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**DIVISION OF
INTERNAL
OVERSIGHT
SERVICES**

Evaluation Office

UNESCO EVALUATION MANUAL

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADG	Assistant Director-General
BSP	Bureau of Strategic Planning
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EFP	Evaluation Focal Point
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EVS	Evaluation Office
EXB	Executive Board
FO	Field Office
HRGE	Human Rights and Gender Equality
IOS	Division of Internal Oversight Services
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RBM	Results-Based Management
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Foreword and Acknowledgements

**“We do not learn from experience ...
we learn from reflecting on experience.”**

(John Dewey, 1859 – 1952)

The purpose of this Evaluation Manual and Tools is to provide practical guidance to UNESCO staff who manage evaluations. At the Evaluation Office we know our colleagues require high-quality evaluation products that are credible and useful for learning, accountability and decision-making. They expect a smooth, rigorous, inclusive and participatory evaluation process that allows for engagement and reflection along the way. This Manual is conceived precisely to support this. It presents the methodology and approach to effectively manage an evaluation based on international good evaluation standards and practices and on the principles established in the UNESCO Evaluation Policy.

The Evaluation Manual is part of a broader initiative aimed at strengthening the quality and usability of evaluations at UNESCO and which also includes an organization wide Evaluation Focal Point Network, evaluation training and an [Evaluation Knowledge Hub](#). The Manual is presented in a user-friendly format and outlines the key steps of an evaluation process from the evaluation preparation and design stage to evaluation use and communication. During each stage it provides guidance and additional support material including templates and checklists.

The Manual was written by Caspar Merkle, Principal Evaluation Specialist in EV-IOs, with input from the EV-IOs team: Claudia Ibarguen, Ekaterina Sediakina-Rivière, Martina Rathner, Ahmedou El Bah, Taipei Dlamini, Syreen Forest, Getrude Ndungu and Mariana Guedes Gamarra. Other UNESCO colleagues also provided highly appreciated feedback: Othilie du Souich, Fernando Berrios, Lobna Farahat, Wally Meroto, David Tower, Zu Xian Lee, and Joungwon Yun.

I hope you find this Evaluation Manual useful in your work. The Manual is a living document and EV-IOs will periodically review and update it to accommodate new developments. We welcome your feedback as you use it.

Claudia Ibarguen

Head of Evaluation, Evaluation Office (EV),
Internal Oversight Service (IOS)
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Introduction

The purpose of this Manual is to provide guidance to UNESCO staff in planning, managing, quality assuring and overseeing an evaluation of any type. The Manual is primarily addressed to UNESCO staff responsible for managing evaluations, Evaluation Focal Points (EFPs) as well as consultants commissioned to conduct UNESCO evaluations.

The Manual covers the entire UNESCO evaluation cycle from evaluation planning to implementation and use. It provides guidance during each stage together with different support material such as guidance notes, templates and checklists. The Manual is presented in a user-friendly format with internal links to documents available on the UNESCO Intranet and external links to publicly available evaluation resources. The Evaluation Guidance and Tools in Annex 1 are also available as Word-documents on the [UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub - Guidelines & Tools](#). The links to internal documents are not immediately accessible to external users but can be made available by the IOS Evaluation Office upon request.

The Manual complements the online evaluation training available on the [MyLearning thirdportal](#) developed by IOS jointly with the Bureau of Human Resources which is mandatory for Evaluation Focal Points and all UNESCO staff managing an evaluation.

The UNESCO Evaluation Manual is structured as follows:

Section 1 Evaluation at UNESCO

This section presents basic principles and concepts of evaluation and provides an overview of the organizational context for evaluation in UNESCO as defined in the [UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029](#) and presents the roles and responsibilities of different actors related to evaluation in UNESCO.

Section 2 Evaluation Planning and Design

This section provides an overview of the key steps in preparing an evaluation including assessing evaluability, engaging evaluation stakeholders, preparing the Terms of Reference, identifying evaluation consultants, and developing an evaluation communication plan.

Section 3 Managing and Implementing an Evaluation

This section explains mechanisms for engaging evaluation stakeholders, the quality assurance process, and practical tips for managing and overseeing the evaluation process and external consultants who conduct the evaluation.

Section 4 Evaluation Use and Communication

This section focuses on different aspects that facilitate the use of evaluation findings and the implementation of recommendations. It explains the process for developing an evaluation management response with an action plan. It also identifies mechanisms and tools for effectively communicating and disseminating evaluation results.

Annexes:

Annex 1 presents additional guidance and tools for each stage of the evaluation process.

Annex 2 includes a Glossary of Key Terms.

Section 1: Evaluation at UNESCO

1.1 PURPOSE AND DEFINITION

Evaluation in UNESCO serves the purposes of learning, accountability and informing decision-making and is defined as: “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, coherence, 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”.¹

1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Evaluation at UNESCO is guided by the UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029² that outlines the overall framework, principles and rationale for evaluation, and describes the evaluation architecture in UNESCO. While key elements of the Evaluation Policy are explored in this Handbook, other content is not repeated here. Readers are strongly encouraged to consult the Evaluation Policy 2022-2029 for further guidance.

The Manual is also guided by United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards³ that provide a comprehensive set of principles for the conduct of any evaluation and for the governance of evaluation functions in the UN system: Independence, Use, Impartiality, Transparency, Ethics, Credibility, Human Rights, Inclusion and Gender Equality. The respective sections of the Evaluation Manual include hyperlinks to additional relevant evaluation guidance and resources publicly available e.g. from UNEG and the BetterEvaluation Knowledge Platform.

1.3 EVALUATION IN RELATION TO OTHER UNESCO FUNCTIONS

Evaluation is related to but distinct from other oversight and organizational functions carried out by UNESCO.

Monitoring

Monitoring can be described as “a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the key stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds”.⁴

Evaluation differs from Monitoring in terms of purpose, type of data collected, periodicity and responsibility as outlined in the table below.

Table 1: Differences between Monitoring and Evaluation

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Why?	Keeps track of implementation and progress towards the achievement of results (i.e. outputs, outcomes), and take remedial actions when needed	Provides information on the reasons behind what works and what doesn't, to what extent and how results are achieved
What?	Continuous collection of data on pre-determined performance indicators, comparing their baseline values with targets	In-depth assessment of intended and unintended results, assessing their validity based on pre-defined evaluation criteria
When?	Continuous, regular throughout implementation	At a specific moment in the project implementation cycle, i.e. ex-ante (before the project is launched), mid-term (half-way through the project), final/ex-post (upon completion of the project)
Who?	Design and implementation teams, M&E officers	Independent evaluation experts not involved in design and implementation

A strong monitoring system contributes to quality evaluations by providing quality data on how a programme evolved over time, including on key achievements and challenges and remedial actions and lessons learnt during implementation. Monitoring data can also help determine the evaluability of a programme. Details on evaluability are provided in the next Section ‘Evaluation Preparation and Design’.

Audit and Investigation

In UNESCO, Evaluation, Audit and Investigation are co-located in the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS). Internal audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve UNESCO’s operations. It helps UNESCO accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to assess and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

The Investigation Office examines and determines the veracity of allegations about misconduct or other irregularities affecting UNESCO, its projects, programmes, assets or personnel. It is the sole entity within UNESCO responsible for investigating fraud, corruption or other prohibited practices by the Organization’s staff members and vendors.

Results-Based Management






Evaluation is a component of Results-Based Management (RBM) which is defined in UNESCO “as a management strategy which reflects the way an organization applies processes and resources to undertake development interventions to achieve desired results (i.e. output, outcome, impact) integrating evidence and lessons learnt on past performance and actual results into management decision-making. It is a participatory and team-based management approach that focuses on performance and achieving results. RBM is applied at all stages of the programme cycle and is designed to improve programme delivery and strengthen management effectiveness, efficiency, learning and accountability.”⁵ RBM is a manager’s responsibility and Evaluation is an important tool for managers in their RBM responsibilities.

The custodian for RBM in UNESCO is the RBM Unit within the Bureau of Strategic Planning (BSP) that provides RBM guidance, training and coaching. Further details on RBM can be found in the UNESCO 2022 Guiding Principles “Results-Based Management (RBM) approach as applied at UNESCO”⁶.

1.4 TYPES OF EVALUATIONS AT UNESCO

The UNESCO evaluation system is composed of **corporate** and **decentralized** evaluations⁷. The IOS Evaluation Office conducts and/or commissions and manages corporate evaluations, while other UNESCO entities such as Programme Sectors, Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes manage decentralized evaluations. Decentralized evaluations represent the largest number of evaluations within UNESCO.

**DIAGRAM 1:
TYPES OF EVALUATION AT UNESCO**

	Decentralized evaluations	Corporate evaluations
 Coverage	Project or programme	Strategic and/ or thematic areas
 Commissioned by	Sectors, Field Offices or Institutes	IOS Evaluation Office
 Quality assurance by	Managing Entity with Evaluation Focal Point, IOS Evaluation Office	IOS Evaluation Office
 Funded by	3% of Project budget	3% of RP budget from all sectors
 Presented to	Donors, management, partners, etc.	Executive Board, management
 Published on	IOS Website, Evaluation Knowledge Hub, Entity Website	IOS Website, Evaluation Knowledge Hub

Corporate and decentralized evaluations follow the same evaluation standards and quality criteria. All completed evaluation reports are available on the UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub⁸ and on the IOS public website⁹.

Evaluations can also be distinguished by *what* is being evaluated. The evaluation object (evaluand) can be an activity, strategy, policy, programme, project, a sector, a theme, a geographic or thematic cluster or portfolio, operational area, or institution. While the scope and focus of evaluations may differ, the underlying rationale for all evaluations is similar, i.e. to provide an independent, evidence-based assessment and analysis using a set of explicit criteria to determine to what extent, how and why an initiative is working or not.

Timing of evaluations

An evaluation can take place at different moments in the programme cycle, as illustrated in Diagram 2 below “Evaluations during the Programme Cycle”. Depending on the timing evaluations can be classified as follows:

Ex-ante evaluation: An appraisal of a planned intervention to inform a decision on whether or not to implement it.

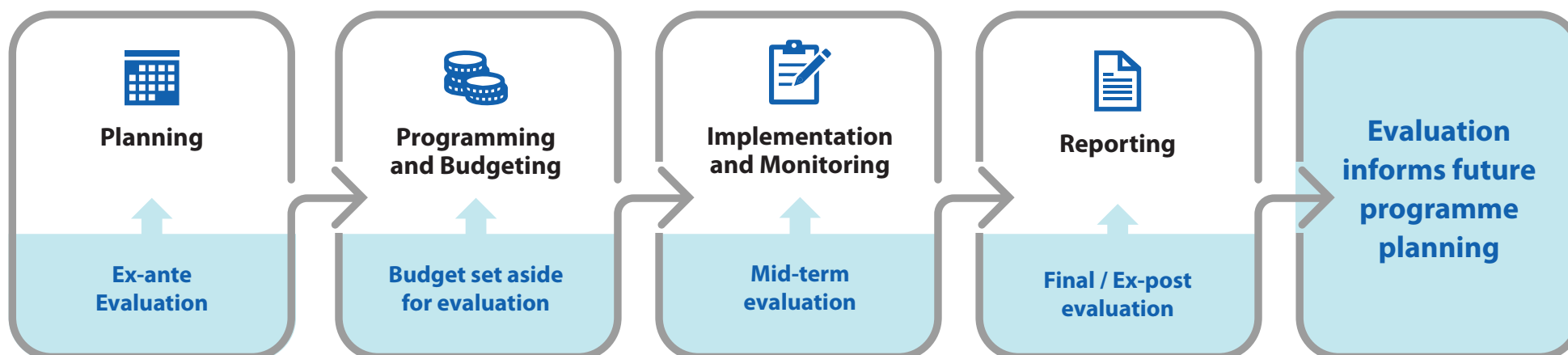
Mid-term evaluation: An evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs. Ex-ante and mid-term evaluations are usually considered formative evaluations that aim at informing or improving a new or ongoing programme.

Final evaluation: An evaluation conducted at the end of an intervention to determine the extent to which intended and unintended outcomes were achieved. Final evaluations typically inform funding decisions and decisions such as whether to continue and improve the design of a new phase of the intervention, scale it up or replicate it elsewhere.

Ex-post (final) evaluation: An evaluation that takes place after completion of the intervention with the aim of assessing intended and unintended impact and longer terms effects. Final and Ex-post evaluations are usually considered summative evaluations that aim at assessing the achievement of results at the end of a programme.

Evaluations can also be distinguished by whether they are undertaken by UNESCO alone or jointly with other partner organizations. Any evaluation can be conducted as a **joint evaluation** and there may be varying degrees of collaboration amongst partners during the evaluation. In most cases, a joint evaluation is conducted in the context of a joint programme where UNESCO is one of several organizations managing a programme component. A joint evaluation can also be a way of meeting different institutional requirements for evaluation, e.g. from UNESCO and from a donor. A **system-wide evaluation** is a joint evaluation involving most or all UN system partners. An example is the evaluation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

**DIAGRAM 2:
EVALUATIONS DURING THE PROGRAMME CYCLE**



1.5 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EVALUATION AT UNESCO

The UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029¹⁰ outlines the roles and responsibilities for evaluation at UNESCO. They are summarized below:

Table 2: Responsibilities for evaluation at UNESCO

IOS Evaluation Office (EVS)

- Serves as the custodian of the evaluation function at UNESCO
- Conducts or commissions corporate evaluations
- Prepares synthetic reviews to assess the quality of UNESCO evaluations and identify recurrent themes
- Provides quality assurance and support to decentralized evaluations
- Develops and facilitates access to evaluation knowledge, guidance and support materials through the Evaluation Knowledge Hub
- Provides evaluation capacity building
- Manages the Evaluation Focal Point (EFP) Network
- Communicates and disseminates evaluation findings
- Tracks the development of management responses and action plans for evaluations

Senior Management (includes Assistant Director-Generals (ADGs) and Directors of Bureaus and Divisions)

- Ensure the allocation of 3% of programme sector operational budget for evaluation in line with the Evaluation Policy
- Appoint an evaluation focal point and support his/her responsibilities as outlined in the [UNESCO Terms of Reference for Evaluation Focal Points \[Guidance #1\]](#)
- Provide the management response to corporate evaluation recommendations under their purview
- Provide assurance that evaluation findings are integrated in knowledge management and decision-making in their respective sectors, programmes or units

Directors and Heads of Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes

- Ensure all voluntary contribution programmes and projects allocate 3% of funds for M&E, and those of more than \$1.5 million carry out (an) external evaluation(s) following the UNESCO Evaluation Policy and related IOS guidance material
- Annually provide the IOS Evaluation Office with the decentralized evaluation plan of the field office or Category 1 Institute under their purview, and all completed evaluation reports for inclusion in the synthetic review
- Appoint an evaluation focal point and support his/her responsibilities as outlined in the UNESCO Terms of Reference for Evaluation Focal Points
- Ensure the management response and action plan to address decentralized evaluation recommendations under their purview, as well as follow-up to these recommendations
- Encourage the use of evaluations, and make all external evaluations commissioned by their field office or institute publicly available and disseminate them

Evaluation Manager

- Responsible for planning, managing and following up on the overall evaluation process
- Ensures that the evaluation is conducted according to plan and meets the deliverables on time
- Acts as the main contact person and coordinates with the evaluation team and the Evaluation Reference Group
- Ensures effective communication with all evaluation stakeholders throughout the process
- Supports evaluation quality assurance
- Supports the evaluation follow up process

Evaluation Focal Points (EFP)

- Act as main point of reference for all evaluation-related matters in their respective administrative unit as outlined in the UNESCO Terms of Reference for Evaluation Focal Points
- Support programme staff in the planning, management and quality assurance of decentralized evaluations
- Ensure their evaluation knowledge and skills remain up to date in particular by completing evaluation trainings
- Support the dissemination and use of evaluation reports and knowledge products
- Participate actively as a member of the EFP community of practice by sharing experience and guidance material with other EFPs

UNESCO staff at HQ and field entities

- Monitor the performance of their respective programmes, including the collection of robust monitoring data for quality evaluations
- If entrusted with managing a decentralized evaluation the staff must reach out to their respective EFP for support
- Use evaluation findings to inform policy, programme and project design
- When consulted, provide input to data collection for evaluation purposes (survey, interviews, focus group discussions, participant in an ERG)

The Evaluation Policy¹¹ presents a Theory of Change for the evaluation function at UNESCO. It provides a comprehensive overview of expected evaluation results in the Organization and includes assumptions for effective evaluation performance. IOS measures evaluation performance in UNESCO periodically through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that provide data on different dimensions of evaluation performance during evaluation planning, implementation and use. The KPIs include evaluation financial resources, evaluation delivery, evaluation quality, completion of evaluation management response, implementation of evaluation recommendations, evaluation training and evaluation coverage. The UNESCO Evaluation Strategy 2022-2029 further explains the KPIs.

1.6 FUNDING FOR EVALUATION AT UNESCO

The UNESCO Evaluation Policy sets an overall target of 3% of programme expenditure from both regular programme resources and voluntary contributions as the recommended minimum level of investment in evaluation. This budget allocation should primarily be used for mid-term and final evaluations and the conduct of baseline studies. It can also contribute to evaluation capacity-building, monitoring activities or national evaluation capacity development.¹²

The allocation of resources for decentralized evaluations, and the timing and nature of planned evaluations should be specified in project documents, evaluation plans and cooperation/ framework agreements with donors. The IOS Evaluation Office encourages

combining evaluation resources from multiple small-scale projects into a larger evaluation on a cross-cutting or thematic topic, provided there is agreement from the donor(s). Such an approach can allow for better learning from the different initiatives while at the same time reducing transaction cost.

UNESCO Programme Sectors contribute 3% of their respective Regular Programme (RP) operational or activity budget for the conduct of corporate evaluations, synthetic reviews, system-wide evaluations, quality assurance and communication activities. This amount also contributes to the IOS Evaluation Office's support to the decentralized function including: developing evaluation capacity of UNESCO staff; managing the UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub; and animating the EFP network.

1.7 PLANNING EVALUATIONS AT UNESCO

At the corporate level, the IOS Evaluation Office develops a biennial corporate evaluation plan in close consultation with UNESCO Programme Sectors. The Evaluation Office takes into consideration coverage of UNESCO's strategic objectives from [the Medium Term Strategy for 2022-2029](#) 41C/4, other emerging organizational priorities and requests from the Executive Board, other governing bodies and senior management.

At the decentralized level, UNESCO entities (Programme Sectors, Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes) must develop an annual evaluation plan for their unit and share it with the IOS Evaluation Office. It is important that the evaluation plans are shared in a timely manner to allow for review and feedback, but also for planning support requirements by the Evaluation Office. A template for the evaluation plan is provided here [\[Guidance #2\]](#). Final evaluation plans should be uploaded on the corporate SISTER database and the Evaluation Marker in SISTER marked accordingly.

Planning for all evaluations is guided by considerations related to budget and other parameters. They are summarized below and further explained in the Evaluation Policy¹³.

All UNESCO initiatives with a budget larger than \$1.5 million USD must commission an independent external evaluation. For initiatives with a budget below \$1.5 million USD, the IOS Evaluation Office also recommends undertaking an independent external evaluation, provided there is adequate financial resources, staff capacity and time. Section 2.1 'Assess evaluability and planned evaluation use' in this Manual provides further guidance on necessary conditions for undertaking a quality evaluation. For any independent external evaluation IOS EVS provides backstopping support and quality assurance during all evaluation stages.

Table 3: Evaluation planning parameters

Parameter	Descriptor/Key question
Budget	Has there been considerable investment (time, funds) in the programme ¹⁴ ?
Relevance	Is the programme of strategic significance? Are there challenges in programme delivery that need to be assessed prior to going forward?
Periodicity and Timing	Has the programme ever been evaluated? Given other developments and upcoming decisions, what is the best timing? Are there upcoming decisions that need to be informed by evaluation evidence?
Knowledge gap	Will the evaluation help fill a critical knowledge gap?
Evaluability	Can the programme be meaningfully evaluated e.g., in terms of available data?
Risks	Are there any risks (environmental, political, economic, financial, structural, organizational) that may prevent the programme from achieving results?
Replication or Scaling Up	Is the programme a pilot and/or an innovative initiative?
Accountability	Are key stakeholders, e.g. donors requesting the evaluation?
Joint Evaluation	Is there an opportunity to evaluate joint activities, projects or programmes?

1.8 THE ROLE OF DONORS IN UNESCO EVALUATIONS

Donors are a key stakeholder in any evaluation. When it comes to evaluation planning, at the programme development stage it is essential to make reference to the UNESCO Evaluation Policy in the project document and share the Policy with donors. The project document must specify the evaluation type, timing and budget for the evaluation. The donor should participate in the evaluation process e.g. through the Evaluation Reference Group (see below section 'Engage evaluation stakeholders'). In cases when the donor envisages a different evaluation modality e.g. a donor-led or joint evaluation, the evaluation manager should seek the advice of the IOS Evaluation Office to discuss the best way forward.

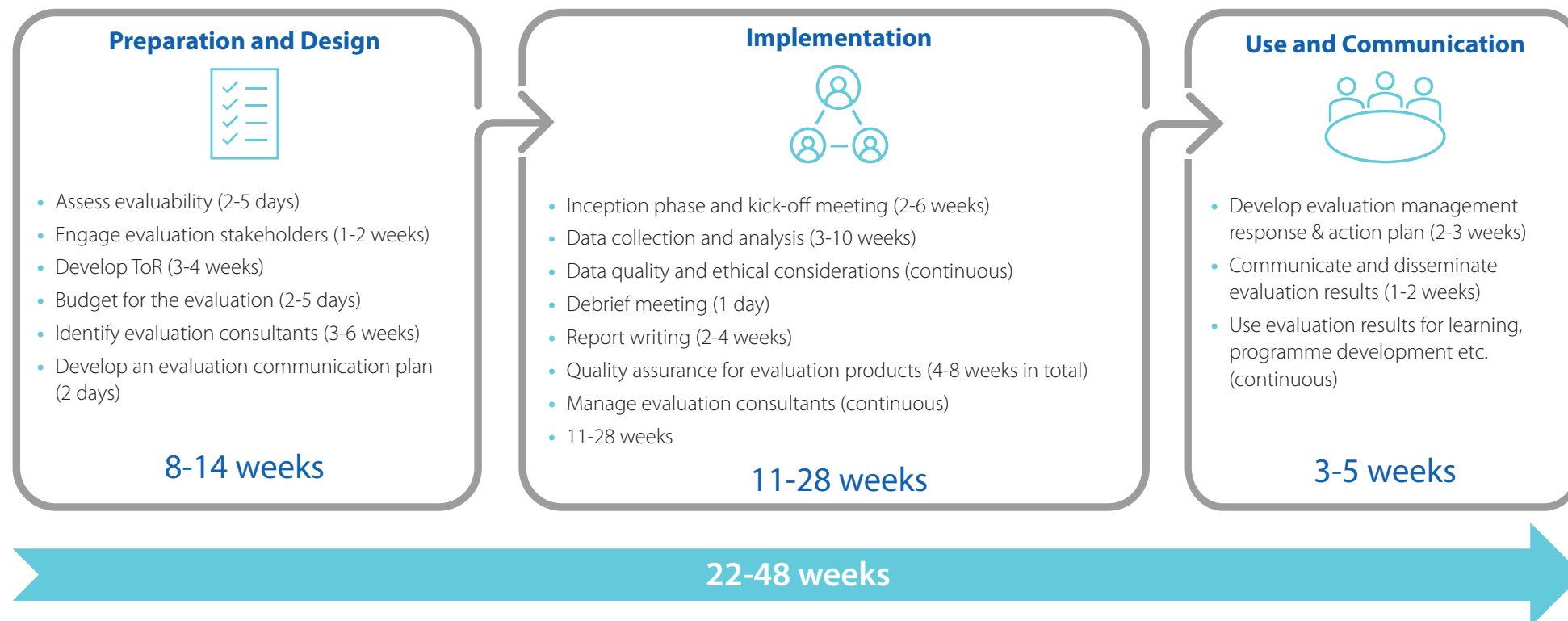
Section 2: Evaluation Preparation and Design

The evaluation process consists of three broad phases: (i) evaluation preparation, (ii) implementation and (iii) use. The process is summarized in Diagram 3 below which also provides indicative time frames for each stage and serves as a basis for developing the overall evaluation timeline with deliverables. The total time required for an evaluation process is not the same as the working days for an evaluation consultant specified in the evaluation Terms of Reference. The time frames vary depending on the scope, complexity, geographical coverage and type (corporate vs. decentralized) of the evaluation.

The evaluation timeline with deliverables is an important tool as it helps to keep the evaluation on track and identify some key parameters for overseeing the work of the evaluation consultant(s). It should include time periods required for feedback on draft evaluation products and should specify responsibilities for quality assurance and approval of evaluation products.

Evaluation quality assurance takes place throughout the process and is explained in detail in the next section 'Evaluation Management and Implementation'.

**DIAGRAM 3:
THE EVALUATION PROCESS**



The evaluation manager is responsible for managing the overall evaluation process and acts as the main contact point for the evaluation team and the Evaluation Reference Group¹⁵. The evaluation manager collaborates closely with the Evaluation Focal Point who supports the evaluation manager in the management and quality assurance of a decentralized evaluation. For corporate evaluations, the evaluation manager is a staff of the IOS Evaluation Office. For decentralized evaluations, the senior manager of the respective Field Office / Institute or the relevant Division appoints the evaluation manager. The evaluation manager must be as independent as possible.¹⁶ Diagram 4 provides an overview of the available guidance and tools during the evaluation preparation stage. Each step is further described below.

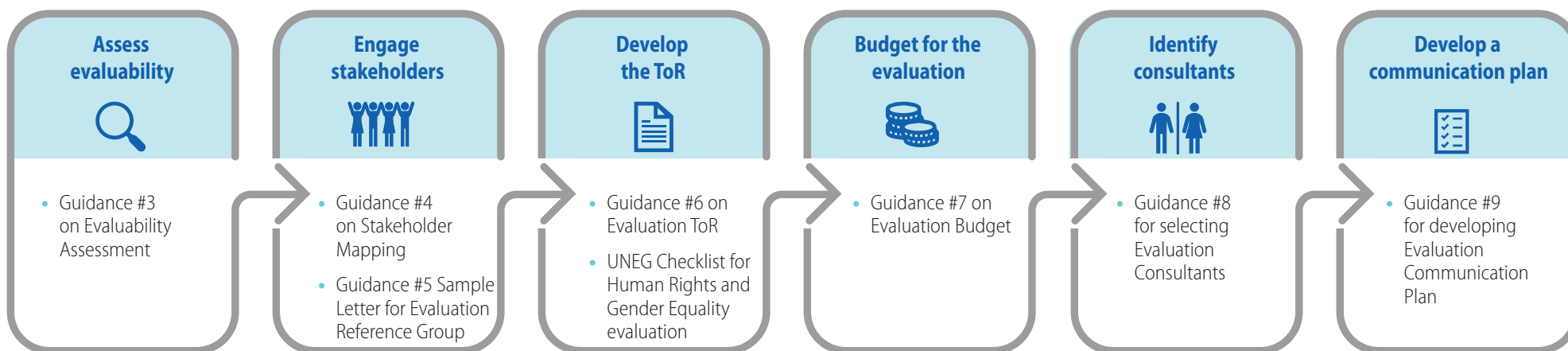
2.1 ASSESS EVALUABILITY AND PLANNED EVALUATION USE



The first step is to undertake a brief evaluability assessment by the evaluation manager to determine to what extent the intervention is ready for an evaluation.¹⁷ The evaluability assessment includes an analysis of the programme Theory of Change, results framework, M&E Framework and its performance and other indicators. It looks at data related to baselines, monitoring information and the conduciveness of the context for the evaluation. Further guidance on the evaluability assessment can be found here [\[Guidance #3\]](#).

If the intervention is considered to be ready for an evaluation, the evaluation manager should reflect on the key stakeholders of the evaluation and on the intended use, the information needs and timing of the evaluation and potential resource implications. For decentralized evaluations, at this stage the evaluation manager should reach out to the IOS Evaluation Office and the Evaluation Focal Point (EFP) to discuss the evaluation process, in particular timing, quality assurance and required support.

**DIAGRAM 4:
GUIDANCE AND TOOLS FOR EVALUATION PREPARATION**



2.2 ENGAGE EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS



Engaging stakeholders early in the evaluation process is essential for ensuring ownership and use of the evaluation¹⁸. It also helps to create a common understanding about what the evaluation can (and cannot) achieve, and the evaluation approach to be taken. Ultimately engaging stakeholders can also support the process of building their own evaluative capacity.

Evaluation stakeholders may include representatives from UNESCO, government, civil society, academia, donors, etc. They are often similar to programme¹⁹ stakeholders as represented in a programme or steering committee.

To identify evaluation stakeholders, it is useful to ask the following questions:

- Who should be involved in the evaluation?
- Who will use the evaluation results and when?
- Who else is potentially interested in the evaluation?
- Who will potentially be affected by the evaluation?
- Who should be consulted for the evaluation?

Primary intended users will likely make decisions or apply learnings based on the evaluation findings. In addition, there are potential secondary users who might use the evaluation lessons in an indirect manner e.g. to develop a similar programme in a different context. Having clarity on evaluation stakeholders will help in targeting the communication and dissemination of evaluation findings to achieve greater use, see below section 'Develop an evaluation communication plan'. For further guidance see the Template for Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis [\[Guidance #4\]](#). The Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis is a useful instrument that will be used throughout the evaluation process including for evaluation sampling, evaluation communication etc.

It is good practice to engage evaluation stakeholders through the formal establishment of an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG).²⁰ The ERG provides advice and quality assurance at different stages of the evaluation process. The main responsibilities of the ERG are the following:

- Provide relevant information to the evaluation team including programme documentation and contacts for potential interview partners

- Provide input to and quality assurance of the draft evaluation products: a) Draft Evaluation ToR; b) Draft Evaluation inception report; c) Draft Evaluation report; d) Preliminary Evaluation recommendations
- Support communication and dissemination of evaluation results
- Support implementation and follow up of evaluation recommendations as appropriate

The ERG should be balanced in terms of professional background, gender, functional and geographical position to ensure that a diversity of individuals is involved, and that the evaluation covers relevant issues from various perspectives. It is the role of the evaluation manager to ensure there is a clear understanding amongst the reference group members on how and when they will contribute to the evaluation process.

The ERG members should ideally be invited by the Director or Head of Sector, Field Office or Institute. This will increase ownership for the evaluation and help to empower the ERG.²¹ The invitation must outline the expected roles and responsibilities for ERG members. Please see here [\[Guidance #5\]](#) an example invitation for participation in an ERG.

On a practical note, the participation of all stakeholders in the evaluation process can be challenging to manage and has cost and time implications. It is important to carefully balance a highly participatory and inclusive approach against the challenge of managing the evaluation process efficiently. Clear and ongoing communication with evaluation stakeholders from the beginning is key for ensuring effective stakeholder engagement.

2.3 DEVELOP THE TERMS OF REFERENCE



A comprehensive Terms of Reference (ToR) document is the foundation of a high-quality evaluation. The ToR provide the parameters for 1) For what purpose and for whom the evaluation is conducted; 2) What will be assessed and how the evaluation will be undertaken; 3) Who will be involved; 4) When will the milestones be reached and how it will be used. The evaluation manager develops the evaluation ToR in consultation with the ERG. The ToR must include the following sections:

Table 4: Outline of Evaluation ToR

Section	Description
1. Background	Provides an overview of the intervention incl. main components, implementation status, partners, budget, Theory of Change and context of the intervention
2. Purpose and Use	Describes why the evaluation is conducted, how the evaluation results will be used and by whom
3. Objectives and Scope	Outlines the evaluation criteria and related evaluation questions. Defines the time frame, geographical, programmatic and thematic coverage, and the boundaries of the scope
4. Design and Methodology	Outlines the suggested evaluation design ²² and methods for data collection and analysis, with a focus on mixed methods combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analysis
5. Roles and Responsibilities	Specifies the evaluation governance and management arrangements, roles and responsibilities
6. Deliverables and Timeline	Describes the expected evaluation products and timelines for delivery, reviews and quality assurance, communication requirements and products
7. Required Qualifications	Specifies the skills, experience, qualifications and other competencies that the consultant(s) / consulting firm will require to conduct the evaluation effectively
8. Annexes	UNESCO Evaluation Manual UNESCO Evaluation Report Quality Checklist ²³ UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation ²⁴ UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation ²⁵ List of relevant documents and websites

Evaluation Criteria and questions

The evaluation criteria and related questions constitute the backbone of the ToR. The criteria provide the broad categories for the evaluation analysis and the framework for organizing the evaluation questions. The standard evaluation criteria²⁶ used in the UN system and by most development agencies are Relevance, Coherence, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability. They are summarized below, and further details are provided in Annex 2 of this Manual 'Glossary of Key Terms'.

Table 5: Evaluation criteria definitions

Criteria	Key Question
Relevance	Is the intervention doing the right things?
Coherence	How well does the intervention fit?
Effectiveness	Is the intervention achieving its objectives?
Efficiency	How well are resources being used?
Impact	What difference does the intervention make?
Sustainability	Will the benefits last?

The systematic use of standard evaluation criteria provides a consistent analytical framework and allows for better comparison and synthesis across evaluations. However, the evaluation manager should apply the criteria thoughtfully and contextualize them to the individual evaluation. In consideration of the purpose, use and available resources, not all evaluation criteria will always be applied for every evaluation. The evaluation manager should use the evaluation criteria to develop specific evaluation questions that are tailored to the specifics of the intervention. To allow for a more focused evaluation, it is recommended to limit the overall number of questions to about three to five key questions under each criteria.

Gender Equality constitutes a UNESCO Global Priority and an important principle in the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards²⁷. It is critical to specify in the TOR how a human rights and gender perspective will be integrated into both the evaluation analysis and process²⁸. The Summary checklist in the 2011 UNEG Guidance “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance”, Annex 1 provides details on how to ensure an HRGE perspective and is available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>.

The evaluation manager should share the draft ToR with IOS EVS, the respective EFP and the ERG for input and comments and share again a revised final version based on the feedback received. This final ToR provides the basis for the advertisement aimed at recruiting the evaluation consultant or team, see section below. The Guidance for developing Evaluation ToR provides more details on this stage of the process [Guidance #6]. When developing the Evaluation ToR the evaluation manager should also consult [Guidance #12 on Evaluation Reports](#) and [Guidance #13 on the Evaluation Report Quality Checklist](#). They provide details on expected structure and content of the final evaluation report.

2.4 BUDGET FOR THE EVALUATION



As mentioned in previous section ‘Funding for Evaluation in UNESCO’, the UNESCO Evaluation Policy sets a target of 3% of the project/programme budget for evaluation. In some circumstances it may be necessary to allocate more than 3% for evaluation purposes, for example in the case of high-risk projects, pilot projects or evaluations that require numerous country visits. For very large projects e.g. with a budget of \$ 20 million or more the 3% allocation for evaluation may not be warranted and hence can be adjusted accordingly. In such cases the evaluation manager should contact the IOS Evaluation Office to discuss the best way forward.

It is useful to break down the costs for a specific evaluation into consultant fees, travel costs, per diems, and costs for communication, dissemination, and translation as necessary. The evaluation manager should also factor in costs for an evaluation inception meeting at the beginning and an evaluation debrief meeting at the end of the evaluation with the ERG, and any costs for developing or disseminating evaluation knowledge products. [Guidance #7a] provides a sample budget for an evaluation, it is also available ExcelSheet on the Evaluation [Knowledge Hub](#) [Guidance #7b]. To increase cost

efficiencies the evaluation manager should consider remote/online modalities and use of local consultants when useful and to the extent possible. The evaluation budget should include provisions for contingency plans as appropriate, e.g. to factor in risks such as due to COVID 19 restrictions.

2.5 IDENTIFY EVALUATION CONSULTANTS



The experience and skills of the evaluation consultant(s) are key factors that will determine the quality and credibility of the evaluation. Evaluation consultants must bring both technical expertise and soft skills such as cultural sensitivity, communication, report writing, and facilitation skills to effectively engage with different stakeholders during the evaluation process. They must also be independent which means having no preconception and no previous or current involvement in the initiative being evaluated, or links to the people who are managing the initiative.

If resources allow, an evaluation team should be selected that allows for a broader and complimentary range of expertise in evaluation methods and thematic areas. Expertise on gender equality and human rights is key. Whenever possible, national experts should be engaged as they provide a better understanding of the local context and can facilitate local buy-in and ownership of the evaluation. Evaluation teams should be balanced across gender, ethnicity and geographical representation.

The selection of the evaluation consultant(s) must be impartial, fair and transparent and take place through an open and competitive process²⁹. The evaluation manager should contact the IOS Evaluation Office and the EFP for support with publishing the advertisement for an adequate period of time and/or disseminating the evaluation ToR e.g. to regional and national evaluation networks. The IOS Evaluation Office also provides support with the selection of the evaluation consultant(s). It is important to factor in sufficient time in the evaluation timeline for advertising, assessment of proposals and recruitment, in line with the required type of procurement.

Once a consultant or team of consultants has been identified, the evaluation manager must undertake due diligence in checking the references. When contracting the consultant(s) the UNEG HRGE Guidance³⁰, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation³¹ and the UNESCO Evaluation Report Quality Checklist³² should be provided with the contract. For further details see the Guidance for selecting Evaluation Consultants [Guidance #8].

2.6 DEVELOP AN EVALUATION COMMUNICATION PLAN



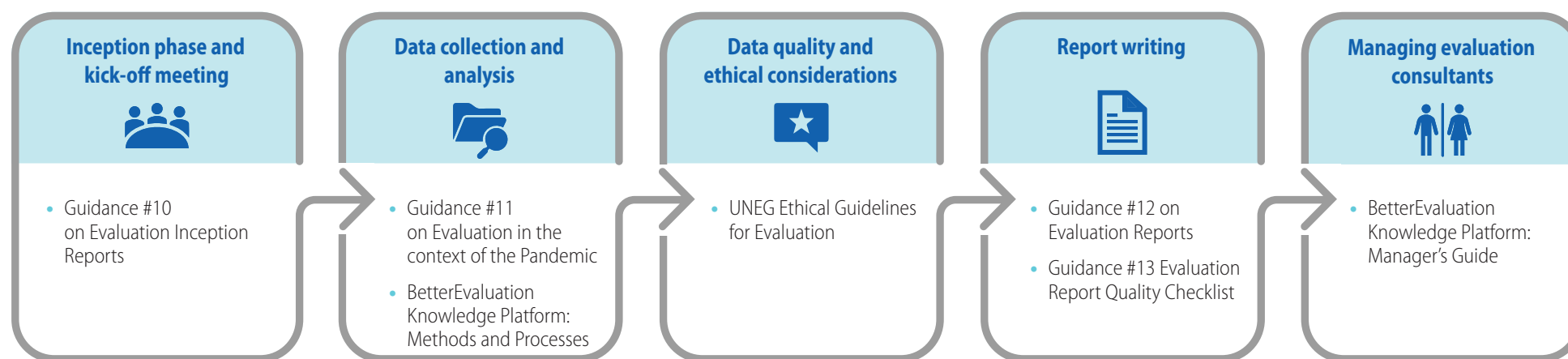
During the evaluation preparation stage, the evaluation manager should reflect about how the evaluation results will reach potential users and therefore how findings and recommendations will be communicated. Different stakeholders will use the evaluation findings differently: Whereas some stakeholders will read the full report, others will prefer to read a summary account of the evaluation findings. Hence evaluation outputs need be tailored to the respective audiences. There are various channels and formats for evaluation communication products in addition to the report e.g. evaluation briefs, infographics, presentations and webinars, videos, and social media. They are further explained in the section ‘Evaluation Use and Communication’ later in this Manual.

An Evaluation Communication Plan which is based on the Evaluation Stakeholder Mapping [Guidance #4, [HYPERLINK](#)] is a useful tool for facilitating the dissemination of evaluation results. It is recommended to set aside a budget for evaluation communication and if possible, include communication products as deliverables in the evaluation ToR. For further details see the Template for a Communication Plan [\[Guidance #9\]](#)

Section 3: Evaluation Implementation

Diagram 5 provides an overview of the available guidance and tools during the evaluation implementation stage. Each step is further explained below.

**DIAGRAM 5:
GUIDANCE AND TOOLS FOR EVALUATION IMPLEMENTATION**



3.1 INCEPTION PHASE AND KICK-OFF MEETING



The inception phase is an important stage to clarify the evaluation process between the evaluation manager, the EFP, the evaluation consultant(s) and the ERG. During the inception phase the evaluation manager should organize a kick-off/inception meeting with the evaluation consultant(s) and the ERG. The purpose of the inception meeting is to introduce the consultant(s) and discuss the focus and approach for the evaluation including accessibility of data and potential limitations.

During the inception phase the evaluation consultant(s) prepare(s) the evaluation inception report. It presents the conceptual framework for the evaluation based on the understanding of the ToR, an initial document review and discussions during the inception phase. The inception report outlines the methods for data collection and analysis and a

timeline for the evaluation with deliverables, roles and responsibilities. A key element of the inception report is the Evaluation Matrix which specifies the respective sources and methods for collecting data on each evaluation question. When preparing the Evaluation Matrix, the evaluation consultant(s) should review the programme M&E Framework for potential data sources and collection methods. [The UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation Inception Reports \[Guidance #10\]](#) provides further guidance including a sample template for the Evaluation Matrix. The inception meeting provides a good opportunity to present the inception report. The evaluation consultant(s) should also consult [Guidance #12 on Evaluation Reports](#) and [Guidance #13 on the Evaluation Report Quality Checklist](#) when developing the Evaluation Inception Report. They provide details on expected structure and content of the final evaluation report.

Sampling

Sampling is a method to obtain representative estimates on a large group, referred to as “the universe”, from a smaller sub-set of that group. There are three clusters of sampling options: Probability sampling (using random or quasi-random options to select the sample); Purposive sampling (selecting units based on predetermined characteristics); and Convenience sampling (using samples which are readily available). The sampling of stakeholders should take into consideration the Stakeholder Mapping [\[Guidance #4\]](#) and be as representative as possible. The purpose is to obtain an illustrative but not necessarily statistically representative sample of stakeholders who are likely to provide relevant evidence for the evaluation.³³ The potential limitations of the sample should be discussed between the evaluation manager and the evaluation consultant(s) and stated clearly in the methodology section in the evaluation inception report.

A list of potential sample criteria is provided below:

Table 6: Potential criteria for sampling

Criteria	Example
Type of partner	Government, International/Local NGO, Academia, Donor, UN agency etc.
Budget	Programmes with large vs. small budgets
Geography	Programmes/stakeholders from different countries/regions
Maturity	Programmes/stakeholders at early vs. late implementation stage
Type of intervention	Normative and Policy ‘upstream’ work vs. programmatic and operational ‘downstream’ work
Performance	Perceived as well-performing vs. perceived as poorly performing programmes ³⁴

In the case of decentralized evaluations, the Evaluation Manager together with the EFP is responsible for the initial quality review of the draft inception report. Once the comments from the first review are addressed, IOS EVS and the ERG review the revised draft inception report. For corporate evaluations, IOS EVS staff and the ERG review the draft inception report. Based on the comments received the evaluation consultant(s) prepare the final version of the inception report.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS



A wide range of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods is available for data collection, and each has advantages and disadvantages. In addition, there is a growing range of information and communications technology (ICT) tools available for data collection and analysis. These new tools potentially facilitate the collection and processing of huge quantities of data, often remotely. Table 7 below on “Examples of data collection methods” provides an overview. In the case of an ongoing pandemic or crisis context, the data collection approach needs to be adapted accordingly e.g. through conducting interviews primarily remotely by phone or video call. The UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation in the context of the Pandemic [\[Guidance #11\]](#) gives further detail on how to plan and manage evaluations in such a context.

Table 7: Examples of data collection methods

‘Traditional’ data collection methods	ICT-based data collection methods
Desk review	Mobile data collection
Key informant interview	Remote sensing
Focus group discussion	Geographic information systems (GIS)
On-site observation	Big data analytics
Case study	
Survey	

The evaluation consultant(s) should choose the most suitable methods depending on the purpose of the evaluation and the most important questions it needs to answer, rather than starting data collection with a pre-determined set of methods and tools. A wide range of resources and literature on evaluation methods is available hence this Evaluation Manual does not discuss specific methods in detail³⁵. On a general note, all evaluations should apply a mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis, and triangulate (cross-compare) data from different sources to strengthen quality, validity and reliability. Regardless of the methods, the evaluator(s) must always follow principles of data privacy and ethics.

It is the responsibility of the evaluation manager together with the respective office, sector or unit to provide logistical support to the evaluator(s) and facilitate data collection including by compiling background documents, providing contact details, scheduling interviews, providing local transport, etc. The evaluation manager should not participate in interviews or focus group discussions as this would interfere with the independence of the process, particularly when (s)he is also the manager of the programme that is being evaluated.

3.3 DATA QUALITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS



In many cases there may be data limitations for the evaluation through the absence of a programme theory of change, M&E framework, baseline and monitoring data, insufficient disaggregation of data by gender or location, staff turnover, etc. The evaluator(s) should mention these limitations to the EFP and ERG and propose ways to address them. To ensure a high-quality data process, the evaluator(s) should test the data collection instruments (interview protocol, survey questionnaire, etc.) prior to rolling them out from the perspective of validity and reliability. Validity refers to whether a data collection tool is measuring what it intends to measure. Reliability refers to the extent to which the same findings would result after using the same data collection method multiple times.

Ethical principles, inclusion and gender equality considerations, and cultural sensitivity must be maintained during the entire data collection process. This includes engaging respectfully with evaluation stakeholders, considering language requirements, adopting measures to guarantee the physical and psychological safety of respondents, confidentiality of data, informed consent, etc. See the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation³⁶ for details.

3.4 DEBRIEF MEETING

Towards the end of the primary data collection stage, the evaluator(s) should present the preliminary findings to the ERG in a debrief meeting or workshop. The purpose is to discuss and validate the emerging findings and potential evaluation recommendations. This validation process is key to ensuring buy-in for the evaluation results and for developing feasible and actionable recommendations.

3.5 REPORT WRITING



According to the UNEG Norms and Standards (2016), “the final evaluation report should be logically structured and contain evidence-based findings, conclusions and recommendations. The products emanating from evaluations should be designed to the needs of its intended users.”

The evaluator(s) is expected to submit a draft evaluation report that is complete and well presented in terms of structure, logic, content and readability. It should be concisely written and facilitate reading through graphic illustrations via tables, charts, diagrams etc. The report should contain evidence-based findings, conclusions and recommendations and be free of information that is not relevant for the overall analysis. Based on good practice, below is a proposed structure that helps to produce a succinct evaluation report:

Table 8: Evaluation report structure

Section	Content
Executive Summary	A stand-alone section that includes key information on all sections of the report
Introduction	Describes the intervention in its context and indicates why the evaluation is conducted
Purpose	Indicates the objective of the evaluation, intended use and users
Methodology	Describes the evaluation approach, methods and quality assurance mechanisms, as well as the limitations
Findings	Provides evidence-based answers to the evaluation questions in relation to the different evaluation criteria. In each section, the findings should be presented in one paragraph upfront, followed by supporting evidence and analysis
Conclusion	Flowing logically from the previous findings, provides a higher-level analysis of cross-cutting, underlying and systemic factors of success and failure of the intervention
Recommendations	Based on the conclusions, provides clear and actionable recommendations and suggested action points to improve different aspects (strategic, organizational, operational etc.) of the intervention
Annexes	Includes the Evaluation ToRs, Evaluation Matrix, List of persons interviewed, Literature list, Data collection instruments and protocols, Evaluators biodata, Theory of Change, Results Framework, M&E Framework, Case study report(s) if applicable

The evaluator(s) should number the paragraphs in the evaluation report to allow clear referencing between the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations. The main body of the report should have a maximum of 30-40 pages. Please refer to the UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation Reports [\[Guidance #12\]](#) and the UNESCO Evaluation Report Quality Checklist [\[Guidance #13\]](#) for further details. The evaluation manager should share these resources in advance with the evaluation consultant(s).

The evaluation manager reviews the draft report internally before sharing externally with the Evaluation Reference Group, as explained in below section ‘Quality assurance for evaluation products’. Based on the review process the evaluation consultant(s) prepare the final version of the evaluation report.

3.6 QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR EVALUATION PRODUCTS

Quality assurance ensures compliance with evaluation norms and standards throughout the evaluation process. It includes both the evaluation products developed at different stages and the process of how an evaluation is conducted. The active engagement of evaluation stakeholders throughout the process is not only required for quality assurance but also fosters ownership contributing to a more credible and useful evaluation³⁷.

Evaluation quality assurance takes place at different levels and the responsibilities vary between corporate and decentralized evaluations. They are summarized in the table below. The quality assurance steps are similar for the Draft Evaluation Inception Report and for the Draft Evaluation Report.

Regarding guidance for quality assurance, the evaluation manager responsible for developing the draft ToR and those responsible for the review should consult the Guidance for developing Evaluation ToR [\[Guidance #6\]](#). For the draft evaluation inception report, the Guidance on Inception Reports [\[Guidance #10\]](#) provides the reference for the person(s) responsible for writing the inception report and those responsible for the review.

For the draft evaluation report, the person(s) responsible for writing the report and those responsible for the review should consult the UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation Reports [\[Guidance #12\]](#) and the UNESCO Evaluation Report Quality Checklist [\[Guidance #13\]](#). The Quality Checklist provides details on key elements to consider in each section of the report and the rating system for UNESCO evaluation reports. It is important to note that

Table 9: Evaluation quality assurance process

	Decentralized evaluations	Corporate evaluations
Terms of Reference		
Development draft ToR	Evaluation manager + EFP	IOS EVS staff in consultation with the respective programme sector/entity
Review draft ToR	EFP, ERG and IOS EVS	IOS EVS and ERG
Finalization ToR	Evaluation manager + EFP	IOS EVS staff
Evaluation Inception Report / Evaluation Report		
Development 1st draft report	Evaluation consultant(s)	IOS EVS staff/ Evaluation consultant(s)
Review 1st draft report	Evaluation manager, EFP and IOS EVS	IOS EVS Evaluation manager
Development 2nd draft report	Evaluation consultant(s)	IOS EVS staff/ Evaluation consultant(s)
Review 2nd draft report	Evaluation manager, EFP and ERG	IOS EVS and ERG
Finalization report	Evaluation consultant(s)	EVS staff/ Evaluation consultant(s)
Final report approval	Senior Management at Sector, Field Office or Institute	Head of Evaluation Office

the assessment for the parameter on “Gender, Human Rights and Inclusion” also serves for reporting on the Evaluation Performance Indicator in the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women³⁸ and for the assessment of the UN Strategy for Disability Inclusion (UNDIS)³⁹.

To help ensure a transparent and credible review process, once the evaluator(s) receive the comments on the draft evaluation report, the evaluator(s) should record in a comments matrix how each comment has been addressed, and for those that have not been addressed, the rationale.

On an annual basis, IOS EVS reports on evaluation quality through the IOS Annual Report and the Annual Synthetic Review. The Annual Synthetic Review is undertaken by an external quality reviewer who assesses all evaluation reports completed in the previous year against the UNESCO quality checklist. For every report the sections are scored on a scale from highly satisfactory, satisfactory, partly satisfactory to unsatisfactory. The weighted scores from the sections are then combined into a quality score for the overall evaluation report. The UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029⁴⁰ provides further details on elements required to ensure the quality of UNESCO evaluations.

3.7 MANAGING EVALUATION CONSULTANTS



One of the key responsibilities of the evaluation manager is effective management of the evaluation consultant(s). This includes being responsive to the evaluation consultant(s), manage related risks and provide a foundation of mutual trust and respect. It also comprises regular communication between the evaluation consultant(s), the evaluation client, the evaluation reference group and other key stakeholders. There may be specific protocols for interacting with stakeholders e.g. government officials or vulnerable populations that need to be observed. The evaluation manager should help the evaluation consultant with following such protocols and ensure that the collection and analysis of information is done in an inclusive, culturally sensitive and ethical manner.

There are potential risks that could arise during the management of an evaluation e.g. time proves too short for data collection, information is withheld by stakeholders, stakeholders are alienated by the evaluator, the evaluator does not meet the ToR, etc. In these cases, the evaluation manager should reach out to IOS EVS to discuss and jointly identify ways to address the issue. Further information on issues to watch out for when managing an evaluation is provided in the [“Manager’s guide to evaluation” on the BetterEvaluation Knowledge Platform](#).

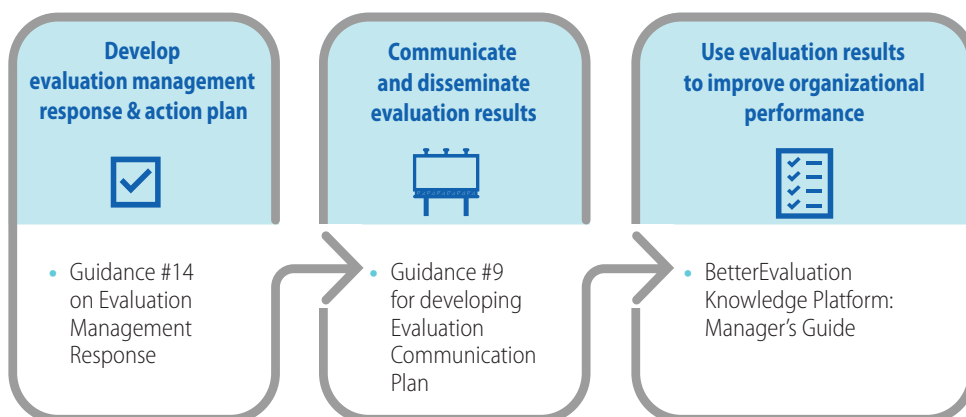
Section 4: Evaluation Use and Communication

Making the evaluation report accessible to a broad public is the first essential step for facilitating evaluation use but also for ensuring transparency⁴¹. Once the evaluation report is finalized, the evaluation manager should upload the final report on the UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub⁴² within 2 weeks after completion. The Evaluation Office makes all corporate and decentralized evaluations available on the IOS public website⁴³. To facilitate evaluation communication the respective entity (sector, Field Office) should also upload the decentralized evaluation report on its website.

It is important recalling that a participatory evaluation process makes a significant difference in terms of how the evaluation results are used. The active engagement of stakeholders throughout the evaluation is critical to ensuring ownership, help build evaluative capacity and make evaluation a tool for learning and evidence-based decision-making.

Diagram 6 provides an overview of the available guidance and tools for supporting evaluation use and communication. Each step is further explained below.

**DIAGRAM 6:
GUIDANCE AND TOOLS FOR EVALUATION USE**



4.1 DEVELOP AN EVALUATION MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN



All UNESCO evaluations must have a management response.⁴⁴ The purpose of the management response is to strengthen the use of the evaluation findings and promote organizational learning and accountability from evaluation results. Senior Management is responsible for completing the evaluation management response and its action plan and should take an active role in implementing evaluation recommendations and applying lessons to improve current and forthcoming strategies, policies or programmes.

The completion of the evaluation management response and the implementation of evaluation recommendations (the action plan) constitute UNESCO Evaluation Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are monitored by IOS EVS on a biannual basis.

The template for the management response can be found here [\[Guidance #14\]](#). The evaluation management response tool indicates to what extent management agrees with the evaluation recommendations, and the type of action that will be taken by whom and by when. It is important to formulate a management response that is actionable and owned by the evaluation client(s). Priorities for action should be clearly stated. The active engagement of stakeholders during the development of the management response helps to ensure ownership. IOS EVS is available to support the review of the draft evaluation management response. The timeline for formulating a management response is 2 weeks. The action plan should be prepared and submitted to IOS EVS four (4) weeks after finalization of the evaluation report.

4.2 COMMUNICATE AND DISSEMINATE EVALUATION RESULTS



Effective communication and dissemination of evaluation results is key for promoting learning, knowledge generation and evidence-based decision-making. It also contributes to greater accountability and trust amongst partners towards UNESCO.

A tailored communication plan [\[Guidance #9\]](#) is central to supporting the use of evaluation. As indicated in the previous section 2.6 'Develop an evaluation communication plan' it

should be developed during the evaluation preparation stage based on the Evaluation Stakeholder Mapping [Guidance #4]. A communication plan needs to be tailored to the different stakeholders of each evaluation and should discuss the following elements:

Table 10: Elements for evaluation communication plan

Element	Key question
Intended users	Who are the audiences for the evaluation findings?
Timing	When and by whom are the evaluation findings required e.g. for planning, decision-making and learning?
Barriers to use	What are potential barriers to use (e.g. negative evaluation findings) and how can they be addressed?
Format	Which formats are most effective for communicating evaluation findings to the different audiences?
Monitoring use	What are the mechanisms for tracking the use of evaluation findings?

There are many ways for packaging evaluation results into user-friendly knowledge products that are targeted to different audiences. Visualization of evaluation data plays a key role in all approaches. Examples of communication formats going beyond the ‘traditional’ evaluation report include:

- Evaluation briefs
- Policy briefs
- Infographics
- Quarterly/Annual reports
- Newsletters and bulletins
- Videos
- Photo stories
- Posters
- etc.

The various evaluation products can be presented and discussed through various channels e.g.:

- Workshops and webinars
- Retreats and learning events
- External and internal websites
- Social media platforms
- Seminars and thematic conferences
- Meetings of governing bodies
- Donor meetings
- Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Whenever possible, the evaluation manager should seek advice from a communication colleague/ expert to develop and roll out the evaluation communication plan.

4.3 USE EVALUATION RESULTS TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE



An organization with a strong evaluation culture uses evaluation results to improve its performance and embraces evaluation as instrument for learning, knowledge generation and evidence-based decision-making. This requires demonstrated senior management leadership and commitment and supportive organizational systems and processes that facilitate the use of evaluation results to improve performance⁴⁵.

There are many opportunities for using evaluation results to share lessons from past experience and to inform ongoing or new strategies, projects and programmes, for example:

- Evaluation recommendations and lessons are integrated in new policies, strategies and programme initiatives
- Evaluation results are systematically and widely shared across the organization; and feed into a thematic, organization-wide knowledge base
- Evaluations results feed into synthetic and/or thematic reviews, and feature in UNESCO Implementation Report (IR) and Strategic Results Report (SRR)

- Evaluation management response and action plan become an integral part of the strategic direction of the respective entity
- Evaluation findings are highlighted in planning and reporting documents for governing bodies and donors and during meetings of the Executive Board, donors etc.
- Learning events are organized to discuss future practices and strategy using evaluation results
- Senior managers regularly stress the importance of evaluation evidence and ask for it to support management decisions
- Evaluation and RBM training are integrated into regular manager and staff training
- Evaluations feed into SDG Voluntary National Reviews and SDG VNR synthesis reports

All UNESCO staff are responsible for promoting evaluations that are timely, objective, credible and relevant and provide the basis for systematic reflection, learning and evidence-based decision-making. Further ideas on how to promote the use of evaluation are provided in the [“Manager’s guide to evaluation” on the BetterEvaluation Knowledge Platform](#).

Annex 1: Evaluation Guidance and Tools

The Evaluation Guidance and Tools presented here are also available as Word-documents on the [UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub - Guidelines & Tools](#).

Section 1: Evaluation at UNESCO

1. UNESCO Terms of Reference for Evaluation Focal Points

Background

1. The [UNESCO Evaluation Policy](#) provides a normative framework for ensuring a stronger and more integrated evaluation system within UNESCO. The policy defines the evaluation system as consisting of two distinct yet complementary types of evaluation: corporate evaluations conducted/managed by the IOS Evaluation Office and decentralized evaluations managed by UNESCO programme sectors, Field Offices, or Category 1 institutes.
2. In 2016, the Evaluation Focal Point Network was formally established with the nomination of focal points and alternates in all UNESCO Field Offices, Category 1 Institutes and Programme Sectors at Headquarters.
3. Today the network is comprised of over 75 trained Evaluation Focal Points and Alternates. A Community of Practice was created on MS Teams as an online platform offering a dedicated space for sharing resources, as well as experiences on evaluation practice amongst Evaluation Focal Points and the IOS Evaluation Office. The list of Evaluation Focal Points and Alternates is available on [the IOS Evaluation Knowledge Hub](#).

Rationale and Purpose

4. Advancing independent inquiry through a more rigorous evaluation practice across a broader spectrum of UNESCO projects is critical to enhancing results-based management, promoting organizational learning and increasing transparency and accountability.
5. A key challenge emerging from different IOS studies⁴⁶ and initiatives to strengthen decentralized evaluation practices has been the lack of a formal structure to ensure a more coordinated approach to planning, management, using and reporting of decentralized evaluations. Moreover, the capacities for managing decentralized evaluations remain uneven across the UNESCO system.

6. In light of these challenges, **the evaluation focal point network** was established for the purpose of strengthening evaluation capacities at UNESCO and improving the overall quality and use of decentralized evaluations. Other potential benefits of the network to the Organization include overall higher quality evaluations, thus better evaluative evidence and learning on how programmes are making a difference; greater visibility of the Organization's work through more effective communication of evaluation findings; and better outreach to key partners and donors thereby creating opportunities for using evaluative evidence for enhancing resource mobilization.

Roles and responsibilities

7. The UNESCO Evaluation Policy highlights that evaluation is a shared function requiring the cooperation of various actors. The Policy (Chapter V) provides a comprehensive description of the respective roles and responsibilities for evaluation. Below is a summary of responsibilities for each actor in the UNESCO evaluation system.

Evaluation Focal Points

8. **The primary role of EFPs is to help improve the quality of decentralized evaluations by acting as the main point of reference for all evaluation-related matters in their respective administrative unit.** EFPs are *not responsible for undertaking external evaluations* themselves; only independent evaluators should be commissioned to undertake external evaluations.
9. EFP responsibilities are to:
 - Support programme staff in the management of decentralized evaluations through quality assurance of the evaluation process and its deliverables, namely the draft and final Terms of Reference, draft and final Inception Report, draft and final Evaluation Report, and Communication outputs.
 - Participate actively as a member of the EFP Community of Practice by sharing experience and good practices with IOS and other EFPs, and by disseminating relevant knowledge and guidance material to other colleagues in their respective units;

- Support decentralized evaluation use by: (a) uploading all completed decentralized evaluation reports in the Database of Evaluation Reports on the [IOS Evaluation Knowledge Hub](#); (b) disseminating decentralized evaluation reports and specific lessons learned and findings within their respective Office / Sector / Category 1 Institute, relevant professional networks, donors, and national authorities; (c) assisting programme specialists in dissemination efforts (e.g. via workshops, newsletters, social media); (d) supporting the dissemination of IOS corporate evaluation reports and knowledge products;
- Support decentralized evaluation planning by: (a) liaising with programme specialists during the project planning phase to ensure an adequate budget for evaluation; and (b) uploading and maintaining an annual decentralized evaluation plan of all extrabudgetary and regular programme projects within their respective Office / Sector / Institute.
- Regularly update their evaluation knowledge, skills and competencies by completing the evaluation online training and participating in other evaluation-related trainings and webinars offered by IOS as well as other training opportunities.

Evaluation Office of the Division of Internal Oversight Service

10. IOS is the custodian of the evaluation function and responsible for establishing an effective evaluation system at UNESCO to promote organizational learning and accountability for results. While the Evaluation Office is directly accountable for the conduct and quality of corporate evaluations, it shares joint responsibility with other UNESCO entities for establishing an effective decentralized evaluation system. To this end, IOS Evaluation Office staff will support EFPs in providing overall support and quality assurance to decentralized evaluations. IOS Evaluation Office staff have designated responsibilities for a portfolio of Field Offices and sectors as outlined in the [IOS Evaluation Knowledge Hub](#).

EFP Direct Supervisors and Directors/Heads of Field Offices and Institutes

11. UNESCO senior management and direct supervisors of EFPs (ADGs, Directors / Heads of Field Offices and Institutes) are expected to:
 - offer leadership by creating an enabling environment, which recognizes the importance of evaluation as a key accountability and learning mechanism;
 - ensure the allocation of 3% of programme sector operational budget for evaluation in line with the Evaluation Policy;

- ensure that evaluations are planned for, conducted and followed-up per the requirements set out in the UNESCO Evaluation Policy;
- support EFPs in the discharge of their responsibilities by including the EFP role in the staff performance objectives in My Talent, and recognizing their achievements in their Annual Staff Performance Review;
- make publicly available and disseminate all external evaluations commissioned by their Field Office or Institute;
- provide the management response to evaluation recommendations under their purview and assurance that evaluation findings are integrated in their respective sectors, programmes or units;
- encourage the use of evaluations by reflecting on lessons learned and sharing evaluation reports for formulating new projects

EFP eligibility requirements

12. At least one EFP and preferably an alternate shall be designated by the respective ADG / Director / Head in the Major Programmes at Headquarters, UNESCO Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes. In offices with M&E officers (s)he should be appointed as EFP to maximize use of existing staff expertise. EFPs and alternates must be full-time staff members. No prior formal professional experience or knowledge of evaluation is required.
13. It is mandatory for EFPs/Alternates to have completed the evaluation management training offered [on the HRM MyTalent platform](#). Furthermore, EFPs/Alternates will be required to fully manage one external evaluation, with coaching and backstopping provided by the IOS Evaluation Office, in order to complete their initial training. Subsequently, EFPs / Alternates are strongly encouraged to manage at least one external evaluation per year in order to maintain their EFP status.
14. Staff members interested in being an EFP should express their interest to their supervisor. Programme sectors, Field Offices and Category 1 Institutes should compile a list of candidates whose profiles suit the requirements described above and preferably include both women and men. In addition to the primary EFP, the respective administrative units are invited to propose a maximum of two alternates from the above established list, while taking into consideration gender balance.
15. Programme Sector ADGs, Directors / Heads of Field Offices and Directors of Category I Institutes should approve and formally communicate the proposed candidates to the IOS Evaluation Office. Any changes in EFPs should also be communicated to IOS.

2. UNESCO Evaluation Plan Template

Planning for evaluations in UNESCO is based on different parameters that are summarized below and further explained in the [UNESCO Evaluation Policy](#) and the UNESCO Evaluation Manual. These parameters justify WHY an evaluation is being done. The Sector, Field Office or Institute develops the annual Evaluation Plan and shares it with IOS Evaluation Office for review. The Evaluation Plan information is essential for monitoring corporate Evaluation Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and for planning quality assurance support requirements by the Evaluation Office.

Evaluation Plan:

Evaluation name	Project Budget Code	Sector	UNESCO 41 C/4 Outcome	Implem. Unit	Country	Joint evaluation (Y/ N, indicate partners)	Planned dates (start – end)	Evaluation Budget	Status
(example) Final Evaluation of project “Better Education Systems for Afghanistan”	(example) 503AFG1003	(example) ED	Outcome 1	(example) KAB	(example) Afghanistan	(example) N	(example) May – Dec 2023	(example) USD 50,000	(example) planned
Evaluation XYZ									
Evaluation XYZ									

Evaluation Planning Parameters:

Budget	Relevance	Periodicity and Timing
Evaluability	Risks	Replication or Scaling Up
Knowledge Gap	Accountability	Joint Evaluation

After applying the above planning parameters, the Sector, Field Office or Institute specifies the evaluation(s) that will be carried in the below Evaluation Plan. The completed Evaluation Plan must be shared with the IOS Evaluation Office and uploaded on the corporate SISTER database.

Section 2: Evaluation Preparation and Design

3. UNESCO Guidance on Evaluability Assessment

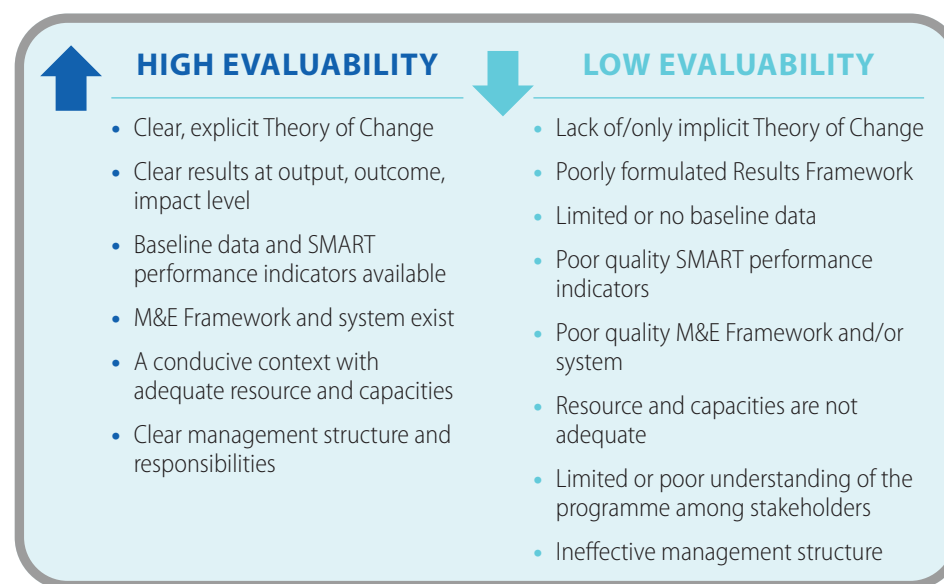
16. An Evaluability Assessment (EA) is a process intended to determine whether or not an intervention can be evaluated at the planned time and is likely to provide useful and timely information. An EA also helps to prepare the conditions necessary for a robust evaluation. It is not considered an evaluation but an assessment to inform the decision of whether or not an evaluation should or should not take place. An EA should ideally be completed quickly within a few days and is therefore not very resource intensive. It can be conducted internally or externally by a consultant.

The main areas of analysis in an EA include the following⁴⁷:

Logic of the design	Availability of relevant information	Conduciveness of the context	Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the programme have a clear results framework / Theory of change? Does the programme have clear results at output, outcome and impact level? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the programme have baseline information? Does the programme have monitoring data? Does the programme have SMART performance indicators? Does the programme have enough information on progress made, challenges and the context? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the programme have resources and capacities (budget, time, technical knowledge) to undertake the evaluation? How supportive is the institutional and socio-political context to undertake the evaluation? Is the timing right for the evaluation to be used for decision-making or other purpose? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the programme have a clear management structure? Does the programme have an effective M&E Framework and reporting system?

Based on the above questions the EA can conclude if an evaluation can be undertaken or not at that specified time. At the same time the EA can identify areas where evaluability is weak and provide recommendations on what to improve prior to any evaluation process. For example, if there is no Theory of Change, one can be reconstructed for the purpose of an evaluation.

**DIAGRAM 7:
GUIDANCE #3 ON EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT**



4. UNESCO Evaluation Stakeholders Mapping Template

Conducting a stakeholder mapping and analysis helps identify all potential evaluation stakeholders (including programme staff, beneficiaries, partners including implementation partners, donors, etc.) and their expected role in the intervention and during the different stages of evaluation preparation, implementation and use. Examples of typical stakeholders are listed below. They should be disaggregated by gender to allow for gender-informed sampling and analysis during the evaluation process.

In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development principle 'Leave No One Behind', the stakeholder analysis can also be an opportunity to identify particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable stakeholders, for example those that are difficult to reach and/or require particular attention (e.g. people with disabilities, youth, linguistic minorities).

Who (group of stakeholders)	What (role in the intervention)	Why (purpose of involvement in the evaluation)	When (in what stage of the evaluation)	How (ways of engagement)
Programme staff	(example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the project 	(example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate results, learn from the project 	(example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stages 	(example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Informant Interviews Reference Group Survey
Beneficiaries				
Government				
Civil Society				
UN agencies				
Donors				
Academia				
National Commission				
Category 2 Centre				
UNESCO Chair				
Stakeholder XYZ				

5. Sample Letter: Evaluation Reference Group Invitation

Dear [...]

As you may know the UNESCO project [...] is coming to an end in [...]. UNESCO is now commissioning a final evaluation which seeks to systematically assess the achievements of the programme including the challenges it has faced during implementation. The evaluation will provide evidence-based information that enables the incorporation of its findings and recommendations into decision-making and the design of new programmes in this area.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are to:

- (1) Assess the relevance, effectiveness, organizational efficiency, impact, coherence, and sustainability of the project
- (2) Provide recommendations to improve the design of the new project XYZ

Against this background UNESCO is establishing an Evaluation Reference Group to facilitate the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process. The reference group will serve as consultative body and sounding board for the evaluation, allow stakeholders to express their information needs and enhance learning and ownership of evaluation findings. Ultimately the reference group will help to enhance the credibility of evaluation findings and their utilization.

We are herewith inviting you to participate in this important evaluation as member of the Reference Group. The specific tasks of the Reference Group will be to:

- a) Provide feedback on the different evaluation products (draft evaluation TOR, draft evaluation inception report and draft evaluation report)
- b) provide relevant information to the evaluation team e.g. suggestions for stakeholders to be consulted, site visits, etc.
- c) participate in the evaluation inception and debriefing workshop and contribute to the discussions

In our office the evaluation is being managed by [...], (s)he is copied on this message and will be the main contact during this evaluation. For further information we are also attaching the draft TOR for this evaluation.

Kindly confirm your availability to be part of the Evaluation Reference Group by [...]. Your representation in this process will be highly appreciated and we remain at your disposal for any questions.

Thank you and best regards,

Signed by:

**ideally Director of the Sector, Field Office or Institute
otherwise Evaluation Manager**

Copy to:

Supervisor of ERG member if ERG member is UNESCO staff

6. UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation Terms of Reference

The purpose of this guidance is to provide the basis for preparing the Terms of Reference (ToR) for decentralized evaluations. It is important to produce a high-quality ToR as it provides the basis for clear evaluation objectives, engaging potential users of the evaluation and for recruiting the evaluation consultant(s). This document includes a quality checklist for evaluation ToR to facilitate quality assurance.

The recommended structure of the evaluation ToR is the following:

1. Background	5. Roles and Responsibilities
2. Purpose and Use	6. Deliverables and Timeline
3. Objectives and Scope	7. Required Qualifications of Evaluation Consultant(s)
4. Design and Methodology	8. Annexes

1. Background

The opening section of the ToR provides an orientation about the programme⁴⁸ being evaluated. It also contextualizes the programme within the broader development environment for a sector or country/region, as well as its timeframe. It should include the following information:

- Programme strategy and a summary of the Theory of Change, Results Framework and M&E Framework (if applicable)
- Budgetary information incl. delivery rate, implementation period
- A brief description of the status and previous key implementation milestones
- A summary of the management / governance structure
- How the programme/project fits within the larger development context of the sector, country or region.
- Alignment with UNESCO's mandate (41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029), 41 C/5 Programme and Budget)

- Key stakeholders (i.e. beneficiaries and partners) of the programme/project; the partnerships and any frameworks of collaboration.
- Key findings from prior evaluations (if applicable)
- Gender equality considerations of the project/programme

2. Purpose and Use

This section should include the following elements:

- The rationale for the evaluation (what prompted the evaluation and why is it done at this time)
- The overall purpose of the evaluation. For example, is the purpose to assess the effectiveness and relevance of a programme/project? Is it to inform organizational decisions?
- A brief discussion of the expected use of the evaluation by key stakeholders, and what decisions might be influenced by the evaluation findings

3. Objectives and Scope

The section on objectives and evaluation questions is one of the most important elements of the ToR. The evaluation questions are usually structured around the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability⁴⁹. Evaluations do not always need to cover all six criteria. The criteria and related evaluation questions should be contextualized and framed to the specifics of the intervention and to the intended use of the evaluation. To adapt and prioritize the evaluation questions it is recommended to apply a participatory approach through engaging key evaluation stakeholders⁵⁰. It is critical to systematically integrate gender and human rights aspects into the evaluation questions⁵¹.



The number of questions should be limited. It is preferable to address fewer questions with a certain level of rigor than to look into a broad range of questions superficially.

Below are examples of generic evaluation questions for further adaptation:

Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the programme respond to the needs of the country? To what extent did the programme integrate considerations of gender and other vulnerable and minority groups?
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the programme coherent with programmes of other partners operating in the same context?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have been the most significant results (outputs and outcomes) of the programme? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of outcomes? How did UNESCO support the achievement of outcomes?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the programme implemented efficiently? To what extent did the management structure, financial and human resources support efficient programme implementation? Was the programme implemented in a timely way?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the intervention made any difference (e.g. to gender relations, education) in the medium or longer term? What were the unintended effects, if any, of the intervention?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the likelihood that the benefits of the intervention will continue after UNESCO's work ceases? To what extent was capacity developed to ensure sustainability of the benefits?

This section should also specify the scope of the evaluation. The scope can be defined by the following:

- Time period covered by the evaluation
- Project / thematic components covered by the evaluation
- Geographical area covered by the evaluation
- Beneficiaries. The evaluation might focus on a subset / all beneficiaries
- Issues that are outside of the scope can be specified here.

4. Design and Methodology

This section outlines how the evaluation will be conducted⁵². It should include the following elements:

- A description of the potential design and methodological approach for the evaluation. In principle it is recommended to follow a mixed methods approach for data collection and analysis. Examples of data collection methods include desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, on-site observation, case study, survey. In addition, there is a growing range of ICT-based data collection methods that have gained importance e.g. during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include mobile data collection, remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS) and big data analytics.
- The choice of methods should be determined by the evaluation objectives, the type of questions it needs to answer, and the resources available for the evaluation instead of starting data collection with a pre-determined set of methods. It is the responsibility of the evaluation consultant(s) to determine the most suitable methods considering evaluation data needs, and available time and resources. The evaluation consultant(s) will present the methodological approach in the Evaluation Inception report.



Avoid too much detail on methodology in the ToR as this may prevent methodological suggestions from the evaluation team. It may also be too soon in the evaluation process to make informed choices on the most optimal evaluation design.

- This section should provide suggestions on the sampling approach and an indication of potential field visits and missions, as this has implications for the overall evaluation process and budget.
- Gender Equality constitutes a UNESCO Global Priority and an important principle in the UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards. This section should specify how a human rights and gender perspective will be integrated into the evaluation process and methods⁵³. If applicable, UNESCO Global Priority Africa should also be considered.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

This section explains the responsibilities of the different evaluation stakeholders throughout the process. Effective stakeholder engagement is critical for creating a common understanding about the evaluation and for ensuring ownership and use of the key evaluation findings⁵⁴. Key actors include the UNESCO evaluation manager, programme manager (if different from the evaluation manager), Evaluation Focal Point, IOS Evaluation Office, members from the Evaluation Reference Group and any other mechanism for quality assurance and to facilitate the engagement of stakeholders. Important questions to be addressed in this section include:

- **Who** will manage the evaluation?
- **Who** will review and provide quality assurance, and when?
- **Who** will provide background documentation e.g. progress reports, budget data etc.?
- **Who** will provide logistical support e.g. travel and fieldwork arrangements?
- **Who** will approve the evaluation deliverables?

Key reference documents for quality assurance of evaluation products include [Guidance #10](#) on Evaluation Inception Reports, [Guidance #12](#) on Evaluation Reports and [Guidance #13](#) 'Evaluation Report Quality Checklist'.

6. Deliverables and Timeline

This section should describe in detail the expected deliverables and the timeline for delivery. The timeline must factor in sufficient time for quality assurance and for stakeholders to review and discuss the respective draft deliverables. The evaluation deliverables usually include the following:

Deliverable	Timeline
1. Draft evaluation inception report , which outlines the proposed methods for data collection and analysis and a timeline with deliverables for the evaluation	
2. Inception meeting to discuss the proposed evaluation methodology	
3. Final evaluation inception report	
4. Draft evaluation report based on the following structure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive Summary 2. Introduction 3. Purpose 4. Methodology 5. Findings 6. Conclusion 7. Recommendations 8. Annexes 	
5. Debrief meeting /presentation to discuss the preliminary evaluation findings and conclusions	
6. Final evaluation report	

Effective communication and dissemination of evaluation results is critical for promoting learning and knowledge generation. If possible, evaluation communication products such as evaluation briefs, slide presentations, infographics, etc. should be included as deliverables in the evaluation ToR. The UNESCO Evaluation Manual and the Evaluation [Guidance #9 'Developing an Evaluation Communication Plan'](#) provide more details on aspects related to effective evaluation management and evaluation communication.

7. Required Qualifications

The experience and skills of the evaluation consultant(s) are amongst the most important factors that will determine the quality and credibility of the evaluation. This section should specify whether the evaluation will be conducted by a single evaluator or an evaluation team. Resources permitting, it is recommended to select an evaluation team that brings a broader and complimentary range of expertise in evaluation methods and thematic areas. Expertise on gender equality and human rights is key. Evaluation teams should be balanced across gender, ethnicity and geographical representation and national experts should be engaged whenever possible. To ensure independence, evaluation team members must not have any previous involvement in the design or implementation of the intervention. If an evaluation team is recruited, a description of the composition of the team and qualifications of the different team members is required.

Below are examples of minimum qualifications the evaluator(s) should demonstrate. The qualifications are to be adapted to the specific requirements of the evaluation:

- a) a strong record in designing and conducting/leading evaluations
- b) extensive experience in applying qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods
- c) technical expertise on the subject matter of the programme
- d) writing, communication and facilitation skills
- e) knowledge of the role of the UN
- f) language skills, country or regional experience

The level of experience (5 years, 10 years etc) should be specified for each qualification. This section must indicate which of the criteria are considered mandatory (where non-compliance leads to disqualification) and which are optional (i.e. desirable but not a precondition for qualification). It should also specify the type of documentation required for verifying the qualifications of the evaluation consultant(s). This usually includes a *Curriculum Vitae* as well as two or three examples of recently completed evaluation reports.

8. Annexes

After the selection of the evaluation consultant(s) the following documents should be annexed to the ToR:

- UNESCO Evaluation Manual
- UNESCO Evaluation Report Quality Checklist⁵⁵
- UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation⁵⁶
- UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation⁵⁷

Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference⁵⁸

Evaluation Context
The ToR describes the particular programmatic and governance environment in which the evaluation will take place.
The ToR describes the particular political, economic and social environment in which the evaluation will take place.
Evaluation Purpose
The ToR states why the evaluation is being done and why it is being done at this time.
The ToR references the mandate for the conduct of the evaluation.
The ToR identifies the primary and secondary users (audiences) of the evaluation and how they will use the evaluation findings.
The ToR identifies how the different groups will use the evaluation findings.
Evaluation Objectives
The ToR includes clearly defined, relevant and feasible objectives.
The evaluation objective(s) clearly follow from the overall purpose of the evaluation.
The ToR states evaluation objectives that are realistic and achievable, in light of the information that can be collected and in the context of the undertaking.
Evaluation Criteria
The ToR specifies the evaluation criteria against which the subject to be evaluated will be assessed such as relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and/or sustainability.
Evaluation Questions
The ToR contains a set of evaluation questions directly related to both the objectives of the evaluation and the criteria against which the subject will be evaluated.
Factoring in the information that will be collected and the context of the evaluation, evidence-backed answers to the set of evaluation questions is achievable.

Evaluation Scope
The ToR explicitly defines what will and will not be covered, including, the timeline, phase in the project and/or geographical area.
The scope of the evaluation is adequate to meet the stated evaluation objective(s).
The scope of the evaluation is feasible given resources and time considerations.
Evaluation Methodology
The ToR states the overall methodological approach and design for the evaluation.
The ToR proposes an evaluation methodology without being overly prescriptive. It provides quantitative and qualitative data methods options.
Evaluation Roles and Responsibilities, Timeline and Deliverables
The ToR state the outputs that will be delivered by the evaluation team.
The ToR describe the key stages of the evaluation process and the timeline.
The ToR establish roles and responsibilities for evaluation team members, the commissioning organization and other stakeholders in the evaluation process.
The ToR describe evaluation quality assurance processes e.g. through the reference group.
Gender Equality/Culture/Human Rights
The ToR specifies how both duty bearers and rights holders (particularly women and other groups subject to discrimination) will be involved in the evaluation process.
The ToR includes an assessment of relevant human rights and gender equality aspects through the selection of the evaluation criteria and questions.
The ToR spells out the relevant instruments or policies on human rights and gender equality that will guide the evaluation process.
The ToR defines the level of expertise needed among the evaluation team on gender equality, human rights and culturally responsive evaluation.
The ToR calls for a gender balanced and culturally diverse team with national/regional knowledge and expertise.
The ToR specifies that, whenever possible, data should be disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, age, disability, etc.

7. UNESCO Evaluation Budget example

The UNESCO Evaluation Policy sets a target of 3% of the programme budget as recommended minimum investment for evaluation. The evaluation budget usually comprises the following cost elements: consultant fees, travel costs, per diems, translation, evaluation inception meeting, evaluation debrief meeting, as well as costs for developing evaluation knowledge products.

Below is a breakdown for a sample evaluation budget that can be adjusted as necessary. It is also available as Excel-sheet on the [UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub - Guidelines & Tools](#).

Country: Kenya

Evaluation team: 1 international consultant, 1 national consultant

Working days: 40 days (international consultant), 30 days (national consultant)

NOTE: Budget based on estimate figures for daily rates for International + National consultant, air ticket costs and DSA rates

Description	Unit cost (USD)	No. of units	Total cost (USD)
International Consultant: Fees			
Conduct desk review	600	3	1800
Drafting and presentation of evaluation inception report, data collection tools and instruments	600	5	3000
Field work incl. presentation and validation of evaluation findings to stakeholders	600	12	7200
Prepare draft evaluation report	600	10	6000
Finalize evaluation report	600	10	6000
Sub-total fees		40	24000
International consultant: Travel Expenses			
Air ticket international travel	1500	1	1500
DSA for 5 nights (Nairobi)	244	5	1220
DSA for 5 nights (Kisumu)	160	5	800

Terminal expenses	38	4	152
Kenya domestic flights	150	1	150
Sub-total travel			3822
National Consultant: Fees			
Conduct desk review	250	3	750
Drafting and presentation of evaluation inception report, data collection tools and instruments	250	2	500
Field work incl. presentation and validation of evaluation findings to stakeholders	250	10	2500
Prepare draft evaluation report	250	10	2500
Finalize evaluation report	250	5	1250
Sub-total fees		30	7500
National consultant: Travel Expenses			
DSA for 5 nights (Nairobi)	244	5	1220
DSA for 5 nights (Kisumu)	160	5	800
Kenya domestic flights	150	1	150
Sub-total travel			2170
Evaluation workshops & communication costs			
Evaluation inception meeting	3500	1	3500
Evaluation debrief meeting	3500	1	3500
Evaluation video development/ other communication products	2000	1	2000
Translation	n/a		
Subtotal workshops & communication			9000
TOTAL			46492

8. UNESCO Guidance for selecting Evaluation Consultants

When selecting an evaluator or an evaluation team the following elements that are based on UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards should be taken into account⁵⁹:

Independence

To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators have to be independent i.e. they must not have been directly or indirectly involved in the design, management nor implementation of the programme. They should have no personal links to the people involved in managing or implementing the programme. Evaluators must have full freedom to impartially conduct their evaluative work, without potential negative effects on their career development.

Evaluation Team Composition

The number of evaluators in a team depends on the size and complexity of the programme⁶⁰ that is being evaluated. Whenever possible it is better to have at least two members. For small evaluations, one evaluator might be sufficient. If the team is composed of two or more individuals, at least one team member should be an expert in the subject matter addressed by the evaluation and the other should be an evaluation specialist. At least one team member should possess local and/or regional knowledge of the specific context. Whenever possible, national experts should be engaged as they provide a better understanding of the local context and can facilitate local buy-in and ownership of the evaluation. Expertise on gender equality and human rights is key. Evaluation teams should be balanced across gender, ethnicity and geographical representation.

Qualifications and skills

Below are examples of minimum qualifications the evaluator(s) should demonstrate. They should be adapted to the specific requirements of the evaluation:

- a strong record in designing and conducting/leading evaluations
- extensive experience in applying qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods
- technical expertise on the subject matter of the programme
- data analysis skills
- excellent writing, communication and facilitation skills
- knowledge of the role of the UN and the 2030 Agenda

- experience in gender analysis and human-rights based approach
- experience in conducting gender-responsive evaluation
- language skills
- country or regional experience

Soft skills such as cultural sensitivity, communication and facilitation skills to effectively engage with different stakeholders during the evaluation process are as important as 'hard' technical skills. They are further explained below:

- **Cultural awareness/sensitivity:** It requires evaluators to be aware and understand how culture may affect their interaction with all types of evaluation stakeholders. Culturally Responsive Evaluations (CRE) are based on the notion that evaluation cannot be separated from the sociocultural contexts within which social programmes are implemented⁶¹.
- **Communication skills:** The ability to effectively communicate with different types of audiences and tailor the communication style to different audiences without alienating them e.g. senior government officials, beneficiaries at community level etc.
- **Facilitation skills:** An evaluation will include several meetings with larger groups of people e.g. the inception workshop, debriefing workshop, focus group discussions etc. The evaluators need thorough experience in facilitating such meetings and ensure that these discussions add value to the evaluation process.

The level of experience (5 years, 10 years etc) should be specified for each qualification. The ToR for the consultant must indicate which of the criteria are considered mandatory (where non-compliance leads to disqualification) and which are optional (i.e. desirable but not a precondition for qualification). It should also specify the type of documentation required for verifying the qualifications of the evaluation consultant(s). This usually includes a Curriculum Vitae as well as two or three examples of recently completed evaluation reports.

The selection of the evaluation consultant(s) must be impartial, fair and transparent and take place through an open and competitive process⁶². As part of the due diligence process it is highly recommended to undertake reference checks and inquire about the previous performance (including hard and soft skills) of the potential evaluator. In case of questions the evaluation manager should seek advice on procurement rules from the Procurement Section in the Division of Operations (OPS/PRO).

9. UNESCO Guidance for developing an Evaluation Communication Plan

Effective communication and dissemination of evaluation results is key for promoting learning and knowledge generation. It also contributes to greater accountability and trust amongst partners towards UNESCO. An Evaluation Communication Plan is a useful tool for facilitating the dissemination of evaluation results. It should be based on the Evaluation Stakeholder Mapping [HYPERLINK] and tailored to each evaluation.

If possible, it is recommended that the evaluation manager collaborate with a communication colleague/ expert to develop and roll out the evaluation communication plan.

The following are key questions to consider for an evaluation communication plan:

Element	Key question
Intended users	<i>Who</i> are the audiences for the evaluation findings?
Timing	<i>When</i> and by whom are the evaluation findings required e.g. for planning, decision-making, and learning?
Barriers to use	<i>What</i> are potential barriers to use (e.g. negative evaluation findings) and how can they be addressed?
Format	<i>Which</i> formats are most effective for communicating evaluation findings to the different audiences?
Monitoring use	<i>What</i> are the mechanisms for tracking the use of evaluation findings?

There are many ways for packaging evaluation results into user-friendly knowledge products. Visualization of evaluation data always plays a key role. The selected communication formats ultimately depend on the audience. Certain communication formats are better suited for certain stakeholders. Below is a list of possible evaluation communication products⁶³:

Evaluation Product	Description
Full evaluation report (30-40 pages)	To facilitate reading, the full evaluation report should not exceed 30—40 pages
Evaluation Brief/ Summary (1-3 pages)	It displays the main information in small, digestible parts and is shorter than the standard Executive Summary
Policy brief (2-4 pages)	The Policy brief is specifically designed to translate evaluation findings into recommendations for policy and practice. It succinctly describes a problem, its context and recommendations for action
Newsletters / Bulletins	Newsletters are usually sent to a broad audience, hence they can be highly effective for communicating evaluation findings
Quarterly/ Annual reports	Integrating evaluation findings into the reporting process can help to institutionalize the use of evaluation
Slide presentation or Photo story	Slides (most common: PowerPoint) are useful for telling the story about the evaluation. They should be based on images and visuals
Screencast	A screencast is a digital recording of a slide show with audio narration
Data dashboards	Dashboards display the status of performance indicators on a single screen. Primarily quantitative.
Infographic	Infographics are visual representation combining text, images and quantitative and qualitative data visualization to explain and tell a story about data
Video	A video recording can be a powerful way to explain the main evaluation messages
Conference Poster	Posters can be used during various events e.g. workshops, evaluation debrief meetings etc.

The various evaluation products can be presented and discussed through various channels e.g.:

- Workshops and webinars
- Retreats and learning events
- External and internal websites
- Social media platforms
- Communities of Practice (CoPs)
- Seminars and conferences
- Intergovernmental meetings/events
- Etc.

Finally, the table below provides examples of how to tailor evaluation communication products to each stakeholder/ audience:

Stakeholder/ Audience	Evaluation Communication Product
Donor 1	Full evaluation report Evaluation Brief/ Summary Slide presentation
Donor 2	Screencast Infographic
Government partner (high-level)	Policy brief Video
Government partner (involved in operations)	Full evaluation report Evaluation Brief/ Summary Slide presentation
NGO	Evaluation Brief/ Summary Screencast Video
UNESCO Senior Management	Quarterly/ Annual reports Video Dashboard
Programme staff	Full evaluation report Evaluation Brief/ Summary Slide presentation

Section 3: Evaluation Management and Implementation

10. UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation Inception Reports

The Evaluation Inception Report ensures a common understanding between the evaluation consultant and the evaluation manager on the context, purpose, audience, scope, methodology and timeline for conducting the evaluation. It provides an opportunity for the evaluation consultant to revise, adjust and provide value added to the Terms of Reference.

The Inception Report is prepared by an evaluator after an initial review of relevant documentation and/ or discussions with relevant stakeholders. It sets out the conceptual framework for an evaluation, the key evaluation questions and methodology, including information on data sources and collection, sampling and performance indicators. The inception report also includes a timeline for the evaluation process and drafts of data collection instruments.

The draft Inception Report is reviewed first internally by the consultant(s) is reviewed first internally by the Evaluation Manager, Evaluation Focal Point and IOS EVS and subsequently shared for feedback with the Evaluation Reference Group.

Evaluation Inception Report Outline:

1. Introduction and Scope

- Describe the programme⁶⁴ being evaluated, drawing particularly from the desk study. Include a summary of relevant conclusions and recommendations from previous evaluations.
- Explain any adjustments to the evaluation scope as set out in the Terms of Reference. Scope usually refers to the time period, thematic and geographical areas covered by the evaluation.
- When appropriate, include dimensions related to UNESCO's two Global Priorities – Priority Gender Equality and Priority Africa.
- Summarize the work done in the inception phase including reviewed documentation and people interviewed.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Use

- State the purpose of the evaluation and introduce any adjustments to the purpose as set out in the ToR.
- Outline the expected use of the evaluation: Who will use it and for what purpose.

3. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

- Discuss the overall approach of the evaluation, highlighting the conceptual model(s) adopted. This should incorporate an analysis of the programme Theory of Change. If there is no ToC it could be reconstructed as part of the evaluation inception phase.
- Describe the data collection methods, data sources and sampling approach⁶⁵. The discussion on sampling should specify the sample size, the geographical areas and population that will be analysed, the rationale and process for selection, sample precision / confidence and potential sample limitations. Specify the planned field visits, if applicable.
- Discuss which performance indicators will be used for measuring progress. State any potential limitations of each method.
- Outline the evaluation management arrangements and how evaluation stakeholders will be engaged during the evaluation process. For example, this includes the evaluation inception meeting and the evaluation debrief meeting with the Evaluation Reference Group.
- Discuss potential risks/ limitations in the methodology that could undermine the reliability and validity of evaluation data, and propose ways to mitigate the risks
- **Prepare the Evaluation Matrix (see below Template) and attach as Annex.** The Evaluation Matrix specifies the respective sources and methods for collecting data on each evaluation question. It is structured around the following headings: evaluation question, performance indicator(s), data sources, data collection method(s) and assumptions. When preparing the Evaluation Matrix, it is recommended to review the programme M&E Framework for potential data sources and collection methods.

- Common data collection methods include desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussion, on-site observation, case studies and surveys. In addition, there is a growing range of ICT-based data collection methods that have gained importance e.g. during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include mobile data collection, remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS) and big data analytics.
- Data sources typically include programme documents, donor and progress reports, monitoring and annual reports, internal and external websites, communication materials, corporate databases etc.

4. Evaluation Timeline and Deliverables

- Develop a timeline based on the evaluation phases (inception/design, data collection, data analysis and reporting) with key deliverables.
- Specify responsibilities for each evaluation phase. Introduce any changes in the evaluation team if applicable.
- Specify project management arrangements including roles and responsibilities of team members for the different deliverables, and mechanisms for quality assurance and for risk management.

- Specify how, when and to whom the evaluation findings will be communicated and in what formats.

5. Logistics

- Discuss the logistics of carrying out the evaluation. Include specific assistance required from UNESCO such as providing transport arrangements for field visits.

6. Appendices

- Evaluation Terms of Reference
- List of documents reviewed
- Draft data collection instruments, such as draft questionnaires and interview guides
- Evaluation Matrix
- List of interviewees, if interviews were conducted during the inception phase

UNESCO EVALUATION MATRIX TEMPLATE

Evaluation Question	Performance Indicators	Data sources	Data collection methods	Assumptions
(example) To what extent has the programme contributed to capacity development for teachers in country XYZ?	(example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teachers trained • Improved education outcomes 	(example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training workshop records • Published education data 	(example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews • Focus groups • Survey 	(example) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher trainings were directed at right group of beneficiaries • Teachers have been able to apply new knowledge
Evaluation Question XYZ				
Evaluation Question XYZ				

11. UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation in the context of the Pandemic

The ongoing Covid-19 crises may impact programme and project implementation and will also have an impact on currently planned and ongoing decentralized evaluations. The following guidance⁶⁶ is aimed at helping you make decisions on how to react and adapt planned and/or ongoing evaluations within your local context and in respect of the related restrictions.

The first and foremost principle that should guide evaluation practice now is: Do no harm!

If there is any likelihood that moving forward with the evaluation as originally planned could put the team or any stakeholder in danger, the evaluation needs to be *adjusted, delayed or cancelled*.

a. For Evaluations currently underway:

Adjust the methods:

- Rely more on already existing datasets
- Review academic literature
- Consult existing evaluations relevant to the topic/region.
- Enlarge planned desk reviews, namely by synthesizing material from existing project monitoring reports and documents.
- Gather information through online surveys
- Conduct remote interviews by phone, skype, teleconference facilities.

If the evaluation had planned on-site visits, consider if these can be carried out later or replace them with a higher number of focused interviews or more in-depth case studies on certain evaluation questions.

Adjusting methods may result in additional challenges that evaluators need to be mindful about:

- Data collection strategies such as observation and snowball sampling on site will not be possible.
- Furthermore, it will not be possible to interview everybody through virtual modalities. For example, government officials might have other pressing priorities and other stakeholders might have inexistent or unreliable online access. This could introduce biases to the data that need to be taken into account.

Ensuring culturally sensitive evaluation approaches is of particular importance, considering that interviewees may be affected in different ways from the crisis, both professionally and personally.

b. For Evaluations planned in the near future:

A decision needs to be made on whether these evaluations should go on as planned, on whether to adjust their scope, or whether they need to be postponed or cancelled. The following is an indicative checklist intended to guide you in making these decisions:

c. Checklist for Evaluation Feasibility in a Crisis (Y/N):

- Is the original evaluation purpose still valid?
- If not, is there another/adapted purpose to having this evaluation now?
- Is the client/donor still interested in having the evaluation now?
- Will the evaluation's findings feed into a foreseen decision-making process that has not itself been postponed by the crisis (intergovernmental meeting or other)?
- Does the evaluation have a clear and intended utility?
- Will the use/users of the evaluation change as a result of the crisis?
- Can all or most data be collected remotely?
 - Are the majority of primary and secondary stakeholders accessible remotely?
 - Is the accessibility of documentation on the evaluand (project, subject at hand) affected?
- Will the evaluation findings still be credible and valid, despite possible biases and data gaps?
- Are there any other subjects that should be assessed now as a priority given the circumstances?
- Are there items that should be substituted on the evaluation plan

If answers to any of the above questions are **no**, consider the **following options** before you proceed:

- Postpone the evaluation by 2 to 3 months in agreement with the donor
- Review the purpose and objectives in line with the (adapted) use of the evaluation
- Adapt the scope to include consideration linked to the current circumstances
- Adapt the methodology to include flexibility for remote data collection and replace face-to-face fieldwork with other data collection methods.

Useful resources on COVID-19 and evaluation work

Evaluation Implication of the Coronavirus global Health Pandemic: 15 considerations (Michael Quinn Patton)

Effects of COVID on evaluation practice from one of the principal evaluation thinkers. What to do: adapt plans, be proactive, make it about use, good enough rule and more.

<https://bluemarbleeval.org/latest/evaluation-implications-coronavirus-global-health-pandemic-emergency>

Conducting evaluations in times of COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Ethical considerations, conceptual shorts and methodological challenges

<https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/blog/conducting-evaluations-times-covid-19-coronavirus>

Bowling in the dark: Monitoring and evaluation during COVID-19: Lessons from past experience can help creatively and responsively adapt M&E practices (WB blog)

How M&E has taken place in very challenging environments such as conflict and during the Ebola epidemic. The limitations of technology.

<https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/blog/mande-covid19>

Evaluation in humanitarian settings and times of crisis

Using technologies for monitoring and evaluation in insecure settings

Lessons from conducting data collection in insecure, conflict humanitarian scenarios.

https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/theme/MandE_technology_insecure_settings

12. UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation Reports

This document provides guidance on the structure, content, and overall length of UNESCO evaluation reports. It also explains general considerations for developing a high-quality evaluation report. The guidance should be used together with the UNESCO Evaluation Report Quality Checklist [\[Guidance #13\]](#) that provides further detail on key elements in each section, and the quality rating system for UNESCO evaluation reports.

Overall report:

The main body of the report should be logically structured, easy to follow and have a maximum of 30-40 pages. It should be concisely written and free of information that is not relevant for the overall analysis. Paragraphs in the report should be numbered to allow for easy referencing between the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations sections. The evaluation report should be readable within 1-2 hours. Based on good practice, below is a summary of the structure, expected content and length for each section of the report that helps to produce a succinct high-quality evaluation report.

1. Title Page (1 page)

- Name of the evaluation object
- UNESCO Budget code(s) of the intervention
- Date of the report
- Location (country, region)
- Names and affiliations of the evaluators
- Name of commissioning office

The design of the title page should be interesting for the potential reader. It can include a photo or visuals that help to illustrate the evaluation object.

2. Opening Pages (2-3 pages)

- Acknowledgements, if relevant
- Table of Contents incl. Annexes
- List of figures & tables
- List of acronyms

Acknowledgements provide an opportunity for the evaluator(s) to thank staff and partners who have contributed to the success of the evaluation. Acknowledgements are optional.

3. Executive Summary (3-5 pages)

- Overview of the evaluation object
- Evaluation objectives
- Summary of the evaluation methodology
- Most important findings and conclusions
- Main recommendations

The Executive Summary should be a stand-alone section that includes the most important information on all sections of the report.

4. Introduction / Object of Evaluation (3-4 pages)

- Description of the intervention: Programme Strategy and Theory of Change, Results Framework, M&E Framework, Programme budget, (implementing) Partners, implementation status
- Context: Social, political, economic, and demographic context, key stakeholders involved
- Background: Why is the evaluation conducted now

The Introduction should be succinct and at the same time comprehensive enough for the reader to understand the intervention in its context.

5. Purpose and Use, Objectives and Scope (1 page)

- Purpose of the evaluation: Why is the evaluation conducted, how will the information be used and by whom
- Evaluation scope: Time period, Project / thematic components, Geographical area covered by the evaluation, Beneficiaries, Issues that are excluded from the scope
- Evaluation criteria: Which of the main criteria Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Sustainability, Coherence are (not) used

The section on Purpose indicates the objectives of the evaluation, intended use and users.

6. Methodology (1-2 pages)

- Evaluation approach: Evaluation design, data collection and analysis methods, rationale for selection, potential limitations
- Sampling: Sampling frame, number of Key Informant Interviews/Focus Group discussions, survey response rate etc.
- Human Rights and Gender Equality (HR GE): How were HR GE issues integrated into the evaluation process and methods
- Evaluation Process: Evaluation management arrangements, role of the Evaluation Reference Group, process for stakeholders engagement/ consultation

The section on Methodology should explain which evaluation methods were selected to answer the evaluation questions and include a reference to the Evaluation Matrix. The section should also describe the process for quality assurance and how data was triangulated.

7. Findings (10-15 pages)

- Evaluation criteria and questions: Triangulated summary of key findings from interviews, surveys, document review etc.
- Organized by evaluation criteria/questions and substantiated by evidence
- Analysis: Reasons for accomplishments and failures are identified, in particular underlying and recurring helping and hindering factors
- Illustrated and supported through succinct case studies, quotes, tables with figures, charts and visuals etc.

The Findings section provides evidence-based answers to the evaluation questions. In each section, the key finding should be presented in one paragraph upfront, followed by supporting evidence and analysis. All findings must be presented with clarity, logic, and coherence. To facilitate reading the report author(s) should use the active voice, keep sentences short and simple (KISS) and avoid repetitions. E.g. instead of “services were provided by the project” a better formulation is “the project provided services”.

8. Conclusions (3-5 pages)

- Structure: Logically connected to previous Findings through referencing: Conclusion XY is based on Finding YZ
- Well substantiated by supporting evidence
- Analysis: Add value to previous Findings through presenting the underlying, systemic strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation object
- Provide evaluative judgments relating to the key evaluation questions

The Conclusions should flow logically from the previous Findings. They provide a higher-level interpretation and judgement about cross-cutting and systemic factors of success and failure of the intervention.

9. Recommendations (2-3 pages)

- Process: How were the recommendations developed including consultation with stakeholders
- Logic: Recommendations are based on conclusions and evidence: Recommendation XY is based on Conclusion YZ
- Responsibilities: Recommendations clearly identify who is responsible for taking action
- Feasibility: Recommendations are realistic and actionable
- Priorities: Timeframes and priorities for action are identified

Based on the Conclusions, the Recommendations should provide clear and actionable proposals to improve the effectiveness of the intervention.

10. Annexes

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Evaluation Terms of Reference | • Data collection instruments: interview protocol, survey, questionnaire etc. |
| • Evaluation Matrix | • Evaluators' biodata |
| • List of persons interviewed (disaggregated by gender and/or other relevant characteristics) | • Theory of Change, Results Framework, M&E Framework |
| • List of sites visited (if relevant) | • Case study report(s) if applicable |
| • List of documents consulted | |

The length of the Annexes depends on several factors hence they are excluded from the page number limit that applies to the evaluation report. The author(s) can provide very lengthy Annexes as a separate document to reduce document and file size.

13. UNESCO Evaluation Report Quality Checklist

Checklist: Core Elements

This is an abridged version of the « UNESCO Evaluation Quality Assurance Checklist and Guidance » (2022). It can be consulted on the UNESCO [Evaluation Knowledge Hub - Guidelines & Tools](#), for further details. The Evaluation Report Quality Checklist should be used together with the UNESCO Guidance on Evaluation Reports [Guidance #12].

On an annual basis, IOS EVS reports on evaluation quality through an Evaluation Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and the IOS Annual Report and Annual Synthetic Review. An external quality reviewer undertakes the Annual Synthetic Review and assesses all evaluation reports completed in the previous year against the UNESCO quality checklist. The external quality reviewer scores each section in a report on a scale from highly satisfactory, satisfactory, partly satisfactory to unsatisfactory. The weighted scores from the sections are then combined into a quality score for the overall evaluation report.

1. Evaluation Report Structure and Clarity	
Weighting	Findings
30%	1.1: The report is logically structured and easy to follow. For example, background and objectives are presented before findings, and findings are presented before conclusions and recommendations. The style of writing is accessible and free of errors.
20%	1.2: The title page and opening pages provide the key basic information listed below. (It is also acceptable if some of this information can easily be found elsewhere in the report.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name of the evaluation object 2. Timeframe of the evaluation and date of the report 3. Locations (country, region, etc.) of the evaluation object 4. Names and/or organizations of evaluators 5. Name of the organization commissioning the evaluation 6. List of acronyms 7. Table of contents which also lists tables, graphs, figures, and annexes

1. Evaluation Report Structure and Clarity	
Weighting	Findings
30%	1.3: The Executive Summary is a concise standalone section of about 3 pages that presents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overview of the evaluation object 2. Evaluation objectives and intended audience 3. Key elements of the evaluation methodology 4. Most important findings and conclusions 5. Main recommendations
20%	1.4: Annexes increase the credibility of the evaluation report. It is recommended that they include the following, at minimum: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation terms of reference 2. Evaluation matrix 3. List of persons interviewed (disaggregated by gender and/or other relevant characteristics) 4. List of sites visited (if relevant) 5. List of documents consulted 6. Additional details on the methodology, such as data collection instruments, including details of their reliability and validity 7. Evaluators' biodata and/or information on team composition 8. Results framework, Theory of Change

2. Introduction / Object of Evaluation

Weighting	Findings
15%	2.1: The report presents a clear and full description of the object of the evaluation. This section may be complemented by hyperlinked materials or annexes.
20%	2.2: The theory of change, logic model and/or expected results chain (inputs, outputs and outcomes) of the object of evaluation is clearly described. This section may be complemented by annexes.
20%	2.3: The context of key social, political, economic, demographic, and institutional factors that have a direct bearing on the object of the evaluation is described. This section may be complemented by annexes.
15%	2.4: The scale and complexity of the object of the evaluation are clearly described, for example: (i) the number of components and the size of the population each component is intended to serve; (ii) the geographic context and boundaries; (iii) the purpose and organization/management of the object; (iv) the total resources from all sources, including human resources and budget(s) (e.g. concerned agency, partner government and other donor contributions). This section may be complemented by annexes.
15%	2.5: The key stakeholders involved in implementing the object of evaluation are identified and their roles described. This includes the implementing agency(s) and partners, and other key stakeholders such as beneficiaries or participants. This section may be complemented by annexes.
15%	2.6: The report identifies the implementation status of the object of the evaluation and any significant changes that have occurred over time to plans, strategies, logical frameworks, or other elements, explaining the implications of those changes for the evaluation.

3. Purpose and Use, Objective(s) and Scope

Weighting	Findings
25%	3.1: The purpose, use and objectives of the evaluation are clearly defined, including why the evaluation was needed at the time it was conducted, what information is needed, who needed the information, and how the information will be used by the different groups of stakeholders.
25%	3.2: The report provides a clear explanation of the evaluation scope, including main evaluation questions, and describes and justifies what the evaluation did and did not cover.
25%	3.3: The report describes and provides an explanation of the evaluation criteria (such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact), performance standards, or other criteria used by the evaluators. The report provides a justification in case the standard OECD-DAC criteria are not used.
25%	3.4: Evaluation objectives, scope, and questions address issues of gender, human rights and/or inclusion, unless there is compelling evidence that this is not relevant.

4. Methodology

Weighting	Findings
15%	4.1: The report presents a transparent description of the evaluation methodology, clearly explaining how the evaluation was designed to address the evaluation criteria, yield answers to the evaluation questions, and achieve evaluation purposes. This may be complemented by annexes.
15%	4.2: The report describes the data collection and analysis methods, the rationale for selecting them, and their limitations. Reference indicators and benchmarks are included where relevant. This may be complemented by annexes.
10%	4.3: The report describes the data sources, the rationale for their selection, and their limitations. It describes how the mix of data sources and methods was used to obtain a diversity of perspectives, ensure data accuracy, and overcome data limits.
10%	4.4: The report describes the sampling frame and strategy, identifying the population represented, rationale for selection, mechanics of selection, numbers selected out of potential subjects, and limitations of the sample, with due attention to issues of disaggregation by gender and other relevant characteristics. This may be complemented by annexes.
10%	4.5: The report gives a complete description of stakeholder consultation process in the evaluation, including the rationale for selecting the level and activities for consultation, and the establishment and role of the reference group. This may be complemented by annexes.
15%	4.6: The methods employed are appropriate for the evaluation and to answer its questions.

4. Methodology

Weighting	Findings
10%	4.7: The methods employed are appropriate for analyzing crosscutting topics (e.g. gender, environment, COVID-19, human rights, disability, inclusion, etc.) as identified in the evaluation scope.
15%	4.8: The report presents evidence that adequate measures were taken to ensure data quality, including evidence supporting the reliability and validity of data collection tools (e.g., interview protocols, observation tools, etc.).

5. Findings

Weighting	Findings
20%	5.1: Reported findings reflect systematic and appropriate analysis and interpretation of the data. This section may be complemented by annexes, such as detailed survey results and case study reports.
20%	5.2: Reported findings the identified evaluation criteria, issues, and questions including any crosscutting issues and questions defined in the evaluation scope.
20%	5.3: Findings are objectively reported and substantiated by credible evidence.
10%	5.4: Gaps and limitations in the data and/or unanticipated findings are reported and discussed.
20%	5.5: Reasons for accomplishments and failures, especially continuing constraints, are identified as much as possible.
10%	5.6: Overall, findings are presented with clarity, logic, and coherence.

6. Conclusions

Weighting	Findings
25%	6.1: The conclusions reflect reasonable evaluative judgments relating to key evaluation questions as set out in the ToR or as agreed in the Evaluation Inception Report/ evaluation matrix.
25%	6.2: Conclusions are well substantiated by the evidence presented and are logically connected to evaluation findings. New evidence that was not discussed in the findings is not introduced in the conclusions.
25%	6.3: Stated conclusions provide insights into the identification and/ or solution of important problems or issues pertinent to the prospective decisions and actions of evaluation users.
25%	6.4: Conclusions present underlying, systemic strengths and weaknesses of the object of the evaluation, based on the evidence presented and taking due account of the views of a diverse cross-section of stakeholders.

7. Recommendations

Weighting	Findings
15%	7.1: The report describes the process followed in developing the recommendations, including consultation with stakeholders.
20%	7.2: Recommendations are firmly based on evidence and conclusions.
15%	7.3: Recommendations are relevant to the purposes and objectives of the evaluation.
15%	7.4: Recommendations clearly identify the target group they are addressed to and include an indicative timeline for implementation. Their implementation is clearly measurable.
15%	7.5: Recommendations are logically organized with priorities for action made clear.
20%	7.6: Recommendations are realistic and actionable, reflecting an understanding of the commissioning organization and potential constraints to follow-up.

8. Human Rights and Inclusion (LNOB) ⁶⁷	
Weighting	Findings
15%	8.1: The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation, the evaluation process, and the evaluation results incorporate a human rights-based approach and/or have applied the UN Common Understanding of the human rights-based approach (HRBA). The evaluation provides evidence on whether implementation was monitored through human rights-based frameworks and assesses results using a human rights-based approach.
15%	8.2: Inclusion (of, as relevant, people with disabilities and/or linguistic, ethnic, gender, and other minorities) is mainstreamed effectively throughout the evaluation process and reflected in the evaluation report. For disability, inclusion should reflect the motto, “Nothing About Us Without Us.” The report demonstrates the integration of measures sensitive to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged /marginalized groups as relevant into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the object.
20%	8.3: The evaluation approach, data collection, and analysis methods are responsive to human rights and appropriate for analyzing the human rights issues identified in the scope. This includes but is not limited to disaggregation of data by sex, gender, age, disability, language, ethnicity etc.

8. Human Rights and Inclusion (LNOB) ⁶⁷	
Weighting	Findings
15%	8.4: Evaluation questions cover different aspects of inclusion. For example: “To what extent has the object of the evaluation ensured that the various needs of marginalized and excluded populations, including women and girls, adolescents and youth, persons with disabilities and indigenous communities, been taken into account in both the planning and implementation of the agency-supported interventions?” or “To what extent did the object of the evaluation support the elimination of barriers to access (e.g., political, social, economic, legal, physical and attitudinal) to services, rights, information for vulnerable and marginalized populations (e.g., women, adolescents and youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, sexual diversities), particularly those within groups that are furthest behind?” ⁶⁸
20%	8.5: Evaluation findings address LNOB and disability inclusion issues, substantiated by data and evidence. The evaluation identifies the impact of programmes on persons with disabilities, and/or people from specific disadvantaged or marginalized groups and identifies reasons for exclusion and mechanisms of inclusion wherever possible.”
15%	8.6: Reported findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons adequately address human rights aspects, utilize human rights-based language throughout, and are sensitive to disability inclusion, and inclusion of other disadvantaged or marginalized groups.

The assessment in the next section 9. Gender Equality may overlap with overlap with the qualitative of UNESCO Global Priority Gender Equality in the “additional elements” section. Here, the focus is on how the evaluation object and the evaluation integrate gender considerations, whereas the assessment of Global Priority Gender Equality focuses on how the evaluation assessed the alignment of the object with the Global Priority.

9. Gender Equality⁶⁹

Weighting	Findings
20%	9.1: The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation were based on sound gender analysis, incorporated a gender equality perspective, and the object monitored through a gender lens, as well as assessing the extent to which it produced gender aware, gender-sensitive, gender-responsive, or gender transformative results.
20%	9.2: The evaluation process adhered to the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality during all phases.
20%	9.3: The evaluation methodology explicitly addresses issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. The evaluation approach, methodology, and data collection and analysis methods are gender-responsive and appropriate for analyzing the gender equality issues identified in the scope. This includes but is not limited to collecting data from a wide variety of participants to ensure balanced perspectives and fair representation of different points of view, disaggregation of data by gender and other relevant characteristics, and consideration of inclusion/exclusion and equity/equality in data analysis.
20%	9.4: The evaluation report details the characteristics of the evaluation team, and insofar as possible, the evaluation team is diverse in terms of gender, skills, and competencies. It is geographically and culturally balanced.
20%	9.5: Reported findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons reflect gender analysis and use gender-sensitive language throughout.

10. Management Response⁷⁰

Weighting	Findings
25%	10.1: The report includes a formal management response to evaluation findings and recommendations.
30%	10.2: The management response acknowledges and individually accepts or rejects the recommendations of the evaluation report.
45%	10.3: The management response includes a clear and time-bound plan for the follow-up and integration of evaluation findings and recommendations into decision-making, knowledge-management, and learning.

Checklist: Additional Elements

The additional elements are assessed on a qualitative basis, not using the rating scale for the core elements listed above. If an element is not relevant to the evaluation under review, it may be marked “not applicable” (N/A).

11. UNESCO Global Priorities (Gender Equality and Africa) and Priority Groups (Youth, SIDS, LDCs, Indigenous Peoples)

Priority Africa

- 11.1:** The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation directly address or mainstream Priority Africa and is aligned with UNESCO guidance on Priority Africa.⁷¹
- 11.2:** The evaluation approach and data collection and analysis methods are culturally sensitive, appropriate, and suitable for analyzing the identified scope with respect to Priority Africa.

Priority Gender Equality

- 11.3:** The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation address and/or mainstream Priority Gender Equality and is aligned with UNESCO guidance on Priority Gender Equality.
- 11.4:** The evaluation approach and data collection and analysis methods are suitable for analyzing the identified scope with respect to Priority Gender Equality.⁷²

11. UNESCO Global Priorities (Gender Equality and Africa) and Priority Groups (Youth, SIDS, LDCs, Indigenous Peoples)

Priority Group: Indigenous Peoples⁷³

- 11.5:** The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation address and/or mainstream Priority Group: Indigenous Peoples and is aligned with UNESCO guidance on Priority Group: Indigenous Peoples.⁷⁴

Priority Group: Youth⁷⁵

- 11.6:** The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation address and mainstream Priority Group: Youth and is aligned with UNESCO guidance on Priority Group: Youth.⁷⁶

Priority Group: Small Island Developing States (SIDS)⁷⁷

- 11.7:** The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation address and mainstream Priority Group: SIDS and is aligned with UNESCO guidance on Priority Group: SIDS.⁷⁸

Priority Group: Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

- 11.8:** The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation address and mainstream Priority Group: LDCs and is aligned with UNESCO guidance on Priority Group: LDCs.⁷⁹

12. COVID-19 and/ or other crises⁸⁰

- 12.1:** The report includes the criteria considered when determining whether an evaluation can be undertaken during the pandemic/ crisis, potentially drawing from the UNESCO Checklist for Evaluation Feasibility in a Crisis or resources named in UNESCO's Guidance on Evaluation in the Context of the Pandemic.
- 12.2:** The report identifies the constraints on the evaluation due to COVID-19 or other crises, their implications on the evaluation, and the mitigating actions or adjustments employed (e.g., travel restrictions and the solution of remote data collection and secondary sources, or amendments of work plans and evaluation design, as well as involvement and strengthening of local evaluation capacities).
- 12.3:** The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation, the assessment of its results, and the evaluation process upheld United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards while adhering to appropriate ethical and safety considerations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic/ other crises.
- 12.4:** The report identifies evaluation methods, tools, and approaches used for data collection, such as the use of remote methods or the role of local consultants and addresses the constraints, challenges as well as opportunities of conducting an evaluation during a pandemic/ crisis.
- 12.5:** To the full extent possible despite any limitations imposed by COVID-19 restrictions or restrictions due to other crises, the evaluation ensures full representation of stakeholders, including end beneficiaries.

13. Environmental considerations⁸¹

- 13.1:** The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation has addressed and/or mainstreamed UNESCO's Strategic Objective 2 and in particular Outcomes 3 and 4.⁸² The evaluation also illustrates the extent to which environmental considerations were integrated across the design and implementation of the object of the evaluation, operational models, facilities, and management practices.⁸³
- 13.2:** The report illustrates the extent to which environmental considerations were integrated into the design of the evaluation, for example, by including criteria and/or questions that address the environmental impact of the object of the evaluation, and by addressing the environmental impact of the conduct of the evaluation itself (for example, through choices about travel vs remote data collection).
- 13.3:** The report includes appropriate analysis and evidence on how the evaluation object interacted with and affected the natural environment. Reported findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons provide adequate information on environmental considerations.

14. Good Practices in Evaluation

Identify and document any notable good practices used in the design, implementation, and/or reporting of the evaluation, guided by the questions below.

- 14.1:** Introduction to the good practice: Describe the context of and justification for the practice.
- 14.2:** Implementation of the good practice: How was the practice carried out and what was the result?
- 14.3:** Reflections on the good practice: Why is this considered a good practice? How could it help evaluators assessing the same or similar object(s)? What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt this practice?

Section 4: Evaluation Use and Communication

14. UNESCO Evaluation Management Response and Action Plan Template

The evaluation management response indicates to what extent management agrees the evaluation recommendations, and the type of action that will be taken by whom and by when. The management response should be formulated in a way that is actionable and owned by the evaluation client(s), with priorities for action clearly stated.

The completion of the evaluation management response and the implementation status of the evaluation recommendations (the action plan) constitute UNESCO Evaluation Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are with monitored by IOS EVS on a biannual basis. The timeline for accepting the evaluation recommendations is 2 weeks. The management response action plan should be prepared 4 weeks after finalization of the evaluation report.

Below is the template for the evaluation management response:

Overall Management Response	
[provide the overall reaction towards the evaluation findings and recommendations, and how they will be used]	
Recommendation 1	Management Response and Action Plan
Recommendation 1: [copy recommendation from the evaluation report]	[indicate whether the recommendation is accepted or rejected. Specify the specific action that will be taken]
Owner: [indicate who is responsible for taking action]	
Time frame: [indicate deadline for implementing action]	Status: [indicate whether status is open, implemented, closed without implementation, not accepted]

Recommendation 2	Management Response and Action Plan
Recommendation 2: Addressed to:	
Time frame:	
	Status:

Examples of good practice for promoting effective follow-up through the evaluation management response include the following⁸⁴.

- Increasing ownership of evaluation findings during the evaluation process improves the likelihood of effective management response and follow-up
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are required for developing and following up on the management response
- A focal point should be nominated by management to coordinate the management response. This is particularly important in cases where the evaluation involves several units, and in the case of a joint evaluation
- The Management Response should clearly indicate whether Management accepts or rejects the recommendations. If the latter is the case, the reason(s) for the rejection should be provided
- When more than one unit is mentioned for implementing the planned actions, it should be clear which unit is responsible for which action(s)
- The management responses should be disclosed in conjunction with the evaluation. If the management response does not become available within the agreed period, the evaluation report should be disclosed with an indication that the management response was not made available at the date in which it was due

Annex 2: Glossary of Key Terms⁸⁵

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Coherence: The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. Responding to the question: *"How well does the intervention fit?"* There are two types of coherence:

- **Internal coherence:** It refers to the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by UNESCO as well as their consistency with relevant international norms and standards to which UNESCO adheres.
- **External coherence:** It refers to the consistency of UNESCO's interventions with those of other actors in the same context (e.g. consistency with Member States' development needs and priorities; and consistency with United Nations partners, particularly as it concerns issues of system-wide coherence). This includes complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. It is a measure of how economically inputs (i.e., funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) are converted into results. Responding to the question: *"How well are resources being used?"*

Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups, taking into account their relative importance. Responding to the question: *"Is the intervention achieving its objectives?"*

Impact: The extent to which the intervention has or is expected to have positive or negative, intended or unintended, long-term effects. It seeks to identify effects of the intervention that are longer term or broader in scope than those already captured under the effectiveness criterion. Responding to the question: *"What difference does the intervention make?"*

Relevance: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country and partner/institution⁸⁶ needs, policies and priorities and continue to do so, if circumstances change. Responding to the question: *"Is the intervention doing the right things?"*

Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue. Responding to the question: *"Will the benefits last?"*

TYPES OF EVALUATION

Corporate evaluations: Thematic or cross-cutting evaluations of large UNESCO programmes or areas of work which assess areas of high strategic importance. They are conducted and/or managed by the IOS Evaluation Office.

Decentralized evaluations: Independent external evaluations of a project, a portfolio of projects implemented within a country or across a spectrum of countries or a larger programme/entity. They are directly managed by the concerned Programme Sector, Field Office or Category 1 institute responsible for the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation.

Mid-term evaluation (also known as Formative evaluation): An evaluation intended to improve performance, most often conducted during the implementation phase of projects or programs.

Final evaluation (also known as Summative evaluation): An evaluation conducted at the end of an intervention (or a phase of that intervention) to determine the extent to which anticipated outcomes were achieved.

Independent system wide evaluation⁸⁷: A systemic and impartial assessment of the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the combined contributions of the United Nations entities towards the achievement of collective development objectives and results. This includes an assessment, inter alia,

of the implementation of policies, strategies, programmes and activities, as well as implementation of system-wide mandates and institutional performance issues.

Meta-evaluation: Evaluations designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It can also be used to denote the evaluation of an evaluation to judge its quality and/or assess the performance of the evaluators. In UNESCO IOS conducts an annual meta evaluation known as a Synthetic Review.

EVALUATION STAKEHOLDERS

Evaluation Focal Point (EFP): A programme specialist designated within a UNESCO Programme Sector, a Field Office or a Category 1 institute to support their entity in the establishment and implementation of the decentralized evaluation plan, in the follow-up to evaluations and the effective use of findings for future programming and learning. She/he acts as liaison between their entity and IOS, whilst also contributing to the development of an evaluation culture across UNESCO.

Evaluation Reference Group⁸⁸: A reference group is established during the planning phase of an evaluation. It is composed of a core group of stakeholders of the evaluation subject who can provide different perspectives and knowledge on the subject, including at least one member from the UNESCO entity responsible for managing the evaluation process. It may also include, as relevant, staff from other UNESCO Programme Sectors, Field Offices and Category 1 institutes, an implementing partner, national authorities, and donor (if an extrabudgetary project evaluation) as relevant. The reference group should be consulted on the evaluation design in order to enhance its relevance; on the preliminary findings to enhance their validity; on the recommendations to enhance their feasibility, acceptability and ownership; and at any point during the evaluation process when needed. Evaluation reference groups have the following responsibilities:

- to review and comment on the Terms of Reference;
- to help steer the evaluation by providing technical advice as necessary;
- to provide feedback on deliverables such as the draft and final evaluation inception and evaluation report;
- and to help ensure that management uses accepted evaluation findings and recommendations in the management response.

UN-SWAP: The United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) is an accountability framework designed by UN WOMEN that enables to assess the extent to which gender issues are mainstreamed systematically and measurably into all major institutional functions of the UN system entities. It includes monitoring activities and outcomes for gender-related sustainable development goal results.⁸⁹ Performance indicator 4 specifically measures the consideration of gender in evaluations.

Disability SWAP: The System-Wide Action Plan for Disability inclusion is a means to build internal capacity, providing clear guidelines for the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities across all pillars and at all levels of the UN work. The associated accountability framework will measure their progress against a set of common indicators⁹⁰. Performance indicator 4 specifically measures disability inclusion in evaluations.

EVALUATION AND RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT TERMINOLOGY

Action Plan: It specifies the actions to implement those recommendations that were agreed to by management in the Management Response. These actions should be concrete, objectively verifiable, time-bound and clear on the responsibilities for implementation.

Evaluability: The extent to which an activity or a programme can be evaluated in a reliable, valid and credible fashion.

Evaluand: The subject of an evaluation.

Inputs: The financial, human, and institutional (material, technological and information) resources used for the intervention.

Management Response: The management response provides management's views of the evaluation recommendations, including whether and why management agrees or disagrees with each recommendation and whether it accepts the recommendation or not.

Output: Changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products, goods and services induced by the completion of activities within an intervention. It is within the control of the Organization/implementing team and attributable to it.

Outcome: Changes in the institutional and behavioural capacities or development conditions that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of impacts.

Results-Based Management: It is a management strategy which reflects the way an organization applies processes and resources to undertake interventions to achieve desired results (i.e., outputs, outcomes, impacts) integrating evidence and lessons learned on past performance and actual results into management decision-making.

Results Framework: Building on the Theory of Change, it is designed to guide the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting at all levels of the Organization. It provides the internal logic that explains how the expected results are to be achieved. It links the impact to the activities and related key underlying assumptions. It also presents performance indicators for each result and related assessment measures with associated information (i.e. baselines, sources, means of verification and targets).

Theory of Change (ToC): A representation of how an intervention is expected to lead to desired results. The ToC facilitates the process of making sense of how an intervention works and is intended to lead to change. The ToC illustrates the pathway of change and articulates the causal relationships and key underlying assumptions to explain the change process. Other related terms include but are not limited to **impact pathway, logic model** and **intervention logic**.

Triangulation: The use of three or more theories, sources or types of information, or types of analysis to verify and substantiate an assessment to overcome the bias that conforms from single informants, methods, observer or theory studies.

OVERSIGHT FUNCTIONS

Appraisal: An overall assessment of the relevance, feasibility and potential sustainability of an intervention prior to a decision of funding.

Audit⁹¹: An independent and objective assurance and advisory activity performed by IOS that is guided by a philosophy of adding value to improve the operations of UNESCO. It assists UNESCO accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to assess and improve the effectiveness of the Organization's risk management and internal control.

Evaluation: 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 coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Investigation: A specific examination and determination of the veracity of allegations about misconduct or other irregularities affecting UNESCO, its projects, assets or personnel. It allows for the provision of evidence for eventual prosecution or disciplinary measures.

Monitoring: A continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the key stakeholders of an ongoing intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. Monitoring is undertaken by the implementing team of the intervention.

Its purpose is to continuously assess the actual situation compared to the programming information originally defined in order to keep track of implementation and progress towards the achievement of results and take remedial actions when needed.

Performance Audit⁹²: It builds on traditional financial statement audit concepts by expanding the focus beyond financials to programmes and processes. It also emphasizes accountability for outputs and outcomes with due regard to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Endnotes

- 1 UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016) available at <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>
- 2 UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381664>
- 3 idem
- 4 OECD/DAC RBM Glossary (2002), p. 27
- 5 UNESCO 2022 RBM Guiding Principles: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000177568>
- 6 idem
- 7 Further details are provided in Annex 2 of this Manual 'Glossary of Key Terms'
- 8 UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub: <https://unesco.sharepoint.com/sites/EvaluationFocalPointNetwork/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- 9 UNESCO IOS public website: <https://en.unesco.org/about-us/ios/services#evaluation>
- 10 UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381664/>
- 11 UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381664>
- 12 See UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029, paragraph 42
- 13 See UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029, p. 16
- 14 An activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institution can be evaluated. For simplicity, this document refers solely to programme.
- 15 The Evaluation Reference Group is further explained in the subsequent section 2.2 'Engage evaluation stakeholders'
- 16 In most cases the concerned Project Responsible Officer is appointed as Evaluation Manager. To increase evaluation independence, the senior manager can also appoint somebody who was not involved in the management of the project as Evaluation Manager
- 17 See UNEG Norms and Standards (2016, p. 22): "An assessment of evaluability should be undertaken as an initial step to increase the likelihood that an evaluation will provide timely and credible information for decision-making."
- 18 See UNEG Norms and Standards (2016, p. 24): "Inclusive and diverse stakeholder engagement in the planning, design, conduct and follow-up of evaluations is critical to ensure ownership, relevance, credibility and the use of evaluation. Reference groups and other stakeholder engagement mechanisms should be designed for this purpose."
- 19 An activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institution can be evaluated. For simplicity, this document refers solely to programme.
- 20 See also the 1st stage on Evaluation Preparation and Design in Diagram 3 'The evaluation process' in this Manual
- 21 If this is not feasible the evaluation manager invites the ERG
- 22 The evaluation literature usually refers to three primary types of evaluation designs:
 - a) experimental: involves random assignment, control group and before/after measurements;
 - b) quasi-experimental: involves comparison group and after measurements, and may or may not involve before measurements;
 - c) non-experimental: no comparison group and measures change only at the end of the intervention.
 Most UNESCO evaluations follow a non-experimental design.
- 23 See Guidance #13 in the Annex of this Evaluation Manual
- 24 UNEG Guidance "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance" (2011) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>
- 25 UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866>
- 26 They are also referred to as OECD DAC criteria, see <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>
- 27 See p. 12 in the UNEG Norms and Standards (2016): "The universally recognized values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated into all stages of an evaluation. It is the responsibility of evaluators and evaluation managers to ensure that these values are respected, addressed and promoted, underpinning the commitment to the principle of 'leave no-one behind'"
- 28 Under this criterion, quality benchmarks include the extent to which both the object of evaluation and the evaluation itself incorporate a gender equality and human rights-based approach, and whether these issues are addressed during the evaluation process and in every part of the evaluation report – including in findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- 29 For details consult the UNESCO Administrative Manual Section 10.2 'Procurement of Goods, Works and Services' at <https://manual-part1.unesco.org/EN/Pages/default.aspx>

- 30 The UNEG document “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance” (2011) outlines how to prepare, conduct and use HRGE responsive evaluations. Available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>
- 31 UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866>
- 32 See Guidance #13 in the Annex of this Evaluation Manual
- 33 A lot of guidance and literature is available on sampling. The BetterEvaluation Knowledge Platform provides an overview at https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/rainbow_framework/describe/sample
- 34 An activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institution can be evaluated. For simplicity, this document refers solely to programme.
- 35 A comprehensive overview on evaluation methods and how to determine the right mix of methods is provided on the global BetterEvaluation Knowledge Platform at <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/choose-methods-and-processes>. Another example is the Guide ‘[Evaluation of International Development Interventions: An Overview of Approaches and Methods](#)’ published by World Bank IEG in 2020
- 36 UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866>
- 37 See UNEG Norms and Standards (2016, p. 24) “Inclusive and diverse stakeholder engagement in the planning, design, conduct and follow-up of evaluations is critical to ensure ownership, relevance, credibility and the use of evaluation. Reference groups and other stakeholder engagement mechanisms should be designed for this purpose.”
- 38 For details see UNEG (2018): UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Technical Note, Annex I: Individual Evaluation Scoring Tool available at <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452>
- 39 For details see <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>
- 40 See UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029, p. 15
- 41 UNEG Norms and Standards (2016, p. 12) “Transparency is an essential element of evaluation that establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership and increases public accountability. Evaluation products should be publicly accessible.”
- 42 UNESCO Evaluation Knowledge Hub: <https://unesco.sharepoint.com/sites/EvaluationFocalPointNetwork/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- 43 Decentralized evaluations will be made available on the IOS website starting 2023
- 44 In line with UNEG Norms and Standards (2016, p. 17) “The organization’s management is responsible for providing a formal management response to each evaluation. The management response provides management’s views of the evaluation recommendations, including whether and why management agrees or disagrees with each recommendation. The management response should detail specific actions to implement those recommendations that were agreed to by management. These actions should be concrete, objectively verifiable, time-bound and clear on the responsibilities for implementation.”
- 45 For details see John Mayne (2008): Building an evaluative culture for effective evaluation and results Management. Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Brief, November, Rome, 1–4.
- 46 Diagnostic Study of Evaluations of UNESCO’s Extrabudgetary Activities (2013); Synthetic Review of Evaluations in the UNESCO System (2016); Periodic Report on IOS Evaluations 205 EX/5, Part II (2018); Internal Oversight Service Annual Report (2021) 214 EX/19. These studies have shown that while most evaluation reports meet basic reporting requirements, the overall quality of reports is only slowly improving over time. One recurring finding is the absence of evidence on the effects (outcomes and impacts) of UNESCO’s work, in particular in the evaluations of extrabudgetary projects.
- 47 Adapted from: UN Women Evaluation Handbook p. 121-127, and from https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/themes/evaluability_assessment
- 48 An activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institution can be evaluated. For simplicity, this document refers solely to programme.
- 49 For details on the OECD DAC criteria see <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>
- 50 The UNESCO Evaluation Manual provides more details on how to engage evaluation stakeholders
- 51 The Summary checklist for a human rights and gender equality evaluation process (2011) in the UNEG document “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance”, Annex 1 provides further details. It is available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>
- 52 The UNESCO Evaluation Manual provides more details on evaluation management and implementation
- 53 The Summary checklist for a human rights and gender equality evaluation process (2011) in the UNEG document “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance”, Annex 1 provides further details. It is available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>
- 54 The UNESCO Evaluation Manual provides more details on how to engage evaluation stakeholders
- 55 See Guidance #13 in the Annex of this Evaluation Manual

- 56 UNEG Guidance “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance” (2011) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>
- 57 UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866>
- 58 Adjusted from UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/608>
- 59 See UNEG Norms and Standards (2016, p. 19): All those engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities should aspire to conduct high-quality work guided by professional standards and ethical and moral principles. This includes heads of evaluation offices/units, evaluation office staff, decentralized evaluation staff, evaluation managers and external evaluators.
- 60 An activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institution can be evaluated. For simplicity, this document refers solely to programme.
- 61 For more information refer to the UNEG Concept Note (2018) “Development of Culturally Responsive Criteria for Evaluations” available at <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2123>
- 62 For details consult the UNESCO Administrative Manual Section 10.2 ‘Procurement of Goods, Works and Services’ at <https://manual-part1.unesco.org/EN/Pages/default.aspx>
- 63 Adjusted from: “A short primer on Innovative Evaluation Reporting,” Kylie Hutchinson, 2017, Chapter 5 Alternatives to an Evaluation Report.
- 64 An activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institution can be evaluated. For simplicity, this document refers solely to programme.
- 65 The UNESCO Evaluation Manual provides more details on evaluation data collection and analysis
- 66 This Guidance is based on an earlier version developed in 2020
- 67 This section is informed by, among other sources, the 2030 Agenda “leave no one behind” principle, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator (2022).
- 68 UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Disability Inclusion in Evaluations and Reporting on the UNDIS Entity Accountability Framework Evaluation Indicator (2022), pg. 12.
- 69 The criteria in this section were informed by the UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation -- Towards UNEG Guidance, UN-SWAP Performance Indicator 4: Evaluation, and UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Technical Note.
- 70 Informed by the UNESCO Evaluation Policy, 2022-2029.
- 71 The Strategic Objectives set in the [UNESCO MTS 2014-2021](#) or [UNESCO MTS 2022-29](#), whichever is relevant to the period of object design and implementation, [Operational strategy for Priority Africa](#).
- 72 The Strategic Objectives set in the [UNESCO MTS 2014-2021](#) or [UNESCO MTS 2022-29](#), whichever is relevant to the period of object design and implementation, [UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan: 2014-2021](#),
- 73 Informed by UNESCO, Indigenous Peoples webpage
- 74 [UNESCO policy on engaging with indigenous peoples](#)
- 75 “The United Nations defines ‘youth’ as persons aged between 15 and 24. However, this definition is flexible. The experience of being young can vary substantially across the world, between countries and regions, and ‘youth’ is therefore often a fluid and changing category. As such, context is always an important guide in UNESCO’s definition of youth.” (UNESCO, By youth, with youth, for youth.)
- 76 The Strategic Objectives set in the [UNESCO MTS 2014-2021](#) or [UNESCO MTS 2022-29](#), whichever is relevant to the period of object design and implementation, [UNESCO operational strategy on youth 2014-2021](#)
- 77 Informed by Small Island Developing States, UNESCO’S Action Plan 2016-2021
- 78 The Strategic Objectives set in the [UNESCO MTS 2014-2021](#) or [UNESCO MTS 2022-29](#), whichever is relevant to the period of object design and implementation, [Small islands developing States: UNESCO’s action plan](#)
- 79 The Strategic Objectives set in the [UNESCO MTS 2014-2021](#) or [UNESCO MTS 2022-29](#), whichever is relevant to the period of object design and implementation, [the Comprehensive High-Level Midterm Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries \(MTR\)](#)
- 80 Informed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime – Independent Evaluation Section, Planning and Undertaking Evaluations in UNODC During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Other Crises (2020); UNICEF, Response of the UNICEF Evaluation Function to the COVID-19 crisis – Technical note (2020); UNESCO, Guidance on Evaluation in the context of the Pandemic (2020); UN WOMEN, Pocket Tool for Managing Evaluation during the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020).

- 81 Informed by the UNESCO Evaluation Policy 2022-2029; UNEG, Stock-Taking Exercise on Policies and Guidance of UN Agencies in Support of Evaluation of Social and Environmental Considerations (2022); UNESCO's Mid-term Strategy 2022-2029; UNEP Evaluation Manual (2016).
- 82 UNESCO's Strategic Objective 2: Work towards sustainable societies and protecting the environment through the promotion of science, technology, innovation and the natural heritage and in particular, Outcome 3: Enhance knowledge for climate action, biodiversity, water and ocean management, and disaster risk reduction and Outcome 4: Advance international cooperation in science, technology and innovation.
- 83 The evaluation may assess the extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions, or regions where it is being implemented. Examples may include national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements, etc. (UNEP Evaluation Manual [2016]).
- 84 Adapted from: UNEG Good Practice Guidelines for Follow up to Evaluations (2010) available at <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/610>
- 85 Some definitions are taken from the OECD Development Assistance Committee [Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management](#) (2002), as updated by the OECD Development Assistance Committee's Network on Development Evaluation's [Better Criteria for Better Evaluation report – revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use](#) (2019). Others are drawn from the UNESCO [Results-Based Management Guidelines](#) (2022).
- 86 Partner/institution includes government (national, regional, local), civil society organizations, private entities and international bodies involved in funding, implementing and/or overseeing the intervention.
- 87 [Policy for Independent System-Wide Evaluation of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System](#) (2014).
- 88 [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) (2016).
- 89 See more information here: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>
- 90 See more information here: https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/disability_swap_onepager.pdf
- 91 IOS Internal Audit Charter and Policy as reflected in Annex III of the [IOS Annual Report](#) (2015)
- 92 Maria Barrados and Jeremy Lonsdale, Crossover of Audit and Evaluation Practices: Challenges and Opportunities, Comparative Policy Evaluation Volume 26, Routledge (2020)



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