answer the evaluation questions. It should detail the various steps and stages of analysis that were carried out, including the steps to confirm the accuracy of data and the results. The report also should discuss the appropriateness of the analysis to the evaluation questions. Potential weaknesses in the data analysis and gaps or limitations of the data should be discussed, including their possible influence on the way findings may be interpreted and conclusions drawn.

Findings and conclusions—The report should present the evaluation findings based on the analysis and conclusions drawn from the findings.

- **Findings**—Should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data. They should be structured around the evaluation criteria and questions so that report users can readily make the connection between what was asked and what was found. Variances between planned and actual results should be explained, as well as factors affecting the achievement of intended results. Assumptions or risks in the project or programme design that subsequently affected implementation should be discussed.
- **Conclusions**—Should be comprehensive and balanced, and highlight the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of the intervention. They should be well substantiated by the evidence and logically connected to evaluation findings. They should respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to the decision making of intended users.

69 A summary matrix displaying for each of evaluation questions, the data sources, the data collection tools or methods for each data source and the standard or measure by which each question was evaluated is a good illustrative tool to simplify the logic of the methodology for the report reader.

70 UNEG, ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’, June 2008. Available at <http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines>.

Recommendations—The report should provide practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation. They should address sustainability of the initiative and comment on the adequacy of the project exit strategy, if applicable.

Lessons learned—As appropriate, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation, that is, new knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (intervention, context outcomes, even about evaluation methods) that are applicable to a similar context. Lessons should be concise and based on specific evidence presented in the report.

Report annexes—Suggested annexes should include the following to provide the report user with supplemental background and methodological details that enhance the credibility of the report:

- ToR for the evaluation
- Additional methodology-related documentation, such as the evaluation matrix and data collection instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, observation protocols, etc.) as appropriate
- List of individuals or groups interviewed or consulted and sites visited
- List of supporting documents reviewed
- Project or programme results map or results framework
- Summary tables of findings, such as tables displaying progress towards outputs, targets, and goals relative to established indicators
- Short biographies of the evaluators and justification of team composition
- Code of conduct signed by evaluators