UNDP EVALUATION GUIDELINES

FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines in collaboration with the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office.

These guidelines reflect the commitment of UNDP to continuous learning and improvement, and they come at an important moment in time. The ambition of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals demand a different kind of development: where problems and their solutions are connected and integrated, and where incremental change for good is not enough.

We are mandated to help our partners find and implement integrated, transformational solutions across the Sustainable Development Goals. As we do this in and across our six signature areas of poverty, governance, environment, resilience, energy and gender, we must learn and adapt with openness, transparency and accountability. Strong evaluations, thoughtfully used, are a fundamental part of that process and will be increasingly central to our work.

I would like to commend all those involved in preparing these guidelines, including colleagues across UNDP country, regional and global teams as well as the Independent Evaluation Office. I encourage you all to read them carefully and put them to work to enhance how we think, deliver, invest and manage as the next generation UNDP.

ACHIM STEINER

Administrator
UNDP

PREFACE

As Director of the Independent Evaluation Office, I am very pleased to share the new UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, which we hope will be a useful tool for all UNDP colleagues involved in any aspect of the evaluation function. The guidelines represent the latest thinking on evaluation and reflect recent developments in the United Nations system.

The first UNDP handbook on monitoring and evaluation was developed in 1997 and subsequently revised in 2002 and 2009. The Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (2009) has been used across 170 countries with over 1 million downloads. However, new challenges facing the United Nations development system call for updated evaluation guidelines.

In recent years, UNDP has seen several significant changes including the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals, and the revised Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group, as well as its own revised Evaluation Policy and new Strategic Plan, 2018-2021. The new Evaluation Guidelines encapsulate the role and use of evaluation given these advancements and provide further clarity in implementing evaluation. They also reflect the UNDP commitment to evaluation and the organization's desire to improve the quality, credibility and usability of its evaluations, particularly for capturing lessons learned to ensure that future work is informed and strengthened by past implementation experience.

The completion of the guidelines was made possible through the collective efforts of the Independent Evaluation Office team and of UNDP colleagues from headquarters, regional bureaux and country offices who participated in the process and whom we thank for their valuable contributions.

To further strengthen UNDP's decentralized evaluation function, I encourage all UNDP offices to review and refer to these guidelines.

INDRAN A. NAIDOO

Director
Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP

CONTENTS

THE GUIDELINES ARE DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING SIX SECTIONS:

SECTION 1: THE UNDP EVALUATION FUNCTION

SECTION 2: DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION IN UNDP

SECTION 3: EVALUATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT
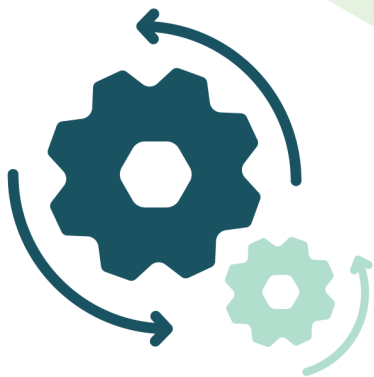
SECTION 4: EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION 5: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION

SECTION 6: EVALUATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT

SECTION 1
THE UNDP EVALUATION FUNCTION

CONTENTS

1. THE UNDP EVALUATION FUNCTION

Section 1 introduces the updated UNDP Evaluation Guidelines and describes the UNDP evaluation function. The section explains the reasons for updating the guidelines, whom the guidelines are for, why UNDP conducts evaluations and the principles that guide evaluation in UNDP, as well as describing the UNDP governance structure for evaluation.

1.1. Introduction to the updated Evaluation Guidelines

1.1.1. Why update the Evaluation Guidelines?

Welcome to the updated Evaluation Guidelines, 2018. The guidelines have been updated to reflect several changes in UNDP in recent years, outlined below, and to bring them into line with the new UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new guidelines will be routinely updated to reflect future changes in UNDP policies and approaches.

- ➢ **Evaluation Policy, 2016:**[1] The updated Evaluation Guidelines reflect the changes introduced in the 2016 revised Evaluation Policy. The guidelines will be updated as needed to reflect future policy adjustments**.**
- ➢ **United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) updated Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016:**[2] Replacing the 2005 edition, the 2016 UNEG Norms and Standards are a foundational document intended for application by all United Nations evaluation bodies and shed light on evaluations in the United Nations system in the era of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, **various UNEG guidelines**[3] have been introduced or adjusted in recent years.
- ➢ **UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results (Yellow Handbook), 2009**[4] **and 2011:**[5] The present Evaluation Guidelines build on the 2009 and 2011 "Yellow Handbook", which has been the central guide for all UNDP results-based management activities over the last several years. The present guidelines contain much of the content and description of evaluation in the Yellow Handbook but have been updated to match the new development context in UNDP. The updated Evaluation Guidelines also reflect new guidance and policy and clarify aspects of evaluation that were unclear.
- ➢ **UNDP Monitoring Policy, 2016:** The Evaluation Guidelines reflect the benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation staffing outlined in the monitoring policy.
- ➢ **Updated UNDP programme and operations policies and procedures (POPP)**[6] **for project and programme management (PPM)**[7] were streamlined in 2018 and the updated guidelines reflect these changes.

---

[1] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml
[2] Access at: http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914
[3] Access at: http://www.uneval.org/document/guidance-documents
[4] Access at: These updated Evaluation Guidelines (2018) replace the sections of the Yellow Handbook related to evaluation. This is now the primary evaluation guidance tool and approach http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guidance.shtml.
[5] Access at: In 2011, UNDP developed an addendum updating the 2009 Yellow Handbook and a companion guide for outcome-level evaluation.
[6] Access at: https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPRoot.aspx
[7] Access at: https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPBSUnit.aspx?TermID=1c019435-9793-447e-8959-0b32d23bf3d5&Menu=BusinessUnit

- **The guidelines for United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs)**[8] and mandatory requirements for UNDAF evaluations introduced in 2017 are also fully reflected in the updated Evaluation Guidelines, with further clarifications given.
- **The SDGs, 2030 Agenda and the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021**[9] are also reflected in the updated guidelines and any future strategic changes within UNDP will be further incorporated or linked to specific companion pieces.

1.1.2. Whom are the Evaluation Guidelines for?

The Evaluation Guidelines have several uses and will steer users through all aspects of the evaluation function. They are thus aimed at a variety of **audiences**:

- **UNDP staff** in country offices, regional bureaux, regional centres and headquarters. This includes project/programme staff and managers involved in:
  - Planning evaluations.
  - Commissioning evaluations.
  - Managing evaluations.
  - Recruiting evaluators.
  - Using evaluation results.

- **UNDP senior management** who oversee and assure the quality of the planning, monitoring and evaluation processes and products and use monitoring and evaluation for decision-making, including resident representatives, country directors and deputy directors, and outcome, sector and programme managers.
- **The UNDP Office for Audit and Investigations** can use the guidelines in its audit function as they provide detailed procedures on the evaluation planning, content and implementation process.
- **Stakeholders and partners** such as Governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, United Nations and development partners and beneficiaries involved in UNDP planning, monitoring and evaluation processes.
- The **UNDP Executive Board**, which oversees and supports the activities of UNDP, ensuring that the organization remains responsive to the evolving needs of programme countries.
- **Evaluators and researchers** who need to understand guiding principles, standards and processes for evaluation within the UNDP context.

1.1.3. Structure of the updated Evaluation Guidelines

The Evaluation Guidelines are organized in a number of easy-to-use sections that can be used in sequence or as individual pieces and are intended to be a living and continuously evolving document to support evaluation in UNDP.

Sections will be updated regularly to take into account changing needs in evaluation guidance as well as changes in the UNDP policy and approaches.

- **Section 1** gives an **overview of the evaluation function** and structure within UNDP.
- **Section 2** outlines the **different types of evaluation** undertaken across UNDP.
- **Section 3** details **evaluation planning processes.**
- **Section 4** details the **preparation, implementation and use of evaluations.**
- **Section 5** details the **roles and responsibilities for planning, implementing and overseeing decentralized evaluations.**

---

[8] Access at: https://undg.org/programme/undaf-guidance/
[9] Access at: http://strategicplan.undp.org/

- **Section 6** gives an overview of the **annual quality assessment of evaluations.**

Additional sections or companion pieces will include: (a) a glossary of evaluation and other terms; (b) a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) about evaluation; (c) links to a number of related evaluation resources; and (d) information on global, regional and national evaluation networks.

Throughout the Evaluation Guidelines are links to other guidance and policies of relevance to evaluation in UNDP.

1.2. The UNDP evaluation function

Section 1 of the Evaluation Guidelines introduces the reader to the role of the evaluation function within UNDP, answering the following questions:

- What is evaluation?
- Why does UNDP evaluate?
- What principles, norms and standards guide evaluation within UNDP?
- What are the structure and roles and responsibilities for evaluation across UNDP?

Section 1 also gives an overview of the other sections of the Evaluation Guidelines and outlines how the evaluation function has evolved in recent years, leading to the need for a revised set of Evaluation Guidelines.

1.2.1. What is evaluation?

An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful, evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders.[10]
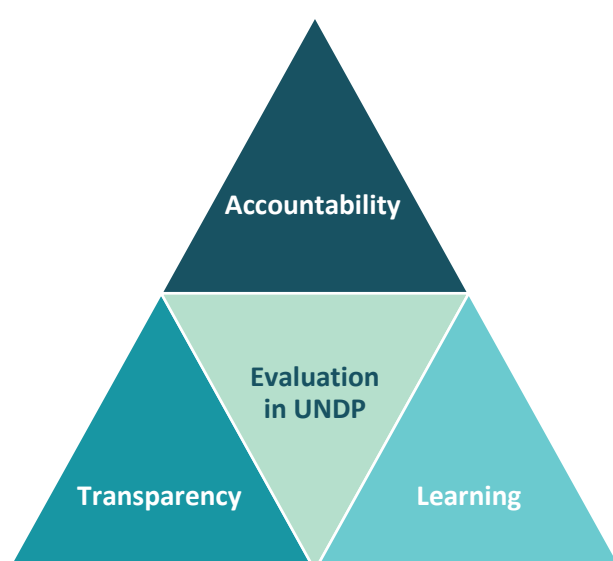
Figure 1. The UNDP evaluation function

1.2.2. Why does UNDP evaluate?

Evaluation is a means to strengthen **learning** within our organization to support better decision-making and promote learning among stakeholders. At the same time, it is essential and important for **accountability and transparency,** strengthening the ability of stakeholders to hold UNDP accountable for its development contributions. Engaging independent external evaluators is a means to avoid undue influence and bias in the undertaking of an evaluation, ensuring objective and credible evaluation results. Evaluations in UNDP help to ensure that the Strategic Plan's goals and organizational initiatives are aligned with and support the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as well as other global, national and corporate priorities.

---

[10] UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914

Evaluation is critical for UNDP to progress towards advancing sustainable human development. In addition, evaluation is often intended to generate empirical knowledge about the interventions in pursuit of given objectives: what elements of the intervention worked, what did not work and why. Through the generation of "evidence" and objective information, evaluations enable programme managers and other stakeholders to make informed decisions and plan strategically.

When evaluations are used effectively, they support programmatic improvements, knowledge generation and accountability.

Supporting programmatic/project improvements: Did the programme or project work or not, and why?

How could a programme/project be designed and implemented differently for better results? The interest is on **what works, why and in what context**. Decision makers such as managers at all levels (bureau, regional, country office and programme managers), government partners and other stakeholders should use evaluations to make necessary improvements and adjustments to implementation approaches and strategies, and to decide on alternative approaches. Evaluations addressing these questions need to provide concrete information on how improvements could be made or what alternatives exist to generate the necessary improvements.

Building knowledge for generalizability and wider application: What can we learn from the evaluation? How can we apply this knowledge to other contexts?

Evaluations should aim to develop knowledge for global use and for generalization to other contexts and situations in support of development and the SDGs. When the focus is on knowledge generation, evaluations generally apply more rigorous methodology to ensure a higher level of accuracy in the evaluation and the information being produced to allow for generalizability and wider application beyond a particular context.

Supporting accountability and transparency: Is UNDP doing the right things? Is UNDP doing things correctly? Did UNDP do what it said would do?

An effective accountability framework requires credible and objective information, and evaluations can deliver such information. UNDP is accountable for providing evaluative evidence that links its contributions to the achievement of development results in a given country and for delivering services that are based on the principles of human development. By providing such objective and independent assessments, evaluations in UNDP support the organization's accountability towards its Executive Board, donors, programme country Governments, national partners and beneficiaries.

The intended use determines the timing, methodological framework and level and nature of stakeholder participation of an evaluation. This in turn informs the monitoring and evaluation plan for the implementing unit, shaping the nature of the baselines and indicators to be collected and when they are collected, ensuring the evaluability of projects and programmes and informing the timing of evaluations.

The United Nations and UNDP have a number of other oversight, accountability and assessment tools and functions in addition to evaluation, which have different purposes. Examples of these other mechanisms are listed in figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Distinction between evaluation and other oversight, accountability and assessment functions

Appraisal
A critical assessment of the potential value of an undertaking before a decision is made to implement it.

Monitoring
Management's continuous examination of progress achieved during the implementation of an undertaking to track compliance with the plan and to take necessary decisions to improve performance.

Review
The periodic or ad hoc, often rapid assessments of the performance of an undertaking that do not apply the due process of evaluation. Reviews tend to emphasize operational issues.

Inspection
A general examination that seeks to identify vulnerable areas and malfunctions and to propose corrective action.

Investigation
A specific examination of a claim of wrongdoing and provision of evidence for eventual prosecution or disciplinary measures.

Research
A systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge.

Audit
Regular reviews of implementing agencies' compliance with management controls and internal procedures (such as the PPM and POPP).

1.2.3. UNDP evaluation principles, norms and standards

Evaluations across UNDP, both independent and decentralized, as well as evaluations across the United Nations system are guided by a set of clear principles, norms and standards.

UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation as overarching guide[11]

The UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016) provide a detailed overarching framework for United Nations organizations in the implementation of evaluations and the evaluation function. The UNDP Evaluation Policy and these Evaluation Guidelines are built on the foundation of this agreed framework.

---

[11] UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016, http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914

Figure 3. The 10 UNEG norms for evaluation

Internationally agreed principles, goals & targets	Utility	Credibility	Independence
Impartiality	Ethics	Transparency	Human rights & gender equality
National evaluation capacities	Professionalism		

UNEG has also outlined detailed standards, which are forward-looking and provide an aspirational and progressive framework for the improvement of all United Nations evaluations functions. The standards for evaluations include:

- o **Institutional framework** which includes organizational, policy, planning, reporting and management response standards.
- o **Management of the evaluation function**, with standards detailing leadership, guideline requirements, and responsiveness and promotion of the evaluation function.
- o **Evaluation competencies,** which outline professional standards and ethical and moral principles in the implementation of evaluations.
- o **Conduct of evaluations**, which detail the implementation standards for evaluation including timeliness and intentionality; evaluability assessment standards; terms of reference, scope and objectives; methodology; stakeholder engagement; human rights-based approaches; selecting independent evaluators and evaluation teams; evaluation reports and products; recommendations; and communication and dissemination.
- o **Quality standards** give a framework for quality assurance, the evaluation design and control of the final stages of an evaluation.

1.2.4. Evaluation in UNDP

UNDP Evaluation Policy (2016)

Evaluation in UNDP should follow the principles outlined in the 2016 Evaluation Policy,[12] which stem from General Assembly resolutions and UNDP Executive Board decisions.

---

[12] Access at: DP/2016/23

> The 2016 UNDP Evaluation Policy elaborates the UNEG principles as follows:
>
> - High ethical standards and norms must be upheld.
> - Evaluations must be independent, impartial and credible.
> - Planning and implementation of evaluations must be rule-bound.
> - Evaluations should be carried out with high technical competence and rigour.
> - Evaluation processes should be transparent and fully engage stakeholders.

The roles and responsibilities for evaluation and its oversight within UNDP are clearly outlined in the Evaluation Policy. UNDP has a dual evaluation system, with independent country programme evaluations[13] and UNDP-wide thematic evaluations undertaken by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) and decentralized evaluations implemented by programme units such as the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, regional bureaux and country offices.

A distinction between evaluation and monitoring, both in function and budget, is also clearly called for under the policy, which established for the first time in UNDP an evaluation budget benchmark for the organization, separate from the budget for monitoring resources (financial and human). Under the Evaluation Policy, UNDP "aims to allocate 1 per cent of combined programmatic (core and non-core) resources to the evaluation function; with no less than 0.2 per cent reserved for the work of the Independent Evaluation Office, subject to availability of resources".[14] Furthermore, "resources are allocated to evaluation through a series of evaluation plans covering programmes at the country, regional and global levels, as well as through the medium-term evaluation plan of the Independent Evaluation Office".

Independent/ decentralized evaluation

Independent evaluations. Evaluations undertaken by IEO are fully independent of UNDP management and its implementing agencies. Independent evaluations inform the decision-making process with credible recommendations, ensure accountability and support learning across the organization.

Decentralized evaluations are undertaken by UNDP programme units to ensure accountability and capture lessons learned for future programming and planning.

Programme units commission various types of **decentralized evaluations** and ensure that they provide adequate information about the overall performance of UNDP support in a given context. In making management decisions, programme units draw on information, findings, conclusions and recommendations from a range of evaluation types, conducted at the country, regional or global levels, including UNDAF evaluations, evaluations of country, regional or global programmes, and outcome, thematic area and project evaluations.[15] The most common decentralized evaluations are **project and outcome evaluations**. Programme units do not conduct these evaluations themselves, but rather commission external evaluation consultants to do so.

Although the institutional arrangements—including mandates, lines of accountability and operational modalities—of independent and decentralized evaluations are different, they complement and reinforce each other. Decentralized evaluations, particularly outcome evaluations, provide relevant

---

[13] Prior to 2018, independent country programme evaluations were known as assessments of development results.
[14] At the time of updating the Evaluation Guidelines, full delineation of monitoring and evaluation has yet to happen. https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Implement_Monitor.docx&action=default
[15] The UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 structures UNDP work around platforms or work which may in turn require platform evaluations in the future.

information for independent evaluations of country programmes and evaluations of thematic and regional programmes conducted by IEO.

In conducting such evaluations, IEO may carry out country case studies, including reviews of relevant decentralized evaluations, or apply a meta-evaluation approach and draw extensively from country- or region-specific decentralized evaluations. Similarly, evaluators for decentralized evaluations may use the analysis provided in the relevant independent evaluations and case studies as a building block for their analysis.

1.2.5. UNDP evaluation governance structure

This section details the overall governance structure for evaluation within UNDP and gives an overview of the roles and responsibilities within implementing units. More detail on roles and responsibilities can be found in section 5 of the guidelines.

1. **The UNDP Executive Board:** According to the UNDP Evaluation Policy,[16] the Executive Board "is the custodian of the evaluation policy; annually considers its implementation, and periodically commissions independent reviews of the policy." The Board approves the biennial financial appropriation to IEO as well as its annual programme of work. The IEO submits independent thematic and programmatic evaluations to the Executive Board, which approves or notes the management responses as appropriate.[17]

2. **The IEO** "is a functionally independent unit with UNDP that supports the oversight and accountability functions of the Executive Board and the management of UNDP, [the United Nations Capital Development Fund] and [United Nations Volunteers programme]. The structural independence of the Office underpins and guarantees its freedom to conduct evaluations and report evaluation results to the Executive Board."[18] The work of IEO is further outlined in the Evaluation Policy.

   As the custodian of the evaluation function, the IEO conducts independent evaluations, sets standards and guidelines, manages the systems for quality assessment and evaluation planning and use through the Evaluation Resource Centre and develops products to support organizational learning, knowledge management and evaluation capacity development. The IEO also participates in the UNEG, which works to strengthen the objectivity, effectiveness and visibility of the evaluation function across the United Nations system.

3. **The UNDP Administrator** "(a) safeguards the integrity of the evaluation function, ensuring its independence from operational management and activities; (b) ensures that adequate financial resources are allocated to the evaluation function across the organization, in accordance with the Executive Board-approved financial appropriation for Independent Evaluation Office, and reports to the Board annually on the volume of resources that the organization has invested in evaluation; (c) ensures that the Office has unfettered access to data and information required for the evaluation of UNDP performance; and (d) appoints the Director of the Office in consultation with the Executive Board, taking into account the advice of the Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee."[19]

4. **UNDP programme and policy units (headquarters, regional and country offices)** "commission decentralized evaluations according to evaluation plans that coincide with relevant programmes (global, regional and country). The evaluations are to be carried out by

---

[16] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml
[17] DP/2016/23, para 35
[18] DP/2016/23, para 40
[19] DP/2016/23, para 36

independent external consultants, and UNDP management shall take all necessary actions to ensure the objectivity and impartiality of the process and persons hired."[20]

5. **The Bureau for Policy and Programme Support,** in addition to undertaking its own evaluations**,** "coordinates communication between UNDP management and the Independent Evaluation Office and advises country offices and regional bureaux on the decentralized evaluation function for UNDP. The Bureau works with the monitoring and evaluation staff of UNDP units to ensure that evaluation plans are properly implemented. Together with the Office, the Bureau provides guidance to UNDP units on the use of evaluation findings and lessons to improve organizational decision-making and accountability and synthesizes evaluation lessons for institutional learning. It also monitors implementation of the management responses to independent evaluations and decentralized evaluations in UNDP."[21]

6. **Regional bureaux,** in addition to implementing their own evaluations, support country offices in the development of evaluation plans and implementation of evaluations and oversee implementation of evaluation plans through their appointed evaluation focal points.[22]

7. **Bureau and country office senior management** (bureau directors, resident representatives and country directors) are responsible and accountable for the development of the units' evaluation plans and ensuring their timely implementation.

8. **The Audit and Evaluation Advisory Committee** has been expanded to include evaluation oversight functions. The Committee advises the UNDP Administrator on:

    o   The Evaluation Policy.
    o   Appointment and dismissal of the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office.
    o   Multi-year and annual workplans, budgets and periodic reports of the Independent Evaluation Office.
    o   Thematic and programmatic evaluation reports and management responses.
    o   The UNDP decentralized evaluation function, and national evaluation capacity programming.[23]

    The Committee also periodically receives and comments on the programme of work of the IEO and appraises the performance of the Director annually. It further helps to safeguard the Evaluation Policy.

Section 5 of the guidelines details the roles and responsibilities for planning, implementing and oversight of decentralized evaluation.

---

[20] DP/2016/23, para 37
[21] DP/2016/23, para 38
[22] Regional bureaux must ensure there is a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal point responsible for supporting and overseeing evaluation based at the regional level. Evaluation focal points should have results-based management, M&E, planning or evaluation capacity.
[23] DP/2016/23, para 53

SECTION 2
DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION
IN UNDP

UNDP EVALUATION GUIDELINES

CONTENTS

2. DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION IN UNDP

Section 2 describes the different type of decentralized evaluations carried out by UNDP programme units.

2.1. Introduction

This section gives an overview of the different evaluations implemented by UNDP programme units in line with their evaluation plans. Programme units, especially *country offices*, should ensure that their evaluation plans include a variety of these evaluation approaches to ensure that as broad a spectrum of evaluation results as possible is captured during the country programme cycle. This will support accountability and the capturing of experience and knowledge to strengthen work within the country, the region and the wider organization.

Evaluations undertaken by UNDP

UNDP implements a variety of evaluations at different levels and using varied approaches. Section 2 gives an overview of these evaluations and approaches, why we use these evaluations, the timing of the evaluations and how they may be carried out, as well as the use of evaluation results and links to more detailed guidance where available.

Figure 1. Types of evaluations undertaken by UNDP

UNDAF evaluations	Country programme evaluations	Outcome evaluations	Global regional programme evaluations
Project evaluations	Global Environment Facility evaluations	Multi-country or South-South project evaluations	Portfolio evaluations
Thematic evaluations	Impact evaluations	Joint evaluations	Donor- and multilateral organization programme-commissioned evaluations

Evaluation examples provided below are chosen due to their quality assessment ratings. Only evaluations with a rating of satisfactory (5) or highly satisfactory (6) were chosen. Efforts will be made to update these annually.

> Note that all evaluation approaches must integrate gender equality concerns and are all subject to assessment against the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women **(UN-SWAP) Evaluation Performance Indicator**.

2.2. UNDAF evaluations

The approach to evaluations of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) is led and guided by the guidance and companion pieces that have been developed to support UNDAFs and their evaluation as well as supporting guidance from the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). This guidance is detailed in the box below. As guidance and approaches change or are updated, UNDP will make an effort to ensure the guidance detailed here is adjusted to meet current prevailing practice. However, when a programme unit is undertaking the UNDAF evaluation planning process, it should first check for the latest and most up-to-date guidance.

> **UNDAF evaluation guidelines**
>
> **The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the UNEG have produced a comprehensive and ever-growing set of guidance to support the planning, implementation and use of UNDAF evaluations.**
>
> *Primary guidance* (linked for easy access)
> - UNDAF guidance, 2017
> - UNDAF monitoring and evaluation companion piece, 2017
>
> *Supporting guidance* (linked for easy access)
> - UNEG frequently asked questions for UNDAF evaluations, 2015
> - UNEG guidance on preparing terms of reference for UNDAF evaluations, 2012
> - UNEG guidance on preparing management responses for UNDAF evaluations, 2012
> - UNDG results-based management handbook, 2011

Planning, timing and funding for UNDAF evaluations

The UNDAF evaluation should be timed to provide inputs to the preparation of the next UNDAF as well as to individual agencies' preparation of country programme and project documents. Ideally, UNDP outcome evaluations should be timed to feed into the UNDAF evaluation and preparation in order to provide a deeper degree of reflection and lessons captured from the outcome evaluation, further strengthening the UNDAF evaluation and development process.

Given the mandatory nature of UNDAF evaluations, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) should ensure that the timing and budget for UNDAF evaluations are clearly agreed during the design phase of the UNDAF and included in workplans. The UNDAF guidelines state, "**an UNDAF evaluation happens once during the life cycle of the UNDAF, with costs shared among UNCT members**" and **should take place during the penultimate year of the programme cycle** (typically year four of a five-year cycle).

UNCTs should plan for evaluation costs and management arrangements. The UNDAF should include the estimated budget for evaluations, and the UNCT should agree on cost-sharing among team members.

UNDAF management structure

Early engagement in and planning for joint management arrangements will help to ensure that all agencies are clear on decision-making processes and input requirements. Clear mechanisms and resources for quality assurance should be in place throughout the evaluation process (guidance from the UNDAF monitoring and evaluation companion piece).[1] As different organizations take different approaches to evaluation, it is important to allow flexibility to adapt and additional time to accommodate delays due to such differences. Implementing agencies could: (a) agree that the evaluation will be managed using the systems and procedures from **one agency;** or (b) split the evaluation into components and agree whose systems will be used to manage which components. The approach taken will determine appropriate templates, budgeting norms and approaches and report finalization procedures. These approaches should be agreed upon prior to the evaluation starting.

UNDAF evaluator recruitment

UNDAF evaluations are jointly commissioned and managed by the heads of United Nations organizations and national Governments. They are conducted by external and independent consultants selected by mutual agreement between the United Nations and the Government through a transparent and thorough selection process. The UNDAF guidelines and the monitoring and evaluation companion guidance[2] give further details.

UNDP management response to UNDAF evaluations with key actions

The management response is a crucial step to improve the timely and effective use of evaluations. Through the management response[3] process, the UNCT and evaluation stakeholders can review the UNDAF evaluation recommendations and agree on what follow-up steps and actions will be taken. It also gives the UNCT and stakeholders an opportunity to reject recommendations with justification. Management responses should clearly detail next steps, assign responsibilities and set realistic time frames and outputs where appropriate.

UNDAF evaluations and management responses issued by the UNCT are prepared in line with the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation. UNEG also gives guidance on the preparation of UNDAF management responses.[4]

The final UNDAF evaluation should be uploaded by UNDP to the Evaluation Resource Center (ERC) along with recommendations, **management responses and key actions to recommendations applicable to UNDP** and UNDP outcome areas as agreed by the UNCT in response to the UNDAF evaluation. Only the implementation and achievement of management responses and key actions assigned to UNDP wholly or partly will be routinely monitored and reported on through the ERC. Status updates should be prepared and provided quarterly until all planned actions have been completed.

---

[1] UNDAF Monitoring and Evaluation Companion piece, page 12, https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-6-Monitoring-And-Evaluation.pdf
[2] Access at: https://undg.org/document/monitoring-and-evaluation-undaf-companion-guidance/
[3] This is a new approach introduced under the 2018 Programme and project management revisions.
[4] UNEG Guidance on Preparing Management Response to UNDAF Evaluations, 2012, http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1212

2.3. Country programme evaluations

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) is now undertaking independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) [5] for all countries coming to the end of their country programme cycles. [6] Decentralized country programme evaluations are thus no longer mandatory.

ICPEs will cover one country programme cycle and will be undertaken by IEO **in the penultimate year** (year prior to completion of the programme cycle)**.** ICPEs come under the IEO plan and budget and therefore do not need to be included in programme unit evaluation plans or budgets. ICPE findings, conclusions and recommendations serve as inputs to the UNDAF evaluation process as well as the process of developing the new UNDAF and UNDP country programme. IEO will make every effort to coordinate ICPE implementation with the programme units responsible for the country programme and UNDAF development processes. ICPEs accompany new country programme documents presented to the UNDP Executive Board for approval.

Though decentralized country programme evaluations are no longer mandatory, it is highly recommended that country offices consider commissioning midterm evaluations of country programmes. A midterm evaluation gives the opportunity to review the attainment of the country programme's intended results across all (or the majority) of outcome areas. Such an evaluation would assess the level of effectiveness in delivering the intended results as well as the positioning of UNDP. A midterm evaluation of the country programme would provide an accountability tool as well as a means to review progress and adjust direction if needed (course correction). The process is also an opportunity to have further dialogue with the Government and partners on progress by UNDP and the direction of a programme.

Similarly, regional bureaux and policy and practice units may decide to carry out midterm evaluations of their respective regional and global programmes. These midterm programme evaluations allow for mid-course adjustment of programmes.

---

[5] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/assessment-of-development-results.shtml
[6] Prior to 2018, ICPEs and previously assessments of development results (ADRs) covered around 25 percent of countries annually. ADRs also covered two country programme cycles. Many countries undertook country programme evaluations which were different to ADRs/ICPEs in that they usually covered a given programme cycle with a greater focus on performance at the project level. Further, decentralized country programme evaluations are commissioned by those responsible for programme management, as opposed to IEO.

2.4. Outcome evaluations

Outcome evaluations capture UNDP contributions towards outcome achievements as identified in the country programme document and directly linked to UNDAF outcomes. Outcome evaluations are undertaken to:

- Provide evidence to support accountability of programmes and for UNDP to use in its accountability requirements to its investors.
- Provide evidence of the UNDP contribution to outcomes.
- Guide performance improvement within the current global, regional and country programmes by identifying current areas of strengths, weaknesses and gaps, especially in regard to:

    o The appropriateness of the UNDP partnership strategy.
    o Impediments to the outcome being achieved.
    o Mid-course adjustments to the theory of change.
    o Lessons learned for the next programming cycle.

- Provide evidence and inform higher-level evaluations, such as ICPE, UNDAF evaluations and evaluations of regional and global programmes, and subsequent planning based on the evaluations.

It is highly recommended that country offices evaluate **at least one outcome during the country programme cycle** period, although this is no longer mandatory. Outcome evaluations can evaluate the contribution of all activities/projects under a specific outcome and the contribution to and achievement of a particular outcome (all projects and programmes are now linked to specific outcomes). Alternatively, some outcome evaluations may focus on a specific outcome area (e.g., rule of law or access to justice) rather than a full outcome, and focus on the contribution and achievement of projects working towards that smaller outcome area (see also portfolio evaluations)

Midterm outcome evaluations can highlight progress being achieved towards an outcome as well as provide an opportunity to identify outcome implementation challenges and may identify opportunities for course correction. Final outcome evaluations are ideally held in the **penultimate year of country programme implementation** prior to the ICPE and UNDAF evaluation and timed so that the findings and recommendations can support the development of the new UNDAF and UNDP country programme.

Outcome evaluations, as with all evaluations undertaken, should be implemented independently.

Outcome evaluation examples (linked for easy access)

- Angola, 2017, Outcome evaluation in the practice of environment and disaster risk reduction
- Ethiopia, 2016, Outcome evaluation of agriculture and private sector development
- Myanmar, Evaluation of UNDP outcome 1 (Local Governance Programme), 2013-2016
- Iraq, 2016, UNDP Evaluation of CPAP outcome 1, Government of Iraq and civil society have strengthened participatory mechanisms in place for electoral processes, national dialogue and reconciliation

---

2.5. Project evaluations

Project evaluations assess the performance of a project in achieving its intended results and contribution to outcomes and associated theories of change. Project evaluations yield useful

information on project implementation arrangements and the achievement of outputs and also draw linkages between a project's outputs and its contribution to programme outcomes.

The primary purpose of a project evaluation is to make improvements; to continue or scale up an initiative; to assess sustainability and replicability in other settings; to demonstrate accountability for results; or to consider alternatives. Project evaluation budgets should be agreed with partners and stakeholders and included in project documents and plans. Project evaluations play an important role in accountability to donors and Governments involved in financing projects. For their own accountability reasons, donor agencies and other cost-sharing partners may request UNDP to include evaluation requirements in the UNDP-donor partnership agreements.

Project evaluations are mandatory when required by partnership protocols, as in the case of Global Environment Facility (GEF), Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund (GCF) midterm and terminal evaluations.

To ensure accountability and learning and that results are being achieved, projects representing a significant financial investment and/or extending over a certain period should be evaluated. Project evaluations thus also become mandatory when projects are expected to reach or pass certain thresholds as indicated in the table below:

MANDATORY EVALUATION THRESHOLDS	EVALUATIONS
Projects with a planned budget or actual expenditure of more than $5 million	Midterm and final evaluation
Projects with a planned budget or actual expenditure of between $3 million and $5 million	Midterm or final evaluation
Projects with a duration of more than five years	At least one evaluation, midterm or final

In addition, projects entering a second or subsequent phase should undergo an evaluation[7] before moving into the new phase. Equally, development initiatives being considered for scaling up should be evaluated before expansion.

In all these cases, evaluation plans and budgets should be included in project documents and plans.

Project evaluation examples (linked for easy access)

- Guinea-Bissau, 2017, Rule of law and justice
- Afghanistan, 2017, Final evaluation of the Gender Equality Project II (GEP II)
- Burkina Faso, 2017, Evaluation finale du projet d'appui aux élections, 2015-2016
- Jordan, 2017, Final evaluation, Support to the electoral cycle in Jordan

---

[7] A project is entering in a second phase when it proposes to scale up results, through a substantive project revision or a new project.

2.6. Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund evaluations

Global Environment Facility

Terminal evaluations are mandatory for all medium- and full-sized projects financed by the GEF.[8] In addition, all full-sized GEF-financed projects must undergo midterm evaluations (MTEs) or midterm reviews (MTRs). Separate GEF guidance for terminal evaluations and MTEs/MTRs outlines the procedures and approaches that must be taken including guidance on evaluation processes, roles and responsibilities, terms of reference templates, evaluation report outlines and sample evaluation criteria matrices.

GEF midterm or terminal evaluations must be independently implemented and quality assured as the GEF Independent Evaluation Office compares the quality of terminal evaluations between GEF agencies. Joint agency projects require just one evaluation, managed by the lead agency, which adheres to GEF guidance. Both midterm and terminal evaluations should be included in UNDP evaluation plans (country office or regional bureau evaluation plans) and uploaded to the ERC.

GEF terminal and midterm evaluation and guidelines (linked for easy access)

- Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects, 2012
- Guidance for conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects

---

Examples of GEF terminal evaluations (linked for easy access)

- Comoros, 2017, évaluation finale du projet ACCE (Adaptation de la gestion des ressources en eau aux changements climatiques)
- Madagascar, 2017, Evaluation finale du projet "Managed Resources Protected Areas (MRPA)"
- Guatemala, 2017, Terminal Evaluation Report, promoting ecotourism to strengthen the financial sustainability of the Guatemalan Protected Areas System (SIGAP)
- China, 2017, Final Evaluation for Qinghai protected areas project

---

Adaptation Fund

All Adaptation Fund regular[9] projects are subject to a final evaluation by an external evaluator selected by the implementing entity. All small-size[10] projects as well as readiness grant projects are subject to a final evaluation if deemed appropriate by the Adaptation Fund Board and shall follow an evaluation process as decided by the Board using templates approved by the Board. Final evaluation reports will be submitted to the Adaptation Fund Board as stipulated in the project agreement.[11] "Projects and programmes that have more than four years of implementation will conduct an independent midterm evaluation after completing the second year of implementation." [12] Adaptation

---

[8] GEF full-sized projects have a grant budget of more than $2 million. GEF medium-sized projects have a grant budget of up to $2 million.
[9] Adaptation Fund regular projects have a grant budget over $1 million.
[10] Adaptation Fund small-size projects have a grant budget up to $1 million.
[11] Access at: https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/OPG-amended-in-October-2017-1.pdf
[12] Access at: https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/evaluation-framework-4/

Fund midterm and final evaluations should be included in UNDP evaluation plans (country office and regional bureau evaluation plans) and uploaded to the ERC.

Green Climate Fund

The GCF Evaluation Policy is currently under development.[13] All GCF evaluations should be included in UNDP evaluation plans (country office or regional bureau evaluation plans) and uploaded to the ERC.

2.7. Multi-country or South-South cooperation projects

Multi-country projects may require evaluation. Though a single project is considered for the purpose of project management, the offices involved are accountable to contribute to joint results on equal terms. In this scenario, the modality of carrying out the evaluation is similar to a joint evaluation (see below), with the UNDP offices agreeing on management structure, collaborating in drafting the terms of reference, selecting evaluators, reporting dissemination strategies and management responses, and following up and implementing recommendations. The evaluation is managed and commissioned by the UNDP country office which is designated as the "coordination office".

2.8. Portfolio evaluations

Increasingly, programme units are evaluating the work of a group or portfolio of projects with similar aims towards a country programme output or outcome. This is similar to a selective outcome evaluation although the projects themselves may straddle outcomes. For instance, a country office may evaluate the interventions contributing to strengthening governance institutions (state audit, ombudsman, etc.). This allows a few projects to contribute to a number of management costs including the evaluation rather than bearing the full cost individually. This should be planned in advance and budgets agreed across projects if needed and the approach included in the evaluation plan of the implementing unit.

2.9. Thematic evaluations

Thematic evaluations are sometimes implemented to assess UNDP performance in areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contribution to development results and that may cross outcome areas and areas of UNDP work. Thematic evaluations can be found at all levels and are implemented by all programme units. Thematic evaluations focus on one or more cross-cutting themes that have significance beyond a particular project or initiative and even outcome. Examples of thematic evaluations include the evaluation of UNDP initiatives in a particular results area such as democratic governance, the evaluation of a cross-cutting theme, such as capacity development or gender mainstreaming, or signature solutions in UNDP programming in a given country.

At the country office level, an office may decide to focus on its work in one area, for example gender, across all or some of its outcome areas.

---

[13] https://ieu.greenclimate.fund/

> **Thematic evaluation examples** (linked for easy access)
>
> - Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, 2017, External Assessment of the UNDP Gender Seal
> - United Nations Volunteers, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment for Organizational and Programmatic Effectiveness
> - Mauritania, 2016, Analyse des interventions du PNUD en matière de développement communautaire
> - IEO, 2016, Evaluation of UNDP contribution to Anti-corruption and Addressing Drivers of Corruption
> - IEO, 2015, Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to gender equality

The IEO undertakes thematic evaluations as part of its mandate to look closely at the achievements and challenges of the organization.

2.10. Impact evaluations

An impact evaluation is an evaluation of the effects—positive or negative, intended or not—on individual households and institutions, and the environment caused by a given development activity such as a programme or project. Such an evaluation refers to the final (long-term) impact as well as to the (medium-term) effects at the outcome level. By identifying if development assistance is working or not, impact evaluation also serves the accountability function.

Impact evaluations do not simply measure whether objectives have been achieved or assess direct effects on intended beneficiaries. They include the full range of impacts at all levels of the results chain, including ripple effects on families, households and communities, on institutional, technical or social systems and on the environment. In terms of a simple logic model, there can be multiple intermediate (short- and medium-term) outcomes over time that eventually lead to impact, some or all of which may be included in an evaluation of impact at a specific moment in time.

UNDP undertakes very few impact evaluations as many of our projects contribute to a broader outcome or development goal or play a role for which it is difficult to attribute impact.[14] When projects are being designed and an impact evaluation is expected, programme units should consider the type of impact that is expected and what indicators will illustrate the impact of the project towards the project's goals. A baseline measure will give the current, pre-project levels and realistic targets can then be built into a project's goals, monitored regularly and finally checked and validated (or not) using an impact evaluation. UNEG has detailed Impact evaluation guidance.[15]

2.11. Joint evaluations

Joint evaluation is one modality of carrying out an evaluation to which different partners contribute. Any evaluation can be conducted as a joint evaluation. Increasingly, UNDP is being asked to undertake joint evaluations and there are various degrees of "jointness" depending on the extent to which individual partners cooperate in the evaluation process, merge their evaluation resources and combine their evaluation reporting. Joint evaluations tend to be lengthier in process and require greater coordination efforts. Other advantages and disadvantages should be discussed both internally and with stakeholders.

---

[14] Between 2016 and 2017, UNDP implemented 600 decentralized evaluations, which included only one impact evaluation.
[15] Access at: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1433

At the country level, an obvious example of a joint evaluation is the UNDAF evaluation, in which a number of United Nations organizations and the Government participate. In addition, a UNDP country office may jointly carry out, together with the partner Government or with a donor, a joint outcome evaluation that assesses where both parties are mutually and equally responsible for the evaluation exercise. General guidance on joint evaluations has been produced by UNEG.[16]

Joint evaluations come with both benefits and challenges and these should be strongly considered before venturing into a joint evaluation. Benefits include strengthened harmonization and donor coordination, possible reduced transactions costs, increased legitimacy and objectivity, broader scope, greater learning and enhanced ownership. However, challenges faced could include coordination issues as well as a low level of buy-in.[17] Programme units should be realistic about the challenges and benefits that joint evaluations bring.

Joint evaluations follow the same approach as other evaluations, with the added step of having each step agreed by multiple parties. These steps are described in brief in the figure below, and in more detail in the annex. All steps need to be agreed between all parties to ensure smooth running of a joint evaluation.

Figure 2. Joint evaluation implementation steps

Deciding the need for a joint evaluation: does a project warrant a joint evaluation?

Determining partners: early identification of joint evaluation partners.

Management structure: is a joint steering committee required?

Division of work: what are the decision-making structures and responsibilities.

Drafting the terms of reference (TOR): who will "hold the pen" in the finalization of the TOR?

Determining whose procedures will be used: agreement on whose administrative or evaluation approached will be followed.

Funding modalities: whose funding modalities will be followed?

---

[16] Access at http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1620
[17] Adopted from OECD, 'DAC Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations', Paris, France, 2006; and Feinstein O and G Ingram, 'Lessons Learned from World Bank experiences in Joint Evaluation', OECD, Paris, France, 2003, http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/37512030.pdf

2.12. Donor- and multilateral organization-commissioned evaluations

Donor-funded projects and programmes may require evaluations (final or midterm) and these must be planned in advance and included in project documents. If evaluations are mandatory, this will be stated in the agreement between UNDP and the donor, and the timing and funding source will be agreed at the time of project finalization and signing. These evaluations may be commissioned directly by the donor agencies and UNDP or are sometimes commissioned only by the donor agencies themselves.

These evaluations should be included in programme units' evaluation plans and uploaded to the ERC. It should be communicated to the donor that all UNDP evaluations are treated as public documents and will be uploaded to the ERC. Where an evaluation is not planned and has not been included in the evaluation plan, the plan must be revised to include the new evaluation and this must be uploaded to the ERC.

Evaluation commissioned by donors should be planned and completed in a collaborative manner between UNDP and donors. The scope and methodology of the evaluation must be planned, and procedural matters are to be agreed upon in advance by the donor and UNDP. UNDP should ensure that donor partners share the draft report for comment prior to final issuance and completion.

Recommendations, management responses and key actions which are specifically applicable to UNDP and the programme unit should be uploaded to the ERC within six weeks of completion of the evaluation report. Other non-UNDP related recommendations, etc., can be omitted from the ERC, though they remain in the evaluation report. The programme unit needs to monitor the implementation and report on the progress of the planned key actions until they have all been completed.

Annex. Joint evaluation consideration checklist

Deciding on the need for a joint evaluation

It is important to assess whether the programme or project warrants a joint evaluation.
- ➢ Is the focus of the programme on an outcome that reaches across sectors and agencies?
- ➢ Is the programme co-financed by multiple partners?
- ➢ Would a joint evaluation reduce evaluation transaction costs?
- ➢ Can the project be evaluated (evaluability)?

Determining partners

Choose evaluation partners at an early stage to ensure their involvement and ownership.

Management structure

A recommended structure for a joint evaluation could have a steering group that oversees the evaluation process and a smaller management group to ensure smooth implementation.
- ➢ The steering group comprises a representative from each partner organization and government entity.
- ➢ The steering group approves the terms of reference (TOR) and the evaluation team ensures oversight of the evaluation, introduces balance in the final evaluation judgements and takes responsibility for the use of results.
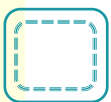
Division of work

Senior management of the UNDP programme unit should agree with the evaluation partners on the decision-making arrangements and the division of labour at the outset of the evaluation process.
- ➢ This includes who in the management group takes the lead role in each of the subsequent steps in the evaluation.
- ➢ A conflict resolution process should be determined to deal with any problems that may arise.

Drafting the TOR

It is practical for one party to take the lead in drafting the evaluation TOR, which define the scope of work. The draft should be discussed and agreed upon by the partner organizations and the interests of all parties concerned should be included and agreed in the TOR.

Determining whose procedures will be used

Different organizations take different approaches to evaluation, and it is important to allow flexibility to adapt and allow additional time to accommodate delays due to such differences. Implementing agencies could:

➢ Agree that the evaluation will be managed using the systems and procedures of one **agency**; or

➢ Split the evaluation into components and agree whose systems will be used to manage which components.

Whichever approach is taken will determine appropriate templates, budgeting norms and approaches and report finalization procedures. These approaches should be agreed prior to the evaluation starting.

Funding modalities

If UNDP is taking the lead, the preferred funding approach should be to pool partners' financial support into a fund (akin to a trust fund) that is administered by one agency and that covers all costs related to the exercise. Alternatively, individual partner(s) could finance certain components of the evaluation while UNDP covers others. This approach increases transaction and coordination costs.

Selecting evaluators

One of the joint evaluation partners could take responsibility for recruiting the evaluation team, in consultation with the other partners. Another option is for each of the partners to contribute their own experts. However, an evaluation team leader should be hired and agreed by partners to aid the smooth implementation, organization and final report development of the evaluation. Guidance on evaluator recruitment can be found in section 5.
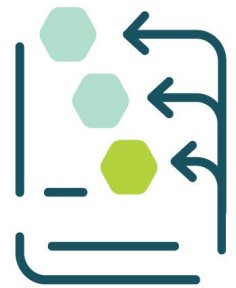
Report dissemination strategies

For a joint evaluation, partners should agree that they have the opportunity to correct factual errors in the report; where it is impossible to resolve differences on the findings and conclusions, dissenting views should be included in the report; and the conclusions and recommendations should be the responsibility of the evaluators. However, sometimes measures such as allowing for separate evaluation products may be beneficial for the partners who have certain accountability or reporting requirements.

Management response, follow-up and implementing recommendations

All managers must follow up on the findings and recommendations of each evaluation report in UNDP. Partners need to agree on what to do individually and collectively and decide upon a follow-up mechanism that monitors the status of the changes being implemented. In line with the Evaluation Policy requirement, UNDP may select recommendations that are pertinent to UNDP and prepare a management response focusing on these recommendations.

SECTION 3
EVALUATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

3. EVALUATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Section 3 provides guidance on how to develop an evaluation plan that will provide appropriate evaluative coverage of a programme (e.g., a country programme, in the case of country offices). The section details what should be included in an evaluation, how to cost the plan, the evaluation plan review and approval process, and how the evaluation plan can be updated.

Figure 1. The steps of evaluation plan development

Evaluation plan content

Evaluation plan review & approval

Evaluation plan changes

Developing a programme unit's evaluation plan

Costing & identifying funding sources for the evaluation plan

Evaluation plan completion & approval

Monitoring compliance with the evaluation plan
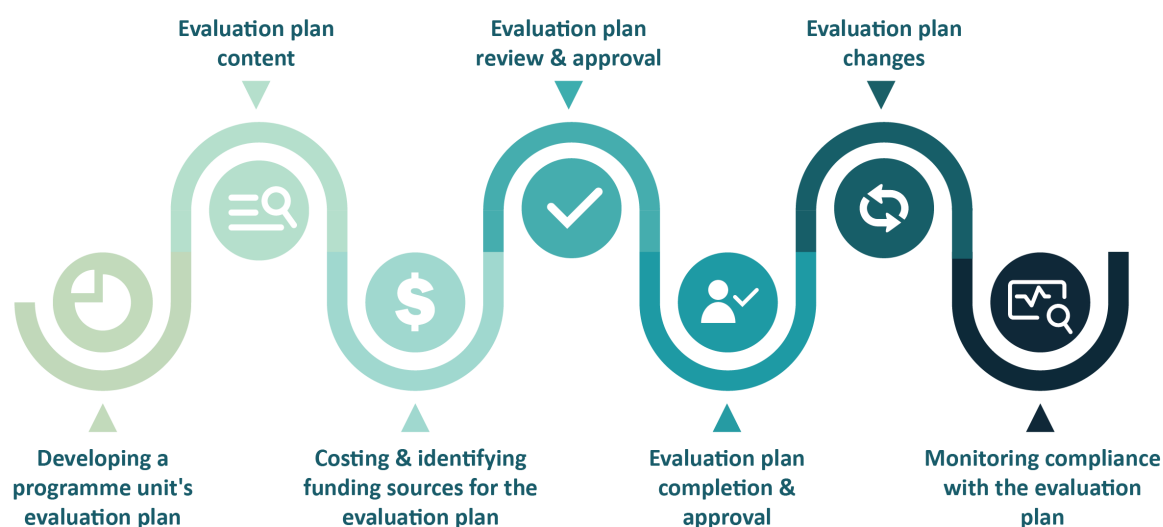
3.1 Introduction to evaluation plan development

This section gives details on the development of a programme unit's mandatory evaluation plan, including who should be involved in the development of the plan, what the plan should contain, budget considerations when developing the plan and how the plan should be managed throughout the programme cycle.

As a programme unit plans its activities over a strategic period (for example, through the country programme period in the case of country offices), it is important also to plan how the programme unit will check its progress towards agreed development goals and outcomes at all levels (project, programme, outcome, etc.). Evaluation planning is necessary in order to support course correction if needed, check progress (in the case of midterm evaluations and reviews) or capture results (in the case of final and terminal evaluations).

An evaluation plan is a strategic document that is constantly used to check progress towards agreed evaluation commitments, produce evaluation findings to support change and aid knowledge-gathering and inform the work of UNDP. The evaluation plan accompanies the draft country programme document as an annex when it is submitted to the Executive Board for approval.[1] Programme units should ensure that the evaluation plan is an effective learning and accountability tool and is not only a compliance document containing just mandatory evaluations.

---

[1]

https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/CPD%20Template%20and%20Guidance%20-%20Updated%202017.docx&action=default

3.2   Developing a programme unit's evaluation plan

Programme units must **present a timed and fully costed evaluation plan to the Executive Board** with each country, regional and global programme document considered for approval. The plan should be strategic, practical, cost-effective and include evaluations of different types (project, programme, outcome, etc.) that will generate the most critical and useful information for UNDP and its partners in future programming. The plan should ensure accountability and strengthen learning from implementation.

When submitted to the Programme Appraisal Committee (PAC) for review, all evaluation plans **must be accompanied by a brief text (maximum 300 words) explaining the rationale** for the evaluations in the plan. Kindly note that this is for internal review use only and should not accompany the evaluation plan submitted to the Executive Board. The rationale can:

- Explain evaluations that are included in the plan and how they contribute to accountability, learning and the achievement of strategic results.
- Explain how the evaluations included in the plan provide sufficient and balanced coverage of the programme unit's areas of engagement (for example, country or regional programme outcomes).

As with the country programme development process, partners and stakeholders should be included in the development of the evaluation plan. For this reason, the evaluation plan should be developed through the same process as the country programme, with involvement of the Government and partners throughout.

The programme unit's senior management leads the development of the evaluation plan and is accountable for its implementation. Typically, the programme unit's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal point coordinates with programme teams and other stakeholders in the development of the evaluation plan. Regional evaluation focal points should be included in the review of draft country office evaluation plans.

3.3   Evaluation plan content

In deciding what to evaluate, programme units should first determine the purpose of proposed evaluations as well as other factors (e.g., country office priorities, emerging areas of engagement and potential scale-up opportunities, etc.) that may influence the relevance and use of evaluations. The evaluation plan should remain reflective of the goals and outcomes under the country programme and should take a balanced approach, with all programmatic areas evaluated, to ensure accountability across the country programme and ensure that lessons are captured to inform current and future programming.

The contents of the plan should be checked against the following criteria.

1. **Evaluations included in the plan should be strategic in nature:**
   (a) Evaluations that provide substantive information for decision-making and learning;
   (b) Evaluations that address the programme unit's priorities, emerging areas of engagement, potential scale-up opportunities and cross-cutting issues.[2]
2. **Evaluation coverage is as inclusive and balanced as possible:**
   (a) **Ensure a range of evaluations (outcome, project, thematic and others) are**

---

[2] For example, gender, crisis prevention and recovery, youth empowerment, HIV/AIDS, human rights, governance.

included in the evaluation plan so that the plan provides comprehensive evaluation coverage of the programme.[3] Any revisions should ensure retention of a comprehensive evaluation focus.

3. **All mandatory evaluations are included:**
    (a) United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluations (one per UNDAF cycle);
    (b) Global Environment Facility (GEF) terminal evaluations for all GEF-financed medium-size projects and full-size projects;[4]
    (c) GEF midterm reviews for full-size projects;
    (d) Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund projects as required;
    (e) Donor/cost-sharing agreement evaluations.

4. **Evaluations of projects meeting the following criteria: [5]**
    (a) Projects with a planned budget or actual expenditure of over $5 million must plan and undertake both a midterm and final evaluation;[6]
    (b) Projects with a planned budget or actual expenditure between $3 million and $5 million must plan and undertake either a midterm or final evaluation;[7]
    (c) Projects with a duration of more than five years[8] must plan and undertake either a midterm or final evaluation;
    (d) Projects entering a second phase should plan and undertake an evaluation;[9]
    (e) Development initiatives being considered for scaling up should be evaluated before expansion.

5. **Timing, costs, resources and sequencing are realistic:**
    (a) The evaluation plan should also consider the timing of evaluations across the full evaluation calendar. When developing an evaluation calendar, it is important to ensure that timing allows for completion and contribution to key planning activities and other evaluations being undertaken by the implementing unit, such as outcome evaluations, independent country programme evaluations and UNDAF evaluations;
    (b) A second consideration is to avoid "bunching" evaluations together for completion at the same time, such as the end of the country programme period or the end of a calendar year (when other reporting is required), which will overstretch human resources within implementing units and impact oversight;
    (c) Evaluations in any given year should be completed and uploaded to the Evaluation Resource Center (ERC) by December and the evaluation plan should consider this;
    (d) Evaluation costs should be realistic and funds for evaluations need to be made available. For further detail, refer to subsection 1.4 (Costing).

6. **Ensure that influencing and constraining factors been fully considered:**
    Socioeconomic, political and environmental risks should be considered when outlining the evaluation plan and calendar. Here, examples include elections (national and local), cultural and religious festivals, rainy seasons (which can highly impact travel) and even planting and

---

[3] For instance, if a programme unit has a strong focus on and a large portfolio of disaster risk management, then its evaluation plan should be reflective of this.

[4] GEF medium-size projects (up to $2 million in grant funds), GEF full-size projects (more than $2 million in grant funds).

[5] Country offices may request the regional evaluation focal point to waive evaluations based on reasonable justification. At the same time, if a project is due to be evaluated as part of an outcome, portfolio or thematic evaluation, a separate project evaluation may not be necessary.

[6] If the project has a duration of less than four years, only one evaluation is required.

[7] This covers projects and not development services. While it is recommended that programme units evaluate large development service projects, delivery efficiency can be covered through audits.

[8] Projects exceeding five years should be evaluated within six months if they have not yet been evaluated.

[9] A project is entering in a second phase when it is proposed to scale up results through a substantive project revision or a new project.

harvesting time when community members remain extremely busy. All of these could impact availability of interviewees as well as the scope of data collection.

3.4 Costing and identifying the funding sources for the evaluation plan

Costing of the evaluation plan is important and should be realistic in relation to the requirements and scope of the evaluation as well as the realities of the country office's budget. The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) annual report on evaluation gives average annual costs for evaluations across the globe (UNDAF, outcome, project, etc.) as well as at the regional level (in the report's annexes), which should be used as a guide by programme units, although there will be differences between country offices.

Programme units should estimate and indicate financial requirements and financing sources for each evaluation in the evaluation plan. When estimating the cost for an evaluation, it is important to consider the scope, depth and duration of the evaluation as well as the composition of the planned evaluation team. The greater the complexity and scope of an evaluation, the longer time and more detailed work will be needed by the evaluation team to collect required data, which in turn will increase evaluators' overall fees and therefore total evaluation costs. A further consideration is the cost of the travel of the evaluation team. Programme units should be realistic in terms of the scope and complexity of the evaluation vis-à-vis available resources. Finally, programme unit should consider communication and dissemination costs for wider dissemination of the evaluation report.

Underfunding evaluations will seriously constrain their scope, results, quality and credibility. When identifying the sources of funds for evaluations, the following should be considered:

➢ UNDAF evaluation funding and management considerations should be agreed by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) prior to the start of the evaluation.
➢ Outcome evaluations should have resources set aside in the programme budget (e.g., country programme budget). Alternatively, related projects should contain a budget line to allow for sufficient resources for an outcome evaluation.
➢ Project evaluations should have a budget line for evaluation activities exclusive of monitoring activities.
➢ GEF terminal and midterm evaluation guidelines give suggested budget outlines.

Individual evaluation budget considerations include:

➢ Professional fees for all evaluators or thematic experts undertaking the evaluation (international and national). There are often additional costs when hiring a professional firm.
➢ Flights to and from the evaluation country, where applicable.
➢ Additional and non-professional costs such as daily subsistence allowance for time in country for data-collection and terminal expenses.
➢ Translation costs for interviews, field visits, validation and dissemination workshops.
➢ Travel costs within the country during the evaluation (evaluator, translator, UNDP accompanying staff and other participants).
➢ Any focus group meeting or data-collection meeting costs (venue hire, snacks, participant transport costs, etc.).
➢ Communication costs including editing, publication and dissemination costs.
➢ Stakeholder, validation or evaluation reference group workshop costs.
➢ Additional contingency costs for any unknown expenses during the evaluation.

Table 1. Budget considerations and calculation for evaluations

A. EVALUATION TEAM COSTS		# DAYS	DAILY RATE	TOTAL COST
Professional fees	Team Leader/ Evaluator 1			
	Evaluator 2			
	TOTAL			
Flights (international)	Evaluator 1			
	Evaluator 2			
	TOTAL			
Per diem costs (time in the field)	Evaluator 1			
	Evaluator 2			
	TOTAL			
TOTAL A				

B. EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION AND DATA-COLLECTION COSTS		#	COST	TOTAL
Internal flights				
Car hire				
Translation				
Focus group and workshop-related costs				
Other costs				
TOTAL B				

C. EVALUATION DISTRIBUTION COSTS		#	COST	TOTAL
Report production (editing, design, printing)				
Report dissemination (outreach, shipping etc.)				
Stakeholder meeting				
TOTAL C				

TOTAL EVALUATION COSTS A+B+C	

Where an individual or a group of individuals is hired to undertake an evaluation, most of the costs cited above will be manged by UNDP. Where UNDP engages a firm to undertake an evaluation, some of the costs may be managed by the firm on behalf of UNDP, i.e., flights, per diem costs, etc.

It is important that an evaluation be fully costed and budgeted for, to allow for adequate scope and duration of the evaluation and also to ensure that additional incidental costs are included.

In all cases, whether an individual or a firm is engaged, the budget and financing expectations and responsibilities must be clarified and agreed prior to the evaluation starting.

Evaluation budgets are separate to monitoring budgets and should be detailed under a separate budget line. Delineation of M&E budgets is required under the 2016 Evaluation Policy.[10]

Joint evaluations and UNDAF evaluations require further discussion within the UNCT or with evaluation partners as to whose procedures should be used, both for the evaluation and also for procurement, as well as the funding modalities and contributions from different parties and how the process is managed and reported to all parties. Section 2 outlines these considerations alongside other considerations related to joint and UNDAF evaluations.

---

[10] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml

3.5 Evaluation plan template

The completed evaluation plan template[11] accompanies the draft country programme document as annex 2 Fully Costed Evaluation Plan.[12]

Table 2. Evaluation plan template

UNDAF (or equivalent) outcome	UNDP Strategic Plan outcome	Evaluation title	Partners (joint evaluation)	Evaluation commissioned by (if not UNDP)	Type of evaluation	Planned evaluation completion date	Estimated cost	Provisional source of funding
Copied verbatim from the UNDAF/ equivalent/ country programme document	Cite relevant Strategic Plan outcome	E.g., Midterm outcome evaluation: Energy and Environment Portfolio	List all partners, e.g., United Nations organizations; government partners, such as national ministry; donor; etc.	E.g. Ministry of Environment; GEF	E.g., UNDAF/equivalent, country programme, outcome, thematic, programme / project, GEF, etc. **Note**: Evaluative exercises may vary in size and scope but they should all help produce intelligence outcome-level performance. All evaluations should meet United Nations Evaluation Group gender standards	E.g., June 2015 **Note:** Timing and nature of evaluation to be determined by performance and learning needs based on testing of theory of change that underpins strategy towards each outcome	Consider the following expenses: Evaluators and external advisers, and expenses related to their duties; expert advisory panel members (if any); travel; stakeholder consultations; data collection, and analysis tools and methods; supplies (office, computer, software, etc.); communication costs; publication and dissemination	E.g., project budget; donor; M&E budget; etc.

---

[11] This template should be accompanied by brief text explaining the rationale behind the plan (as explained in section 1.2).

[12] https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/CPD%20Template%20and%20Guidance%20-%20Updated%202017.docx&action=default

3.6 Evaluation plan review and quality assurance

All evaluation plans go through a pre-PAC and headquarters PAC review process. The reviewers use a checklist of requirements for the evaluation plan when reviewing them.[13]

The review verifies that the criteria and requirements for the content of the plan, as detailed above, have been fully considered and included. The reviewer will check the following considerations when reviewing the draft evaluation plan.

Table 3. Evaluation plan checklist

#	Quality assurance criteria	YES	NO
1	**Is the evaluation plan complete, i.e., noting the following?** ▪ The commissioning unit ▪ Evaluation partners (only for joint evaluations) ▪ Evaluation type (UNDAF, programme, project, outcome, thematic, GEF) ▪ Planned evaluation completion dates ▪ Are evaluations aligned to UNDAF and Strategic Plan outcomes? ▪ Estimated budget and source of the funding		
2	**Are all mandatory evaluations included?** ▪ UNDAF evaluations (one per UNDAF cycle) ▪ GEF terminal evaluations for all GEF-financed medium-size projects and full-size projects ▪ GEF midterm reviews for full-size projects ▪ Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund projects as required ▪ Donor/cost-sharing agreement evaluations **The following project benchmarks also detail further mandatory project evaluations:[14]** ▪ Projects with a planned budget or actual expenditure of over $5 million plan and undertake both a midterm and final evaluation ▪ Projects with a planned budget or actual expenditure between $3 million and $5 million plan and undertake either a midterm or final evaluation ▪ Projects with a duration of more than five years plan and undertake either a midterm or final evaluation ▪ Projects entering a second phase should plan and undertake an evaluation ▪ Development initiatives being considered for scaling up should be evaluated before expansion		
3	**Is there a brief text explaining the rationale for including the evaluations in the plan (maximum 300 words)?**		
4	**Is there inclusive and balanced coverage of the country programme content?**		
5	**Are the timing and sequencing of evaluations in the plan realistic?**		
6	**Does costing properly reflect the scope, depth and duration of each evaluation? Is it realistic?**		

---

[13] Access at:
https://intranet.undp.org/unit/office/exo/sp2014/SP201417/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/unit/office/exo/sp2014/SP201417/PAC%20Library/2018/New%20guidance%20notes/Checklist%20to%20review%20evaluation%20plans%20to%20CPDs%2020180420.docx&action=default

[14] Exceptions and further details can be found in section 3.3. Evaluation plan content

A further template to check the scope and balance of the evaluation plan can be seen below. By categorizing evaluations by year, type or outcome, you can quickly identify evaluation gaps where lessons are not being captured or where a year may see significant bunching of evaluations and therefore may face implementation challenges.

Table 4. Evaluation plan scheduling and number checklist, example

		Year 1 2019	Year 2 2020	Year 3 2021	Year 4 2022	Year 5 (If applicable)	Total
	UNDAF evaluation (mandatory)						**0**
Outcomes	Outcome 1 evaluation			1			**1**
	Outcome 1 project evaluations	1		1			**2**
	Outcome 2 evaluation			1			**1**
	Outcome 2 project evaluations						**0**
	Outcome 3 evaluation			1			**1**
	Outcome 3 project evaluations						**0**
GEF	GEF terminal evaluation	4	3	1	2		**10**
	GEF midterm evaluations						**0**
	Other evaluations						**0**
	TOTAL	**5**	**3**	**5**	**2**		**15**

3.7 Evaluation plan completion and approval

The senior management of a programme unit must review and endorse the evaluation plan before its submission to the headquarters PAC. Once the evaluation plan has been finalized and endorsed through the pre-PAC and the headquarters PAC, it accompanies the country/regional/global programme document as an annex when it is submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

Once the country programme document and annexed evaluation plan have been approved by the Executive Board, the programme unit should upload the details of each evaluation to the ERC. The evaluation plan document should also be uploaded as a supporting document under the "Plan details" heading of the programme unit's evaluations plan on ERC.[15]

Example of a plan document uploaded to the Evaluation Resource Center "plan detail" heading

Plan detail (2016-2020)	
Commissioning unit:	Indonesia
Period:	2016-2020
Status:	Posted
Comments:	UNDP CO Indonesia Evaluation Plan 2016-2020
Plan document:	30 May Indonesia Evaluation Plan.docx

---

[15] For more information, see the ERC user guide, https://erc.undp.org/guidance

3.8 Evaluation plan changes

Once an evaluation plan has been approved and the respective programme unit enters the evaluation plan in the ERC for tracking, the regional bureau will use the plan as a basis for monitoring compliance. However, the evaluation plan is not a static document and may require adjustment as circumstances change. Adjustments to individual evaluations and the evaluation plan should be considered annually as part of the programme unit's stocktaking exercise. Changes that can be made with approval include:

- Extending the completion date for evaluations.
- Changing the scope and purpose of evaluations due to changes in the context (e.g., crisis settings).
- Addition of new evaluations. New projects may require new and additional evaluations that need to be included in the evaluation plan.
- Deletion (in exceptional circumstances).[16]

Any adjustments to the plans including date changes, deletions and additions need to be clearly supported with a detailed rationale validated and approved by the regional evaluation focal point. As changes are made to the evaluation plan, it is also important to ensure that the overall goals, scope, coverage and timing remain reflective of the programme unit's work, capture its results and are realistic for implementation.

The evaluation plan should be reviewed annually and refined and adjusted as needed. As part of the annual review, programme units should also ensure that all completed evaluations have been uploaded to ERC together with a management response, and that all management responses and key actions are up to date.

Programme units should discuss possible changes with regional focal points prior to making and requesting adjustments to plans through the ERC. Changes, particularly deletions, to individual project evaluations should be discussed, agreed and noted in minutes with project management boards or their equivalents such as a steering committee. Change requests can be made through the ERC by the M&E focal points. Regional evaluation focal points will review these requests and approve or reject as needed.

A formal **midterm review of the evaluation plan** is highly recommended. Changes to the evaluation plan during the midterm review includes ensuring that:

(a) the evaluation plan remains balanced and covers all aspects of the programme document in some way;
(b) all completion dates are realistic and attainable;
(c) all new evaluations have been included;
(d) all management responses and key actions are up to date and not overdue.

Changes to evaluation plans are recorded and kept in the ERC and programme units can see a full picture of the changes and adjustments through the life of an evaluation plan. If a country programme

---

[16] Evaluations can be deleted in instances such as: (a) evaluations were mistakenly added to the plan or ERC, such as duplicates; (b) the planned completion date is out of the country programme period, in which case the evaluation is deleted and added to the next evaluation plan; (c) evaluations are combined into other evaluations such as outcome, thematic or regional evaluations; (d) the funds available are too limited to make an evaluation usable or credible; and (e) the security, political or social situation is such that the evaluation cannot occur safely or meet its goals.

period is extended, the change must also be made in the ERC to reflect the new period of the programme.

3.9 Compliance with the evaluation plan

A programme unit's M&E focal point, together with regional evaluation focal points, monitors the implementation of the evaluation plan to ensure that completed evaluations have management responses and key actions are implemented. The Bureau for Policy and Programme Support monitors overall compliance with evaluation plans, management response and key action implementation and follows up with regional bureaux to ensure timely implementation and reporting. Annually IEO will report in the annual report to the Executive Board on the number of evaluations planned during a given year, as well as completion numbers and the number of changes to evaluation plans and the reasons for the changes. IEO also reports on management responses to recommendations as well as key action completions.

Table 5. Examples of well-balanced evaluation plans

Country	UNDAF	Outcomes	Other	Projects	GEF projects (terminal & midterm evaluations)	TOTAL
Cambodia, 2016 to 2018[17]	1	2	2	12	3	20
Ethiopia, 2017 to 2020[18]	1	2	0	10	6	19
Malawi, 2012 to 2018[19]	1	4	1	9	2	17
Paraguay, 2015 to 2019[20]	1	3	1	7	3	14
Pakistan, 2013 to 2017[21]	0	2	0	7	5	14

---

[17] Accessible at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/plans/detail/1382
[18] Accessible at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/plans/detail/1453
[19] Accessible at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/plans/detail/1214
[20] Accessible at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/plans/detail/1305
[21] Accessible at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/plans/detail/1295

SECTION 4
EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION

CONTENTS

4. EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION AND USE

Section 4 provides detailed guidance on the implementation of decentralized evaluations, beginning with the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation manager and other actors. The following sub-sections include pre-evaluation steps such as checking the readiness for evaluation; preparing the evaluation including drafting the terms of reference; managing the evaluation; the evaluation team; and finally, using the evaluation, including the preparation of evaluation management responses.

The process for developing evaluations commissioned by programme units includes the following four key steps, which are outlined in detail in this section.

1 — Pre-evaluation: Initiating the evaluation process
▸ Checking the 'evaluability,' or readiness, for evaluation

Evaluation preparation
▸ Agreeing on the management structure of an evaluation and roles and responsibilities
▸ Drafting the terms of reference
▸ Engaging the evaluation reference group
▸ Organizing the relevant documentation
▸ Selecting the evaluation team

2 — Managing an evaluation
▸ Briefing and supporting the evaluation team
▸ Supporting implementation of the evaluation by independent evaluators
▸ Reviewing the inception report prepared by the evaluation team
▸ Reviewing the draft evaluation report

3 — Using the evaluation: management response, knowledge-sharing and dissemination
▸ Preparing the management response and implementing follow-up actions
▸ Preparing and disseminating evaluation products and organizing knowledge-sharing events
▸ Reviewing evaluations prior to new planning processes

4

4.1 Evaluation Implementation: roles and responsibilities

All evaluations should have a clearly defined organization and management structure as well as established and communicated roles and responsibilities. All evaluations should have an evaluation manager who is responsible for the oversight of the whole evaluation process. Who this is will depend on the human resources available within the programme unit. Ideally, the evaluation manager should not be the programme/project manager to avoid all conflicts of interest.

Evaluation commissioner/owner: in the context of these guidelines, the evaluation commissioner is defined as the agency or entity that calls for the evaluation to be conducted, in the present case UNDP, and within UNDP, the senior manager that "owns" the evaluation plan according to which a decentralized evaluation is being carried out. The evaluation commissioner, e.g., the resident representative in a country office, appoints an evaluation manager.

Programme/project manager: Within UNDP, this is the manager responsible for the programme/outcome/portfolio/project under evaluation (the "evaluand").[1] The programme/project

---

[1] Typically, this includes senior management for country programme evaluations, global programme managers for global programme evaluations, outcome leads for outcome evaluations and/or programme officers (programme team leaders, programme analysts) for project evaluations.

manager should take a supporting role in the implementation of an evaluation. In order to ensure the independence and credibility of an evaluation, they will not manage the evaluation directly. However, they will provide documents and data as requested and support the overall evaluation, including the data-collection mission, and have a clear plan for using the results of the evaluation.

Evaluation manager: Evaluation management should be separate from programme/project management. Where a UNDP implementing office has a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist or focal point in place, they should take the evaluation management role. Where there is no such position, an evaluation manager should be assigned by the programme unit senior management (e.g., the resident representative). The programme/project manager retains a supporting role for the evaluation and the evaluation manager throughout.

The evaluation manager can recommend the final sign-off and approval of all aspects of the evaluation process including: (a) ensuring evaluability; (b) finalization of the terms of reference for the evaluation; (c) the appropriate evaluation team structure and recruitment; (d) recommending approval of the inception report; (e) coordination of comments on the draft evaluation report; and (f) recommending acceptance of the final evaluation reports.

If an evaluation is a joint evaluation, there may be a co-commissioner and a co-manager from the partner agency. The evaluation management structure and roles and responsibilities should be agreed prior to the evaluability stage of the evaluation process. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluation management structures follow a similar approach to joint evaluations though they include more participants from the United Nations Country Team (UNCT).[2]

Box 1. Role of the M&E focal point, specialist or officer

Whether or not the M&E focal point/specialist/officer is evaluation manager, they should still ensure the quality of all evaluations (outcome, project, vertical-funded projects [Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF)], donor project evaluations, etc.)

The M&E focal point/specialist/officer should approve each stage before moving to the next stage, including:

- Review and approve the evaluation terms of reference, ensuring that they meet UNDP guidance requirements.
- Review and approve the evaluation inception report, ensuring that it meets UNDP requirements.
- Review and recommend acceptance of the draft and final evaluation reports.
- Review the management responses and key actions.

In addition, the M&E focal point/specialist/officer maintains the programme unit's evaluation plan on the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC) including:

- Upload the evaluation plan and update as required.
- Manage changes to the evaluation plan and get approval for changes from the regional evaluation focal point.
- Upload evaluation documents to the ERC within the timelines outlined (terms of reference, evaluations, etc.).
- Upload management responses and key actions and update on a quarterly basis.
- Report to management on compliance with the evaluation plan, completion of management responses and key actions and quality assessment results.

---

[2] Access at: Monitoring and Evaluation UNDAF Companion Guidance, 2017

Evaluation reference group: The evaluation commissioner and evaluation manager should consider establishing an evaluation reference group made up of key partners and stakeholders who can support the evaluation and give comments and direction at key stages in the evaluation process. An evaluation reference group ensures transparency in the evaluation process and strengthens the credibility of the evaluation results.

The regional evaluation focal points oversee the implementation of country office evaluation plans, approve any adjustments to the plans with valid justification, and ensure that country offices meet the evaluation commitments given under the plans. The regional evaluation focal point also offers technical guidance to country offices, primarily to their management and M&E focal points/officers/specialists, in the implementation of evaluations to ensure that commitments under evaluation plans are met, evaluations are credible and independent and are of the quality level required by UNDP. At the central bureau level, there are evaluation focal points who have the same role overseeing central bureau evaluation plans and changes to the ERC.

In country offices where there is no dedicated M&E officer or specialist, the regional evaluation focal points should provide additional support to the assigned M&E focal points. Technical support can include advice on the development of terms of reference, including the integration of gender equality perspectives, recruitment of evaluators, feedback on inception reports, implementation of evaluations, finalization of evaluations and feedback on draft evaluations and management responses. Regional evaluation focal points are also the main focal points when disputes arise in the evaluation process.

Box 2. **Monitoring guidance[3]**

UNDP monitoring guidance detailed in the Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures on programme and project management states the following requirements for M&E staffing within programme units.

- UNDP offices and units must maintain adequate staffing for M&E. All offices with annual programme expenditures of $50 million and above, excluding expenditures for vertical funds with their own dedicated capacities, such as the GEF, GCF and Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, should maintain two full-time specialists dedicated to M&E. Offices with programme expenditures between $10 million and $50 million should maintain one full-time specialist. Offices with less than $10 million in programme expenditures must maintain staff with appropriate time dedicated to M&E.

- The regional service centre should provide full-time equivalent staff dedicated to M&E to support offices that are unable to maintain the benchmark in a 1:4 ratio (one full-time equivalent staff person to four countries without adequate capacities). Staff dedicated to project monitoring and/or evaluation do not count towards meeting programme benchmarks.

More details of roles and responsibilities in the evaluation implementation process can be found in section 5.

---

[3] Access at:
https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Implement_Monitor.docx&action=default

Step One: Evaluability

4.2 Step One: Pre-evaluation: initiating the evaluation process

Checking the "evaluability" or readiness for evaluation

UNDP programme units and stakeholders should undertake an evaluability assessment of any proposed evaluation prior to its commencement to ensure that the activity (programme, outcome, project, portfolio or thematic area) is in a position to be evaluated. This should be undertaken jointly by the evaluation commissioner, evaluation manager and/or the M&E focal point. Key stakeholders in the project, especially the national counterparts, should be fully involved in the development of an evaluation and contribute to the evaluation design and results including the evaluability assessment.

The checklist below can guide the evaluability check and highlights areas that may need to be improved and strengthened for an evaluation to move ahead.

Table 1. Evaluability checklist

		Y	N
1.	Does the subject of evaluation have a **clearly defined theory of change**? Is there common understanding as to what initiatives will be subject to evaluation?		
2.	Is there a **well-defined results framework for initiative(s)** that are subject to evaluation? Are goals, outcome statements, outputs, inputs and activities clearly defined? Are indicators SMART?[4]		
3.	Is there sufficient **data for evaluation**? Is there baseline data? Is there sufficient data collected from monitoring against a set of targets? Are there well-documented progress reports, field visit reports, reviews and previous evaluations?		
4.	Is the planned evaluation still **relevant**, given the evolving context? Are the purpose and scope of the evaluation clearly defined and commonly shared among stakeholders? What evaluation questions are of interest to whom? Are we clear? Are these questions realistic, given the project design and likely data availability and resources available for the evaluation?		
5.	Will **political, social and economic factors** allow for an effective conduct and use of the evaluation as envisaged?		
6.	Are there **sufficient resources** (human and financial) allocated to the evaluation?		

If "no" is the answer to one or more of **questions 1 to 3** above, the programme unit including unit management, the evaluation commissioner, evaluation manager and/or the M&E focal point/specialist/officer and stakeholders will need to make the appropriate adjustments and updates to bring the programme/project into a position to be evaluated (which may cause implementation delays). Working with implementing partners, results models and frameworks and overall

---

[4] Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Relevant and Time-based.

documentation should be brought up to date. **A well-managed and monitored programme/project should have these prerequisites in place by the time of the evaluation.**

Relevance of an evaluation (question 4) may be a consideration where a project or outcome area has been reduced in importance due to resource mobilization limitations or changes in UNDP or the country context that have led to a reduced focus by UNDP. This may be the case for certain outcome areas.

If **political and socioeconomic situations** (**question 5**) do not allow the team to carry out an evaluation in a meaningful manner, UNDP management, together with national stakeholders, may decide to wait until an environment that is conducive to evaluation is secured. The evaluation may need to be flexible in its data-collection approach (changing field visit sites) and methodology to accommodate issues that may arise. In crisis settings, such decisions should be made based on good and current analyses of the setting so that the evaluation will be relevant to fast-changing crisis situations. Factors such as security situations (safety of evaluators, UNDP staff involved and interviewees) and potential impact of the evaluation on existing tensions should be carefully assessed.

Box 3. Planning, monitoring and evaluation in a crisis setting

Crisis settings (both relating to conflicts and disasters) are "not normal". This has ramifications for all aspects of programming including planning, monitoring and evaluation. In general, "normal" planning, M&E methods and mechanisms presented in these guidelines are transferable to crisis settings, with several important caveats:

- **Crisis situations are dynamic** and UNDP programming should quickly respond to radical changes that often take place in such circumstances. Therefore, the situation should continually be analysed and monitored to ensure that programming remains relevant. Changes should be documented so that monitoring and evaluating of the relevance and appropriateness of development initiatives take into consideration the fluid situations in which they were conceived and implemented. This will involve continuous situational and conflict analysis.
- **Crisis situations are characteristically ones of raised (or potentially raised) tension** between different parties. Thus, crisis and conflict-sensitivity should be exercised in all aspects of programming—including planning, monitoring and evaluation—to ensure that both the substance and process of programming are conducted in a way to reduce, or at the least not heighten, tensions between different parties. Security of programme staff, beneficiaries and M&E staff can be a constant concern, and risk analysis for all those involved should be constantly monitored and factored into M&E activities.
- **It is important to keep a "big picture" perspective**: the connectivity of projects and programmes to the wider peace process is critical, particularly for conflict prevention and peacebuilding programming. Planning, monitoring and evaluation should always include this aspect to avoid a situation where a project is "successful" in terms of meeting the desired results but either doesn't have an impact on the wider peace or negatively impacts it.

The 'Compendium on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in crisis prevention and recovery settings'[5] provides further guidance. Other resources are also available to support evaluation in crisis and humanitarian contexts.[6]

---

[5] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/compendium.html
[6] ALNAP, 2016, "Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide", https://www.alnap.org/help-library/evaluation-of-humanitarian-action-guide

Finally, sufficient resources (**question 6)** should have been assigned at the time of the design and approval of the country programme and evaluation plan. If adequate resources are not currently available to ensure funding and therefore the full scope of an evaluation, it is more prudent to delay implementation and ensure that adequate resources are available rather than pushing ahead with an evaluation that is under resourced and therefore likely to suffer from reduced scope, utility and credibility.

Delaying an evaluation: If a project, programme or outcome is found to be not yet ready for evaluation and a delay in implementing the evaluation is required, adjustments can be made to the evaluation plan with a new evaluation completion date. If the evaluation is to be delayed, an adjustment should be made to the evaluation plan with justification and submitted via the ERC for review and approval by the regional evaluation focal point.

Deletion of an evaluation: Programme units should make every effort to implement all evaluations on an evaluation plan. Only in exceptional circumstances[7] should an evaluation be deleted from an evaluation plan. If an evaluation is believed to no longer be relevant or is not expected to meet evaluability requirements, then UNDP senior and programme unit management should review and approve deletion with the M&E focal point/specialist/officer and project manager, ensuring that the programme or project board has approved the deletion. A request for deletion of an evaluation should be submitted via the ERC, along with clear and detailed justification, for review and approval by the regional evaluation focal point. All changes made to the evaluation plan will be recorded in the ERC to support and strengthen oversight of the plan's implementation.

---

[7] Evaluations can be deleted in instances where: (a) evaluations were mistakenly added to the evaluation plan or ERC, such as duplicates; (bi) the planned completion date is out of the country programme period, in which case the evaluation is deleted and added to the next evaluation plan; (c) evaluations are combined into other evaluations such as outcome, thematic or regional evaluations; (d) the funds available are too limited to make an evaluation usable or credible; and (e) the security, political or social situation is such that the evaluation cannot occur safely or meet its goals.

Step Two: Evaluation preparation

4.3 Step Two: Evaluation preparation

STEPS IN PREPARING AN EVALUATION

1 Agree evaluation management — **2** Develop the terms of reference — **3** Prepare supporting documents & data — **4** Select evaluators

4.3.1 Evaluation funding/budget

Budgets and sources of budgets for evaluation are detailed in the evaluation plan and should be agreed with partners during the drafting of the evaluation plan.

- ➤ **Project evaluation budgets** should be detailed in project and programme documents. GEF projects have suggested budgets for midterm reviews and terminal evaluations.
- ➤ **Outcome evaluation budgets** can come from country office funds or can be funded in part by individual projects and programmes.
- ➤ **UNDAF evaluation budgets** and procurement processes should be agreed by the UNCT at the time of drafting the UNDAF.

Budgets should be realistic and should enable credible and independent evaluations that produce usable results for the organization. A reduced or limited budget will limit the scope and depth of an evaluation and could limit it use and credibility. The annual report on evaluation from the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) gives average budgets for different evaluation approaches globally and by region. These can be used as a reference.[8]

Individual evaluation budget considerations include:

- ➤ Professional fees for all evaluators or thematic experts undertaking the evaluation (international and national). There are often additional costs when hiring a professional firm.
- ➤ Flights to and from the evaluation country, where applicable.
- ➤ Additional and non-professional costs such as daily subsistence allowance for time in country for data collection and terminal expenses.
- ➤ Translation costs for interviews, field visits, validation and dissemination workshops.
- ➤ Travel costs within the country during the evaluation (evaluator, translator, UNDP accompanying staff and other participants).
- ➤ Any costs related to focus group meetings or data-collection meetings (venue hire, snacks, participant transport costs, etc.).
- ➤ Communications costs including editing, publication and dissemination costs.
- ➤ Stakeholder, validation or evaluation reference group workshop costs.
- ➤ Additional contingency costs for any unknown expenses during the evaluation.

---

[8] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/annual-report/are.shtml

Section 3 includes an evaluation budget template.

4.3.2 Evaluation terms of reference

The terms of reference (TOR) defines the scope, requirements and expectations of the evaluation and serves as a guide and point of reference throughout the evaluation. The initial draft should be developed by the evaluation manager with input from the evaluation commissioner and shared with the evaluation reference group for review and comment. Regional evaluation focal points and others with necessary expertise may comment on the draft TOR to ensure they meet the corporate quality standards.

A quality TOR should be explicit and focused, providing a clear mandate for the evaluation team about what is being evaluated and why, who should be involved in the evaluation process, and the expected outputs. Each TOR should be unique to the particular circumstances and the purposes of the evaluation. Since the TOR play a critical role in establishing the quality criteria and use of the evaluation report, adequate time should be allocated to this exercise.

The outcome, project, thematic area or any other initiatives selected for evaluation, along with the timing, purpose, duration, available budget and scope of the evaluation, will dictate much of the substance of the TOR. However, because an evaluation cannot address all issues, developing the TOR involves strategic choices about the specific focus, parameters and outputs for the evaluation within available resources.

The TOR template is intended to help UNDP programme units create TORs based on quality standards for evaluations consistent with evaluation good practice. When drafting TOR, programme units should also consider the evaluation's coverage of the UNDP quality standards for programming, as relevant and required.[9] In terms of evaluation methodology, the TOR should retain enough flexibility for the evaluation team to determine the best methods and tools for collecting and analysing data. For example, the TOR might suggest using questionnaires, field visits and interviews, but the evaluation team should be able to revise the approach in consultation with the evaluation manager and key stakeholders. These changes in approach should be agreed and reflected clearly in an inception report.

The UNDP quality standards for programming

Strategic

Programming priorities and results contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are consistent with the UNDP Strategic Plan and are aligned with UNDAFs. Programmes and projects are based on clear analysis backed by evidence and theories of change. The latter justify why the defined approach is most appropriate and will most likely achieve, or contribute to, desired development results along with partner contributions. The role of UNDP vis-à-vis partners is deliberately considered. New opportunities and changes in the development context are regularly reassessed, with any relevant adjustments made as appropriate.

Relevant

Programming objectives and results are consistent with national needs and priorities, as well as with feedback obtained through engaging excluded and/or marginalized groups as relevant. Programming strategies consider interconnections between development challenges and results. A gender analysis is integrated to fully consider the different needs, roles and access to/control over resources of women

---

[9] Access at:
https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Programming%20Standards_Quality%20Standards%20for%20Programming.docx&action=default

and men; appropriate measures are taken to address these when relevant. Programmes and projects regularly capture, and review knowledge and lessons learned to inform design, adapt and change plans and actions as appropriate, and plan for scaling up.

Principled

All programming applies the core principles of human rights, gender equality, resilience, sustainability and leaving no one behind. Social and environmental sustainability are systematically integrated. Potential harm to people and the environment is avoided wherever possible, and otherwise minimized, mitigated and managed. The complete Social and Environmental Standards can be found here.

Management and monitoring

Outcomes and outputs are defined at an appropriate level, are consistent with the theory of change, and have SMART, results-oriented indicators, with specified baselines and targets and identified data sources. Gender-responsive, sex-disaggregated indicators are used when appropriate. Relevant indicators from the Strategic Plan's integrated results and resources framework have been adopted in the programme or project results framework. Comprehensive, costed M&E plans are in place and implemented to support evidence-based management, monitoring and evaluation. Risks, in terms of both threats and opportunities, are identified with appropriate plans and actions taken to manage them. Governance of programmes and projects is defined with clear roles and responsibilities and provides active and regular oversight to inform decision-making.

Efficient

Programming budgets are justifiable and valid and programming design and implementation includes measures to ensure efficient use of resources. The size and scope of programmes and projects are consistent with available resources and resource mobilization efforts. Plans include consideration of scaling up and links with other relevant initiatives to achieve greater impact. Procurement planning is done early and regularly reviewed. Monitoring and management include analysis of and actions to improve efficiency in delivering desired outputs with the required quality and timeliness, such as country office support to national implementation modalities. Costs are fully recovered (see the cost-recovery policy).

Effective

Programming design and implementation are informed by relevant knowledge, evaluation and lessons learned to develop strategy and inform course corrections. Targeted groups are systematically identified and engaged, prioritizing the marginalized and excluded. Results consistently respond to gender analysis and are accurately rated by the gender marker. Managers use monitoring data for making decisions that maximize achievement of desired results. South-South and triangular cooperation are used when relevant and captured in the results framework. Required implementing partner assessments have been conducted and the implementation modality is consistent with the results.

Sustainability and national ownership

Programming is accomplished in consultation with relevant stakeholders and national partners, who are engaged throughout the programming cycle in decision-making, implementation and monitoring. Programming includes assessing and strengthening the capacity and sustainability of national institutions. A strategy for use of national systems is defined and implemented, if relevant. Monitoring includes use of relevant national data sources, where possible. Sustainability of results is accomplished through tracking capacity indicators and implementing transition and scale-up plans.

The TOR should, at a minimum, cover the elements described below which are outlined in more detail in annex 1.

1. **Background and context.** This section: states clearly what is being evaluated and should concisely detail social, economic, political, geographic and demographic factors at the time of the evaluation (and not only at the time of programme/ project design); addresses what the evaluation aims to achieve and whom it will serve; and details the main achievements/results/issues of the project under evaluation. The TOR should also specify the evaluation approach that is being commissioned. The project information template should also be included detailing general project data (see annex).

2. **Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives.** These detail why the evaluation is being conducted, who will use or act on the evaluation findings and recommendations, and how they will use or act on the results. The scope and objective give the parameters and focus of the evaluation. Gender equality and women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues need to be included in the scope of the evaluation.

3. **Evaluation criteria and key questions.** These include specific questions to be answered through the evaluation that are relevant to the project, intervention or outcome being evaluated. Questions can be detailed here and broadened and agreed further by the evaluation team through the inception report. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability can be used to frame the questions.[10] Key questions should be clear, well defined and manageable. At least one evaluation question should address the issue of gender.[11]

4. **Methodology.** A suggested overall approach and methodology can be given along with possible data sources and collection methods, but this should be flexible and allow for refinement with the evaluation team once engaged. Methodologies for addressing gender-specific issues as well as inclusion of the SDGs should be requested.

5. **Evaluation products (key deliverables).** This provides details of the key products to be produced: (a) evaluation inception report including a workplan and evaluation schedule; (b) draft evaluation report for comment; (c) audit trail detailing how comments, questions and clarifications have been addressed; (d) final report (addressing comments, questions and clarifications); and (e) presentations and other knowledge products.

6. **Evaluation team composition and required competencies.** This details the specific skills, competencies and characteristics required of the evaluator or each member of the evaluation team.

7. **Evaluation ethics.** Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'.[12]

8. **Management and implementation arrangements.** These describe the organization and management structure for the evaluation and define the roles, key responsibilities and lines of authority of all parties involved in the evaluation process. Implementation arrangements are intended to clarify expectations, eliminate ambiguities and facilitate an efficient and effective evaluation process.

9. **Time frame for the evaluation process.** This should detail the number of days available for the evaluation assignment and the assignment of days across the evaluation team. The TOR

---

[10] Access at: http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

[11] We recommend that relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability are covered to ensure the full scope of an evaluation. If the commissioning unit chooses not to use one or more of the criteria, this should be explicitly stated in the terms of reference including the reasons for the omission.

[12] Access at: http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

should also detail the evaluation timetable including dates for: (a) the start of the evaluation; (b) the evaluation deliverables; (c) fieldwork and data collection; and (d) evaluation completion.

10. **Submission process and basis for selection.** This details the structure and application procedures, supporting documents, submission documents and the criteria for the review of applications.

11. **TOR annexes.** These provide links to supporting background documents and more detailed guidelines on evaluation in UNDP:

    (a) Intervention results framework and theory of change.

    (b) Key stakeholders and partners.

    (c) Documents to be reviewed and consulted.

    (d) Evaluation matrix template.

    (e) Outline of the evaluation report format.

    (f) Code of conduct forms.

Box 4. Integrating gender equality and women's empowerment perspectives in the terms of reference for an evaluation

In principle, all evaluations conducted or commissioned by UNDP must integrate human rights and gender equality and aim to "meet" the requirements of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Evaluation Performance Indicator (see section 6 for more on the assessment and the indicator). Integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in the scope of the evaluation, as expressed in the terms of reference, is a critical first step. A gender-responsive evaluation should be carried out even if the subject of evaluation was not gender-responsive in its design.

The UNEG guidance document, 'Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations',[13] provides examples of how to incorporate these elements in the definition of the evaluation's purpose, objectives, context and scope and to add a gender dimension to the standard evaluation criteria. Examples of tailored evaluation questions are also provided.

GEF terminal evaluations and midterm reviews have their own TOR structure and requirements, which cover the above but also have specific GEF requirements. The GEF guidelines for terminal evaluations and midterm reviews outline these requirements.[14]

All TORs undergo a post-evaluation quality assessment which is conducted by IEO through the quality assessment process on the ERC. Details of the six quality assessment questions for TORs are detailed in section 6.

All TORs are uploaded to the ERC and can be searched by type of evaluation as well as by their quality assessment ratings. Examples of TORs that can be used as a guide are detailed in box 5. [15]

---

[13] Access at: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980

[14] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guidance.shtml (being updated in 2018)

[15] Terms of reference examples provided below were chosen due to their quality assessment ratings. Only terms of reference with a rating of satisfactory (5) or highly satisfactory (6), were chosen. Efforts will be taken to update these annually.

4.3.3   Supporting documentation for evaluations

Once the scope of an evaluation has been defined, the evaluation manager, with help from the project or programme manager, will compile basic documentation that will be provided to the evaluation team. Preliminary desk work may be carried out to gather information on activities and outputs of partners, previous UNDP-related assistance and the current context of the project, programme or outcome.

---

[16] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/8587
[17] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/5685
[18] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/9161
[19] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7795
[20] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7707
[21] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/9281
[22] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/8565
[23] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7753

Table 2. Sources of information for an evaluation team

SOURCES OF INFORMATION	DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION
Country, regional and global programme results frameworks and theories of change	▪ Addressing the key outcomes that UNDP plans to achieve in a three- to five-year period ▪ Relevant theories of change at the country and regional levels ▪ Country programme documents (CPDs) also provide background information and the UNDP perspective on development in a given country
Monitoring (regular reporting, reviews, steering committee meeting minutes) and evaluation reports	▪ Evaluation reports on related subjects commissioned by the UNDP IEO, programme units, government or other development partners and stakeholders ▪ Annual and quarterly progress reports, field visit reports and other outcome and key programme or project documentation ▪ The ERC can be used to search for relevant evaluations carried out by other UNDP units on similar topics
Reports on progress of partners' initiatives	▪ Progress made by partners towards achieving the same outcome and information about how they have strategized their partnership with UNDP may be found in these reports
Data from official sources	▪ Information on progress towards outcome achievements may be obtained from sources in the Government, private sector, academia and national research and regional and international institutes, including those in the United Nations system ▪ In many cases, nationally adopted DevInfo systems and the websites of national statistical authorities are good sources for national statistics ▪ Data disaggregated by sex and other relevant social categories should be provided whenever available
Research papers	▪ Topics related to the outcome being evaluated may have been addressed in research papers from the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international financial institutions and academia
National, regional and global reports	▪ Data can be found in various reports such as the national Human Development Report (HDR), national SDG report and other reports published by national, regional, and sub regional organizations, international financial institutions and United Nations organizations ▪ National strategies and sectoral strategies as well as progress reports ▪ Reports on the status of gender equality and the empowerment of women may be useful, such as the Gender Inequality Index of the HDR[24]

---

[24]Access at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII

Financial and management information	- Atlas, audit, Corporate Planning System, Executive Snapshot, IWP, Transparency Dashboard (International Aid Transparency Initiative) - A number of corporate tools provide financial and other management information that is relevant to evaluation. They include delivery, resource mobilization and human resource management - Programme and project quality assurance reports
Additional sources at the country level	
Reports of related regional and sub regional projects and programmes	These reports indicate the extent to which these projects and programmes have complemented contributions by UNDP and its partners to progress towards the outcome
CPD or United Nations Development Assistance Partnership (UNDAP) in full Delivering as One countries and results-oriented annual report	- The results-oriented annual report provides a summary of the contributions of projects, programmes, sub programmes and soft assistance that contribute to each outcome, on an annual basis - Also included is information on key outputs, the strategic partners, partnership strategy, how much progress has been reported in previous years, the quality of outcome indicators, the need for further work and baseline information
UNDAF, UNDAP and country programme annual reviews and Common Country Assessments as well as evaluations	These documents include baseline information on the country's development situation, partnerships and joint activities of UNDP and other United Nations organizations

4.3.4 Gender, exclusion sensitivity and rights-based approach

UNDP evaluations are guided by the principles of equity, justice, gender equality and respect for diversity.[25] As appropriate, UNDP evaluations assess the extent to which UNDP initiatives have addressed the issues of social and gender inclusion, equality and empowerment; contributed to strengthening the application of these principles to various development efforts in a given country; and incorporated the UNDP commitment to rights-based approaches and gender mainstreaming in the initiative's design.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making gender equality-related concerns an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. UNDP evaluations should assess the extent to which UNDP initiatives have considered addressing gender equality issues in the design, implementation and outcome of the initiative and if both women and men can equally access the programme's benefits to the degree they were intended. Similarly, evaluations should also address the extent to which UNDP has advocated for the principles of equality and inclusive development, and has contributed to empowering and addressing the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations in a given society.

The rights-based approach in development efforts entails the need to ensure that development strategies facilitate the claims of rights-holders and the corresponding obligations of duty-bearers. This approach also emphasizes the important need to address the immediate, underlying and structural causes for not realizing such rights. The concept of civic engagement, as a mechanism to claim rights, is an important aspect in the overall framework. When appropriate, evaluations should assess the extent to which the initiative has facilitated the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights and duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations.

Evaluations should also address other cross-cutting issues, depending on the focus of the evaluation, such as the extent to which UNDP has incorporated and fostered South-South cooperation, knowledge management, volunteerism and United Nations reform in its initiative.

4.3.5 Choosing evaluators

The choice of evaluators is paramount to the quality and credibility of an evaluation. UNDP selects evaluators through a competetive and transparent process in accordance with the organization's rules and regulations for procurement.[26] Areas of expertise to be considered in the team composition include:

- Proven expertise and experience in conducting/managing evaluations.
- Proven experience in data analysis as well as report writing.
- Technical knowledge and experience in UNDP thematic areas, with specifics depending on the focus of the evaluation, and cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, rights-based approach and capacity development.
- Knowledge of the national/regional situation and context.

---

[25] UNDP Evaluation Policy, DP/2016/23 http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml
[26] As detailed in the Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP), https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPBSUnit.aspx?TermID=254a9f96-b883-476a-8ef8-e81f93a2b38d&Menu=BusinessUnit

Depending on the scope and resources for the evaluation as well as its complexity, a programme unit may choose:

(a) an individual evaluator who may be national or international (this will have cost implications);
(b) a team of evaluators, made up of national and/or international experts; or
(c) a firm which provides an individual evaluator or team.

When procuring an evaluation through a firm, the implementing agency should still review the qualifications of the proposed team members to ensure they meets the needs of the evaluation.

It is advisable to have a team comprised of at least two evaluators, preferably national and international evaluators. This will allow for the team members to compare notes, verify the accuracy of information collected and recorded, divide efforts to interview more people and bounce ideas off of each other. In addition, **evaluation teams should be balanced, to the extent possible, in their gender and geographical composition.**

Box 6. **Available evaluator databases[27]**

There are several evaluator databases available across UNDP that can provide evaluators with sectoral, regional and country-level experience.

Regional evaluator rosters

Several regional service centres maintain databases and rosters of evaluators that can be accessed and used by programme units searching for evaluators. These are updated regularly and in addition, regional evaluation focal points can share advice and experience about finding suitable evaluators.

The Evaluation Resource Center

The IEO offers a database of evaluation experts via the ERC (login required). Programme units can also add to this database. The database can be searched by name, thematic area, region and country and can also link evaluators to their evaluation work for UNDP. The database is not vetted and programme units will still need to request references.

At the same time, evaluators not in the main database can be searched for using a general search of all reports. If they have undertaken evaluations for UNDP and their work is in the ERC, the reports can be found alongside the quality assessment review scores for their evaluations.

A search of the ERC by regional, country or thematic area may also bring to light experts and evaluators who could be used for an evaluation.

In order to ensure the credibility and usability of an evaluation, programme units are to ensure the independence and impartiality of evaluators who are free from a conflict of interest. Evaluators should not have worked or contributed to the project/programme, outcome or UNDAF under evaluation at

---

[27] The ERC contains a referral-based Database of Evaluators. This is not a fully vetted list of consultants. The consultants included in this roster are either referred by UNDP staff members working in the area of M&E or they were a team member working on one of the UNDP evaluations. UNDP IEO does not maintain any long-term agreement with any of the consultants in the database. Therefore, the hiring unit must do requisite due diligence in following UNDP procurement process.

any time in any way. Equally, the evaluator should not be in a position where there may be the possibility of future contracts in the area under evaluation. In either case, the evaluator would not be able to provide objective and impartial analysis of the evaluation subject.

Box 7. Sources of conflict of interest in evaluation

Conflict of interest due to past engagement

UNDP commissioning units may not assign consultants to the evaluation of UNDAFs, country programmes, outcomes, sectors and thematic areas in which they have had prior involvement whether in design, implementation, decision-making or financing. Following this principle, UNDP staff members—including advisers based in regional centres and headquarters units, civil servants or employees of NGOs that may be or have been directly or indirectly related to the programme or project—should not take part in the evaluation team.

More broadly, UNDP programme units should consider whether conducting multiple assignments could create a conflict of interest. Many consultants and evaluators undertake numerous assignments for UNDP and its partners during the course of their professional careers. This can include a mixture of evaluation and advisory roles with multiple agencies at different levels. Programme units should make a judgement as to whether a consultant with a high reliance on work with UNDP may preclude them from producing an impartial evaluation. The ERC gives a history of evaluations undertaken by an evaluator in recent years.

Conflict of interest to due potential future involvement

Programme units must ensure that the evaluators will not be rendering any service (related or unrelated to the subject of the evaluation) to the programme unit of the project or outcome being evaluated in the immediate future. Evaluators should not subsequently be engaged in the implementation of a programme or project that was the subject of their evaluation. Equally, evaluators should not be engaged as designers of next phases of projects that they have evaluated.

Evaluator's obligation to reveal any potential conflicts of interest

Evaluators must inform UNDP and stakeholders of any potential or actual conflict of interest. The evaluation report should address any potential or actual conflict of interest and indicate measures put in place to mitigate its negative consequences. If a conflict of interest is uncovered or arises during the evaluation, the organization should determine whether the evaluator should be dismissed and/or the evaluation terminated.

It is good practice to share the curriculum vitae of the potential candidates with wider stakeholders and partners before engagement. This will help ensure that there is no potential conflict of interest or objection to the selection. Check references by talking to colleagues and partners who have worked with the candidates previously to verify their competency as evaluators. The ERC and quality assessment ratings give a further check on the quality of an evaluator's work.

Step Three: Managing an evaluation

4.4 Step Three: Managing an evaluation

The steps of managing an evaluation

1	2	3	4	5	6
Briefing the evaluation team	Supplying supporting information	Inception report	Data collection mission	Draft report & review process	Audit trail & dispute settlement

4.4.1 Briefing the evaluation team

While implementing agencies should ensure that there is no interference in the implementation of an evaluation to safeguard its independence, this does not mean no cooperation, support or direction to an evaluation team. A successful evaluation requires a good level of cooperation and support rendered by the commissioning unit to the evaluation team.

Supporting roles of the programme unit, evaluation manager and project manager include:

- **Briefing the evaluation team** on the purpose and scope of the evaluation and explaining the expectations of UNDP and its stakeholders in terms of the required standards for the quality of the process and the evaluation products. Come to a joint understanding on the TOR and objectives of the evaluation.
- **Providing the evaluation team with relevant UNDP Evaluation Policy guidelines** including the quality standards for evaluation reports, UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations system and the guidance for the quality assessment process. In particular, evaluators must understand the requirement to follow ethical principles as expressed in the UNEG ethical guidelines for evaluators by signing the code of conduct for evaluators in the United Nations system.[28]
- **Ensuring that all information is made available to the evaluators**. If they encounter any difficulty in obtaining information that is critical for the conduct of evaluation, provide necessary support.
- **Providing preliminary partner, stakeholder and beneficiary information** for the evaluation team. However, the evaluation team is responsible for identifying whom they wish to meet. UNDP cannot interfere with their decision but may make further suggestions and should facilitate access to partners, stakeholders and bebeficiaries.
- **Organizing a kick-off meeting to introduce the evaluation team to the evaluation reference group and other partners and stakeholders** to facilitate initial contact.
- **Supporting the arrangement of interviews, meetings and field visits.** Programme units should support contacts and send interview request letters as needed to ensure that meetings are held.
- **Providing comments on and quality assuring the workplan and the inception report** with elaborated evaluation methodology prepared by the evaluation team.
- **Ensuring the security of consultants, stakeholders and accompanying UNDP staff,** particularly in crisis situations. The evaluation team members should have passed relevant United Nations security exams and be aware of and compliant with related security protocols, including passing the United Nations Department of Safety and Security training courses on basic security in the

---

[28] UNEG, 'Code of Conduct', June 2008, available at: http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=code+of+conduct.

field II[29] and advanced security in the field.[30]

4.4.2 Supplying supporting information

Following the introductory meetings and briefings outlined above, the evaluation team will undertake a desk review of all relevant reports and data. This should be supplied by the programme unit in a timely manner and all efforts made to access missing reports and data prior to the development of the inception report and the data-collection mission.

The information to be supplied to an evaluation team is outlined above.

4.4.3 Evaluation inception report

Evaluators will commence the evaluation process with a desk review and preliminary analysis of the available information supplied by the implementing agency. Based on the TOR, initial meetings with the UNDP programme unit/evaluation manager and the desk review, evaluators should develop an inception report. The description of what is being evaluated illustrates the evaluators' understanding of the logic or theory of how the initiative is supposed to work, including strategies, activities, outputs and expected outcomes and their interrelationships.

The inception report provides an opportunity to clarify issues and understanding of the objective and scope of an evaluation, such as resource requirements and delivery schedules. Any identified issues or misunderstandings should be addressed at this stage and prior to any data-collection or field missions.

The commissioning unit and key stakeholders should review and assure the quality of the inception report and its adherence to the terms of reference and goals of the evaluation as well as discussions held with the evaluation team.

Box 8. Inception report content

1. **Background and context** illustrating the understanding of the project/outcome to be evaluated.
2. **Evaluation objective, purpose and scope.** A clear statement of the objectives of the evaluation and the main aspects or elements of the initiative to be examined.
3. **Evaluation criteria and questions.** The criteria the evaluation will use to assess performance and rationale. The stakeholders to be met and interview questions should be included and agreed as well as a proposed schedule for field site visits.
4. **Evaluability analysis.** Illustrate the evaluability analysis based on formal (clear outputs, indicators, baselines, data) and substantive (identification of problem addressed, theory of change, results framework) and the implication on the proposed methodology.
5. **Cross-cutting issues.** Provide details of how cross-cutting issues will be evaluated, considered and analysed throughout the evaluation. The description should specify how methods for data collection and analysis will integrate gender considerations, ensure that data collected is disaggregated by sex and other relevant categories, and employ a diverse range of data

---

sources and processes to ensure inclusion of diverse stakeholders, including the most vulnerable where appropriate.

6. **Evaluation approach and methodology,** highlighting the conceptual models adopted with a description of data-collection methods,[31] sources and analytical approaches to be employed, including the rationale for their selection (how they will inform the evaluation) and their limitations; data-collection tools, instruments and protocols; and discussion of reliability and validity for the evaluation and the sampling plan, including the rationale and limitations.

7. **Evaluation matrix.** This identifies the key evaluation questions and how they will be answered via the methods selected.

8. A revised **schedule of key milestones**, deliverables and responsibilities including the evaluation phases (data collection, data analysis and reporting).

9. Detailed **resource requirements** tied to evaluation activities and deliverables detailed in the workplan. Include specific assistance required from UNDP such as providing arrangements for visiting particular field offices or sites

10. **Outline of the draft/final report** as detailed in the guidelines and ensuring quality and usability (outlined below). The agreed report outline should meet the quality goals outlined in these guidelines and also meet the quality assessment requirements outlined in section 6.

4.4.4 Evaluation and data-collection mission

Once the inception report has been agreed, with a detailed list of stakeholder and beneficiaries to be interviewed and met, UNDP should prepare a detailed workplan of meetings agreed with the evaluation team.

To ensure independence as well as confidentiality, UNDP staff should not participate in any stakeholder or beneficiary meetings. Interviews and meetings are confidential and final reports should not assign any statements or findings to individuals.

Following field missions and prior to the drafting of the evaluation report, the evaluation team should **debrief the UNDP project/programme and management teams** with preliminary findings. Debriefings with key stakeholders and the evaluation reference group may also be organized where possible. This gives an opportunity to discuss preliminary findings and address any factual errors or misunderstandings, prior to writing the evaluation report.

4.4.5 Draft report and review process

The evaluation manager is ultimately responsible for the quality of the evaluation and should plan to review the relevance and accuracy of any reports and their compliance with the TOR. Once the first draft of the evaluation report has been submitted, the evaluation manager with the evaluation reference group should assure the quality of the report and provide comments.

The evaluation report should be logically structured; contain evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations; and be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible.

A quality evaluation report should:

- Have a concise executive summary (maximum four pages).
- Be well structured and complete.

---

[31] Annex 2 outlines different data collection methods.

- Describe what is being evaluated and why.
- Identify the evaluation questions of concern to users.
- Identify target groups covered by the evaluation and whether the needs of the target groups were addressed through the intervention, and if not, why.
- Explain the steps and the procedures used to answer those questions.
- Present findings supported by credible evidence in response to the questions.
- Acknowledge limitations and constraints in undertaking the evaluation.
- Draw conclusions about findings based on of the evidence.
- Propose concrete and usable recommendations derived from conclusions.
- Be written with the report users and how they will use the evaluation in mind.

Standard outline for an evaluation report. Annex 1 provides further information on the standard outline of the evaluation report. In brief the minimum contents of an evaluation report include:

1. **Title and opening pages** with details of the project/programme/outcome and of the evaluation team.
2. **Project and evaluation Information details:** project title, Atlas number, budgets and project dates and other key information.
3. **Table of contents.**
4. **List of acronyms and abbreviations.**
5. **Executive summary:** a stand-alone section of maximum four pages including the quality standards and assurance ratings.
6. **Introduction and overview.** What is being evaluated and why?
7. **Description of the intervention being evaluated.** Provides the basis for report users to understand the logic and evaluability analysis result, assess the merits of the evaluation methodology and understand the applicability of the evaluation results.
8. **Evaluation scope and objectives.** The report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation's scope, primary objectives and main questions.
9. **Evaluation approach and methods.** The evaluation report should describe in detail the selected methodological approaches, methods and analysis.
10. **Data analysis.** The report should describe the procedures used to analyse the data collected to answer the evaluation questions.
11. **Findings and conclusions.** Evaluation findings should be based on an analysis of the data collected and conclusions should be drawn from these findings.
12. **Recommendations.** The report should provide a reasonable number of practical, feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make.
13. **Lessons learned.** As appropriate and as requested in the TOR, the report should include discussion of lessons learned from the evaluation of the intervention.
14. **Annexes.**

When reviewing the evaluation report and its structure and content, evaluation managers should also consider the requirements under the quality assessment ratings[32] which IEO uses to assess the quality of evaluation reports. These can be found in detail in section 6.

GEF terminal evaluations and midterm reviews have their own reporting requirements which can be found in their evaluation guidelines.[33]

---

[32] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/UNDP-Quality-Assessment-System-for-Decentralized-Evaluation.pdf

[33] Access at: http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guidance.shtml#gef

4.4.6 Evaluation review process and dispute settlement process

Providing comments on the draft evaluation report

The evaluation manager should coordinate the collection of all comments, questions and requests for clarification into one document, which should be shared with the evaluation team within the agreed time schedule. This should include inputs, contributions and comments from UNDP, the evaluation reference group and external stakeholders.

Comments, questions, suggestions and requests for clarification on the evaluation draft should be provided on an evaluation "audit trail" document and not directly on the draft report. Where errors of fact or misunderstanding of approaches are found, documentation should be provided to support comments and requests.

The evaluator/evaluation team should reply to the comments through the evaluation audit trail document. If there is disagreement in findings, these should be documented through the evaluation audit trail and effort made to come to an agreement. If UNDP continues to disagree with findings, conclusions and recommendations in an evaluation report, this should be clearly stated in the management response, with supporting reasons for the disagreement.

The evaluation audit trail is not part of the evaluation report and is not a public document but is part of the process of completion of the evaluation report. The evaluation audit trail should not be included in the final report or uploaded to the ERC. In some circumstances where the commissioning unit and/or the stakeholders disagree with a finding, a note can be made within the report as to the disagreement.

Table 3. Audit trail form

Chapter and section number	Paragraph number/ line number	Comments	Evaluation team responses and/ or actions taken

Programme units should not make any adjustments to any evaluation report but should address any disagreement of findings, conclusions or recommendations through the management response.

Dispute settlement

Disputes between evaluators and those being evaluated are not uncommon. The audit trail provides an avenue to highlight issues with an evaluation and also for the evaluator to further provide evidence to support their findings. If there is a continued disagreement, then either UNDP or the evaluation team can address their concerns to the regional evaluation focal points. More details on individual contractor dispute settlement can be found here.[34]

---

[34] Access at:
https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Individual%20Contract_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default

Step Four: Using the evaluation: management response, knowledge-sharing and dissemination

4.5 Step Four: Using the evaluation: management response, knowledge-sharing and dissemination

4.5.1 Preparing the management response for decentralized evaluations

Why do we prepare a management response?

In order to ensure effective use of an evaluation's findings and recommendations and ensure that there are considered follow-up actions, all UNDP evaluations have to develop management responses for all recommendations.

Management responses should include detailed key actions that highlight which agency or unit is responsible for a key action and the deadline for its completion.

Management responses and key follow-up actions are closely monitored by headquarters, IEO and regions to ensure that lessons are being learned from evaluations. The preparation of a management response should not be seen as a one-time activity. Learning emanating from the management response process should be documented and reflected upon when designing a new project or programme or defining an outcome. The process of developing a management response to terminal project evaluations (specifically for projects that have been completed) allows key stakeholders to reflect on the project results and generate lessons that are applicable beyond a particular project to support other activities, projects and outcomes of the programme units.

Management responses

A management response firstly outlines whether a programme unit accepts an evaluation recommendation and how it will deal with a recommendation. Programme units can fully accept, partially accept or reject a recommendation. Each management response should include justification for the acceptance/rejection and text on how it will address the recommendation.

- Fully accept: agrees entirely with all the recommendation and will seek actions to achieve the recommendation.
- Partially accepts: agrees with elements of the recommendation. The management response should detail the elements with which it agrees with and those with which it disagrees and give reasons why parts of the recommendations are not valid.
- Rejected: management can reject a recommendation but needs to state why they reject the recommendation and why they will not follow up on the recommendation in the future (i.e., no key actions need to be included in addition to the response).

Key actions

When recommendations are fully or partially accepted, they require a corresponding management response and key follow-up actions. Recommendations can have several key actions to ensure the evaluation recommendation is met. It is important that key actions:

- Clearly state the nature of the action and how it will address the recommendations.
- Indicate the party (unit or organization) that is responsible for implementing the key action and who will be accountable for its implementation.
- Are time-bound with clear deadlines and schedules for completion. Ideally, key actions should be completed within 18 months of an evaluation.
- Key actions under management responses should be of a reasonable number to ensure implementation, tracking and oversight.

Management responses and key follow-up actions to evaluation recommendations need to be discussed and agreed within the project boards (where relevant). If UNDP or its implementing partner disagrees with a recommendation, they can so state in the management response and no key follow-up actions need to be added.

Management responses and key actions need to be agreed and entered into the ERC within **six weeks** of completion of an evaluation report. The management response template can be found in the annexes.

It is important that the evaluation TOR clearly request recommendations that are targeted and anticipate actual follow-up and implementation. At the same time, the TOR should call for a realistic set of recommendations that are implementable and manageable in number.

TORs could set a limit on the number of recommendations (7-10) and when draft reports are reviewed, evaluators should consider grouping recommendations under broad area headings to ensure this.

A high number of recommendations is difficult to implement and manage and will considerably stretch resources in: (a) developing management responses and key actions; (b) entering recommendations, management responses and key actions to the ERC; and (c) monitoring and reporting on implementation of the management responses and key actions.

Joint project management responses

For joint projects and UNDAF evaluations, UNDP should cooperate and coordinate with project partners in the development of management responses and key actions. UNDP programme units are only responsible for those recommendations targeted at them and should develop management responses and key actions only for these.

Monitoring implementation

M&E specialists/officers/focal points are responsible for monitoring the implementation of key actions and reporting an achievement through the ERC. This should be undertaken on a quarterly basis and the ERC should be updated accordingly with supporting documentation where applicable. Regional bureaux also oversee and monitor implementation and will follow up with programme units on implementation. The ERC can be used to monitor implementation of management response and key action commitments. The IEO reports on management responses in its annual report on evaluation, including the number of management responses and key actions completed, initiated, overdue or considered no longer applicable.

The preparation of a management response should not be seen as a one-time activity. Learning emanating from the management response process should be documented and reflected upon when designing a new project or programme or defining an outcome. The process of developing a management response to terminal project evaluations allows key stakeholders to reflect on the project results and generate lessons that are applicable beyond a particular project. It also supports UNDP accountability by being responsive to the evaluation findings and responsible for follow-up actions. For these reasons, the Evaluation Policy requires management responses to all evaluations regardless of the status of the initiative that was evaluated. The management response template can be found in the annexes.

4.5.2 Publication of the final evaluation report

All evaluation plans and reports must be uploaded to the ERC.[35] The ERC is an open information site and is accessible to all to view evaluation plans and evaluations. Some of the information on the ERC is for internal UNDP use only and requires IEO to provide access. Each programme unit can nominate several ERC focal points who will have different permissions across the site for uploading and accessing different data for oversight purposes.

Access is required to upload evaluation plans, TORs and evaluations. Normally the M&E focal point/specialist or officer has this level of access and can access the ERC using their UNDP email and password.

Only the following documents need to be uploaded for completed evaluations:

- Final TOR for an evaluation, **uploaded within two weeks** of completion of the TOR.
- Final evaluation report, **uploaded within two weeks** of agreement and completion of the report.
- Supporting annexes, **uploaded with the evaluation report** if not part of the main report.

No other documents need to be uploaded. Programme units should remember that the ERC site is open to the public and therefore only final documents should be uploaded. Documents should not contain comments or track changes and should ideally be uploaded as PDF files, although Word documents are acceptable.

Evaluation audit trails should not be uploaded to the ERC. Inception reports should not be uploaded separately to the ERC but should be part of the final report or annexes.

Once the evaluation is complete and has been uploaded, other information previously entered will need to be updated including the completion date, the expenditure for the evaluation and the individual names and roles of the evaluation team members. More information is available in the ERC guidance.[36]

Recommendations, management responses and key actions

The following information also has to be uploaded to the ERC within the schedule outlined below.

- Evaluation recommendations addressed to UNDP, entered into the ERC when the final report is uploaded (within two weeks of completion).
- Evaluation management responses, entered into the ERC **within six weeks** of receipt of the final evaluation report.
- Evaluation key actions, entered into the ERC along with the management responses.

Recommendations are entered into the ERC individually and should not be cut and pasted as a whole into one recommendation. Individual recommendations, management responses and key actions are reported on and tracked separately so must be entered individually. Where an evaluation team has been asked in the TOR to produce lessons learned, these should also be entered into the ERC. A separate page is available for this information.

---

[35] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/
[36] Access at: https://erc.undp.org/resources/docs/guidance/ERC-User-Guide.pdf

Evaluation completion checklist

The process outlined below includes roles and responsibilities for programme units as well as expected completion schedules.

Table 4. Evaluation process checklist

STEP	ACTIVITY	TIME SCHEDULE	RESPONSIBILITY
ONE	Evaluability check	Six months before proposed commencement	▪ Evaluation commissioner ▪ Evaluation manager ▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point
TWO	Draft TOR	Three months before proposed commencement	▪ Evaluation commissioner ▪ Evaluation manager ▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point ▪ Evaluation reference group
TWO	Final TOR	**Uploaded to ERC two weeks after completion of the TOR**	▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point
TWO	Recruit evaluation team	One month prior to proposed commencement	▪ Evaluation commissioner ▪ Evaluation manager ▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point ▪ Operations team
THREE	Inception report review	According to the TOR (Two to four weeks after contract signing)	▪ Evaluation commissioner ▪ Evaluation manager ▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point ▪ Evaluation reference group
THREE	Data collection and field visits	According to the TOR and inception reports	▪ Evaluation team
THREE	Draft report review	Immediately on reception according to the TOR and inception reports.	▪ Evaluation commissioner ▪ Evaluation manager ▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point ▪ Evaluation reference group
THREE	Audit report and comments	According to the TOR and inception reports	▪ Evaluation team
THREE	Final report completion	According to the TOR and inception reports	▪ Evaluation team
THREE	Final report uploaded to the ERC	**Uploaded to ERC within two weeks of receipt**	▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point
THREE	Management response and key actions	Project and outcome evaluations: within four weeks of the final report UNDAF evaluations: within two months of the final report[37]	▪ Evaluation manager ▪ Evaluation reference group

---

[37] UNEG Guidelines, 2012, for UNEG Guidance on Preparing Management Responses to UNDAF Evaluations give a generous two months for the finalization of management responses.

		Uploaded to ERC within six weeks of receipt of the final evaluation report UNDAF evaluations: within two months of the final report[38]	▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point
FOUR	Final management response		
	Quarterly follow-up on key actions	Update ERC at end every quarter	▪ Evaluation manager ▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point based on inputs provided by programme units
	Management response and key actions closed	When all planned actions have been completed or after five years	▪ M&E specialist/officer or focal point

Timings and schedules for each stage can be set by the programme units. However, the dates above for completion and ERC uploading are set.

---

[38] UNEG Guidelines, 2012, for UNEG Guidance on Preparing Management Responses to UNDAF Evaluations give a generous two months for the finalization of management responses.

Annexes

Annex 1. Evaluation terms of reference template

The TOR should, at a minimum, cover the elements described below.

1. Background and context

The background section makes clear what is being evaluated and identifies the critical social, economic, political, geographic and demographic factors within which it operates that have a direct bearing on the evaluation. This description should be focused and concise (a maximum of one page) highlighting **only** those issues most pertinent to the evaluation. The key background and context descriptors that should be included are listed below:

- Description of the intervention (outcome, programme, project, group of projects, themes, soft assistance) that is being evaluated.
- The name of the intervention (e.g., project name), purpose and objectives, including when and how it was initiated, who it is intended to benefit and what outcomes or outputs it is intended to achieve, and the duration of the intervention and its implementation status within that time frame.
- The scale and complexity of the intervention, including, for example, the number of components, if more than one, and the size and description of the population each component is intended to serve, both directly and indirectly.
- The geographic context and boundaries, such as the region, country, landscape and challenges where relevant.
- Total resources required for the intervention from all sources, including human resources and budgets comprising UNDP, donor and other contributions and total expenditures.
- Key partners involved in the intervention, including the implementing agencies and partners, other key stakeholders and their interest, concerns and the relevance for the evaluation.
- Observed changes since the beginning of implementation and contributing factors.
- Links to relevant cross-cutting aspects such as vulnerable groups, gender, human rights, etc.
- How the subject fits into the partner Government's strategies and priorities; international, regional or country development goals; strategies and frameworks; the SDGs, UNDP corporate goals and priorities; and UNDP global, regional or country programmes, as appropriate.
- Key features of the international, regional and national economies and economic policies that have relevance for the evaluation.
- Description of how this evaluation fits within the context of other ongoing and previous evaluations and the evaluation cycle.

More detailed background and context information (e.g., initial funding proposal, strategic plans, logic framework or theory of change, monitoring plans and indicators) should be included or referenced in annexes via links to the Internet or other means of communication.

Basic project information can also be included in table format as follows:

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION		
Project/outcome title		
Atlas ID		
Corporate outcome and output		
Country		
Region		
Date project document signed		
Project dates	Start	Planned end
Project budget		
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation		
Funding source		
Implementing party[39]		

2. Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives

The purpose section of the TOR explains clearly why the evaluation is being conducted, who will use or act on the evaluation results and how they will use or act on the results. The purpose should include some background and justification for why the evaluation is needed at this time and how the evaluation fits within the programme unit's evaluation plan. A clear statement of purpose provides the foundation for a well-designed evaluation.

Scope and objectives of the evaluation should detail and include:

- What aspects of the intervention are to be covered by the evaluation? This can include the time frame, implementation phase, geographic area and target groups to be considered and as applicable, which projects (outputs) are to be included.
- What are the primary issues of concern to users that the evaluation needs to address or objectives the evaluation must achieve?

Issues relate directly to the questions the evaluation must answer so that users will have the information they need for pending decisions or action. An issue may concern the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness or sustainability of the intervention. In addition, UNDP evaluations must address how the intervention sought to strengthen the application of the rights-based approach and mainstream gender in development efforts**.**

3. Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

Evaluation questions define the information that the evaluation will generate. This section proposes the questions that, when answered, will give intended users of the evaluation the information they seek in order to make decisions, take action or add to knowledge. Questions should be grouped

---

[39] It is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

according to the four OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: (a) relevance; (b) effectiveness; (c) efficiency; and (d) sustainability (and/or other criteria used).

The mainstream definitions of the OECD-DAC criteria are neutral in terms of human rights and gender dimensions and these dimensions need to be added into the evaluation criteria chosen (see page 77, table 10 of Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations).

UNDAF evaluation sample questions

Relevance
- To what extent is the UNDAF aligned with the national development needs and priorities and should adjustment in UNDAF implementation be considered to align with the SDGs?
- How well does the design of the UNDAF address the needs of the most vulnerable groups in the country?
- To what extent is the UNDAF responsive to the changing environment in country at national and subnational levels and how should it adapt to these changes?

Effectiveness
- To what extent is the current UNDAF on track to achieve planned results (intended and unintended, positive or negative)?
- How were the United Nations programming principles mainstreamed in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the UNDAF?
- To what extent has the United Nations been able to form and maintain partnerships with other development actors including bilateral and multilateral organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector to leverage results?

Efficiency
- To what extent and how has the United Nations system mobilized and used its resources (human, technical and financial) and improved inter-agency synergies to achieve its planned results in the current UNDAF cycle?
- To what extent has the UNDAF increased the synergies between the programmes of United Nations agencies?

Sustainability
- What is the likelihood that the benefits that resulted from the previous and current UNDAF will continue at national and subnational levels through adequate ownership, commitment and willingness displayed by the Government?
- Looking at the past, the present and the future, how well designed is the UNDAF in order to remain valid in light of the changing environment?

Outcome evaluation sample questions

Relevance
- To what extent is the initiative in line with the UNDP mandate, national priorities and the requirements of targeted women and men?
- To what extent is UNDP support relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in the country?
- To what extent did UNDP adopt gender-sensitive, human rights-based and conflict-sensitive approaches?
- To what extent is UNDP engagement a reflection of strategic considerations, including the role of UNDP in a particular development context and its comparative advantage?

- To what extent was the method of delivery selected by UNDP appropriate to the development context?
- To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?

Effectiveness
- To what extent has progress been made towards outcome achievement? What has been the UNDP contribution to the observed change?
- What have been the key results and changes attained? How has delivery of country programme outputs led to outcome-level progress?
- Have there been any unexpected outcome-level results achieved beyond the planned outcome?
- To what extent has UNDP improved the capacities of national implementing partners to advocate on environmental issues, including climate change issues and disaster risk reduction?
- To what extent has UNDP partnered with civil society and local communities to promote environmental and disaster risk awareness in the country?
- To what extent have the results at the outcome and output levels generated results for gender equality and the empowerment of women?
- To what extent have marginalized groups benefited?
- To what extent have triangular and South-South cooperation and knowledge management contributed to the results attained?
- Which programme areas are the most relevant and strategic for UNDP to scale up or consider going forward?

Efficiency
- To what extent have the programme or project outputs resulted from economic use of resources?
- To what extent were quality country programme outputs delivered on time?
- To what extent were partnership modalities conducive to the delivery of country programme outputs?
- To what extent did monitoring systems provide management with a stream of data that allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?
- To what extent did UNDP promote gender equality, the empowerment of women, human rights and human development in the delivery of country programme outputs?
- To what extent have UNDP practices, policies, processes and decision-making capabilities affected the achievement of the country programme's outcomes?
- To what extent did UNDP engage or coordinate with beneficiaries, implementing partners, other United Nations agencies and national counterparts to achieve outcome-level results?

Sustainability
- To what extent did UNDP establish mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the country programme outcomes?
- To what extent do national partners have the institutional capacities, including sustainability strategies, in place to sustain the outcome-level results?
- To what extent are policy and regulatory frameworks in place that will support the continuation of benefits?
- To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development by primary stakeholders?
- To what extent do partnerships exist with other national institutions, NGOs, United Nations agencies, the private sector and development partners to sustain the attained results?

Project evaluation sample questions

Relevance:

- To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?
- To what extent does the project contribute to the theory of change for the relevant country programme outcome?
- To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the project's design?
- To what extent were perspectives of those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during the project design processes?
- To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?

Effectiveness

- To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan and national development priorities?
- To what extent were the project outputs achieved?
- What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended country programme outputs and outcomes?
- To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?
- What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?
- In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
- In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
- What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives?
- Are the projects objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame?
- To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
- To what extent are project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?
- To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities?
- To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?

Efficiency

- To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
- To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
- To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?

- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Sustainability

- Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs?
- To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?
- To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?
- What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
- To what extent do stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives?
- To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
- To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies?
- What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?

Evaluation cross-cutting issues sample questions

Human rights

- To what extent have poor, indigenous and physically challenged, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the work of UNDP in the country?

Gender equality

- To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
- Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?

Guiding evaluation questions should be outlined in the TOR and further refined by the evaluation team and agreed with UNDP evaluation stakeholders.

4. Methodology

The TOR may **suggest** an overall approach and method for conducting the evaluation, as well as data sources and tools that will likely yield the most reliable and valid answers to the evaluation questions

within the limits of resources. However, final decisions about the specific design and methods for the evaluation should emerge from consultations among the programme unit, the evaluators and key stakeholders about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives and answer the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data.

Methodological approaches may include some or all of the following:

- Evaluation should employ a combination of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments.
- **Document review of all relevant documentation.** This would include a review of inter alia
  - Project document (contribution agreement).
  - Theory of change and results framework.
  - Programme and project quality assurance reports.
  - Annual workplans.
  - Activity designs.
  - Consolidated quarterly and annual reports.
  - Results-oriented monitoring report.
  - Highlights of project board meetings.
  - Technical/financial monitoring reports.
- **Semi-structured interviews** with key stakeholders including key government counterparts, donor community members, representatives of key civil society organizations, UNCT members and implementing partners:
  - **Development of evaluation questions** around relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and designed for different stakeholders to be interviewed.
  - Key informant and focus group discussions with men and women, beneficiaries and stakeholders.
  - All interviews should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals.
- **Surveys and questionnaires** including participants in development programmes, UNCT members and/or surveys and questionnaires involving other stakeholders at strategic and programmatic levels.
- **Field visits** and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions.
- The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach that ensures close engagement with the evaluation managers, implementing partners and direct beneficiaries.
- **Other methods** such as outcome mapping, observational visits, group discussions, etc.
- **Data review and analysis** of monitoring and other data sources and methods.
  - Ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use; the evaluation team will ensure triangulation of the various data sources.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the evaluators.

5. Evaluation products (deliverables)

The terms of reference should clearly outline the outputs UNDP expects from the evaluation team as well as a detailed timeline and schedule for completion evaluation products. Where relevant, the TOR should also detail the length of specific products (pages). These products could include:

- **Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages).** The inception report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP after the desk review, and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits) and prior to the country visit in the case of international evaluators.
- **Evaluation debriefings.** Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.
- **Draft evaluation report (within an agreed length).**[40] The programme unit and key stakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the evaluator within an agreed period of time, addressing the content required (as agreed in the TOR and inception report) and quality criteria as outlined in these guidelines.
- **Evaluation report audit trail.** Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments.
- **Final evaluation report.**
- **Presentations to stakeholders and/or the evaluation reference group** (if requested in the TOR).
- **Evaluation brief and other knowledge products** or participation in knowledge-sharing events, if relevant.

6. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

This section details the specific skills, competencies and characteristics required of the evaluator or individual evaluators in the evaluation team, and the expected structure and composition of the evaluation team, including roles and responsibilities of team members and can include:

- **Required qualifications:** education, length of experience, knowledge and specific country/regional experience.
- **Technical competencies:** team leadership skills and experience, technical knowledge.
- **Language skills required.**

The section also should specify the type of evidence (resumes, work samples, references) that will be expected to support claims of knowledge, skills and experience. The TOR should explicitly demand evaluators' independence from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation.[41]

7. Evaluation ethics

The TOR should include an explicit statement that evaluations in UNDP will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'.[42]

Standard text includes:

"This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure

---

[40] A length of 40 to 60 pages including executive summary is suggested.
[41] For this reason, UNDP staff members based in other country offices, the regional centres and headquarters units should not be part of the evaluation team.
[42] UNEG, 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', June 2008. Available at http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines.

anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners."

8. Implementation arrangements

This section describes the organization and management structure for the evaluation and defines the roles, key responsibilities and lines of authority of all parties involved in the evaluation process. Implementation arrangements are intended to clarify expectations, eliminate ambiguities and facilitate an efficient and effective evaluation process.

The section should describe the specific roles and responsibilities of the evaluators, including those of the members of the team, the task manager, the management of the commissioning programme unit and key stakeholders. The composition and expected roles and responsibilities of the advisory panel members or other quality assurance entities and their working arrangements should also be made explicit. In case of a joint evaluation, the roles and responsibilities of participating agencies should be clarified. Issues to consider include: lines of authority; lines of and processes for approval; and logistical considerations, such as how office space, supplies, equipment and materials will be provided; and processes and responsibility for approving deliverables.

9. Time frame for the evaluation process

This section lists and describes all tasks and deliverables for which evaluators or the evaluation team will be responsible and accountable, as well as those involving the commissioning office, indicating for each the due date or time frame (e.g., workplan, agreements, briefings, draft report, final report), as well as who is responsible for its completion. At a minimum, the time breakdown for the following activities should be included:

- Desk review.
- Briefings of evaluators.
- Finalizing the evaluation design and methods and preparing the detailed inception report.
- In-country data collection and analysis (visits to the field, interviews, questionnaires).
- Preparing the draft report.
- Stakeholder meeting and review of the draft report (for quality assurance).
- Incorporating comments and finalizing the evaluation report.

In addition, the evaluators may be expected to support UNDP efforts in knowledge-sharing and dissemination. Required formats for the inception reports, evaluation reports and other deliverables should be included in the annexes of the TOR for the evaluation being commissioned. This section should also state the number of working days to be given to each member of the evaluation team and the period during which they will be engaged in the evaluation process (e.g., 30 working days over a period of three months).

Example of working day allocation and schedule for an evaluation (outcome evaluation)

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (programme managers and project staff as needed)	-	At the time of contract signing 1 June 2018	UNDP or remote	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team	-	At the time of contract signing 1 June 2018	Via email	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	5 days	Within two weeks of contract signing 1 to 15 June 2018	Home- based	Evaluation Team
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	-	Within two weeks of contract signing 15 June 2018		Evaluation team
Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within one week of submission of the inception report 22 June 2018	UNDP	Evaluation manager
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews and focus groups	15 days	Within four weeks of contract signing 1 to 21 July 2018	In country With field visits	UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff, local authorities, NGOs, etc.
Debriefing to UNDP and key stakeholders	1 day	21 July 2018	In country	Evaluation team
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (5 pages)	5 days	Within three weeks of the completion of the field mission 21 July to 15 August	Home- based	Evaluation team
Draft report submission	-	15 August		Evaluation team
Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	Within two weeks of submission of the draft evaluation report 29 August 2018	UNDP	Evaluation manager and evaluation reference group
Debriefing with UNDP	1 day	Within one week of receipt of comments 4 September 2018	Remotely UNDP	UNDP, evaluation reference group, stakeholder and evaluation team
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office	3 days	Within one week of final debriefing 11 September 2018	Home- based	Evaluation team
Submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP country office (50 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)	-	Within one week of final debriefing 11 September 2018	Home- based	Evaluation team
Estimated total days for the evaluation	**30**			

This is an illustrative example and individual evaluations will have their own requirements based on the nature of the UNDAF, outcome or project, budget available, size of the evaluation team and deadline for completion, sharing or inclusion in other processes.

10. Application submission process and criteria for selection

As required by the programme unit.

11. TOR annexes

Annexes can be used to provide additional detail about evaluation background and requirements to facilitate the work of evaluators. Some examples include:

- **Intervention results framework and theory of change.** Provides more detailed information on the intervention being evaluated.
- **Key stakeholders and partners.** A list of key stakeholders and other individuals who should be consulted, together with an indication of their affiliation and relevance for the evaluation and their contact information. This annex can also suggest sites to be visited.
- **Documents to be consulted.** A list of important documents and web pages that the evaluators should read at the outset of the evaluation and before finalizing the evaluation design and the inception report. This should be limited to the critical information that the evaluation team needs. Data sources and documents may include:
  - Relevant national strategy documents,
  - Strategic and other planning documents (e.g., programme and project documents).
  - Monitoring plans and indicators.
  - Partnership arrangements (e.g., agreements of cooperation with Governments or partners).
  - Previous evaluations and assessments.
  - UNDP evaluation policy, UNEG norms and standards and other policy documents.

- **Evaluation matrix** (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report). The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection, analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated.

Table 5. Sample evaluation matrix

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key questions	Specific sub questions	Data sources	Data-collection methods/tools	Indicators/ success standard	Methods for data analysis

- **Schedule of tasks, milestones and deliverables.** Based on the time frame specified in the TOR, the evaluators present the detailed schedule.

- **Required format for the evaluation report.** The final report must include, but not necessarily be limited to, the elements outlined in the quality criteria for evaluation reports (see annex 7).
- **Code of conduct.** UNDP programme units should request each member of the evaluation team to read carefully, understand and sign the 'Code of Conduct for Evaluators in the United Nations system', which may be made available as an attachment to the evaluation report.

Annex 2. Summary of common data-collection methods/sources used in UNDP evaluations[43]

METHOD/SOURCE	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	CHALLENGES
UNDP monitoring systems	Uses performance indicators to measure progress, particularly actual results against expected results	▪ Can be a reliable, cost-efficient, objective method to assess progress of outputs and outcomes	▪ Dependent upon viable monitoring systems that have established baseline indicators and targets and have collected reliable data in relation to targets over time, as well as data relating to outcome indicators
Reports and documents	Existing documentation, including quantitative and descriptive information about the initiative, its outputs and outcomes, such as documentation from capacity development activities, donor reports and other evidentiary evidence	▪ Cost-efficient	▪ Documentary evidence can be difficult to code and analyse in response to questions ▪ Difficult to verify reliability and validity of data
Questionnaires	Provides a standardized approach to obtaining information on a wide range of topics from a large number or diversity of stakeholders (usually employing sampling techniques) to obtain information on their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, perceptions, level of satisfaction, etc. concerning the operations, inputs, outputs and contextual factors of a UNDP initiative	▪ Good for gathering descriptive data on a wide range of topics quickly at relatively low cost ▪ Easy to analyse ▪ Gives anonymity to respondents ▪	▪ Self-reporting may lead to biased reporting ▪ Data may provide a general picture but may lack depth ▪ May not provide adequate information on context ▪ Subject to sampling bias
Interviews	Solicit person-to-person responses to pre-determined questions designed to obtain in-depth information about a person's impressions or experiences, or to learn more about their answers to questionnaires or surveys	▪ Facilitates fuller coverage, range and depth of information of a topic	▪ Can be time-consuming ▪ Can be difficult to analyse ▪ Can be costly ▪ Potential for Interviewer to bias client's responses
On-site observation	Entails use of a detailed observation form to record accurate information on site about how	▪ Can see operations of a programme as they are occurring	▪ Can be difficult to categorize or interpret observed behaviours

---

[43] Methods described are illustrative and not exhaustive of the types of methods that have applicability for UNDP evaluation context.

	a programme operates (ongoing activities, processes, discussions, social interactions and observable results as directly observed during the course of an initiative)	▪ Can adapt to events as they occur	▪ Can be expensive ▪ Subject to (site) selection bias
Group interviews	A small group (six to eight people) is interviewed together to explore in-depth stakeholder opinions, similar or divergent points of view, or judgements about a development initiative or policy, to collect information around tangible and non-tangible changes resulting from an initiative	▪ Quick, reliable way to obtain common impressions from diverse stakeholders ▪ Efficient way to obtain a high degree of range and depth of information in a short time	▪ Can be hard to analyse responses ▪ Requires trained facilitator ▪ May be difficult to schedule
Key informants	Qualitative in-depth interviews, often one on one, with a wide range of stakeholders who have first-hand knowledge about the initiative's operations and context. These community experts can provide particular knowledge and understanding of problems and recommend solutions	▪ Can provide insight on the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions ▪ Can provide different perspectives on a single issue or on several issues	▪ Subject to sampling bias ▪ Must have some means to verify or corroborate information
Expert panels	A peer review, or reference group, composed of external experts to provide input on technical or other substance topics covered by the evaluation	▪ Adds credibility ▪ Can serve as added (expert) source of information that can provide greater depth ▪ Can verify or substantiate information and results in topic area	▪ Cost of consultancy and related expenses if any ▪ Must ensure impartiality and that there are no conflicts of interest
Case studies	Involves comprehensive examination through cross-comparison of cases to obtain in-depth information with the goal to fully understand the operational dynamics, activities, outputs, outcomes and interactions of a development project or programme	▪ Useful to fully explore factors that contribute to outputs and outcomes	▪ Requires considerable time and resources not usually available for commissioned evaluations ▪ Can be difficult to analyse

Annex 3. UNDP 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 evaluation report should be complete and logically organized. It should be written clearly and be understandable to the intended audience. In a country context, the report should be translated into local languages whenever possible. The report should also include the following:

1. **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.

2. **Project and evaluation information details** to be included in all final versions of evaluation reports (non-GEF)[44] on second page (as one page):

Project/outcome Information		
Project/outcome title		
Atlas ID		
Corporate outcome and output		
Country		
Region		
Date project document signed		
Project dates	**Start**	**Planned end**
Project budget		
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation		
Funding source		
Implementing party[45]		

---

[44] GEF evaluations have their own project information template requirements.
[45] It is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

Evaluation information		
Evaluation type (project/ outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)		
Final/midterm review/ other		
Period under evaluation	**Start**	**End**
Evaluators		
Evaluator email address		
Evaluation dates	**Start**	**Completion**

3. **Table of contents,** including boxes, figures, tables and annexes with page references.

4. **List of acronyms and abbreviations.**

5. **Executive summary (four-page maximum).** A stand-alone section of two to three pages that should:
   ▪ Briefly describe the intervention of the evaluation (the project(s), programme(s), policies or other intervention) that was evaluated.
   ▪ Explain the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, including the audience for the evaluation and the intended uses.
   ▪ Describe key aspect of the evaluation approach and methods.
   ▪ Summarize principle findings, conclusions and recommendations.
   ▪ Include the evaluators' quality standards and assurance ratings.

6. **Introduction**
   ▪ 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 of the evaluation (the project(s) programme(s) policies or other intervention—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.

7. **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. It should:
   ▪ Describe **what is being evaluated**, **who seeks to benefit** and the **problem or issue** it seeks to address.
   ▪ Explain the **expected results model 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.
- Identify **relevant cross-cutting issues** addressed through the intervention, i.e., gender equality, human rights, marginalized groups and leaving no one behind.
- 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).

8. **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.[46] The report should explain the rationale for selecting the particular criteria used in the evaluation.
   - **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.

9. **Evaluation approach and methods.[47]** 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 report should specify how gender equality, vulnerability and social inclusion were addressed in the methodology, including how data-collection and analysis methods integrated gender considerations, use of disaggregated data and outreach to diverse stakeholders' groups. 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:

   - **Evaluation approach.**
   - **Data sources:** the sources of information (documents reviewed and stakeholders) as well as the rationale for their selection and how the information obtained addressed the evaluation questions.

---

[46] The evaluation criteria most commonly applied to UNDP evaluations are the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.

[47] 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.

- **Sample and sampling frame.** If a sample was used: the sample size and characteristics; the sample selection criteria (e.g., single women under age 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 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, as well as gender-responsiveness.
- **Performance standards:**[48] 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 participation** in the evaluation and how the level of involvement of both men and women 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).[49]
- **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** should be identified and openly discussed as to their implications for evaluation, as well as steps taken to mitigate those limitations.

10. **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 for different stakeholder groups (men and women, different social groups, etc.). The report also should discuss the appropriateness of the analyses 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.

11. **Findings** should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data. They should be structured around the evaluation 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. Findings should reflect a gender analysis and cross-cutting issue questions.

12. **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, including issues in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment.

---

[48] 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.

[49] UNEG, 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', June 2008. Available at http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ethical+guidelines.

13. **Recommendations.** The report should provide practical, actionable and feasible recommendations directed to the intended users of the report about what actions to take or decisions to make. Recommendations should be reasonable in number. 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. Recommendations should also provide specific advice for future or similar projects or programming. Recommendations should also address any gender equality and women's empowerment issues and priorities for action to improve these aspects.

14. **Lessons learned.** As appropriate and/or if requested by the TOR, 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.

15. **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. This can be omitted in the interest of confidentiality if agreed by the evaluation team and UNDP.
    - List of supporting documents reviewed.
    - Project or programme results model or results framework.
    - Summary tables of findings, such as tables displaying progress towards outputs, targets and goals relative to established indicators.
    - Code of conduct signed by evaluators.

Annex 4. Management response template

UNDP management response template
[Name of the Evaluation] Date:

Prepared by: Position:
                                          Unit/Bureau:

Cleared by: Position:
                                          Unit/Bureau:

Input into and update in ERC: Position:
                                          Unit/Bureau:

Evaluation recommendation 1.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Completion date**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking***	
			Comments	**Status (initiated, completed or no due date)**
1.1				
1.2				
1.3				
Evaluation recommendation 2.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Completion date**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status (initiated, completed or no due date)**
2.1				
2.2				
2.3				
Evaluation recommendation 3.				
Management response:				
Key action(s)	**Completion date**	**Responsible unit(s)**	**Tracking**	
			Comments	**Status (initiated, completed or no due date)**
3.1				
3.2				
3.3				

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the ERC database.

SECTION 5
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
IN DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS: SUMMARY

Section 5 summarizes the roles and responsibilities in the development and implementation of evaluation plans and in the implementation, dissemination and use of decentralized evaluations.

The table below summarizes roles and responsibilities in the development and oversight of evaluation plans and in the implementation, dissemination and use of decentralized evaluations.

ROLE	PERSON/ORGANIZATION	RESPONSIBILITIES
EVALUATION COMMISSIONER/OWNER	The agency or entity calling for the evaluation to be carried out. Within UNDP, responsibility for decentralized evaluations rests ultimately with **global, regional and country office senior management**, who "own" the evaluation plan for their programme, i.e., • Bureau directors • Resident representatives • Global, regional and country directors	▪ Lead and ensure the development of a comprehensive, representative, strategic and costed evaluation plan ▪ Responsible for the timely implementation of the evaluation plan ▪ Promote joint evaluation work with the United Nations system and other partners ▪ Ensure evaluability of UNDP initiatives: clear and comprehensive results frameworks are in place and effective monitoring is implemented ▪ Appoint the evaluation manager ▪ Safeguard the independence of the evaluation exercise and ensure quality of evaluations ▪ Ensure management responses are prepared for all evaluations with time- bound key actions for their implementation ▪ Accountable for the quality and approval of final terms of reference, final evaluation reports and management responses before final submission to the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC)
PROGRAMME/PROJECT MANAGER	**UNDP manager of the programme/outcome/project under evaluation** Typically: • Senior manager for country programme evaluations • Global programme/project managers for global programme evaluations • Regional programme/project	▪ Participate and involve relevant stakeholders in the development of the evaluation plan ▪ Ensure evaluability of UNDP initiatives in a given project, programme thematic or results area ▪ Establish the evaluation reference group with key project partners where needed ▪ Provide inputs/advice to the evaluation manager and evaluation reference group on the detail and scope of the terms of reference for the evaluation and how the findings will be used ▪ Ensure and safeguard the independence of evaluations ▪ Provide the evaluation manager with all required data and documentation and contacts/stakeholders list, etc. ▪ Provide comments and clarification on the terms of reference, inception report and draft evaluation reports ▪ Respond to evaluation recommendations by providing management responses and key actions to all recommendations addressed to UNDP ▪ Ensure dissemination of the evaluation report to all the stakeholders including the project board

	managers for regional programme/project evaluations • Outcome leads for outcome evaluations • Programme officers (programme team leaders, programme analysts) for project evaluations	▪ Responsible for the implementation of key actions on evaluation recommendations
EVALUATION MANAGER (not the programme/project manager)	**Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) specialist or officer** **In cases where there is no dedicated M&E specialist/officer in place, the programme unit must ensure that the evaluation manager is not the programme/project manager.** **Regional evaluation focal points provide additional support in case of limited evaluation capacity at the country office level.** ************ Some of the listed responsibilities can be performed by the M&E focal point	▪ Participate in all stages of the evaluation process: (a) evaluability assessment; ▪ (b) preparation; (c) implementation and management; and (d) use of the evaluation ▪ Lead the development of the evaluation terms of reference ▪ Participate in the selection/ recruitment of external evaluators ▪ Safeguard the independence of evaluations ▪ Provide the evaluators with administrative support and required data and documentation ▪ Liaise with the programme/project manager(s) throughout the evaluation process ▪ Connect the evaluators with the wider programme unit, senior management and key evaluation stakeholders, and ensure a fully inclusive and transparent approach to the evaluation ▪ Review and approve inception reports including evaluation questions and methodologies ▪ Review and comment on draft evaluation reports, circulate draft and final evaluation reports ▪ Collect and consolidate comments on draft evaluation reports and share with the evaluation team for finalization of the evaluation report ▪ Contribute to the development of management responses and key actions to all recommendations addressed to UNDP ▪ Ensure evaluation terms of reference, final evaluation reports, management responses, lessons learned, and other relevant information are publicly available through the ERC within the specified time frame ▪ Facilitate, monitor and report on a quarterly basis implementation of management responses and key actions ▪ Facilitate knowledge-sharing and use of findings in programming and decision-making

| EVALUATION SUPPORT, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ERC PORTAL MANAGEMENT | M&E specialist or officer

M&E focal points

(Global, regional and country office) | Upload the evaluation plan to the ERC, manage required changes to the evaluation plan and get approval for changes from the regional evaluation focal point Report to management on compliance with the evaluation plan, completion of management responses and key actions and quality assessment results Review and approve the evaluation terms of reference, ensuring they meet UNDP guidance requirements Review and approve the evaluation inception report, ensuring it meets UNDP requirements Review and recommend acceptance of the draft and final evaluation reports Review the management responses and key actions Ensure evaluation terms of reference, final evaluation reports, management responses, lessons learned, and other relevant information are publicly available through the ERC within the specified time frame Facilitate, monitor and report on a quarterly basis implementation of management responses and key actions |
| EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP (OPTIONAL) | Key project/outcome stakeholders, government partners and/ or donors including representatives from project management boards

Should also include persons who have some technical expertise and experience about evaluation design, conduct and quality assurance. The evaluation reference group should not include representatives from the project under evaluation, to avoid conflict of interest | Perform advisory role throughout the evaluation process Ensure that evaluation standards, as provided by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), are adhered to, including safeguarding of transparency and independence Provide advice on the evaluation's relevance, on the appropriateness of evaluation questions and methodology and on the extent to which conclusions and recommendations are both credible considering the evidence that is presented and are action-oriented Support and provide input to the development of the management responses and key actions |

EVALUATION PARTNERS	**Government partners, stakeholders and donors**	▪ Involved in the review of key evaluation deliverables, including terms of reference, the inception report and successive versions of the draft evaluation report ▪ Where donors are leading the evaluation process, UNDP should ensure the inclusion of key elements required by the programme unit (including consideration of cross-cutting issues) ▪ Where UNDP is leading the process, it should be flexible to suggestions and requirements from the donors, but also retain the UNDP requirements for terms of reference, evaluation implementation and evaluation reports ▪ Evaluations of donor-funded projects should be uploaded to the ERC along with recommendations, management responses and key actions that relate to UNDP
INDEPENDENT EVALUATORS	**External evaluation experts and/or firms**	▪ Fulfil the contractual arrangements under the terms of reference as appropriate ▪ Develop the evaluation inception report, including an evaluation matrix, in line with the terms of reference, UNEG norms and standards and ethical guidelines ▪ Draft reports and brief the evaluation manager, programme/project managers and stakeholders on the progress and key findings and recommendations ▪ Finalize the evaluation, taking into consideration comments and questions on the evaluation report. Evaluators' feedback should be recorded in the audit trail ▪
REGIONAL TECHNICAL SUPPORT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE	**Regional evaluation focal points/ specialists and advisers**	▪ Support the evaluation process and ensure compliance with corporate standards ▪ Oversee and support evaluation planning and the uploading, implementation and adjustment of evaluation plans in ERC ▪ Review evaluation plan adjustment requests (date changes, additions, deletions), ensuring the rationale for the changes is appropriate, and approve through the ERC ▪ Provide technical support to country offices including advice on the development of terms of reference; recruitment of evaluators and maintaining evaluator rosters; implementation of evaluations; and finalization of evaluations, management responses and key actions ▪ Ensure management response tracking through ERC and support M&E capacity development and knowledge-sharing ▪ Dispute resolution when issues arise in implementation of evaluations

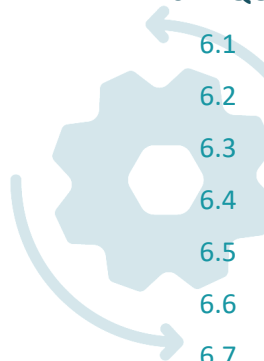|		
GLOBAL QUALITY ASSURANCE	**Bureau for Policy and Programme Support**	▪ Provides global oversight of decentralized evaluation and guidance ▪ Coordinates communication between UNDP management and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) ▪ Advises country offices and regional bureaux on the decentralized evaluation function for UNDP ▪ Supports M&E focal points to ensure that evaluation plans are properly implemented ▪ Monitors the implementation of management responses for independent and decentralized evaluations ▪ In cooperation with IEO, provides guidance to UNDP implementing units on the use of evaluation findings and lessons learned
GLOBAL AND REGIONAL GUIDANCE AND OVERSIGHT	**Independent Evaluation Office**	▪ Provides norms, standards, guidelines and tools to support the quality enhancement of evaluations ▪ Oversees and reports on decentralized evaluation implementation and adherence to evaluation plans ▪ Implements and reports on the annual quality assessment of all decentralized evaluations through an independent quality assessment review panel ▪ Manages and maintains the ERC and supports implementing agencies in technical issues in use of the ERC ▪ Provides guidance on decentralized evaluations through the regional evaluation focal points

SECTION 6
EVALUATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT

CONTENTS

6. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF DECENTRALIZED EVALUATIONS

Section 6 describes the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office system for quality assessment of decentralized evaluations, including the purpose, roles and responsibilities, processes and tools. In addition, the section explains the Evaluation Performance Indicator for the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and how independent and decentralized evaluations are assessed to provide UNDP data for this indicator.

High-quality evaluations are critical for results-based management, knowledge generation for wider use and accountability to programme partners. One of the requirements of the UNDP Evaluation Policy is that programme units—headquarters bureaux, regional bureaux and country offices—ensure that evaluations inform programme management and contribute to development results.[1] There is increased emphasis therefore to strengthen support for decentralized evaluations (those carried out by programme units) in order to improve programme units' compliance with the Evaluation Policy, improve the quality of evaluations and increase use of evaluations by policymakers and stakeholders.

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) annually assesses the quality of decentralized evaluations and reports on the results to the UNDP Executive Board. The quality assessment process supports the improvement of the quality of evaluative evidence including findings, coverage and scope, as well as recommendations through the independent analysis of evaluations undertaken by programme units. The quality assessment process also supports programme units' management of evaluations and the implementation of the evaluation plan as well as oversight by regional bureaux, the Bureau for Policy and Programme (BPPS) and IEO. This quality assessment system for decentralized evaluation reports facilitates uniformity and consistency of the quality assessment process and reporting.

6.1 Purpose and scope

Using a set of parameters, a rating system and weightings, a quality assessment of an evaluation report provides an assessment of an evaluation's design, the quality of its findings and evaluative evidence and the robustness of its conclusions and recommendations. For Global Environment Facility (GEF) evaluations, the assessment also includes the extent to which project outputs and/or programme outcomes were achieved (or are expected to be achieved).

The purposes of a quality assessment of an evaluation report include:
- Improving the quality of evaluative evidence to better manage contributions to development results.
- Supporting accountability by providing an independent assessment of the quality of decentralized evaluation reports to the UNDP Executive Board and management.
- Strengthening consistency in evaluation reporting and quality across projects.
- Supporting bureau oversight functions by providing concurrent feedback through detailed analysis of the quality of the evaluation reports with recommendations for their improvement.

---

[1] UNDP Evaluation Policy (DP/2016/23),
http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/policy/2016/Evaluation_policy_EN_2016.pdf

- Contributing to corporate lessons learned by drawing from good evaluations in the annual report on evaluation.

These guidelines enhance the quality standards of decentralized evaluations such as the utility, clarity of objectives to all stakeholders, credibility, accuracy and reliability of the evaluability evidence, transparency of the judgements and depth and clarity of reporting.

Quality assessments are carried out for all decentralized evaluations conducted by UNDP, as well as the United Nations Capital Development Fund and United Nations Volunteers programme, including evaluations of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), outcome, project and programme evaluations and thematic evaluations. Feedback from IEO can be used by programme units and country offices to make adjustments that will strengthen areas of the evaluative evidence and the report, as well as adjust the management and implementation of evaluations to ensure usable findings and recommendations and the overall utility of decentralized evaluation reports. The quality assessment questions are in line with and reflect the UNDP quality standards for programming.[2]

The scope of analysis of GEF evaluation reports is broader than for other UNDP evaluation reports. GEF analysis includes an assessment of project documentation (e.g., project objectives, project or programme planning and implementation) and an analysis of the validity of an evaluation's findings and conclusions.

6.2   Quality assessment process

The key steps of the quality assessment process are as follows (see figure 1):

- **Posting evaluations to the Evaluation Resource Center**
    - A programme unit posts an electronic and printable copy of the terms of reference (TOR) for an evaluation and the final evaluation report on the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC)[3] within two weeks of completion.
    - Only final documents should be uploaded. Drafts should not be uploaded as the ERC is a public website.
    - The management response and key actions should be uploaded within six weeks of completion of the report.
- **Verification**
    - The IEO will verify if a report posted on the ERC is part of the programme unit's evaluation plan and whether it is the final document.
    - If TOR or an evaluation appear to be a draft and not final version or if supporting annexes are not uploaded, IEO will contact the country office and regional office to ensure that the correct documents are uploaded.[4]
- **Quality assessment**
    - The IEO sends the evaluation report to a contracted quality assessment reviewer to conduct a quality review.
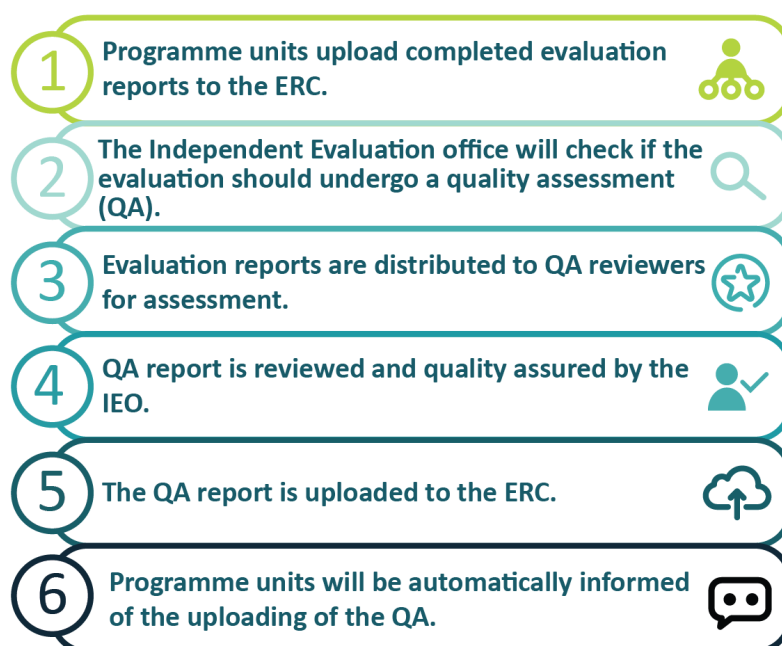
---

[2] Access at:
https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Programming%20Standards_Quality%20Standards%20for%20Programming.docx&action=default
[3] Access at: http://erc.undp.org
[4] The ERC is a public website and therefore all documents should be final and of high quality. The quality assessment ratings are available only to UNDP.

- o The quality assessment rating is available on the ERC typically within two weeks of review and quality assurance check by IEO.
  - **Feedback**
    - o Upon receiving the quality assessment report from the reviewer, the IEO reviews the report and then makes it available to the respective programme unit though the ERC.

Figure 1. Quality assessment process

1	Programme units upload completed evaluation reports to the ERC.
2	The Independent Evaluation office will check if the evaluation should undergo a quality assessment (QA).
3	Evaluation reports are distributed to QA reviewers for assessment.
4	QA report is reviewed and quality assured by the IEO.
5	The QA report is uploaded to the ERC.
6	Programme units will be automatically informed of the uploading of the QA.

6.3 Roles and responsibilities

The IEO has the overall responsibility for evaluation quality assessment and reporting and providing timely feedback to programme units.

Regional bureaux should oversee the quality assessment process and use it to highlight weaknesses and challenges in the implementation of evaluations across their regions and within specific country programmes. The ERC offers an overview tool to see the quality of evaluations at the regional and country office levels. In cases where evaluations are consistently below a satisfactory level, regional evaluation focal points should work closely with country offices to address implementation issues and ensure that programme units understand the issues in the evaluation process highlighted and detailed in the quality assessment process.

Equally, BPPS and IEO support regions in addressing the issues in evaluation implementation highlighted through the quality assessment process and support bureaux in addressing issues consistently highlighted.
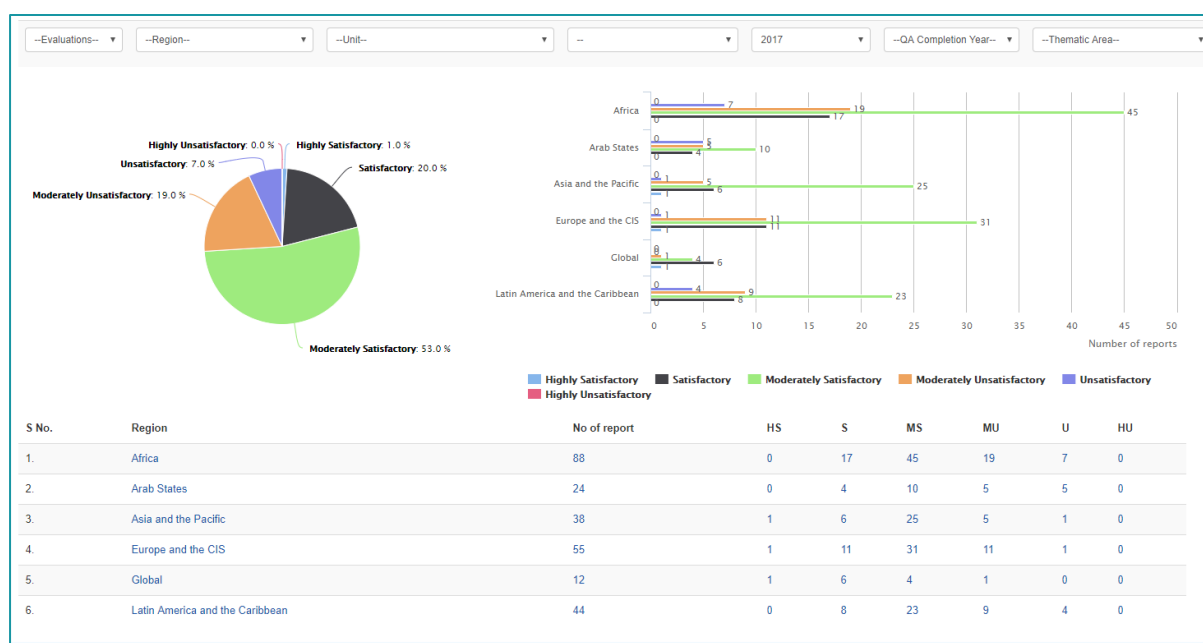
6.4 Quality assessment review pool

In order to ensure the quality and consistency of evaluation report assessments, the IEO retains a pool of expert quality assessment reviewers who are experienced evaluators with a detailed knowledge of

UNDP thematic areas and evaluation approaches as well as having global, regional and country-level knowledge and experience. To ensure the uniformity and consistency of evaluation quality assessment, the reviewers have been oriented in the application of the quality assessment tools and the IEO periodically verifies the quality assessment process to ensure reliability.

6.5 Quality assessment reporting

A quality assessment report for an individual evaluation will be made available as soon as the IEO performs quality assurance checks on the assessment (normally within two weeks of completion and submission of the quality assessment report). Results at the global, regional and country office levels are available through the ERC.

Figure 2. ERC quality assessment summary report by region

S No.	Region	No of report	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
1.	Africa	88	0	17	45	19	7	0
2.	Arab States	24	0	4	10	5	5	0
3.	Asia and the Pacific	38	1	6	25	5	1	0
4.	Europe and the CIS	55	1	11	31	11	1	0
5.	Global	12	1	6	4	1	0	0
6.	Latin America and the Caribbean	44	0	8	23	9	4	0

Annually, IEO will report on the quality assessment process results through its annual report on evaluation along with a more detailed annual quality assessment report, which will be distributed to headquarters and regional bureaux for distribution and follow-up with country offices.

6.6 Quality assessment sections and weighting

The key parameters of a quality assessment draw upon the basic quality requirements for acceptable evaluation reports as outlined in the evaluation guidelines. Overall the quality assessment process includes four weighted sections and 39 questions. Questions may be left unrated by reviewers where they find them not relevant due to the direction of the TOR or the context of the intervention under evaluation.

Quality assessment sections include:

- **Terms of reference:** 5 questions weighted 15 percent

- Do the TOR appropriately and clearly outline the purpose, objectives, criteria and key questions for the evaluation?
- **Evaluation structure, methodology and data sources:** 16 questions weighted 30 percent
  - Is the evaluation well structured with a clearly articulated set of objectives, criteria and methodology that are fully described and appropriate?
- **Cross-cutting issues:** 9 questions weighted 15 percent
  - Does the evaluation adequately review and address cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights, disabilities and vulnerable groups?
- **Findings, conclusions and recommendations:** 9 questions weighted 40 percent
  - Are findings appropriate and based on the evaluation criteria (e.g., relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact), and do they respond directly to the evaluation questions?
  - Do the conclusions go beyond findings and identify underlying priority issues? Do the conclusions present logical judgements based on findings that are substantiated by evidence?
  - Are the recommendations relevant to the subject and purposes of the evaluation, and are they supported by evaluation evidence?

Quality assessments of GEF terminal evaluations include an additional section in which the quality assessment reviewer will validate the evaluation's ratings or recommend adjustment. GEF midterm reviews are currently not quality assessed though they are included in the evaluation plan.

6.7   Quality assessment question ratings

Quality assessment questions under each section are scored using a six-point rating system ranging from highly satisfactory (6) to unsatisfactory (1). The rating scale assesses whether an evaluation has met expectations, norms and criteria. While ratings of 4,5 and 6 could be considered satisfactory, if all UNDP evaluation requirements are met then an evaluation should receive at a minimum a rating of 5 (satisfactory), which is the benchmark for a good evaluation.

Quality assessment rating scale

Code	Rubric for assigning rating		Value
HS	**Highly satisfactory**	All parameters were fully met and there were no shortcomings in the evaluation report	6
S	**Satisfactory**	All parameters were fully met with minor shortcomings in the evaluation report	5
MS	**Mostly satisfactory**	The parameters were partially met with some shortcomings in the evaluation report	4
MU	**Mostly unsatisfactory**	More than one parameter was unmet with significant shortcomings in the evaluation report	3
U	**Unsatisfactory**	Most parameters were not met and there were major shortcomings in the evaluation report	2
HU	**Highly unsatisfactory**	None of the parameters were met and there were severe shortcomings in the evaluation report	1

6.8   Quality assessment tool

The quality assessment tool is accessible from the ERC website (http:erc.undp.org). Login is restricted to registered monitoring and evaluation (M&E) focal points. M&E focal points should share the results of evaluation quality assessments with evaluation commissioners and managers.

Quality assessment reviewers use drop-down menus to assign content ratings and detailed comments supporting their ratings. Overall scores, using the weightings above, will be assigned automatically through the ERC. Scoring and comments can be found under each evaluation when a quality assessment is completed

6.9   Supporting documentation

All supporting documentation for all projects/programmes being assessed is made available via the ERC and will be made available to the quality assessment reviewer.

For UNDP projects the documentation includes:

- The TOR for the evaluation (key document for the quality assessment).
- Final evaluation report and annexes (key document for the quality assessment).
- Project/evaluation information (project details, evaluation budget and time frame).
- Evaluation lessons and findings.
- Evaluation recommendations.
- Management response and key actions.

For the purposes of the quality assessment, the *TOR and the final evaluation report* are the key documents, with other information drawn from these documents.

The ERC will contain the same information for *GEF project terminal evaluations*. However, in order to further validate the terminal evaluation ratings for project implementation, GEF will provide additional information to quality assessment reviewers via IEO. These documents are not available on the ERC at present. Additional documentation includes:

- The project's concept note and identification forms (PIF/Pdf A &B).
- Project document (ProDoc) including results framework.
- Project implementation reviews (APR/PIR).
- Tracking tools (as available).
- Midterm evaluation, if carried out.
- The terminal evaluation report and TOR.
- The terminal evaluation management response.
- Project implementation action plan.

6.10 Quality assessment questions

6.10.1 Terms of reference (GEF and UNDP)

	Do the TOR appropriately and clearly outline the purpose, objectives, criteria and key questions for the evaluation and give adequate time and resources?
1.1	**Do the TOR clearly outline the focus for the evaluation in a logical and realistic manner?** This includes: ▪ The evaluation's purpose, scope and objectives ▪ Outputs and/or outcomes to be evaluated ▪ Evaluation context and detail
1.2	**Do the TOR detail adequate time frames and allocated days for the evaluation's completion?** ▪ Is there a time frame for the scope and focus of the evaluation? ▪ Is there an outline for the size of the evaluation team which recognizes the needs and scope of the evaluation?
1.3	**Do the TOR clearly outline the evaluation's planned approach?** ▪ A clear role for evaluation partners is outlined ▪ A feedback mechanism is clearly outlined
1.4	**Is the proposed outline of the evaluation's approach and methodology clearly detailed in the TOR?** ▪ General methodological approach ▪ Data required, sources and analysis approaches ▪ Funding analysis requirements and sources of funding data
1.5	**Do the TOR include a detailed request to the evaluator to include gender and vulnerable groups in the evaluation? (non-GEF evaluations)** ▪ Do the TOR outline proposed tools, methodologies and data analysis to meet this requirement?

6.10.2 Evaluation report structure, methodology and data sources

	Are the evaluation report's objectives, criteria, methodology and data sources fully described and are they appropriate given the subject being evaluated and the reasons for carrying out the evaluation?
	STRUCTURE
2.1	**Is the evaluation report well-balanced and structured?** - With sufficient but not excessive background information? - Is the report a reasonable length? - Are required annexes provided?
2.2	**Does the evaluation report clearly address the objectives of the evaluation as outlined in the TOR?**
	METHODOLOGY
2.3	**Is the evaluation's methodological approach clearly outlined?** - Any changes from the proposed approach are detailed with reasons why
2.4	**Are the nature and extent of the role and involvement of stakeholders in the project/programme explained adequately?**
2.5	**Does the evaluation clearly assess the project's/programme's level of relevance?**
2.6	**Does the evaluation clearly assess the project's/programme's level of effectiveness?**
2.7	**Does the evaluation clearly assess the project's/programme's level of efficiency?**
2.8	**Does the evaluation clearly assess the project's/programme's level of sustainability?**
	DATA COLLECTION
2.9	**Are data-collection methods and analysis clearly outlined?** - Data sources clearly outlined (including triangulation methods)? - Data analysis approaches detailed? - Data-collection methods and tools explained?
2.10	**Is the data-collection approach and analysis adequate for the scope of the evaluation?** - Comprehensive set of data sources (especially for triangulation) where appropriate? - Comprehensive set of quantitative and qualitative surveys, and analysis approaches where appropriate? - Clear presentation of data analysis and citation within the report? - Documented meetings and surveys with stakeholders and beneficiary groups, where appropriate?

2.11	Are any changes to the evaluation approach or limitations in implementation during the evaluation mission clearly outlined and explained? - Issues with access to data or verification of data sources? - Issues in availability of interviewees? - Outline how these constraints were addressed

REPORT CONTENT

2.12	Does the evaluation draw linkages to the UNDP country programme strategy and/or UNDAF?
2.13	Does the evaluation draw linkages to related national government strategies and plans in the sector/area of support? - Does the evaluation discuss how capacity development or the strengthening of national capacities can be addressed?
2.14	Does the evaluation detail project funding and provide funding data (especially for GEF)? - Variances between planned and actual expenditures assessed and explained? - Observations from financial audits completed for the project considered?
2.15	Does the evaluation include an assessment of the project's M&E design, implementation and overall quality?
2.16	Does the evaluation identify ways in which the programme/project has produced a catalytic role and has demonstrated: (a) the production of a public good; (b) demonstration; (c) replication; and/or (d) scaling up (GEF evaluations)?
2.17	Are indicators in the results framework assessed individually, with final achievements noted?

6.10.3 Cross-cutting issues

	Does the evaluation report address gender and other key cross-cutting issues?
3.1	Are human rights, disabilities, minorities and vulnerable group issues addressed where relevant?
3.2	Does the report discuss the poverty/environment nexus or sustainable livelihood issues, as relevant?
3.3	Does the report discuss disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation issues where relevant?
3.4	Does the report discuss crisis prevention and recovery issues as relevant?
3.5	Are the principles and policy of gender equality and the empowerment of women integrated in the evaluation's scope and indicators as relevant?
3.6	Do the evaluation's criteria and evaluation questions specifically address how gender equality and the empowerment of women have been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention and the results achieved, as relevant?
3.7	Are a gender-responsive evaluation methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques selected?
3.8	Do the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations take aspects of gender equality and the empowerment of women into consideration?
3.9	Does the evaluation draw linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals and relevant targets and indicators for the area being evaluated?
3.10	Does the terminal evaluation adequately address social and environmental safeguards, as relevant? (GEF evaluations)

6.10.4 Evaluation results

This section details all the evaluation results, findings, conclusions and recommendations. Both GEF and UNDP projects use the same questions for quality assessment.

Does the report clearly and concisely outline and support its findings, conclusions and recommendations?	
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	
4.1	**Does the evaluation report contain a concise and logically articulated set of findings?**
4.2	**Does the evaluation report contain a concise and logically articulated set of conclusions?**
4.3	**Does the evaluation report contain a concise and logically articulated set of lessons learned?**
4.4	**Do the findings and conclusions relate directly to the objectives of the project/programme?** - Are the objectives of the evaluation as outlined in the TOR?
4.5	**Are the findings and conclusions supported with data and interview sources?** - Are constraints in access to data and interview sources detailed?
4.6	**Do the conclusions build on the findings of the evaluation?** - Do the conclusions go beyond the findings and present a balanced picture of the strengths and limitations of the evaluation's focus?
4.7	**Are risks discussed in the evaluation report?**
RECOMMENDATIONS	
4.8	**Are the recommendations clear, concise, realistic and actionable?** - A number of recommendations are reasonable given the size and scope of the project/ programme - Recommendations link directly to findings and conclusions
4.9	**Are recommendations linked to country programme outcomes and strategies and actionable by the country office?** - Is guidance given for implementation of the recommendations? - Do recommendations identify implementing roles (UNDP, government, programme, stakeholder, other)?

6.10.5 Validation of GEF terminal evaluation results

This section is used only for GEF evaluations to validate the project ratings identified during the initial terminal evaluations. In order to undertake the quality assessment of GEF terminal evaluations and to validate the rating of project implementation identified by the initial evaluator, additional documentation will be provided to quality assessment reviewers. This will include:

- The project's concept note and identification forms (PIF/Pdf A &B), project document (ProDoc) including results framework.
- Project implementation reviews (APR/PIR).
- Tracking tools (as available).
- Midterm evaluation, if carried out.
- The terminal evaluation report and TOR.
- The terminal evaluation management response.

		UNDP IEO quality assessment rating		GEF terminal evaluation rating		Comments and/or justification for rating/score adjustment	Suggestions for improvement
		Rating	Score	Rating	Score		
Assessment of outcomes							
Project focus	**Indicate what the terminal evaluation has rated for project effectiveness, efficiency and relevance, and based on the available documentation, indicate your rating and justify. Provide your rating also in cases where the terminal evaluation has not included one.**						
1	Effectiveness						
2	Efficiency						
3	Relevance						
4	Overall project outcome						
Sustainability							
Project focus	**Indicate what the terminal evaluation has rated for sustainability and based on the available documentation indicate your rating and justify. Provide your rating also in cases where the terminal evaluation has not included one.**						
5	Financial risks						

6	Sociopolitical risks						
7	Institutional framework and governance risks						
8	Environmental risks						
9	Overall likelihood of sustainability						
Monitoring and evaluation							
Project focus	**Indicate what the terminal evaluation has rated for M&E quality and based on the available documentation indicate your rating and justify. Provide your rating also in cases where the terminal evaluation has not included one.**						
10	M&E design at entry						
11	M&E plan and implementation						
12	Overall quality of M&E						
Implementation and execution							
Project focus	**Indicate what the terminal evaluation has rated for the performance of UNDP as the project implementing agency and based on the available documentation indicate your rating and justify. Provide your rating also in cases where the terminal evaluation has not included one.**						
13	Quality of UNDP implementation						
14	Quality of execution - executing agency						
15	Overall quality of implementation and execution						
Overall project performance							
Project focus	**Does the terminal evaluation include a summary assessment and overall rating of the project results? Indicate the terminal evaluation rating and then indicate whether, based on the available documentation, you think a different rating of overall project results would be more appropriate.**						
16	Provide justification for any agreement or adjustment to ratings.						

6.10.6 Lessons learned

Most evaluations should identify a number of lessons learned from a project's implementation. This section is not scored in the overall quality assessment but gives the reviewer an opportunity to identify the key lessons that could be drawn out of an evaluation and that should be shared, either more widely within a country office, regionally or globally.

	Overall summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation?
1	
2	
3	

6.10.7 Quality assessment summary results

The overall quality assessment will automatically be summarized in the ERC and will be available for the reviewer to consider before submitting the quality assessment to IEO for approval and finalization.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	Rating						Weighted score
	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU	
Evaluation TOR and design							
Do the TOR appropriately and clearly outline the purpose, objectives, criteria and key questions for the evaluation and give adequate time and resources?							
Evaluation report structure							
Are the evaluation report's objectives, criteria, methodology and data sources fully described and are they appropriate given the subject being evaluated and the reasons for carrying out the evaluation?							
Cross-cutting issues							
Does the evaluation report address gender and other key cross-cutting issues?							
Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations							
Does the report clearly and concisely outline and support its findings, conclusions and recommendations?							

6.11 UN-SWAP evaluation performance indicator and assessment

The United Nations System-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was endorsed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination in October 2006 as a means of furthering the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment in the policies and programmes of the United Nations system. In 2012, the United Nations agreed on the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) to implement the aforementioned gender policy. The UN-SWAP assigned common performance standards for the gender-related work of all United Nations entities, including evaluation. The UN-SWAP includes an evaluation performance indicator (EPI). In 2018, the UN-SWAP was updated, including a revision to the EPI.

UNDP is required to report against the EPI annually, assessing both independent evaluations and decentralized evaluations. Detailed information on the EPI is available here. The present chapter summarizes key elements of the EPI and explains the UNDP assessment process.

6.11.1 What is the UN-SWAP evaluation performance indicator?

The EPI assesses the extent to which the evaluation reports of an entity meet the gender-related United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and demonstrate effective use of the UNEG Guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality during all phases of the evaluation.

6.11.2 The evaluation performance indicator criteria and scorecard

A scorecard is used to assess evaluations reports against three criteria. (A fourth criterion applies at the agency level). The first two criteria look at whether gender equality concerns were integrated in the evaluation's scope of analysis and methods and tools for data collection and analysis.

1. Gender equality and the empowerment of women are integrated in the evaluation's scope of analysis, and evaluation criteria and questions are designed in a way that ensures that relevant data will be collected.
2. Gender-responsive methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques are selected.

The third criterion is focused on whether the evaluation report reflects a gender analysis as captured in the findings, conclusions and recommendations. This could be captured in various ways throughout the evaluation report.

3. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis.

The fourth criterion is focused on whether the entity–in the present case UNDP–has commissioned:

4. At least one evaluation to assess corporate performance on gender mainstreaming or equivalent every five to eight years.

Each evaluation report is assessed against the first three criteria using a four-point scale (0-3):
- 0 = Not at all integrated. Applies when none of the elements under a criterion are met.
- 1 = Partially integrated. Applies when some minimal elements have been met but further progress is needed, and remedial action is required to meet the standard.
- 2 = Satisfactorily integrated. Applies when a satisfactory level has been reached and many of the elements have been met but improvement could still be made.

- 3 = Fully integrated. Applies when all the elements under a criterion have been met, used and fully integrated in the evaluation and no remedial action is required.

The annex to the [UN-SWAP EPI technical note](#) sets out guiding questions for the assessment against each criterion. After reviewing the individual evaluation report for each criterion, a score is assigned to the report as follows:

0-3 points = Misses requirement
4-6 points = Approaches requirement
7-9 points= Meets requirement

6.11.3 The assessment process

The UNDP IEO is the focal point for the EPI. Each year, the IEO contracts an external expert to conduct the assessment of a set of evaluations, including all independent evaluations and a sample of decentralized evaluations that were finalized in the period being reported, i.e. January-December of the given year.
The sample of decentralized evaluations should reflect:

- A balance in terms of midterm and final evaluations.
- A mix of evaluation types: project, programme, policy, outcome, impact, evaluation of more normative work, strategic, etc.
- A mix of topics, themes and sectors.
- Widespread geographical coverage.
- Interventions where gender equality is the primary focus of the intervention and where gender is not the primary focus but is mainstreamed throughout the intervention.

In past years, the IEO has selected a sample of approximately 25 decentralized evaluations, distributed across regions (in proportion to the number of evaluations from each region).[5] This selection has resulted in the balance described above.

Scores for all evaluations, both independent and the sample of decentralized evaluations, are aggregated into a final score for UNDP as a whole. In 2016 and 2017, the UNDP composite score was "approaches requirements".

6.11.4 Quality assessment system and the UN-SWAP evaluation performance indicator: why two assessments?

The UN-SWAP 1.0 EPI criteria (2012-2017) have been incorporated into the quality assessment of decentralized evaluations (criteria 4.05-4.08). However, the UN-SWAP EPI assessment requires gender expertise to critically assess evaluation reports against the EPI, expertise which may vary across the pool of expert quality assessment reviewers. In addition, the scoring system in the UNDP quality assessment for all questions (6 (highly satisfactory) to 1 (highly unsatisfactory)) is different than the scoring in the UN-SWAP EPI (0 to 3 points, as described above), and the UN-SWAP 2.0 EPI has revised

---

[5] For example, for 2017, eight evaluations were randomly selected from the list of evaluations from Africa, three from the Arab States, five each from Asia-Pacific and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and four from Latin America and the Caribbean.

the criteria. To ensure a consistent assessment of both independent and decentralized evaluations against the EPI, a separate exercise is conducted with a sample of decentralized evaluations.

Nevertheless, the scoring from the quality assessment questions 4.05-4.08 for all decentralized evaluations and the results of the assessment for the EPI are compared, and reference to the two assessments included in the EPI report. (For example, in 2017, of 128 decentralized evaluations for which the quality assessment had been completed at the time of the EPI, 27 percent were assessed in the UNDP quality assessment process as missing requirements, 41 percent as approaching requirements and 32 percent meeting or exceeding requirements. The average score for all 128 evaluations corresponded to "approaching requirements," the same rating as that given by the special focused assessment).

Examples of evaluations that have "met" EPI requirements (linked for easy access)

- Angola: UNDP Outcome Evaluation in the practice of Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction
- Sierra Leone: Outcome Evaluation of the UNDP Support to Access to Justice in Sierra Leone
- Jamaica: Evaluation of the "Building capacity for reform of HIV-related law and policy in Jamaica" Project"
- Mozambique: Final Evaluation of the Project Disaster Risk Resilient Livelihoods Recovery
- Tunisia: Evaluation à mi-parcours du projet d'appui à un Système National d'Intégrité.
- Guatemala: Midterm evaluation Joint programme for the full exercise of the rights of indigenous peoples in Guatemala.

Note: the EPI assesses the extent to which the evaluation integrates gender equality and women's empowerment. A report may score well against the EPI even if the findings of the evaluation as to the integration of gender in the programme/project being evaluated are negative.

6.11.5 Reporting

The IEO prepares a final synthesis report, which is uploaded to the UN-SWAP portal. UN-Women analyses all UN-SWAP performance indicators, including for evaluation, and an aggregated report is presented every year through the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.[6]

---

[6] The 2017 report can be accessed at
https://www.unsceb.org/CEBPublicFiles/E_2017_57%20Mainstreaming%20a%20gender%20perspective.pdf

UNDP EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Independent Evaluation Office
United Nations Development Programme
One United Nations Plaza, 20th Floor New York,
NY 10017, USA Tel. +1 (646) 781-4200

Web: http://www.undp.org/evaluation

/UNDP_Evaluation

/ieoundp

/evaluationoffice