



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Evaluation Handbook

Guidance for designing,
conducting and using
independent evaluation
at UNODC



UNDERGOING REVIEW

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME
Vienna

Evaluation Handbook

Guidance for designing, conducting and using
independent evaluations at UNODC



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Disclaimer gender assessment

Eva Otero Candelera and Cristina Santillán Idoate, external consultants specialized in gender and evaluation, reviewed the evaluation handbook. The review was aimed at integrating human rights and gender equality dimensions thoroughly. The consultants were informed by their experience of participating in UNODC evaluation teams, the exchange with IEU staff, the literature review, and their academic background and professional experience.

While the external consultants suggested changes and submitted comments to improve the quality of the handbook, they concluded that it is in full compliance with the norms, standards and requirements on gender equality and evaluation of the United Nations Evaluation Group, UN-SWAP and UNODC. The handbook consistently recognizes that all UNODC evaluations have to consider human rights and gender equality aspects, and provides specific and clear guidance and practical examples to mainstream gender equality in all phases and at all levels of the evaluation process. Furthermore, it recommends a useful range of online resources on human rights, gender equality and evaluation.

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Foreword

Member States, the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have placed increased emphasis both on accountability and on the need to draw lessons from UNODC interventions, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness. UNODC needs to prove that concrete results have been achieved, which, in times of financial constraints, has become an even higher political priority. Based on credible, objective, valid, evidence-based information, evaluation is a powerful tool that can make programmes and projects, and therefore UNODC itself, more effective and efficient. Thus, as an agent of change, evaluation strives towards strengthening the leading role of UNODC in countering crime, drugs and terrorism.

The present handbook is at the core of the mandate of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) of UNODC, as it guides all stakeholders throughout the evaluation process, and is part of further normative innovations such as the web-based evaluation function and e-learning modules. This handbook is placed in the context of “Unite Evaluation”, a web-based application facilitating not only all steps through a systematic online process, but also generating high-level aggregate information, thereby meeting the demand for data at the synthesis level.

Furthermore, this handbook is based on the principles of the 2030 agenda and the Strategic Development Goals, complementing the investments IEU is making in this regard, participating actively in the building of national evaluation capacity and national evaluation systems. UNODC e-learning modules are made available in order to build capacity and awareness of the public good evaluation constitutes.

UNODC adopts an approach to evaluation that encourages the wider participation and consultation of internal and external stakeholders during the planning, design and conducting of evaluations and their subsequent follow-up. At the same time, the Office strives to maintain strict impartiality and independence in the framing of conclusions and recommendations. Moreover, the UNODC evaluation function implements the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group and focuses particularly on a gender-responsive evaluation process in order to further gender equality and the empowerment of women and other marginalized or discriminated groups—adhering to the principle of leaving no one behind.

Furthermore, this evaluation handbook responds to the demands of Member States for a strengthened evaluation function within UNODC and I hope that its publication will help our partners and us to strengthen evaluation culture within UNODC with the aim of ultimately accounting for the Office’s achievements in countering crime, drugs and terrorism.



I would like to express my deep appreciation to the consultants who have worked on the evaluation handbook together with IEU colleagues and the gender experts who have reviewed this handbook in order to ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the publication and at all steps of the UNODC evaluation process.

Katharina Kayser, Chief, Independent Evaluation Unit, UNODC

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About this Handbook

Evaluation matters. It matters because, when done well, evaluation supports informed decision-making, accountability and learning—ultimately improving the work of the United Nations office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Ten million people are estimated to be incarcerated in prisons across the globe. Some of these individuals face prison conditions, including overcrowding, that can contribute to HIV transmission through drug use, needle sharing, tattooing, unprotected sex and other risky behaviours. Prisoners' welfare is sometimes overlooked in these challenging conditions and HIV prevention and care programmes remain rare in some countries. UNODC has provided HIV treatment, care and support interventions for prisoners, prison workers and injection drug users since 2002.

In 2014, a comprehensive evaluation of the 34 projects within the UNODC global HIV programme¹ recommended expanding the focus to support prisoners' general health. By following this recommendation, HIV programme managers added more countries to the programme and held the first global consultation on HIV in prisons in order to further identify problems and solutions.

The work of the HIV programme shows the strong link between evaluation and supporting individuals in a vulnerable position. It also highlights one of the key aspects of evaluation, which is to bring change and improve the delivery of solutions on the ground.

Evaluation is key for a healthy organization that learns from its actions and pushes for innovation in order to serve those we work to benefit. At UNODC, the evaluation function provides for evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful to serve four main purposes: accountability, organizational learning, inclusive dialogue and knowledge generation. Furthermore, the evaluation function contributes to developing UNODC capacities in terms of innovation and organizational change, providing building blocks to a learning organization.

Evaluation matters.
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work better.

¹ https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2014/In-Depth_Evaluation_UNODC_HIV-AIDS_programme_2008-2012_published_2014.pdf



WHO IS THE HANDBOOK FOR?

This revised and updated UNODC Evaluation Handbook has been designed as a user-friendly resource to inspire and guide UNODC stakeholders to promote evaluation and support good evaluation practice. The primary audience is UNODC staff who manage evaluations or are involved in evaluation processes, and international development evaluators who conduct evaluations of UNODC programmes, projects (also referred to as “interventions”) as well as of UNODC policies.

Furthermore, it is a practical guide for everyone involved in the evaluation process. This includes counterparts who are interested in evaluation and who want to use and learn from evaluations, particularly core learning partners. It may also be useful for donors and other representatives from Member States who want to learn more about how evaluation is undertaken at UNODC and about good evaluation practice more generally.

WHY AN EVALUATION HANDBOOK?

The Evaluation Handbook aims to support UNODC in making evaluation processes, learning and accountability a central part of UNODC programme and project delivery. In addition to providing practical guidance, this Handbook aspires to encourage evaluation at UNODC by highlighting numerous examples of how good evaluation practice has been put to use across the organization’s thematic areas.

On a day-to-day practical level, the Handbook is intended to help users:

- Better understand the purposes and benefits of evaluation
- Be equipped to plan for and manage evaluations
- Be able to judge the quality of evaluation methods and reports
- Actively utilize evaluation recommendations for following up on evaluation findings and planning future interventions

This edition supersedes the 2011 Evaluation Handbook. It has been revised to better respond to the needs and demands of UNODC. The new version complements the new UNODC evaluation policy and takes into account the rapidly changing organizational structure of UNODC, as well as evolving international evaluation standards. Revisions have also been made to other normative evaluation tools, such as the templates and guidelines for terms of reference, inception and evaluation reports, in order to ensure a coherent and consistent approach for all of UNODC evaluation guidance.

This version of the Handbook is intended to be a more structured, comprehensive Evaluation Handbook that users can easily refer to in their work. In addition to its direct application to evaluation processes, it also aims to:

- Promote evidence-based decision-making through evaluative thinking, a more results-oriented culture and an environment of continuous learning and transparency among UNODC staff, senior management, Member States and donors
- Provide timely, relevant and quality evaluation guidance to UNODC staff, senior management, Member States and donors, ultimately enhancing ownership of evaluation processes
- Support change and innovation, in particular the United Nations move towards an integrated programming approach,² which seeks synergies and harmonization at the regional and thematic levels
- Promote greater coordination and cohesion, internally and externally with other aid partners.

HOW TO USE THE HANDBOOK

Readers are encouraged to review all chapters in order to get a good understanding of how evaluations should best be managed and conducted. The Evaluation Handbook can also be used as a reference document for readers to zoom in on the specific issues they want to know more about.

The Evaluation Handbook is organized into three parts for ease of use.

Part A (chapters one, two and three) provides the overall context for evaluation. Chapter one covers the basic concepts of evaluation, why it is important, and the general principles of good practice. Chapter two then highlights the standards and agendas that guide all evaluations within the United Nations system. Chapter three includes more specific information about the types, timing and requirements for evaluations within UNODC, including the roles and responsibilities for all parties involved.

Part B (chapters four, five and six) guides programme/project managers and evaluators through UNODC's evaluation process. The 10 essential steps for initiating and managing evaluations are described in chapter four. Chapter five provides specific instructions for preparing the two main deliverables required from evaluators—the inception report and the evaluation report. Chapter six then addresses how the findings, lessons learned and best practices that emerge from evaluations can be shared and used to improve programming.

²ECOSOC Resolution 2009/23 “Support for the development and implementation of the regional programmes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime”, and the ECOSOC Resolution 2010/20 “Support for the development and implementation of an integrated approach to programme development at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime”.



Part C (chapter seven) is a practical guide providing advice and tools for carrying out high quality, credible and useful evaluations. Thus, chapter seven includes the most common methods used in UNODC evaluations and provides links to additional guidance and helpful resources. It is highly recommended for both evaluators and managers of evaluations.

Throughout the Handbook, easy references are provided to additional resources relevant to each section. The references are indicated by these icons:



TOOL OR TEMPLATE



WEBSITES FOR GUIDANCE AND
REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

The online version of this Handbook also includes annexes with specific tools, templates and guidelines for UNODC evaluation processes.

UNODC EVALUATION FUNCTION

The evaluation function of UNODC assesses the organization's programmes and projects, supports innovative practices and promotes an evaluation culture. The evaluation function was re-established as an independent unit in 2010, reporting directly to the Executive Director and Member States. Its purpose is to lead and guide evaluations in order to provide objective information on the performance of UNODC. Its main roles include:

- Providing updated tools, guidelines and templates for use in the evaluation process
- Overseeing and guiding all UNODC evaluation processes
- Reviewing and approving all evaluation products and deliverables
- Providing quality assurance
- Guiding the external, independent evaluation teams
- Managing and conducting in-depth evaluations in collaboration with external evaluators
- Ensuring that appropriate evaluation quality standards are met
- Ensuring that all evaluation processes, products and deliverables respond to human rights and gender equality (HR and GE) standards
- Supporting evaluation results and lessons to become part of organizational learning
- Providing knowledge products and analysis based upon evaluation results
- Reporting on the implementation rate of evaluation recommendations to Member States and the Executive Director on an annual basis

Most importantly, the evaluation function is available to provide support to all UNODC stakeholders with any evaluation-related questions and needs that arise. The evaluation function can be contacted at: ieu@unodc.org

For more information, please refer to the UNODC evaluation website:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/index.html>

More detailed information is outlined in the UNODC evaluation policy, which can be accessed here:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/IEUwebsite/Evaluation_Policy/UNODC_Evaluation_Policy.pdf

The evaluation function hopes that readers will find the UNODC Evaluation Handbook an interesting and helpful resource, one that inspires more people join in our efforts to shape the work of UNODC with high quality evaluations!



CHAPTER 1

Evaluation: what it is and why it matters

This chapter outlines why evaluation is essential to the success of programmes and projects as well as to organizational transparency, accountability and learning. It covers the basic concepts of evaluation and of what constitutes good evaluation practice. The chapter also explains how evaluation fits into results-based management practices and how it relates to other types of assessments.

WHAT IS EVALUATION?

Evaluations are carried out using social research methods and practices to measure what changes the programme, projects and policies have contributed to, and to obtain a mature understanding of how it happened. Evaluation aims at increasing knowledge of one or several aspects of the intervention for learning, informing decision-making processes, and being accountable to stakeholders, donors and citizens.

More precisely, UNODC uses the definition of evaluation developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). The key part of the definition being that evaluation is:

An assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Furthermore, following UNEG norms and standards,³ UNODC requires evaluations to consider how well its interventions have addressed the principles of human rights and gender equality and to identify and analyse specific results at these levels. Therefore, human rights and gender aspects need to be considered as part of any UNODC evaluation.

This definition of evaluation further states that 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 the organizations and stakeholders”.⁴

Importantly, evaluation is not about fault-finding or judging an individual or a team. Rather, evaluation is an opportunity for internal and external stakeholders to contribute their knowledge and views about a particular intervention. At the end of the process, evaluation provides feedback by recognizing achievements that have been made. Furthermore, it identifies ways for improvement and supports evidence-based decision-making.

³<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

⁴UNEG, Norms and Standards for Evaluation, 2016.



The United Nations Secretary-General Guterres has stressed that to be fully accountable, “we need a culture of evaluation, independent and real-time evaluation with full transparency.”

WHY IS EVALUATION IMPORTANT?

The vital role that evaluation plays in the success of interventions is becoming increasingly apparent. The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, has stressed that to be fully accountable, “we need a culture of evaluation, independent and real-time evaluation with full transparency”.⁵ The former Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, was also a strong advocate of recognizing that, “evaluation is (. . .) critical for promoting accountability and for understanding what we are doing right and what we may be getting wrong”.⁶

Moreover, evaluation is at the heart of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda,⁷ which highlights that the follow-up and review processes for the development goals will be informed by country-led evaluations and by data that is accessible, timely, reliable and of high quality.

Ultimately, the information obtained through evaluation and the processes for gathering it serve four main purposes: accountability, organizational learning, knowledge generation and opportunities for dialogue. Evaluation enables the achievement of these aims as follows:

Accountability: By assessing compliance with established conventions, treaties, norms, policies and plans. Accountability is achieved through independently conducted evaluations that accurately and fairly report on performance results to UNODC at large, Member States and other stakeholders.

Organizational learning: By measuring the extent to which intended and unintended results are or are not achieved and their differentiated impact on stakeholders, giving attention to gender, age, social status and origin among other variables. Evaluation deals with answering difficult questions, such as whether the organization is doing the right things and whether it is doing things right. In this sense, evaluation is an important source of evidence about what works, what does not and why. Through the timely incorporation of recommendations and lessons learned into decision-making processes, evaluation aims at making programming and UNODC at large more effective and efficient.

⁵ <http://www.unevaluation.org/mediacenter/newscenter/newsdetail/121>

⁶ United Nations Evaluation Group High-level event: “Bridge to a Better World: Evaluation at the Service of the Post-2015 Agenda”, New York, 9 March 2015.

⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

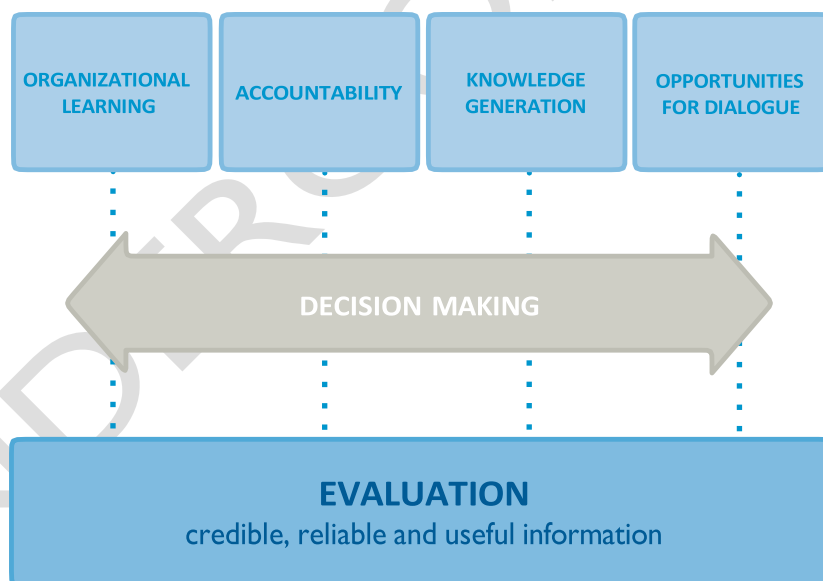
Knowledge generation: By producing substantive knowledge about the specific topics that are part of an organization's mandate, and about innovative practices. This knowledge is generally found in the recommendations and lessons learned contained in evaluation reports. Such information is compiled from multiple evaluations and then synthesized and shared by the UNODC evaluation function for the benefit of UNODC stakeholders as well as the United Nations organizations at large and its Member States.

Opportunities for dialogue: By providing a useful platform for stakeholders to come together to discuss the subject of the evaluation and other areas of common interest, inclusive evaluation processes help to build relationships and ensure a better understanding of the different needs and interests of participants and other stakeholders, as well as opportunities for further collaboration.

Evaluation is at the heart of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Figure 1.1 shows the four purposes that emerge from evaluation processes with decision-making being a common factor throughout. In some cases, evaluations become development interventions in themselves. Evaluations can create the space for participants to reflect on an intervention, whether individually or in groups, which may inspire new ideas and energy that lead to change such as new partnerships or new initiatives. Thus, evaluation as an agent of change is often an intervention in itself.

FIGURE 1.1 THE MAIN PURPOSES OF EVALUATION





SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

The 2015 UNODC mid-term in-depth evaluation of the global programme on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism is an example of how evaluations can be useful for organizational learning.

One of the evaluation report's recommendations focused on the need for the UNODC Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) to "identify good practice and create guidelines on implementing sustainability strategies that should be incorporated into the programming of the delivery of future activity". Based on this, the Compendium of Good Sustainability Strategies in the Terrorism Prevention Branch was produced. The compendium has become an important resource for ensuring that good practices in the TPB technical assistance programmes are shared within UNODC and among new (and old) staff members.

Source: https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2015/GLOR35_Mid-term_In-Depth_Evaluation_Report_May_2015.pdf

THE BASICS OF CONDUCTING A GOOD EVALUATION

Good evaluations are those that:

- Meet the expectations of those commissioning the evaluation, as well as those of key stakeholders
- Are useful for and guide future decision-making at the organization
- Provide credible and trustworthy results, as well as pertinent and actionable recommendations
- Are timely and conducted by using a reasonable amount of resources to ensure that evaluation results and recommendations feed into decision-making processes⁸

The best way to ensure that evaluations are credible, reliable and useful is to ensure that they meet high quality and professional standards. Within the United Nations system, this means that evaluation processes must align with the international norms and standards developed by UNEG. United Nations requirements and resources are explained more fully in chapter two, but it is worth highlighting the main principles of good evaluation practice here:

- *Independent and impartial:* evaluation processes need to be separated from policymaking, implementation and management of the intervention.

⁸Adapted from CIDA Evaluation Guide, Canadian International Development Agency, 2004 http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/cida_evaluation_guide

- *Transparent, participatory and inclusive:* evaluations need to be conducted in an open, respectful and consultative manner creating spaces for all relevant stakeholders, including those in a more disadvantaged position, to engage directly in the evaluation and take ownership of the evaluation process.
- *Robust in methodological approach:* evaluations need to be conducted in a systematic manner, using sound approaches and methods.
- *Utilization focused:* there needs to be clear intent about the purpose and use of findings to improve the organization's work.
- *Ethically conducted:* evaluations need to be carried out according to professional and ethical guidelines and codes of conduct.

More details about the practicalities of conducting good evaluations can be found in subsequent chapters, in particular, chapters five and seven.

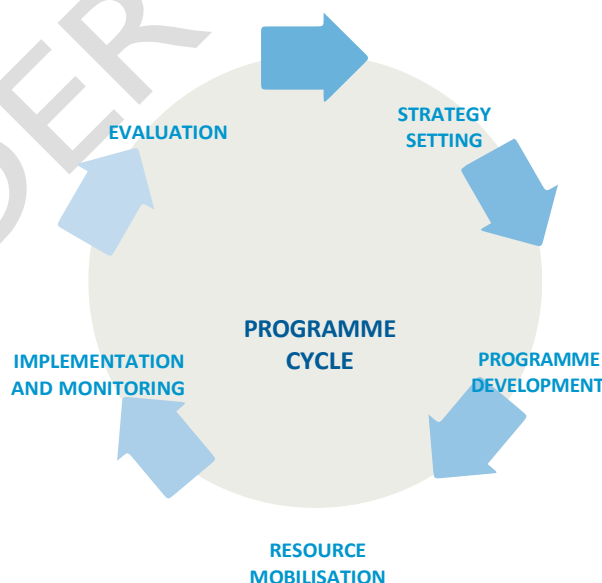
The best way to ensure that evaluations are credible, reliable and useful is to ensure that they meet high professional standards.

WHAT TO EVALUATE?

Evaluations can be carried out on many types of development initiatives including activities, projects, programmes, strategies, policies, topics, themes, sectors, operational areas and institutional performance. This handbook primarily focuses on the evaluations of programmes and projects (also collectively referred to as "interventions") but has relevance for other types of initiatives including policy work.

Evaluations are part of the normal programme/project cycle, which can be seen in figure 1.2 below, and can be conducted at any point in the life cycle of an initiative.

FIGURE 1.2 BASIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE UNODC PROJECT CYCLE*



* Based on the general programme/project cycle as illustrated in the UNODC programme and operations manual. It has to be noted that it is not a strictly linear process but that many of the steps/processes will overlap. For instance, evaluation will continue throughout strategy setting as well as programme development and is also relevant for resource mobilization, etc.



Evaluations can address several types of questions about the different topics and aspects of the policy or intervention being assessed. For this reason, it is useful to distinguish between three broad categories of questions that can be addressed by evaluations, along with examples of each:⁹

- *Descriptive questions* aim at determining the way things are, the way things occurred and who was involved.

Examples: What were the overall objectives of the intervention being evaluated? What key stakeholders (male and female) were involved? What resources did the organization have to fulfil its mandate? What were the major gender stereotypes, norms and judgements among the intervention team and stakeholders in relation to the intervention topic?

- *Normative questions* aim at assessing whether things are the way they should be.

Examples: Were the objectives realistic given the political context and the time and resources available for their implementation? Were intervention resources used efficiently? Has the policy been enforced as planned? How did the different stakeholders (male and female) benefit from the intervention?

- *Cause-and-effect questions* aim at determining whether a particular intervention or policy “made a difference”, in the sense that certain measurable effects and impacts can be attributed to it.

Examples: To what extent did the programme contribute to improving the situation of the target population? To what extent did the intervention contribute to women’s empowerment? To what extent did the intervention have an effect on institutional change? Which changes are most valued by stakeholders (disaggregated by different hierarchies of disadvantage and mainly by gender), and why?

In order to bring consistency to evaluation processes, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) developed a standard set of evaluation criteria to be used in assessing all types of interventions. These include *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact* and *sustainability*. UNODC together with other United Nations entities requires human rights and gender equality criteria to be considered. *Design, partnership* and *cooperation* are also frequently criteria that are required in UNODC evaluations. These nine criteria, and how they guide the main questions that evaluations need to address, are discussed in the next chapter.

⁹ Adapted from “The road to results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations” 2009, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2699>.

HOW GOOD EVALUATION CAN BE USEFUL

Ultimately, an evaluation needs to be useful to the commissioning organization or team. Good evaluations are those that provide information and recommendations that help managers and policymakers make sound decisions and that help teams and stakeholders to plan for better programming. Good evaluations (those that are relevant and based on credible and reliable evidence) are also the basis for promoting future actions or policies amongst stakeholders who might otherwise be reluctant to lend their support. Good evaluations can have a significant and useful role in fulfilling the reporting requirements of results-based management (RBM) systems.

Good evaluations are those that provide information and recommendations that help managers and policymakers make sound decisions.

RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Results-based management (RBM) is a management strategy that focuses on performance and the achievement of outputs, outcomes and overall impact of an intervention, collectively known as "results".¹⁰ It is one of the core programming principles for development organizations globally.

RBM uses a structured, logical approach that identifies expected results as well as the inputs and activities necessary to achieve them. It aims at promoting management effectiveness and accountability through:

- Clearly defining realistic results and targets
- Linking planned activities to the results to be achieved
- Monitoring progress towards the achievement of expected results and targets
- Assessing whether results were achieved and why
- Integrating lessons learned into management decisions
- Reporting on performance

Importantly, RBM helps to sharpen management practices by placing the primary focus on the results to be achieved by the intervention instead of on the activities being implemented.

¹⁰ <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>



RBM helps to sharpen management practices by placing the primary focus on the results to be achieved by the intervention instead of on the activities being implemented.

THE RBM JOURNEY

RBM is sometimes likened to making travel plans. The process entails first choosing a destination, then deciding on the route and the intermediary stops along the way, checking progress against a roadmap, and making course adjustments as needed in order to reach the desired destination. In this case, the main focus is the destination, and lessons learned during the journey are used to plan the next trip.

Like most travel, RBM places the primary focus on the destination (the results to be achieved) rather than on purely managing the processes (inputs and activities) along the way. It is still important to carefully attend to the details that make the trip possible, but the overriding emphasis is arriving at the agreed upon goal.

This analogy can also be used loosely to illustrate how evaluation criteria can be applied:

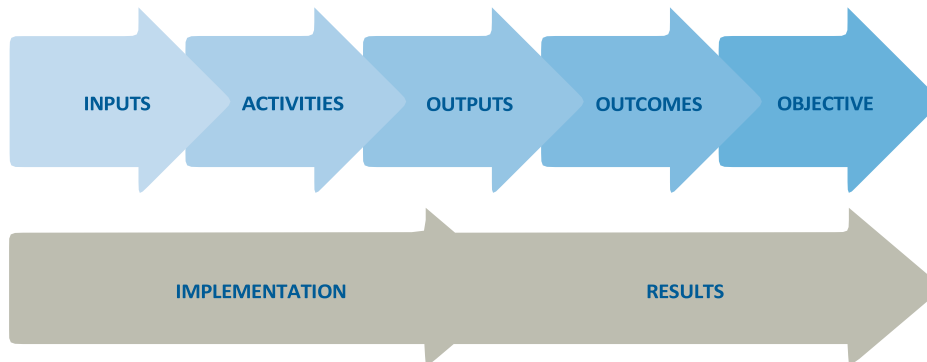
- *Relevance*: Who decided the route and the destination? Did the route and destination take into account other drivers? Was it the direction the passengers wanted to go in? Were we missing any passengers?
- *Efficiency*: Was the best route chosen and the least amount of fuel used given the circumstances?
- *Effectiveness*: Was good progress made in getting to the destination?
- *Impact*: Is the destination helping people achieve their larger goals?
- *Sustainability*: Will passengers be able to keep travelling on their own?
- *Human rights and gender equality (HR and GE)*: Did passengers represent diverse groups? Was everyone safe and comfortable? Did women have equal opportunities to make decisions and to drive?

RBM aspects have to be considered at the beginning of any programme/project planning. The planning process involves the development of a results framework, which is ideally based on a theory of change or programme theory. The results framework is important because it shows the links and cause-and-effect relationships between the ultimate goal (objective/impact), the short-term (output) and intermediate-term (outcome) results, and the activities to be implemented in order to achieve those results.

A simple way of showing these relationships is by developing a results chain. Figure 1.3 shows the main elements of a results chain. It also shows which elements are part of programme/project implementation, which are considered results, and how the different types of results build upon each other. Evaluations are typically focused on outcome-level results as these are the results that the intervention is expected to achieve.

More information about results frameworks and programme theories can be found in the practical guide in part 3 of this handbook.

FIGURE 1.3 RESULTS CHAIN



Evaluations are typically focused on outcome-level results as these are the results that the intervention is expected to achieve.

THE CHALLENGE OF MEASURING IMPACT

Impact (or objective) refers to the longer-term change that an intervention is expected to contribute towards. It may take months or years for these types of changes to become apparent. It is often difficult to attribute the observed changes to a particular intervention alone because other factors and actors may have contributed to the results as well. Thus, achieving the impact is generally beyond the direct control of the intervention.

Two important concepts in measuring impact are attribution and contribution. *Attribution* means that the particular intervention led to the observed outcomes and that it can be attributed to causing the outcome. *Contribution* means that the intervention helped to cause the observed outcomes, that it was a factor capable of causing the change.

Thus, evaluation primarily focuses on what changes the programme/project should be able to control—the outcome-level results. However, as there is still a need to prove to stakeholders that progress towards impact is being made and to learn from what works and what does not work, careful consideration should be given to developing evaluation questions that can reasonably capture impact-related information. In addition, it should be assessed how valuable the changes produced were to the different stakeholders involved.

Some programmes and projects do not have logical frameworks (logframes) or respective monitoring tools set up in a way that can easily assess impact. In these cases, the evaluation teams have to carefully revisit and consider the programme/project logic as well as the theory of change in order to determine the contribution of the programme/project under evaluation to changes.

However, most interventions can demonstrate their impact indicators in the form of anecdotal qualitative data as indicators that emphasize the effect a programme/project has had. Systematic monitoring and reporting on stories of success and, in particular, qualitative case studies will improve the challenge of assessing the impact of UNODC programmes/projects. However, such information remains selective in contrast to a well-developed impact evaluation, which will provide insights into the overall impact of the intervention.



Systematic monitoring and reporting on stories of success and, in particular, qualitative case studies will improve the challenge of assessing the impact of UNODC programmes/projects.

WHAT IS AN IMPACT EVALUATION?

Impact evaluations belong to a particular type of evaluation that seeks to answer cause-and-effect questions. Unlike general evaluations, which can answer many types of questions, impact evaluations are structured around one particular type of question: What is the impact (or causal effect) of a programme/project on the outcome of interest? An impact evaluation looks for changes in outcomes that the intervention *contributes* towards triggering. This also includes any unintended changes as well as any negative impact.

Rigorous impact evaluations are impact evaluations specially designed for *measuring* the changes in outcomes that are *directly attributable* to the intervention. In rigorous impact evaluations, variables other than the intervention affecting the outcomes of interest are deduced from the measurement of the impact by collecting data on changes in outcomes among individuals who are almost identical to those benefiting from the intervention, but who are *not* affected by the intervention. In impact evaluation jargon, these groups of individuals are called, respectively, the comparison group and the treatment group.

Source: Gertler, P. J., Martinez, S., Premand, P., Rawlings, L. B. and Vermeersch, C. M. J. (2011). *Impact Evaluation in Practice*. The World Bank.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATIVE THINKING¹¹

Conducting high quality evaluations is just as important as promoting evaluative thinking among managers and policymakers. In this way they actively participate in the evaluation process and make the best use of evaluation results.

Essentially, evaluative thinking is critical thinking applied to contexts of evaluation. More specifically, it is the ability to logically and rationally consider information that is relevant to the evaluation process, or that is generated by evaluations.

Rather than accepting the arguments and conclusions presented, a person with strong evaluative thinking will question and seek to understand the evidence provided. He or she will look for logical connections between ideas, consider alternative interpretations of information and evaluate the strength of arguments presented.

Evaluative thinking is not a matter of accumulating information. A person with a good memory and who knows a lot of facts is not necessarily good at critical thinking. A critical thinker is able to deduce consequences from what he or she knows, and seek relevant sources of information.

¹¹“Defining and Teaching Evaluative Thinking: Insights from Research on Critical Thinking”, *American Journal of Evaluation*, 2015, Vol. 36(3). Jane Buckley, Thomas Archibald, Monica Hargraves and William M. Trochim, 2015.

Critical thinking should not be confused with being argumentative or being critical of other people. Although critical thinking skills can be used to expose fallacies and bad reasoning, critical thinking can also be constructive and help us acquire knowledge, improve our theories and strengthen arguments. In evaluation, using critical thinking in a constructive way is essential for enhancing work processes and improving projects and programmes through learning.

In addition, the proper process of designing, implementing and using evaluations requires that evaluators, programme/project managers (who will also be referred to as managers in this handbook) and intended users reflect critically on key aspects of the intervention, the knowledge gaps, and the implications of evaluation findings, recommendations and lessons learned.

HOW IS EVALUATION RELATED TO OTHER TYPES OF OVERSIGHT?

In addition to evaluation, there are other assessment practices and disciplines that help ensure policymakers, programme managers, teams and stakeholders have sufficient understanding and oversight of policies, programmes and projects. This section distinguishes evaluation from monitoring and from other investigative assessments. It also describes the formal types of oversight within the United Nations system.

MONITORING¹²

The main difference between monitoring and evaluation is the timing and focus of the assessment.

Monitoring is a continuous part of programme/project management that involves the systematic collection and analysis of data based on the intervention's indicators. This data helps determine the progress being made in implementing activities, achieving results and using allocated resources. Thus, monitoring is an internal assessment aimed at keeping interventions on track and ensuring the timely decision-making needed to improve their design and functioning.

Information collected through monitoring is an important source of data used in evaluation processes to understand what is happening. It is quantitative and qualitative information on individual indicators collected on an ongoing basis by programme or partner staff. Monitoring and evaluation, together with planning, are the foundation of RBM.

¹² <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf>



Information collected through monitoring is an important source of data used in evaluation processes to understand what is happening.

Evaluation is conducted at specific points in time and uses multiple sources and types of data. It is usually conducted by independent external consultants. Evaluation provides more detailed information such as why and how things are happening.

Monitoring and evaluation are integrally linked. While monitoring tells us whether an activity is on track to achieve its intended objectives, evaluation tells us whether the intervention as a whole is on the right track and what lessons can be drawn from its implementation.

OTHER ASSESSMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONS

Other types of investigative assessments include reviews, audits, inspections and research. Although they may be related to evaluation, each serves a different purpose as described below and in table I.1.

Review

A review is a periodic or ad hoc assessment that typically addresses performance and operational issues of programme/project implementation. Examples of reviews include rapid assessments (often conducted as a part of programme/project design) and evaluability assessments (often as a part of programme/project design or prior to an evaluation). Reviews are usually undertaken internally and tend to be less rigorous than evaluations.

Audit

An audit is an assessment of the adequacy of management controls. It is meant to ensure the economical and efficient use of resources; the safeguarding of assets; the reliability of financial and other information; the compliance with regulations, rules and policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organizational structures, systems and processes. Evaluation is more closely linked to managing for results and learning, while audits mainly focus on compliance.

Inspection

An inspection is a general examination of an organizational unit, issue or practice. It is meant to determine the extent to which the unit, issue or practice adheres to prescribed standards, good practices or other criteria. Information gained is used to make recommendations for improvement or apply corrective measures. Inspections are often performed when there is a perceived risk of non-compliance.

Research

Research is a systematic examination undertaken to develop or contribute to knowledge of a particular topic. Research often feeds information into evaluations, other assessments or decision-making processes. Examples include in-depth baseline studies and impact studies.

TABLE 1.1 COMPARING KEY FEATURES OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

	MONITORING AND REVIEWS	EVALUATIONS	AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS	RESEARCH
WHY?	Track progress, inform decisions and remedial action, update project plans, support accountability	Assess progress, derive recommendations and identify lessons learned for longer-term planning and organizational learning, contribute to accountability	Ensure compliance and provide assurance and accountability	Acquire in-depth knowledge on specific issue
WHEN?	Ongoing during programme/project implementation	Periodic (usually mid-term) and at the end of an intervention	Ad hoc or according to requirements (often the donor's)	Ad hoc, based on research gap identified after thorough preliminary analysis of existing knowledge
WHO?	Internal, involving programme/project implementers	Typically external consultants, but with participation of all stakeholders	Typically external to programme/project but internal or external to organization	Typically external
WHAT?	Focus on inputs, activities, outputs and shorter-term outcomes	Focus on outcomes and overall objective/impact	Focus on inputs, activities and outputs	Focus on a specific research question and hypothesis

Source: Adapted from White, Graham and Wiles, Peter. 2008. *Monitoring Templates for Humanitarian Organizations*. Commissioned by the European Commission Director-General for Humanitarian AID (DG ECHO); p. 40.



OVERSIGHT FUNCTIONS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Most United Nations organizations have specific evaluation functions that provide expertise, guidance and management for their required evaluation activities. They all commission evaluations to respond to the need to account for the use of resources and demonstrate results and the added value of the work of the organizations.

In addition to the specialized evaluation functions located within each individual organization, three further system-wide institutions have to be mentioned, namely the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System (JIU), the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Board of Auditors (BoA). All three contribute to system-wide transparency and accountability.

The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) is a unit established in 1976 by the General Assembly of the United Nations under resolution 31/192. JIU is the only independent external oversight body of the United Nations system mandated to conduct evaluations, inspections and investigations system-wide. Its objective is to enhance the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations system and, to this end, it may make on-the-spot inquiries and investigations.¹³

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) is the internal oversight body of the United Nations. It was established in 1994 by the General Assembly under resolution 48/218B. The office assists the Secretary-General in fulfilling his oversight responsibilities through the provision of audit, investigation, inspection and evaluation services. OIOS aims to be an agent of change that promotes responsible administration of resources, a culture of accountability and transparency, and improved programme performance.¹⁴

The United Nations Board of Auditors (BoA) was established by the General Assembly in 1946 under resolution 74(I) as an important mechanism to promote accountability and transparency in the United Nations. BoA performs external audits of the accounts of the United Nations organization and its funds and programmes, and reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.¹⁵

¹³<https://www.unjiu.org/en/Pages/default.aspx>

¹⁴<https://oios.un.org/>

¹⁵<http://www.un.org/en/auditors/board/>

SUMMARY

Evaluation is increasingly recognized for its vital role in organizational dialogue, accountability, learning and knowledge generation. Evaluation complements other types of assessment processes and brings additional evidence to bear that can tangibly improve programming and policymaking. However, evaluations only have value when they are actually used. Conducting high quality evaluations is just as important as promoting evaluative thinking (critical thinking applied to evaluation) among managers, programme teams, stakeholders and policymakers. In this way they actively participate in the evaluation process and make the best use of evaluation results.

This chapter has provided a definition of evaluation as well as showing how it differs from other types of assessment and review. In addition, it has outlined the importance of evaluation in general. The next chapter provides further information about overall evaluation principles as well as the requirements for evaluation processes conducted by United Nations entities.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

- MY M&E Resource Centre and E-learning Course:
<http://mymande.org>
- OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance:
<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>
- United Nations Development Group RBM Handbook:
United Nations Evaluation Group Norms & Standards for Evaluation:
<https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>



CHAPTER 2

Evaluation in the United Nations System

This chapter introduces the main principles and requirements that influence, guide and harmonize how evaluations are conducted in the United Nations system. These principles and requirements include the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which gives prominence to evaluation; the 2016 UNEG norms and standards; and the OECD-DAC criteria. The chapter concludes with a more in-depth look at the UNEG standards of human rights and gender equality, national evaluation capacity and ethical conduct.

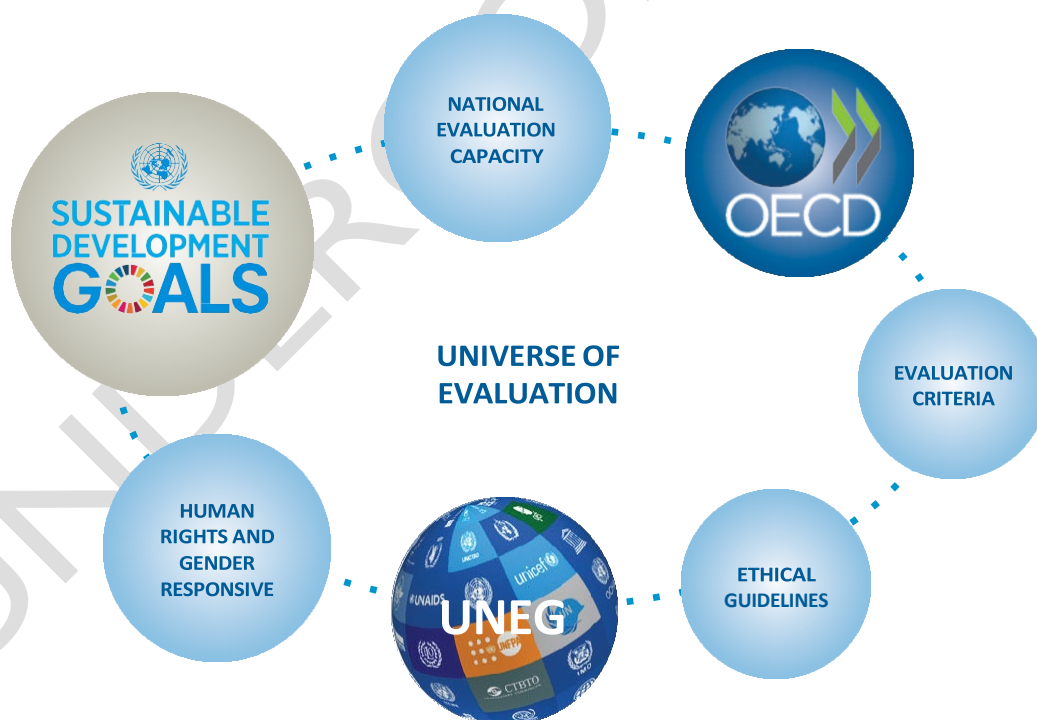
THE UNITED NATIONS CONTEXT OF EVALUATION

Evaluations undertaken within the United Nations system need to take into account specific agendas, principles, criteria, norms, standards and other considerations. It is perhaps helpful to think about these elements as being part of a “United Nations context of evaluation” that has connecting and overlapping functions.

Figure 2.1 suggests how this context of evaluation might be constructed, and what managers and evaluators need to be mindful of when conducting evaluations. The largest part represents the Agenda for Sustainable Development, which guides all the work of the United Nations. Evaluation is essential to the agenda for generating knowledge that can be used at country level to inform priority setting and to improve public policies and interventions. Within this context are efforts led by UNEG and OECD to harmonize, standardize and strengthen evaluation practice and to ensure ethical conduct—these are the criteria, norms, standards and principles that evaluation processes need to follow. The Agenda 2030 also requires that special consideration be given to issues that require more attention in order for our collective goals to be reached, and reached in an equitable manner. Specific issues that intersect with evaluation include the need to use human rights and gender equality-responsive evaluation approaches, and the imperative of strengthening national evaluation systems. Each of these elements is considered in this chapter.

All United Nations evaluations are embedded in the 2030 agenda, OECD-DAC criteria, UNEG norms and standards, ethical guidelines as well as the cross-cutting approaches of human rights and gender equality.

FIGURE 2.1 UNITED NATIONS CONTEXT OF EVALUATION





Evaluation will play a key role in achieving the SDGs. Ensuring that policies and programmes are on track to achieve such large-scale change requires measuring what works and does not work.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In 2015 the 194 Member States of the United Nations, with input from global civil society, adopted *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.¹⁶ It sets out 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In its own words, this is “a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity that seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom.” As noted above, within the context of evaluation, the SDGs guide all work of the United Nations.

The 17 SDGs are elaborated through 169 targets to be met by 2030. These provide a transformational vision for the world where no one is left behind and they spell out commitments for working together to eradicate poverty, create decent jobs, promote dignity, equality and justice for all, while sustaining the natural environment.

Evaluation will play a key role in achieving the SDGs. Ensuring that policies and programmes are aligned with the SDGs and corresponding targets and on track to achieve such large-scale change requires measuring what works and what does not work. Where necessary, it means providing evidence-based guidance to recalibrate for success.¹⁷

Unlike the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),¹⁸ that only applied to developing countries, the SDGs are relevant for all countries and have a clearly stated follow-up and review process that underscores the important role of evaluation. The Agenda 2030 calls for the accountability of all people, national ownership of development results, and country-led review processes. As a result, strengthening national evaluation capacity has been highlighted as a critical part of the 2030 Agenda,¹⁹ and one to which UNODC is contributing.

There are over 230 indicators for tracking progress towards the SDGs. These indicators are important references that should inform all planning and evaluation processes. With that in mind, programme/project managers and evaluators should be knowledgeable about those related to their areas of work. The complete list of indicators and more information can be found on the website of the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs, Statistics Division.



[HTTPS://UNSTATS.UN.ORG/SDGS/INDICATORS/INDICATORS-LIST/](https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/)

¹⁶http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

¹⁷<http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/17357IIED.pdf>

¹⁸<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

¹⁹http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=a/res/69/237

PRIORITY GOALS FOR UNODC

Given the strong connections between rule of law, security, peace and inclusive sustainable development, UNODC has an important role to play in the achievement and measurement of the SDGs across all of their thematic areas. Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, 10 have been identified as priorities for UNODC. These are highlighted in figure 2.2 and discussed below. More details on each of these and how they relate to the work of UNODC can be found in the publication “UNODC and the Sustainable Development Goals”. It has to be emphasized that the SDGs are however universal and complementary to each other. No SDG can be looked at in isolation.



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/SDGS/UNODC-SDG_BROCHURE_LORES.PDF](https://www.unodc.org/documents/sdgs/unodc-sdg_brochure_lores.pdf)

FIGURE 2.2 SDGS FOR UNODC



HARMONIZING EVALUATION PRACTICE

The conducting of evaluation within the United Nations context is primarily guided by two organizations/networks: the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The work of these two bodies has been instrumental in helping to develop, standardize and improve evaluation processes. Both continue to be key actors and leaders in supporting and measuring the success of the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNEG is an interagency professional network that aims to promote and strengthen evaluation. It brings together over 45 evaluation units of the United Nations system and affiliated organizations. UNEG was created in 1984 with the name “Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation” and initially focused on designing and introducing monitoring and



The United Nations Evaluation Group is an interagency professional network that aims to promote and strengthen evaluation.

evaluation systems primarily for United Nations technical assistance projects. Its current mission is “to promote the independence, credibility and usefulness of the evaluation function and evaluation across the United Nations system, to advocate for the importance of evaluation for learning, decision-making and accountability, and to support the evaluation community in the United Nations system and beyond”.²⁰ UNODC is a member of UNEG and has adopted its norms and standards for evaluation.

OECD provides a forum for governments to work together to share experiences and seek solutions to common problems. Their mission is to “promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world”.²¹ The mandate of OECD with respect to SDG evaluation includes tracking and monitoring official development assistance and international climate finance, strengthening national-level data systems, and facilitating follow-up and review mechanisms.

OECD, specifically its Development Assistance Committee (DAC), established a common set of criteria by which interventions should be evaluated. The need for these common measures emerged from the aid effectiveness principles of ownership and donor harmonization contained in the 2005 Paris Declaration and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action.²² UNEG subsequently developed more precise guidance in the form of the Evaluation Norms and Standards. These were initially issued in 2005 and were updated in 2016.²³

UNITED NATIONS EVALUATION GROUP NORMS AND STANDARDS

In 2005, UNEG released its first norms and standards, which set out clear principles to strengthen and harmonize evaluation practice for development interventions. The norms and standards were instrumental in guiding evaluation practitioners across the globe. However, changes in the evaluation field and the adoption of both the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the 2014 United Nations Resolution “Capacity-building for the evaluation of development activities at the country level” led to the need for revisions in order to ensure the continued relevance of these requirements in guiding and further strengthening evaluation practices.

The 2016 updated UNEG norms and standards for evaluation now include ten general norms to be followed in conducting evaluations and four institutional norms to be reflected in the management and oversight of evaluations. These are accompanied by 24 standards to support implementation of the norms. This updated version introduces four new norms: human rights and gender equality, national evaluation capacities and professionalization of evaluation.



[HTTP://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/NORMATIVE-TOOLS.HTML](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/normative-tools.html)

²⁰United Nations Evaluation Group <http://www.uneval.org/about>

²¹Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <http://www.oecd.org/about/>

²²The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf>

²³<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

The general norms are highlighted in table 2.1. Those relating to ethical conduct, human rights and gender equality, and national evaluation capacity are more fully described in the text below. The standards are not specified here but are integrated into the remaining chapters of this handbook.

TABLE 2.1 LIST OF 2016 GENERAL NORMS

NORMS	DESCRIPTION
#1 - Internationally agreed principles, goals and targets	Upholding and promoting United Nations principles and values is the responsibility of evaluation managers and evaluators. This includes respecting, promoting and contributing to the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
#2 - Utility	There must be clear intention to use the evaluation's analysis, conclusions and recommendations. This includes relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, decision-making and accountability.
#3 - Credibility	This requires independence, impartiality, rigorous methodology and ethical conduct. Key elements include transparent processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders and robust quality assurance systems.
#4 - Independence	Evaluators must have the freedom to conduct their work without influence from any party or threat to their careers. In addition, the organization's evaluation function must be positioned separately from other management functions, be responsible for setting the evaluation agenda, and have adequate resources to do its work.
#5 - Impartiality	This entails objectivity, professional integrity, and absence of bias at all stages of the evaluation process. Evaluators must not have been or expect to be directly responsible for the policy setting, design or management of the evaluation subject.
#6 - Ethics	Evaluations need to be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the social and cultural environment, for human rights and gender equality, and for the "do no harm" principle.
#7 - Transparency	This is essential in order to establish and build trust, confidence, stakeholder ownership and public accountability. It includes making evaluation products publicly available.
#8 - Human rights and gender equality	These universally recognized values and principles need to be integrated into all stages of an evaluation, underpinning the commitment to the principle of "no-one left behind".
#9 - National evaluation capacities	Building capacity for evaluating development activities at the country level is vital and is to be supported when requested by Member States.
#10 - Professionalism	To ensure credibility, evaluations need to be conducted with professionalism and integrity. These are supported by an enabling environment, institutional structures and adequate resources.

All UNODC evaluations adhere to UNEG norms and standards, updated in 2016.



The standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria are: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. UNODC places additional emphasis on partnerships and cooperation as well as human rights and gender equality. These are also sometimes complemented by design and innovation.

OECD-DAC CRITERIA

The criteria developed by OECD-DAC continue to be the standard categories for what evaluations should measure. As noted in chapter one, the five main criteria—relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability plus, more recently, human rights and gender equality—are used throughout the United Nations system with most of its entities adopting additional criteria relevant to their work. UNODC evaluations also commonly address design (as part of relevance), partnership and cooperation, and innovation.

These criteria, described in table 2.2, provide the foundation for developing the main questions that each evaluation needs to answer. Further information and suggestions for framing questions for all criteria can be found in the UNODC guidelines for developing terms of reference for evaluation processes.



TERMS OF REFERENCE GUIDELINES

TABLE 2.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA*

CRITERIA	DEFINITION
Standard evaluation criteria	
Relevance	The extent to which the intervention conforms to the needs of participants and other stakeholders, compliments existing initiatives, and aligns with organizational mandates and policies.
Efficiency	The extent to which resources and inputs are managed and used in an optimal way.
Effectiveness	The extent to which intended outcome-level results are being achieved.
Impact	The lasting changes—positive and negative, intended and unintended—arising from the intervention.
Sustainability	The degree to which processes started and results obtained are likely to remain in place after intervention completion.
Human rights	The extent to which the intervention is guided by human rights standards and principles following a human rights-based approach and addressing issues such as non-discrimination, participation, accountability and social transformation.
Gender equality	The extent to which the intervention integrates a gender perspective (gender mainstreaming) and addresses issues such as power relations and social transformation, equal inclusion and participation, and the empowerment of women and marginalized groups.

CRITERIA	DEFINITION
Additional criteria that may be used in UNODC evaluations	
Design (as part of relevance)	The extent to which appropriate and participatory planning processes took place; the existence and suitability of logical frameworks and performance indicators.
Partnerships and cooperation	The extent to which effective partnerships were established and maintained; the extent of alignment and contribution to the One UN, UNDAF, and other coordination mechanisms.
Innovation	The extent to which innovative approaches were successfully used or emerged from implementation.

*The definitions have been slightly rephrased from the original reference. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

INTEGRATING HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

The promotion and protection of human rights (HR) and gender equality (GE) are guiding principles for all United Nations entities. There is virtually no aspect of the work of the United Nations that does not have a human rights dimension. Whether we are talking about peace and security, development, humanitarian action or climate change, none of these challenges can be addressed without consideration of HR and GE issues and principles. In the United Nations context of evaluation, this is closely connected to the Agenda for Sustainable Development. Interventions that do not follow these principles risk reinforcing or neglecting harmful patterns of discrimination and exclusion.

As the United Nations organization mandated to address crime, terrorism and drugs, UNODC requires that HR and GE be considered throughout all programming and as a central pillar of the work itself. Therefore, UNODC strives and has developed guiding documents to ensure that HR and GE are actively and visibly mainstreamed in all its practices, policies and programmes. The position paper “UNODC and the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights” (2012) recognizes the need to adopt a human rights-based approach in all development cooperation and technical assistance activities, and to ensure that (a) all interventions and activities further the realization of human rights; (b) human rights standards and principles guide all phases of the programming process; and (c) programmes contribute to the development of the capacities of Member States to meet their obligations as duty bearers, and/or of rights holders to claim their rights. The “Guidance Note on Gender Mainstreaming in UNODC” (2013) stresses that UNODC has the responsibility to understand how and where gender issues are relevant in its different areas of work and to integrate a gender perspective in all its practices, policies and programmes.



GUIDANCE NOTE ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN UNODC:
[HTTP://WWW.UN.ORG/WOMENWATCH/DIRECTORY/DOCS/UNODC-GUIDANCENOTE-GENDERMAINSTREAMING.PDF](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/docs/unodc-guidancenote-gendermainstreaming.pdf)



UNODC AND THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:
[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/JUSTICE-AND-PRISON-REFORM/UNODC_HUMAN_RIGHTS_POSITION_PAPER_2012.PDF](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/unodc-human-rights-position-paper-2012.pdf)

It is mandatory for the United Nations entities to consider human rights and gender equality principles and standards in the design, implementation and evaluation processes of all interventions, regardless of whether these issues are the focus of the intervention itself.

It is mandatory for United Nations entities to consider HR and GE principles and standards in the design, implementation and evaluation processes of all interventions, regardless of whether these issues are the focus of the intervention itself. By addressing HR and GE, the important principles of equality and non-discrimination, inclusion and participation as well as accountability become part of the evaluation focus. Although substantial progress has been made in this regard, meta-assessments of United Nations programming suggest that more still needs to be done to fully integrate and mainstream HR and GE issues and approaches, including into evaluation processes.²⁴

Specifically, the challenge to fully mainstream gender equality in United Nations work has been taken up across the United Nations system. In 2006, a United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women was developed calling for a system-wide action plan in order to make the strategy of gender mainstreaming operational. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP)²⁵ was adopted in 2012. Since 2013, on a yearly basis, all entities are required to report on their progress in meeting indicators specific to gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW), which includes ratings of all evaluation reports for the evaluation performance indicator of the UN-SWAP reporting. UNEG has been instrumental in providing guidance on how evaluations can usefully address the principles of HR and GE. The work of the UNEG Working Group on Gender Equality and Human Rights includes helping to clarify and provide context for key terminology used in such discussions and the provision of guidelines and tools.



[HTTP://UNEVAL.ORG/DOCUMENT/DETAIL/1452](http://uneval.org/document/detail/1452)

²⁴ www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2685

²⁵ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/un-system-coordination/promoting-un-accountability>

CLARIFYING THE TERMS

The 2014 UNEG Guidance Document, *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations* provides the basis for the following definitions of key terms.

Human rights are the civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights inherent to all human beings without discrimination, regardless of one's nationality, place of residence, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, colour, disability, religion, language or any other status. Human rights are universal, inalienable, interdependent and indivisible.

The work of the United Nations is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights signed in 1948 and the nine core international human rights treaties that have been signed subsequent to the initial Declaration.

A human rights-based approach is essential for all United Nations activities and interventions

THE NINE CORE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

- ICERD International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 21 Dec 1965
- ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 16 Dec 1966
- ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 16 Dec 1966
- CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 18 Dec 1979
- CAT Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 10 Dec 1984
- CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child 20 Nov 1989
- ICRMW International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families 18 Dec 1990
- CPED International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance 20 Dec 2006
- CRPD Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 13 Dec 2006

A *human rights-based approach (HRBA)* is the strategy for implementing human rights in United Nations programming. It mainstreams human rights aspects such as universality, non-discrimination, participation and accountability into development work promoting and protecting human rights on the basis of international human rights standards. More information, tools and insight from United Nations practitioners about this approach can be found through the HRBA Portal, a collaborative effort between 19 United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes.



UN HRBA PORTAL: [HTTP://HRBAPORTAL.ORG](http://hrbaportal.org)



Gender equality implies that all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. Gender equality does not imply that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.²⁶

Gender equality serves to the advantage of both men and women, girls and boys and all individuals/groups marginalized and/or discriminated against account of their gender (transgender people for example). Gender equality cannot be achieved without the full engagement of all of them. Furthermore, men and women are subject to different, often contextually specific, forms of discrimination (e.g., due to gender identity, class, religion, caste, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, location, among others).

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY*

Gender equality is at the heart of human rights and United Nations values and development goals. Discrimination based on sex is prohibited under almost every human rights treaty. The United Nations Charter (1945) recognizes the “equal rights of men and women”, and protecting and promoting women’s human rights is the responsibility of all States.

*<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/VRGS/Pages/VRGSIndex.aspx>

Gender mainstreaming is the strategy adopted by the United Nations at the Fourth International Conference on Women (Beijing, 2005) for integrating gender equality in programming. It goes beyond increasing women’s participation; it entails bringing the experience, knowledge and interest of women and men to bear in all development interventions. The 2014 UNEG Guidance Document provides the detailed definition in ECOSOC Resolution 1997/2.²⁷

The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, such that inequality between men and women is not perpetuated.

²⁶ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/factsheet2.pdf>; <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>

²⁷ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/ECOSOCAC1997.2.PDF>

Gender-responsive evaluations are assessments that provide “credible and reliable evidence-based information about the extent to which an intervention has resulted in progress (or the lack thereof) towards intended and/or unintended results regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women”.²⁸ They require an analysis of the specific gender-related strategy, processes and practices deployed by an intervention. Specifically, gender-responsive evaluations should be sensitive to and include all the diverse forms of discrimination that women and men face.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATION

The main concepts underlying evaluations that are HR and GE-responsive are inclusion, participation, non-discrimination and fair power relations. Considering these concepts helps improve programming by taking into account important social and cultural issues that can make interventions more effective and sustainable. Other benefits to conducting HR and GE-responsive evaluations, as highlighted in figure 2.3, are for general organizational learning and accountability purposes.

The main concepts underlying evaluations that are both HR and GE-responsive are inclusion, participation, non-discrimination, and fair power relations.

FIGURE 2.3 BENEFITS OF HR AND GE-RESPONSIVE EVALUATIONS



²⁸UN Women Independent Evaluation Office (2015). *How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation Handbook*.



UNEG has developed two sets of guidance documents on HR and GE that are useful resources for evaluators and those who manage evaluation processes. The group's 2011 publication *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluation—towards UNEG guidance* is an abridged version that provides step-by-step advice for preparing, conducting and using HR and GE-responsive evaluations. Its 2014 publication, *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations* provides more in-depth theoretical and practical information, tools and suggestions.

Processes for conducting HR and GE-responsive evaluations are also discussed in the practical guide in chapter seven.



UNEG (2011) *INTEGRATING HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN EVALUATION—TOWARDS UNEG GUIDANCE*: [HTTP://WWW.UNEVAL.ORG/DOCUMENT/DETAIL/980](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980)



UNEG (2014) *INTEGRATING HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN EVALUATIONS*: [HTTP://WWW.UNEVAL.ORG/DOCUMENT/DETAIL/980](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980)

MAINSTREAMING OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER ASPECTS AS PART OF UNODC EVALUATIONS

Evaluation plays a crucial role in assessing to what extent UNODC interventions adhere to the principles of human rights and gender equality. UNODC's evaluation policy requires that both principles be a key part of its evaluation processes. Based on the guiding principles of UNEG, the whole evaluation process at UNODC is required to follow HR and GE-sensitive, inclusive and participatory approaches, advancing human rights, gender equality, and the inclusion and empowerment of women and other marginalized groups. Core elements of these approaches to evaluation are highlighted in figure 2.4.

Over the past years, the UNODC evaluation function has engaged in more thoroughly mainstreaming the GE and HR approaches into the evaluation cycle. These efforts have included:

- Hiring evaluation staff with human rights and gender expertise to support evaluation processes, including by developing guidelines and tools.
- Raising awareness of internal and external stakeholders about both issues. This has included ensuring that evaluation teams receive relevant guidance as part of their key reading material.
- Ensuring, to the extent possible, that there is equal representation of both genders and regional balance on all evaluation teams, and that all teams have at least one member with expertise in gender mainstreaming.

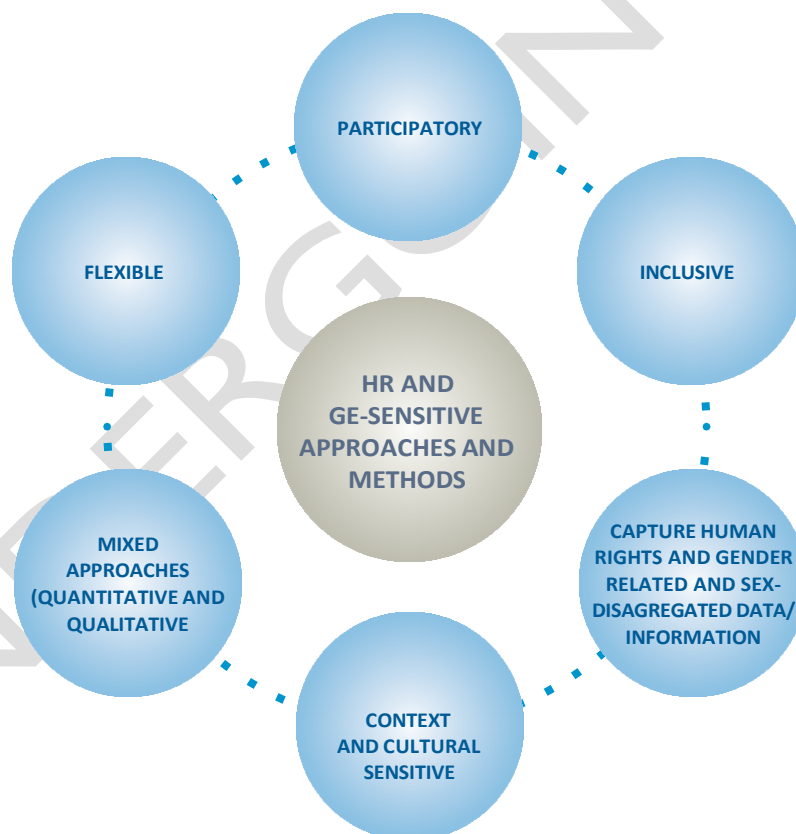
- Including human rights and gender experts on evaluation teams conducting in-depth evaluations to further strengthen and facilitate organizational learning.
- Ensuring training to enhance evaluation function expertise and capacity for gender responsive evaluation.
- Having members from the evaluation function actively participate in and contribute to the UNEG working group on human rights and gender equality.

UNODC has produced the internal guiding document *Gender Responsive Evaluations in the Work of UNODC* aimed at (a) presenting the most important frameworks for gender-responsive evaluations; (b) explaining what a gender-responsive evaluation entails; and (c) providing practical guidance to mainstream a gender perspective in the various stages of the evaluation process: planning, preparation, implementation and follow-up.



'GENDER RESPONSIVE EVALUATIONS IN THE WORK OF UNODC':
[HTTP://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/HUMAN-RIGHTS-AND-GENDER.HTML](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/human-rights-and-gender.html)

FIGURE 2.4 ELEMENTS OF HR AND GE-SENSITIVE EVALUATION PROCESSES AND METHODS





OVERSIGHT OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATIONS

The United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP, 2012) sets common performance standards for the gender-related work of all United Nations entities. Since 2013, all United Nations entities are required to self-assess and report on their progress on meeting the 15 commonly agreed upon performance indicators. The indicators track six components of gender mainstreaming: accountability, results-based management, oversight (including evaluation), human and financial resources, capacity, and knowledge exchange and networking.

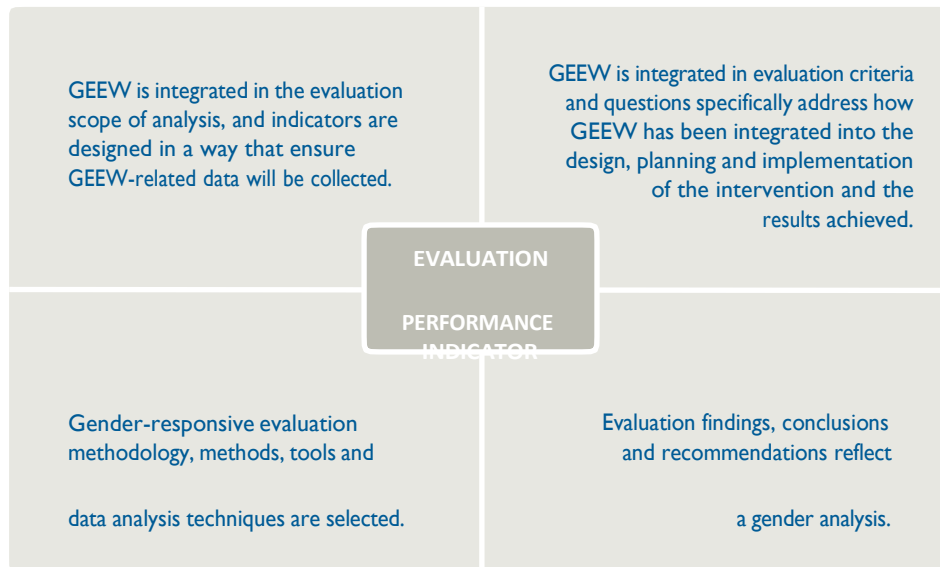
The oversight component of UN-SWAP includes three performance indicators, one of them dedicated to evaluation. The evaluation indicator is linked to meeting the gender-related UNEG norms and standards and demonstrating effective use of UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation.

The UNEG working group on gender equality and human rights developed a technical note and scorecard for the evaluation performance indicator (EPI). It aims to support more systematic and harmonized reporting through the use of a common tool that allows for improved comparability across the United Nations system. The unit of analysis selected as most feasible to assess was the evaluation report. Thus, the UN-SWAP rating for evaluation for UNODC, and all other United Nations entities, is solely based on an assessment of the extent to which evaluation reports completed in the reporting year successfully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into the evaluation approach and implementation.

Figure 2.5 highlights the specific criteria used for this assessment. Each of the four criteria is rated on a scale of 1–3 (with 3 being the highest) and the ratings are combined to give the total score. More information about UN-SWAP, including the scoring tool, technical note and additional guidance, can be found on the UNEG website at the following link.



[HTTP://WWW.UNEVALUATION.ORG/DOCUMENT/DETAIL/1452](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1452)

FIGURE 2.5 UN-SWAP EVALUATION PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (EPI) CRITERIA

Source: UNEG. UN-SWAP Individual Evaluation Scoring Tool. Accessible at: <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/2149>

The UN-SWAP rating for evaluation is based on an assessment of the extent to which evaluation reports completed in

the reporting year successfully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment in the evaluation approach and implementation.

BUILDING NATIONAL EVALUATION CAPACITY

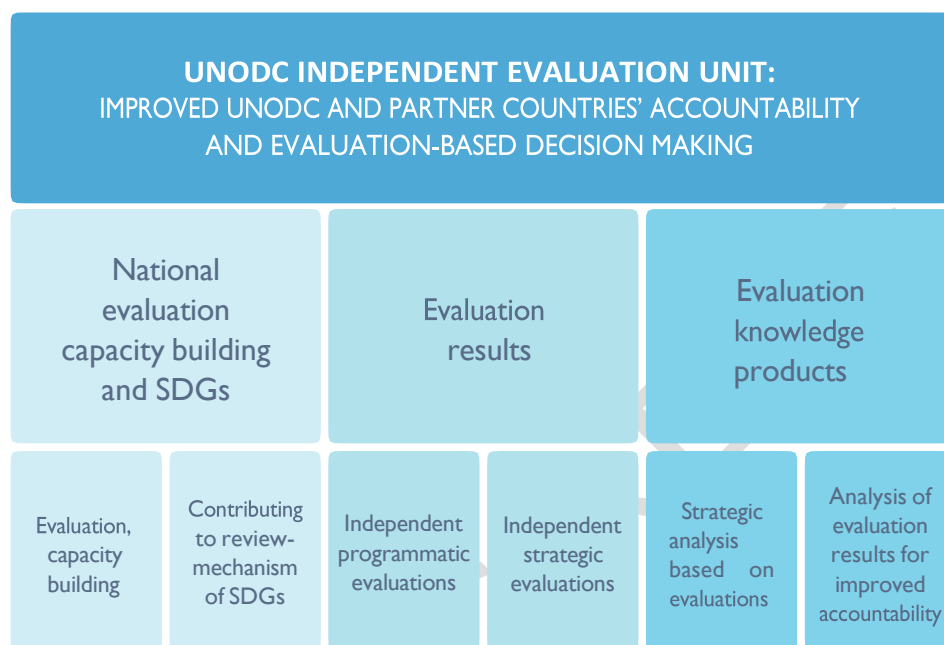
The Agenda for Sustainable Development asks countries, for the first time, to assess their achievements against their commitments. This call, also reflected in the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on evaluation capacity-building (A/RES/69/237), requires assessing and investing in the existing evaluation capacity of Member States. Once again, in the United Nations context of evaluation, the SDGs provide fundamental guidance for the overall evaluation process as well as evaluation functions in general.

Thus, country-led evaluation is at the heart of the review mechanism of the Agenda for Sustainable Development. The work of UNODC in this agenda contributes to helping build evaluation capacity in selected countries. In addition, it directly contributes to SDG target 16.6 by furthering the development of “effective, accountable and transparent institutions” in the respective ministries of Member States, ensuring that “responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making takes place at all levels” (16.7).

The evaluation function delivers technical assistance in evaluation capacity within the areas mandated to UNODC (drugs, crime and terrorism). The approach follows a series of tailored technical assistance interventions with the aim to improve good governance by increasing effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness in public organizations at the country level. This initiative focuses on the first pillar of the strategy of the UNODC evaluation function as can be seen in figure 2.6 below.



FIGURE 2.6 UNODC AREAS OF STRATEGIC PRIORITY



Country-led evaluation is at the heart of the review mechanism of the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

EVALUATION ETHICS

Evaluations within the United Nations context are guided by a set of ethical guidelines drawn up by UNEG. These guidelines have three main purposes: responsible use of power, ensuring credibility and responsible use of resources. They recognize that ethical conduct in evaluation is a shared responsibility and lay out a set of principles for evaluators, evaluation managers, the evaluation function and the organization commissioning the evaluation.



UNEG ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION:
[HTTP://WWW.UNEVALUATION.ORG/DOCUMENT/DETAIL/102](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102).

Those involved in evaluation processes must also follow the UNEG code of conduct for evaluation. The code applies to, and must be signed by all United Nations staff engaged in evaluation and all evaluation consultants working in the United Nations system. The provisions apply to all stages of the evaluation process and address the principles of: independence, impartiality, conflict of interest, honesty and integrity, competence, accountability, obligations to participants, confidentiality, avoidance of harm, accuracy/ completeness and reliability, transparency, and omissions and wrongdoing.



UNEG CODE OF CONDUCT:
[HTTP://WWW.UNEVALUATION.ORG/DOCUMENT/DETAIL/100](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100)

Of particular importance to the conduct of evaluations are that evaluators need to:

- Be sensitive to the beliefs, manners and customs of all stakeholders, paying particular attention to protocols, codes and recommendations that may be relevant to their interactions with women and minority groups
- Ensure that the rights of individuals involved in an evaluation are respected
- Act with integrity and honesty in their relationships with all stakeholders, treating everyone with respect
- Protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants
- Be responsible for their performance and their products

SUMMARY

This chapter described the United Nations context of evaluation in order to illustrate the different evaluation principles and requirements that apply to UNODC evaluation and the connections between them. The United Nations context of evaluation includes the SDGs, UNEG norms and standards, OECD-DAC criteria, HR and GE-responsive approaches, building of national evaluation capacity and evaluation ethics. The SDGs guide all United Nations work and provide a clear role for evaluation. The criteria, norms, standards and ethical guidelines provide a common understanding of what constitutes good evaluation practice. Finally, being mindful of HR and GE aspects ensures that the important principles of equality and non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, and fair power relations also become part of the evaluation focus, and ultimately help to ensure that the SDGs are for the benefit of all.

The next chapter describes the process of UNODC evaluations in detail.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Gender Mainstreaming: Economic and Social Council Resolution 2013/16
<http://undocs.org/E/RES/2013/16>
- Gender Mainstreaming in the Work of UNODC, Guidance note for UNODC staff (2013)
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/docs/UNODC-GuidanceNote-GenderMainstreaming.pdf>
- IEU Guiding Document “Gender Responsive Evaluations in the Work of UNODC”, 2017
- Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system: Economic and Social Council Resolution 1997/2
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/ECOSOCAC1997.2.PDF>



- OECD DAC Evaluating Development Cooperation: Summary of Key Norms and Standards <http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/41612905.pdf>
- OECD DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management <https://www.oecd.org/dac/2754804.pdf>
- United Nations Evaluation Group (2011). Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation: Towards UNEG Guidance. New York: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/980>
- United Nations Evaluation Group (2014). Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. New York: UNEG. <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>
- UNODC and the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Position paper (2012). https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/UNODC_Human_rights_position_paper_2012.pdf
- UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP; 2012) on gender equality and women's empowerment <https://www.unsceb.org/content/un-system-wide-action-plan-gender-equality-and-empowerment-women-swap-0>
- UN Women Independent Evaluation Office (2015). How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation Handbook. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation>



CHAPTER 3

Evaluation in UNODC

This chapter explains the prominent place of evaluation within UNODC and within the programme/project cycle in general. It describes how and when evaluations are undertaken at UNODC. It also discusses the specific roles of the different parties involved. Finally, it provides insights into some of the specifics of evaluating the mandate of UNODC on issues of illicit drugs, crime and terrorism.

THE COMMITMENT OF UNODC TO EVALUATION

UNODC recognizes that evaluation is a powerful tool for learning, decision-making and accountability. As such, it is a priority for the organization. UNODC commits resources towards conducting and supporting evaluation, including ensuring that adequate budgets for evaluation are reserved. It also commits to building organizational capacity for good evaluation practice.

The UNODC evaluation policy is both the guiding and the binding document for the organization in relation to UNODC evaluations. The policy has been endorsed at the highest level by Member States and the Executive Director of UNODC.

The commitment of UNODC extends to promoting a culture of evaluation throughout the organization as well as amongst partner organizations. In practice this means:

- Providing clear procedures and guidance for evaluation processes, including clearly stated roles and responsibilities for all parties involved
- Providing adequate and ongoing support to programme/project managers tasked with managing evaluations
- Facilitating the engagement of a range of internal and external stakeholders in each evaluation process
- Fostering ongoing learning about good evaluation practice
- Ensuring that evaluation results are broadly shared to improve programming, strategy, operations and organizational learning

Specific practices to support organizational learning include evaluation briefings and debriefings, wide dissemination of all published evaluation reports, preparing and sharing evaluation briefs that highlight the results of in-depth evaluations, and having the lessons learned and recommendations from evaluation reports easily accessible as searchable databases on the evaluation portal. These activities are also described more fully in chapter six “Use of evaluation results”.

The UNODC evaluation policy is both the guiding and the binding document for the organization in relation to UNODC evaluations.



The commitment of UNODC extends to promoting a culture of evaluation throughout the organization as well as amongst partner organizations.

THE EVALUATION POLICY OF UNODC

The evaluation policy of UNODC is an important reference document for both staff and Member States. It sets out the principles and rules that guide the Organization's decisions and actions when planning, conducting, disseminating and using evaluations.

Evaluation is an institutional responsibility. It is the responsibility of senior management to promote a culture of evaluation and be champions of evaluation. It is the responsibility of all staff to follow the principles set out in the Organization's evaluation policy. This policy can be found on the IEU website.



[HTTP://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/EVALUATION-POLICY.HTML](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/evaluation-policy.html)

EVALUATION IN THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT CYCLE

Evaluation is part of the whole programme/project life cycle. Figure 3.1 shows how evaluation is embedded into the three main stages of any programme/project planning, implementation, and of course, evaluation, which includes the dissemination of the findings. The evaluation-related activities in each phase build upon each other and contribute to continuous learning about what is working, what adjustments need to be made, and what lessons can be drawn for future use.

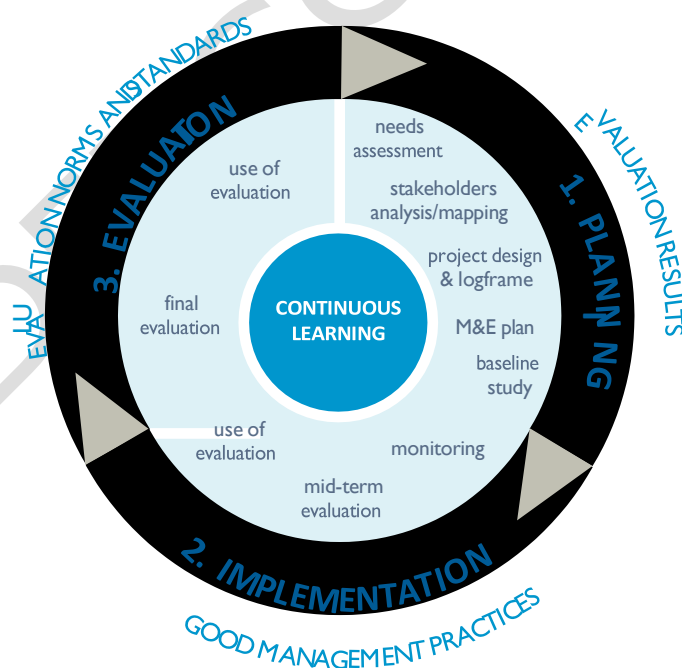
- I. *Planning stage.* Good practice calls for taking into account the results—findings, recommendations, and lessons learned of relevant, previous evaluations when:
 - Conducting the needs assessment and the stakeholder analysis and mapping
 - Strategy setting, including reviewing evaluation results, recommendations and lessons learned from previous thematically/regionally relevant interventions in order to inform the design of the new programme/project
 - Designing the project, including the theory of change, the project logical framework, the HR and GE strategies, etc.
 - Developing the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, including key indicators and budget
 - Reviewing evaluation plans for related future interventions at UNODC in order to ensure coordination and coherence of evaluation activities across the organization
 - Carefully planning the timing of evaluation in coordination with the evaluation function as well as ensuring sufficient funding is reserved for evaluations

- Undertaking the baseline study to obtain initial data for measuring progress on the key indicators (the data obtained from the study is then included as baseline information in the M&E plan)
2. *Implementation stage.* Implementation should be guided by good management practices that include:
 - Developing and using the monitoring system and information produced
 - Managing the mid-term evaluation
 - Using the results of the mid-term evaluation to make any necessary course corrections
 - Continuing to gather monitoring data
 3. *Evaluation stage.* This stage should be informed by the norms and standards for evaluations, with the main activities being:
 - Designing and managing the final evaluation
 - Ensuring the use of evaluation results for accountability, decision-making and organizational learning

Evaluation is part of the whole programme/project life cycle.

Continuous learning, as well as stakeholder participation, should be central components for all phases. The results of evaluations are integral to planning new interventions and so the cycle continues.

FIGURE 3.1 EVALUATION IN THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT LIFECYCLE





The evaluation policy of UNODC requires all programmes/projects to be evaluated at least every four years or six months before the intervention is finalized.

The steps/processes as outlined in figure 3.1 are not to be understood as linear or stand-alone; rather they complement as well as cross over and influence each other. Programme/project management is ultimately responsible for integrating evaluation into the programme/project cycle as well as for properly planning for, budgeting and initiating the evaluation process. Before initiating an evaluation however, close consultations with the UNODC evaluation function on issues of timing, the modality of evaluation and the evaluation budget is mandatory before the required information can be entered into the web-based evaluation portal. More specific instructions and guidance on the different phases and steps of UNODC evaluations are provided in the next chapter.

WHEN ARE EVALUATIONS CONDUCTED?

The evaluation policy of UNODC requires all programmes/projects to be evaluated at least every four years or six months before the intervention is finalized. Most UNODC interventions are evaluated at two major points during their life cycle.

A mid-term evaluation is typically conducted during the development or improvement of the programme/project, often more than once, by the in-house staff of the programme/project.²⁹ It aims to assess the achievement of initial output-level results and to provide an early indication of whether the intervention is on track to achieve its outcome-level results. It may also address the adequacy of delivery and monitoring systems, and provide early indications of the intervention's potential for sustainability and scalability. Mid-term evaluations are "formative" in their approach as they provide the opportunity to determine what adjustments might be needed and to implement those changes within the intervention's lifecycle.

A final evaluation is conducted shortly before the end of a programme/project and for the benefit of some external audience or decision makers.³⁰ It focuses on the assessment of outcome-level results, both intended and unintended. It captures lessons learned from implementation to inform future programming, policymaking and overall organizational learning. Final evaluations are also referred to as "summative" evaluations.

²⁹Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation Thesaurus*. 4th ed. SAGE Publications. p. 168f.

³⁰Scriven, M. (1991). *Evaluation Thesaurus*. 4th ed. SAGE Publications. p. 340.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF EVALUATIONS?

In addition to timing, different types (or modalities) of evaluation are undertaken within UNODC. The most common are independent project evaluations and in-depth evaluations, with the latter being more complex. UNODC also conducts cluster evaluations and joint evaluations, which are usually undertaken as in-depth evaluations. Decisions about the type of evaluation to be conducted are made by the evaluation function and based on the evaluation's purpose, the level of direct involvement of different parties, as well as the focus and complexity of the evaluation. Table 3.1 provides a brief overview of each type with fuller descriptions provided below.

Regardless of the type of evaluation undertaken, all evaluations must be conducted in accordance with the UNODC evaluation policy, norms and standards, guidelines and templates.

Decisions about the type of evaluation to be conducted are made by the evaluation function and based on its purpose, the level of direct involvement of different parties, as well as the focus and complexity of the evaluation.


TABLE 3.1 TYPES AND NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF UNODC EVALUATIONS

TYPE	FOCUS	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
Independent project evaluations (IPE)	<p>Examining the performance of individual projects. These are the evaluations most frequently undertaken at UNODC.</p> <p>Notable examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent project evaluation of the UNODC Global eLearning Programme - making the world safer from drugs, crime and terrorism (GEP), GLOU 61, 2015 Final independent project evaluation of the "Strengthening Criminal Justice Responses to Human Trafficking in Lao People's Democratic Republic" Project, LAOX 26, 2016 	Programme/project Manager and IEU
In-depth evaluations (IDE)	<p>Examining broader initiatives that are of high strategic interest and relevance across the organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country, regional, thematic or global programmes Cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights, etc. Corporate policies <p>Notable examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-Term In-depth Evaluation of the Country Programme Promoting the Rule of Law and Public Health in Pakistan (2010–2015), 2014 Mid-term In-Depth Evaluation of the "Strengthening the legal regime against Terrorism" (GLO/R35) 	IEU

(cont.)



Independent project evaluations (IPEs) are required for all projects unless the evaluation office determines that another type of evaluation is more suitable.

TYPE	FOCUS	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY
Cluster evaluations	<p>Identifying commonalities and synergies across a set of related projects as well as determining the progress made towards a wider programming objective. In some cases, the decision may be made to group several smaller projects in one cluster evaluation in order to ensure efficient usage of resources.</p> <p>Notable examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-depth mid-term cluster evaluation of the global programmes against trafficking in persons (GLOT 59) and the global programme against smuggling of migrants (GLOT 92), 2017	IEU
Joint evaluations	<p>Collaboratively undertaking an evaluation with another implementing partner, usually done as a requirement of particular funding and donor agreements. Joint evaluations within the United Nations system gain importance as means of improving coordination and harmonization, as well as assessing the effectiveness, of UN Delivering as One.</p> <p> HTTP://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/GA/DELIVERINGASONE/</p> <p>Notable examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The evaluation function strives to increase the number of joint evaluations and therefore provides guidance and additional references in this handbook.	IEU

INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATIONS

Independent project evaluations (IPEs) are required for all UNODC projects unless the evaluation function determines that another type of evaluation is more suitable. The responsibility for managing IPEs lies with the manager of the programme/project being evaluated (also referred to in this handbook as the “manager”). They are conducted by independent external evaluators/consultants. The role of the evaluation function is to backstop the process, review and clear all deliverables in the process as well as provide quality assurance and guidance to managers and evaluators throughout the process. IPEs are typically initiated approximately six months prior to the planned date of completion of the project.

IN-DEPTH EVALUATIONS

In-depth evaluations (IDEs) are usually large-scale strategic evaluations. These may be of country, regional, thematic or global programmes, or of corporate-level initiatives, policies or approaches. The range of potential themes is highlighted in the text box below. The evaluation function of UNODC usually conducts between two and four IDEs each year. The subject chosen depends on the focus, purpose or complexity of the analysis required, and on the human and financial resources available to conduct the evaluation.

IDEs differ from IPEs in their relative size, geographical scope and strategic importance, as well as the greater complexity of methodological evaluation instruments used. These evaluations are also undertaken by independent external evaluators/consultants or specialized companies. However, they are managed by the evaluation function and involve staff from the evaluation function as part of the evaluation team. IDEs usually require extensive consultation, take longer to complete, command significantly larger budgets, and share their reports with a wider audience. IDEs are typically initiated at least eight months prior to the planned date of completion of the intervention.

In-depth evaluations are usually large-scale strategic evaluations of country, regional, thematic or global programmes, or of corporate-level initiatives, policies or approaches.

POTENTIAL THEMES AND TOPICS FOR IN-DEPTH EVALUATIONS

- Overall UNODC strategy and mandate
- Specific thematic programme within UNODC strategy and mandate
- Regional or country programme
- Global programme or project
- Area of special interest to UNODC senior management or donor
- Cluster of projects
- Specific project or programme requiring more intensive involvement of IEU

CLUSTER EVALUATIONS

Cluster evaluations can be beneficial for grouping individual programmes or projects in order to identify commonalities and potential synergies. They may be justified when interventions have similar aspects such as a theme, subprogramme or region that can be meaningfully assessed together. In some cases, it is more efficient and effective to cluster small projects together for one evaluation than to evaluate them individually. The evaluation function takes the lead in cases where it is determined that an in-depth evaluation approach is more appropriate. Further information can be found in the “Guidelines for Cluster Evaluations” on the IEU website.



GUIDELINES FOR CLUSTER
EVALUATIONS



[HTTP://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/
EVALUATION/GUIDELINES/GUIDELINES_
ON_CLUSTER_EVALUATIONS.PDF](http://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/guidelines/guidelines_on_cluster_evaluations.pdf)



Cluster evaluations can be beneficial as a way of grouping programmes and projects in order to identify commonalities and synergies.

JOINT EVALUATIONS

Joint evaluations may be conducted in cases where the intervention being evaluated is collaboratively funded or implemented with Member States or partners such as other United Nations or multilateral organizations. There can be various degrees of “jointness” depending on the extent to which individual partners cooperate on the implementation of the evaluation process, merge their evaluation resources and combine their evaluation reporting. In all cases, UNODC programme/project management still needs to set aside funds for the evaluation, even when conducted by multiple partners.

Joint evaluations can help overcome a range of issues commonly encountered in evaluation processes. The benefits to undertaking joint evaluations include the opportunity to:

- Increase harmonization and cohesion of international aid when partners work together
- Decrease burden on recipient countries by reducing the overall number of evaluations
- Overcome challenges of attributing effectiveness to an individual intervention by being able to more easily look at complementary efforts supported by different partners
- Increase acceptance and legitimacy of findings and recommendations as a result of shared ownership of the evaluation process
- Build capacity for evaluation by being exposed to good practices used by other partners

Joint evaluations tend to be lengthier and require greater coordination than other types of evaluations. Clear management structures and communications systems are essential for joint evaluations to function effectively. It is important to determine at an early stage exactly which partners will be participating and their probable contribution. The level of cooperation between UNODC and its partners can vary but typically all partners work together throughout the evaluation process. The OECD publication “Joint evaluations: Recent experiences, lessons learned and options for the future” provides a good overview and detailed instructions for managing joint evaluations.³¹

OTHER TYPES OF EVALUATIONS

In addition to the above, there are several other types of evaluations that may potentially be conducted within UNODC. This is a limited selection:

- *Meta-evaluations.* These are the evaluation of evaluations and are used to assess the evaluator, the evaluation report as well as the evaluation process itself. The focus may include combining evaluation results, checking compliance with evaluation policy and good practices, and/or assessing how well evaluations are disseminated and used for organizational learning.

³¹<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dcdndep/35353699.pdf>. And additional guidance: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/37512030.pdf>

- *Impact evaluations.* These focus on the effect of an intervention rather than on its management and delivery. They are usually undertaken after the intervention is completed, but may also be done during longer programmes/projects. Systematic baseline assessments and data collection and monitoring throughout the implementation phase are key to the success of an impact evaluation.
- *Ex-poste evaluations.* These are carried out at a period after the intervention has been completed, usually with the intention of discovering what the longer-term impact of the intervention has been.
- *Developmental evaluations.* These are an approach to understanding the activities of a programme/ project operating in dynamic, novel environments with complex interactions. They focus on innovation and strategic learning rather than standard outcomes and are as much a way of thinking about programmes-in-context and the feedback they produce.

Clear management structures and communications systems are essential for joint evaluations to function effectively.

WHO IS INVOLVED AND HOW?

During all its evaluations, UNODC aims to be inclusive of the wide range of internal and external stakeholders involved in the undertaking of any programme/project. This section describes the parties that may be involved in the evaluation process and their responsibilities—these include the evaluation function, the evaluation team, the programme/project managers, core learning partners (CLPs), informants, advisory board members, Member States and senior management.

The extent of involvement of the various parties differs according to the type and complexity of the intervention and evaluation. Therefore, it is important to clarify the roles of all stakeholders at the beginning of the evaluation process. This includes determining which headquarters unit/section or field office will manage and/or support the process. This decision needs to take into account the significant time commitment that managing the entire evaluation processes generally requires. Once finalized, the respective responsibilities of all parties need to be identified in the evaluation terms of reference. This does not preclude UNODC's evaluation function from refining the roles and responsibilities later on in the evaluation planning process.

More detailed guidance about undertaking evaluation processes as well as links to templates and useful resources are provided in the following chapter.



UNODC EVALUATION FUNCTION

The independent evaluation function of UNODC is situated outside of the organizational structure of UNODC with an administrative linkage to the Office of the Executive Director. It is staffed by evaluation specialists. By directly reporting to the Executive Director and Member States, the unit is able to conduct their work independently and impartially.

It is the responsibility of the evaluation function to:

- Promote a culture of evaluation within the organization
- Provide policy, tools, templates and guidelines to be used in the evaluation process, and to update these on a continuous basis
- Review and approve all products and deliverables of the evaluation, including terms of reference, selection of evaluators, the evaluation methodology in the form of an inception report, draft evaluation report, final evaluation report, presentation of evaluation findings, and the evaluation follow-up plan provided by the programme/project manager
- Manage and conduct in-depth evaluations in collaboration with external independent evaluators. The staff members of the evaluation office participate as part of the evaluation team and contribute to all deliverables according to the terms of reference
- Provide quality assurance by ensuring that evaluation quality standards are met throughout the evaluation process
- Respond to questions from all involved parties, and provide coaching support as feasible
- Publish and make publically available all cleared final evaluation reports on the UNODC website
- Regularly disseminate evaluation results to the Executive Director, senior management and Member States
- Report the implementation rate of recommendations to the Executive Director, senior management and Member States on an annual basis

EVALUATION TEAM

UNODC relies on independent evaluators in order to promote transparency and ensure the maximum objectivity of the evaluation process. All UNODC evaluations require an evaluation team of at least two team members in order to conduct each evaluation—one team leader with extensive expertise in evaluation and the other team member with expertise in the substantive topic to be evaluated. Depending on the specific requirements of the evaluation, size and complexity of the intervention, additional substantive experts may be recruited to fill any technical gaps on the team (e.g. in strategic issues such as human rights and gender equality, or in UNODC thematic areas such as policing). Furthermore, the teams need to be gender balanced. In addition, the evaluators' knowledge of and commitment to gender mainstreaming and a human rights-based approach are essential. The teams should also be geographically diverse. Ideally, the evaluation team includes professionals from the countries or regions concerned, as they can contribute with knowledge of the local context and fluency in one or multiple local languages to the team. In the case of in-depth evaluations, a staff member of the evaluation function is also part of the evaluation team.

It is the team's responsibility to conduct professional evaluations guided by the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation and UNODC evaluation processes and procedures, and according to the evaluation terms of reference.

PROGRAMME/PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Programme/project managers are the staff responsible for the implementation and management of individual UNODC programmes and projects, including the respective evaluation activities. It is their responsibility to:

- Build evaluation into the programme/project design and budget
- Consult with the UNODC evaluation function on the exact modality and timing of the evaluation
- Confirm that the funds specified in the programme/ project budget for evaluation are available
- Initiate the evaluation process of independent project evaluations with the evaluation function through the evaluation application
- Manage all IPE evaluation processes under the guidance of the evaluation function and in consultation and collaboration with the core learning partners
- Support evaluations by facilitating programme/ project team engagement, access to documents, interaction with stakeholders and provide other required information



- Complete all administrative and logistical arrangements during the evaluation process
- Prepare the management response addressing the recommendations of the final evaluation report and ensuring agreed upon follow-up actions
- Disseminate the final evaluation report to all relevant stakeholders
- Prepare an evaluation follow-up plan (EFP) on the recommendations
- Track the implementation of the recommendations by regular yearly updates
- Make use of the recommendations and lessons learned for future decision-making, planning and organizational learning

CORE LEARNING PARTNERS

The Core Learning Partnership (CLP) is a platform for key stakeholders to actively participate in the evaluation process. CLPs are made up of intended users of the evaluation, including donors, beneficiaries, counterparts in government and other organizations involved in the intervention's implementation.

CLP members are identified by programme/project management at the planning stage of the evaluation and can be further refined by the evaluation team throughout the evaluation process. Membership can differ depending on the type of evaluation, the countries involved and the thematic area under evaluation.

The benefits of this partnership of stakeholders are wide ranging. In addition to improving transparency and accountability of evaluation processes with UNODC stakeholders, CLP members' participation can increase the quality and relevance of evaluations. Lessons can also be shared quickly as they emerge during the evaluation. Furthermore, members gain exposure that can increase their understanding of the thematic area and evaluation practice.

A high degree of stakeholder participation throughout the evaluation can also result in strengthening commitment to the process, ownership of the subsequent evaluation results, and willingness to implement the recommendations.

The primary role of the CLPs is to:

- Review and comment on the evaluation terms of reference, including the evaluation questions
- Propose any known qualified candidates for the evaluation team
- Provide support and insights throughout the evaluation process, including as participants in interviews and discussions conducted by the evaluators

- Review and comment on the draft evaluation report and take note of the final evaluation report
- Attend presentation of results, if feasible
- Agree on implementation of recommendations
- Support the implementation of the follow-up actions of the recommendations

CLPs are to be inclusive in their membership and in their processes. It is important to ensure a fair representation of women and marginalized groups in the CLP, and that their voices are heard during consultations.

INFORMANTS

Informants such as interviewees, focus group participants or survey respondents are essential to any evaluation since they are able to provide the information about the intervention under evaluation. They thereby provide the data for the assessment by the evaluation team. Informants form part of the wider stakeholder group and can include counterparts from government institutions, CSOs, academics, direct beneficiaries, etc. The evaluation team has to identify all relevant informants based on a thorough, inclusive stakeholder mapping.

Informants are an essential element for an evaluation process identifying and engaging with them properly impacts the quality of data collection and in turn the whole evaluation exercise.

ADVISORY BOARD

Advisory boards are composed of internal or external experts who can provide technical advice on a thematic area or on the conduct and use of evaluation studies. Individuals are selected based on their technical, procedural or political expertise, and may include, for instance, judicial or policy experts, medical professionals, human rights campaigners and gender equality experts. Advisory boards are used in cases where their participation may increase the profile, legitimacy, credibility and/or acceptance of the evaluation and its results.

The primary role of advisory board members is to offer guidance and feedback on the evaluation design, methodology, data collection and analysis as well as the content and format for reporting the findings. They do not have any decision-making power or direct responsibility in the evaluation process.

The evaluation manager normally creates this structure by drafting terms of reference for the specific advisory group to be established including: number of members, technical expertise required, decision-making process and staged inclusion of advisory group products through the evaluation process. As in all evaluation-related structures, fair representation of women and men and gender equality and human rights expertise is recommended.



Advisory boards are used in cases where their participation is likely to increase the profile, legitimacy, credibility and/or acceptance of the evaluation and its results.

The in-depth evaluation of the global programme on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism benefited from this advisory function during the evaluation. A highly respected and authoritative expert on terrorism prevention was in charge of reviewing and advising on the products of the evaluation and his final advice and opinion was published as part of the preface of the final evaluation report.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2015/GLOR35_Mid-term_In-Depth_Evaluation_Report_May_2015.pdf

MEMBER STATES

Member States of the United Nations are involved in evaluations as stakeholders, donors or other counterparts including as programme/project hosts or beneficiaries. On a regular basis, the UNODC evaluation function presents evaluation findings, the implementation rate of recommendations, and information on compliance with evaluation standards and other evaluation-related topics to Member States. The presentations are either given as part of FinGov meetings (the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC) or during specifically arranged evaluation meetings and events designed to reach a wide audience of stakeholders.

Representatives of Member States are welcome to participate in all phases of the evaluation process, including as members of the CLP. They are encouraged to reach out to the UNODC evaluation function with any questions or concerns about evaluations, transparency and accountability, as well as to request evaluations of UNODC activities.

The roles of Member States within evaluation processes can potentially include:

- Being involved as CLPs during the evaluation process
- Making individual representatives available for consultations or interviews with the evaluation team
- Attending the presentations of evaluation results
- Being stakeholders in the follow-up to evaluation recommendations

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

The members of UNODC senior management include the Executive Director, directors of branches and divisions, and field representatives. UNODC's senior management is expected to support the further development of the organization's evaluation function, to ensure that adequate resources for evaluation are reserved and that evaluation processes are of a high standard. Evaluation is part of the programme and project cycle and is therefore an institutional responsibility to be taken up by all managers in UNODC.

The responsibilities of senior management during evaluations include:

- Being available for consultations or interviews with the evaluation team
- Ensuring that evaluation recommendations are implemented
- Acknowledging the results of the evaluation and reviewing the management response
- Ensuring the dissemination and utilization of evaluation recommendations, identified best practices and lessons learned to inform work plans and strategies

EVALUATING ISSUES OF DRUGS AND CRIME

Illicit drugs, organized crime, corruption and terrorism threaten development, justice and security in countries around the globe, disproportionately affecting those members of society in a most vulnerable position.

UNODC is a global leader in the struggle against illicit drugs and organized and serious crime, and the lead United Nations entity for delivering legal and technical assistance to prevent terrorism. Headquartered in Vienna, UNODC operates more than 50 field offices around the world, covering over 150 countries. The UNODC evaluation function is also located at the headquarters in Vienna, Austria, with an international team of evaluation experts, evaluation assistants and administrative assistants.

UNODC is mandated to assist Member States in their struggle against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism and is responsible for five interrelated thematic areas: (a) organized crime and trafficking, including drug trafficking, firearms, human trafficking and migrant smuggling, maritime crime and piracy as well as wildlife and forest crime); (b) corruption; (c) crime prevention and criminal justice reform; (d) drug abuse prevention and health as well as (e) terrorism prevention. Through all its work, UNODC strives to mainstream a gender perspective and human rights-based approach.

The thematic topics are being addressed within five clear lines of services, namely:

Research and threat analysis. Drugs and crime policies must be firmly based on evidence to be effective. UNODC regularly publishes comprehensive reports for instance on drugs, homicide, trafficking in persons and wildlife crime.³²

Capacity-building assistance. Developing local capacity improves the ability of states to tackle the threats posed by illicit drugs, organized crime, corruption and terrorism. The technical assistance provided by UNODC includes expert advice, specialized training, legal assistance, operational tools, guidance and practical resources.

³² World Drug Report 2016, Global Study in Homicide 2013, Trafficking in Persons Report 2016, World Wildlife Crime Report 2016.



Standards and norms. The internationally accepted standards and norms developed by UNODC encourage a coordinated transnational approach to address the challenges posed by drugs, crime and terrorism. UNODC is the guardian of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the United Nations convention against transnational organized crime as well as the standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners. In addition, UNODC is a co-sponsor of the joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and oversees the ratification and implementation of the 19 legal instruments against terrorism.

Cross-border cooperation and knowledge-sharing. UNDOC develops and supports cross-border cooperation linking practitioners and policymakers, Governments and non-governmental organizations, to encourage them to share knowledge, experience and best practices in dealing with drugs, crime and terrorism.

Communication and advocacy. UNODC engages in communications and advocacy to increase awareness and understanding of drugs, crime and terrorism and to mobilize society to promote change.

Additional information and more details about UNODC in general can be found on the UNODC website:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/index.html>

The independent UNODC evaluation function, which is located next to the Office of the Executive Director in the UNODC organigram, contributes to establishing strong institutions, criminal justice and the rule of law by evaluating all UNODC efforts in combatting drugs, crime and terrorism, issuing and disseminating recommendations as well as lessons learned and best practices.

Specific challenges as well as mitigating factors and solutions when evaluating the UNODC thematic areas are outlined in the practical guide of chapter seven.

SUMMARY

The UNODC evaluation policy underscores the organization's strong commitment to evaluation. Evaluation is a core part of the lifecycle of all UNODC interventions, and there are clear procedures for the timing and types of evaluations that are conducted. Evaluation at UNODC involves multiple parties including programme/project managers, evaluators, staff of the evaluation function, core learning partners and Member States. All have important roles to play in ensuring that evaluations are relevant, timely and credible, and that the results are used.

The next chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the evaluation processes to be followed in managing UNODC evaluations.



CHAPTER 4

Evaluation as part of programme/project management

This chapter guides project/programme managers through the steps and requirements leading up to, during, and after the evaluation. By following these steps, project/programme managers can ensure that the evaluation process goes smoothly and that the results of the evaluation can be used to improve UNODC programmes and operations.

OVERVIEW OF THE UNODC EVALUATION PROCESS

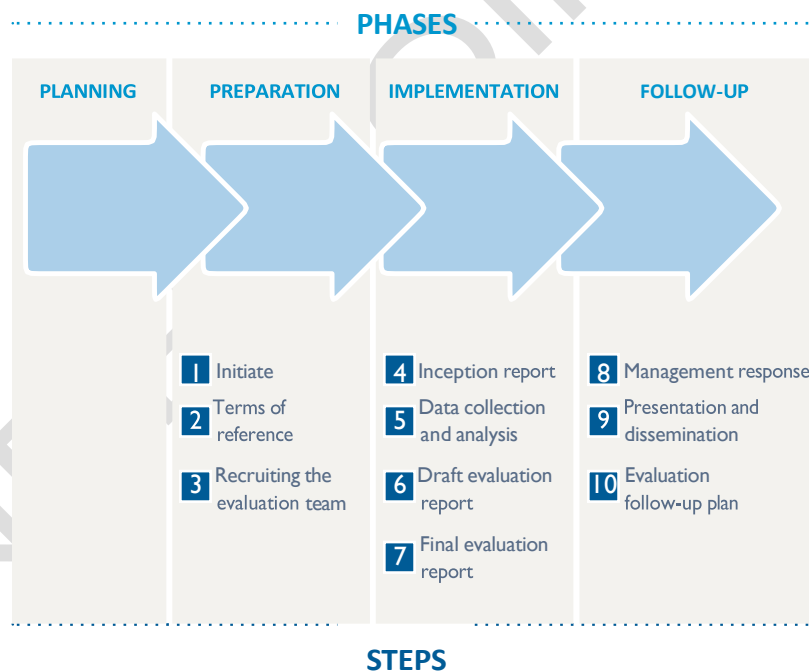
This chapter is primarily written for those who manage projects/programmes and who therefore have a central role in managing project evaluations, but it will also be useful for evaluators and partners. It will help all readers become familiar with the necessary actions, stages and requirements of the evaluation process in order to successfully conclude a UNODC evaluation.

Although the general principles and standards for evaluations are similar across the United Nations and other development organizations, the actual evaluation processes may vary. As the implementing entity of the evaluation function, the UNODC evaluation function provides guidance on how to meet internationally recognized standards and UNODC specific requirements.

The evaluation process can be described as having four overall phases: (a) Planning, (b) Preparation, (c) Implementation and (d) Follow-up. Within these phases are 10 specific steps that need to be followed in order to meet all of the requirements of a UNODC evaluation. These phases and steps are shown in figure 4.1.

The UNODC evaluation function stands ready to answer questions and provide guidance and support throughout the evaluation process.

FIGURE 4.1 FOUR PHASES AND TEN STEPS OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS





There are four phases encompassing 10 steps of the overall evaluation process.

This chapter provides an overview of each step and of what is required for its successful completion. It also provides links to more detailed guidance and to required templates. Specifically, the guiding document “Gender-Responsive Evaluations in the Work of UNODC” provides practical guidance to mainstream a gender perspective in the four phases of the evaluation process. Although some key gender-related guidelines will be presented in this chapter, evaluation stakeholders should review this detailed guiding document in order to ensure adherence to organizational norms, standards and guidelines on gender-responsive evaluation.



GUIDING DOCUMENT “GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATIONS IN THE WORK OF UNODC”

EVALUATION TOOLS

PLANNING PHASE

- Quality checklist for project proposals
- Evaluability assessment template
- Evaluation quality criteria
- Evaluation plan template
- IEU Guiding Document ‘Gender Responsive Evaluations in the Work of UNODC’, 2017
- IEU evaluation budget matrix

PREPARATION PHASE

- Evaluability assessment template
- Guidelines and template for evaluation ToR
- Guidelines for selection of evaluators
- Evaluations consultants declaration of interest
- Guidelines and template for inception report
- Guidelines for cluster evaluations
- Evaluation roles and responsibilities
- IEU guiding document “Gender Responsive Evaluations in the Work of UNODC”, 2017

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

- Quality assessment for evaluation reports
- IEU guiding document “Gender Responsive Evaluations in the Work of UNODC”, 2017, which includes a proposed set of gender-sensitive evaluation questions and a gender mainstreaming checklist for quality assessment
- Guidelines and template for evaluation reports
- Typographic styles
- United Nations spelling

FOLLOW-UP PHASE

- Evaluation follow-up plan template
- IEU guiding document “Gender Responsive Evaluations in the Work of UNODC”, 2017
- Evaluation application for recording recommendations and lessons learned

The links to the templates and guidelines are available on the IEU website and included in the annex of the electronic version of this handbook

PHASE 1: PLANNING

Programmes and projects need to be designed with evaluation in mind as evaluation is an essential part of an intervention's life cycle. Programme and project managers (who will also be referred to as managers in this handbook) play a critical role in any evaluation process beginning at the programme/project design stage. This is when managers should:

- Review evaluation results, recommendations and lessons learned from previous interventions in order to inform the design of the new programme/project
- Review evaluation plans for related interventions at UNODC in order to ensure coordination and coherence of evaluation activities across the organization
- Carefully plan the timing of the evaluations and ensure sufficient funding is reserved
- Review the UNODC evaluation handbook in order to ensure adherence to organizational evaluation norms, standards and guidelines

In line with the UNODC evaluation policy, all projects and programmes need to undergo an evaluation every four years and before completion of a project/programme.

All programme and project documents, including any revision documents, are required to include a section on evaluation. The evaluation function reviews and clears all documents in the direct approval process as well as provides comments for the approval process of the UNODC programme review committee. A list of what has to be included in the evaluation section appears in the text box below.

REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR THE EVALUATION SECTION OF THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT DOCUMENT AS WELL AS THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT REVISION DOCUMENT

- Type of evaluation: mid-term or final evaluation, independent project evaluation or in-depth evaluation (also indicating if cluster or joint evaluation) and rationale for this choice
- Purpose of the evaluation, including how evaluation findings will be used
- Approach of the evaluation, including how human rights (HR) and gender equality (GE) approaches will be integrated
- Timing for the evaluation (i.e. month and year; plan for evaluation preparation and implementation; whether rescheduling of evaluation needed due to project extension)
- Relationship to relevant past and planned evaluations, and to relevant evaluations at other levels (project, subprogramme or global programme evaluations and country, regional or thematic programme evaluations)
- Evaluation capacity: identify evaluation focal points in the region or section/branch, if any
- Evaluation budget: specify the reserved budget for the planned evaluations
- Evaluation management: clarify roles and responsibilities of involved parties
- Summary of recommendations of any previous evaluations



Programmes and projects need to be designed with evaluation in mind and based on evaluation recommendations and lessons learned.

When preparing the programme/project documents, managers must:

- Explain how evaluation has been incorporated into the project/programme in accordance with UNODC evaluation policy
- Explain how they expect to coordinate evaluations between different levels of UNODC programming in order to ensure coherence
- Include evaluation activities in the timeline and budget

Programme/project managers are responsible for properly budgeting for the evaluation. In accordance with UNODC evaluation policy, 2–3 per cent of the overall programme/project budget needs to be reserved for one evaluation. However, the exact budget will depend on the scope and methodology of the evaluation (such as number of field missions), duration of the project/programme, geographical and thematic coverage, composition of the evaluation team, etc. In order to help managers prepare evaluation budgets, the evaluation function has developed a matrix for calculating the minimum amount required for a fully-fledged evaluation. The matrix is available upon request.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN DEVELOPING AN EVALUATION BUDGET

FEES FOR EVALUATORS:

- Number of working days
- Daily fee
- Number of consultants (minimum evaluation team of two)

EVALUATION REPORT:

- Publication
- Translation

TRAVEL:

- Number of countries to be visited
- Number of working days in each country (daily subsistence allowance)
- Location/base of the consultants
- Participation of evaluation office staff in field missions
- Security measures
- Need for interpreters

Managers must discuss the final evaluation plan and budget with the evaluation office, which will review the plan and budget prior to the programme/project approval. This approval process is a requirement for all new initiatives and for all formal revisions. It helps ensure that all evaluation information is clearly established during the planning and design stage.

The planning phase is crucial to make sure HR and GE aspects are properly addressed in the programme/project and its evaluation. Thus, it is relevant to mobilize human rights and gender knowledge and capacity during this phase. Moreover, during this phase it is necessary to commit enough capacity, time and budget to ensure HR and GE-responsive, inclusive and participatory evaluation processes. Managers must be aware that HR and GE-responsive evaluations require wide consultation with different informants, many of them hard-to-reach populations. Furthermore, human rights and gender expertise must be ensured among evaluation teams.

PHASE 2: PREPARATION

Careful preparation of the overall evaluation process helps to ensure that evaluations will be of high quality, credible and useful. The preparation phase has three main steps: initiating the process, determining the terms of reference and recruiting the evaluation team. The preparation phase establishes the foundations for a HR and GE-responsive evaluation process. As part of the planning phase, it is important that HR and GE knowledge and capacity are mobilized.

In accordance with UNODC evaluation policy, 2–3 per cent of the overall programme/project budget needs to be directed towards evaluation.

STEP 1 - INITIATE

The first step in the evaluation process is to start the coordination and administrative processes for conducting the evaluation. Managers begin this approximately six to eight months prior to the start of the implementation of the evaluation.

During this step, managers need to take the following actions:

- Inform the UNODC evaluation function and core learning partners (CLPs) of the intention to proceed
- Receive confirmation on the modality (type) of evaluation from the evaluation office
- Confirm that the funds specified in the programme/project budget for evaluation are readily available
- Confirm which stakeholders will be involved and their specific roles in the evaluation
- Update the evaluation timeline
- Officially initiate the evaluation process for project evaluations in the evaluation application

It is important that managers enter the above information in the evaluation application and consult with the evaluation function before further action is taken.



Careful and timely preparation of the overall evaluation process helps

to ensure that evaluations will be of high quality, credible and useful, and human rights and gender equality-responsive.

Useful reference documents include UNODC guidance on evaluation roles and responsibilities and the evaluation planning template.



UNODC GUIDANCE FOR IN-DEPTH EVALUATIONS



UNODC GUIDANCE FOR INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATIONS



UNODC EVALUATION PLANNING TEMPLATE



UNODC EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/GUIDANCE-FOR-PROJECT-PROGRAMME-MANAGERS.HTML](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/guidance-for-project-programme-managers.html)

THE UNODC WEB-BASED EVALUATION APPLICATION

The web-based evaluation application is a key tool, guide and resource for evaluations at UNODC. It is an internal site, accessible to staff, that is used throughout the evaluation process.

All evaluation planning documents and deliverables need to be uploaded and submitted to the evaluation function through the evaluation application.

The application has useful resources including:

- Searchable databases for recommendations and lessons learned that have emerged from UNODC evaluations across all thematic areas
- Step-by-step instructions, guidance and templates for managing and undertaking evaluations

Please find below a screenshot of the evaluation application.

During the initiation step, managers also need to start gathering relevant background documents for the evaluation team to use during the desk review process. The documents should be provided to the evaluators as soon as they begin their work.

More detailed information regarding the relevant background documents and the desk review can be found in the practical guide in part 3 of this handbook.

Timeframe

As indicated above, the preparation for evaluation needs to begin six to eight months in advance of the start of the evaluation. How far in advance to start preparations depends on the size of the intervention and of the evaluation. Larger programmes and projects typically require longer preparation time. It is necessary for evaluations to be completed before the end of the intervention to ensure the availability of funds as well as the availability of key staff to participate for the duration of the evaluation. An approximate time frame for each phase of the evaluation is provided in table 4.1. It is of utmost importance to emphasize that the time frame provided in the table is exemplary and can vary substantively depending on the size and scope of the evaluation.

The preparation for evaluation needs to begin around six to eight months in advance of the start of the evaluation.

TABLE 4.1 SAMPLE EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

TASK	TIMEFRAME	PARTY RESPONSIBLE
ToR	3–4 weeks (+ 2 weeks for review by CLPs)	Programme/project manager (with approval by the evaluation function)
Recruitment process of Human Resources and Management Service (HRMS) for evaluation team* (availability of consultants should be checked much earlier)	3–4 weeks (assuming that all required documents have been arranged beforehand)	Programme/project manager (with approval by the evaluation function)
Inception report	3–5 weeks (once contract signed)	Evaluation team
Implementation activities (data collection), including field missions	2–6 weeks (once inception report approved; this strongly depends on the size and scope of the programme/project)	Evaluation team Programme/project management for all logistics
Reporting activities (analysis, preparation of draft and final report, presentation)	8–12 weeks (once data collection finalized; includes around 3–4 iterations between the evaluation office and the evaluation team) (+ 2 weeks for review by CLPs)	Evaluation team (with approval by the evaluation function) Programme/project manager review for factual errors
Follow-up phase (use and dissemination)	4–6 weeks (once final evaluation report received) (+ yearly update)	Programme/project manager and the evaluation function for approval

* Please note that the HRMS recruitment process mentioned here only includes the official recruitment of the selected candidates and not the selection process itself.



A well-considered and well-written ToR document is the foundation for a good evaluation.

STEP 2 - TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference (ToR) serve as the contractual basis under which the evaluation team is expected to operate. The document sets out the roles and parameters for the evaluation process, and provides specific instructions to the evaluation team.

The ToR outline why the evaluation is being undertaken (purpose and objectives). It explains what is being examined (scope) and defines the key criteria and the key questions to be answered. It describes how the evaluation is to be accomplished (approach/es and methods). It outlines when the various activities will take place (time frame and deliverables). It identifies who will be involved (as stakeholders and users). Additionally, the ToR discuss the use of the evaluation once it is completed.

When preparing the ToR, it is important to mobilize human rights and gender knowledge and capacity. Specifically, it is recommended to look for advice on integrating HR and GE in evaluation processes at the IEU level.

Table 4.2 provides a checklist of the key components and requirements of the ToR. More detailed guidance and the required ToR template can be found on the UNODC evaluation website. Additional guidance in drafting this critical document is available from the evaluation function.



TERMS OF REFERENCE GUIDELINES



TERMS OF REFERENCE TEMPLATE



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/GUIDANCE-FOR-PROJECT-PROGRAMME-MANAGERS.HTML](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/guidance-for-project-programme-managers.html)

Review and approval of the terms of reference

It is important for the ToR to be reviewed in order to ensure it is sufficiently comprehensive and of adequate quality. The process of developing the ToR includes involvement of and close consultation with the evaluation function.

Sharing the ToR with key stakeholders is an important way to:

- Make use of their collective knowledge about key issues to be addressed in the evaluation and how these should be addressed
- Develop a shared understanding of the purpose of the evaluation, thereby facilitating ownership of the evaluation process
- Clarify and manage expectations of each party's roles and responsibilities

Once the initial draft of the ToR has been developed by the manager, it is discussed with, and cleared by, the evaluation function. The CLPs are then offered the opportunity to comment on the draft document. The CLPs are informed by the programme/project manager of their role in the process before they receive the ToR for comments. Once their input has been included, the evaluation function reviews and clears the final ToR.

TABLE 4.2 KEY COMPONENTS OF THE EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

HEADINGS	ISSUES TO ADDRESS
Background and context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the programme/project overview: historical and social context, key stakeholders, main challenges and notable developments during implementation (including sex-disaggregated data)? • What are the main objectives and outcomes? • What main issues from previous evaluations should be considered? • How have HR and GE been addressed? • What are the links to other programmes, and to agency strategies and goals? • How does the programme/project contribute to the SDGs? What SDGs are relevant in the context of the programme/ project?
Disbursement history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much is the overall budget, expenditure, committed funds of the programme/ project?
Purpose of evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who commissioned the evaluation; why is it being undertaken now? • What does the evaluation seek to accomplish; how will results be used? • Who are the main evaluation users; how will they be involved?
Scope of evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What unit of analysis is covered? • What time period and geographic area is covered?
Key evaluation questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the focus of the evaluation; what are the most critical things to know about the intervention? • What are 1–3 priority questions for each criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, partnership and cooperation, HR and GE-, innovation (optional) and for lessons learned and best practice?
Evaluation methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the methodological guidance, both for data collection and analysis, for qualitative and quantitative data, for integrating HR and GE dimensions into the evaluation design? • What are sources of data?
Evaluation team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the evaluation team composed; what are the required experience and skills? • What are the responsibilities of evaluators? • How many working days are required for the overall evaluation process as well as for individual deliverables?
Management of evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder group? • What are the logistical responsibilities?

(cont.)



HEADINGS	ISSUES TO ADDRESS
Timeframe and deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the timing/deadlines during the evaluation process, including for field missions?• What are expected deliverables; when do they have to be concluded?
Payment modalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will payment be provided?
Annexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terms of reference for evaluators• List of background documents for desk review• List of Sustainable Development Goals and Targets• List of stakeholders (CLPs) to be consulted

STEP 3 - RECRUITING THE EVALUATION TEAM

In this step, the manager considers the composition of the team that will conduct the evaluation. This involves identifying and selecting qualified candidates in line with guidance from the evaluation function. The evaluation function is closely involved during these steps and reviews and clears any proposed candidates before the recruitment can be initiated. More specific information on the actual recruitment and contractual process is available from HRMS. In addition, more information, including about the clearance process and relevant UNEG Norms and Standards, can be found in the guidance document on the UNODC evaluation website.



GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF EVALUATION CONSULTANTS

Composition of the evaluation team

In order to promote transparency and ensure the maximum objectivity of evaluations, the UNODC relies on external independent evaluators. Evaluators are selected on the basis of their experience, expertise, technical competence, independence and integrity.

Evaluation teams for a project evaluation need to include at least two members, one team leader/lead evaluator with extensive evaluation expertise, the other a team member/second evaluator with expertise in the substantive topic to be evaluated. One of the team members should also have expertise in HR and GE-responsive evaluation approach. In addition, all team members' commitment to HR and GE mainstreaming and the analysis of gender and human rights issues is essential. Depending on the size and complexity of the intervention being evaluated, additional interdisciplinary national and international team members with evaluation expertise may be added, in particular for in-depth evaluations.

The teams should be gender balanced and geographically diverse. Ideally, the evaluation team includes international professionals and others from the countries or regions concerned, as they can bring knowledge of the local context and fluency in one or multiple local languages to the team.

The inclusion of one or more national team members is also beneficial in order to help build national evaluation capacity. This is particularly the case where the international consultant has experience in specific evaluation tools and methods that can be shared with national team members. The ToR have to indicate whether the evaluators are to be national or international recruits.

When conducting in-depth evaluations, which are managed by the evaluation function, the evaluation team includes an evaluator from the evaluation function, sometimes acting as the team leader. The chief of the UNODC evaluation function will appoint this person. In-depth evaluations are managed by the evaluation function.

Evaluation teams need to have at least two members with expertise in evaluation and the topic to be evaluated. At least one member is required to have expertise in HR and GE in evaluation processes.

Required skills and competencies

As mentioned, the evaluation team needs to possess evaluation and subject-matter expertise, as well as demonstrate understanding of GE and HR approaches. The required core competencies and the ethical standards are outlined in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation. Additional competencies may be required by programme/project managers, in consultation with evaluation office, and included in the ToR.

Key attributes of evaluation teams generally also include knowledge of the local, country or regional context (depending on the specificity of each programme/project), experience or familiarity with the United Nations system, and proven ability to work as part of an international team.

The team leader plays a key role in getting the evaluation team to work efficiently together. Besides having relevant evaluation and technical skills and HR and GE sensitivity, the team leader needs to have effective management, interpersonal, facilitation, writing and presentation skills.

Sources for recruiting evaluators

There are several places to begin the search for an appropriate evaluation team. These include:

- Consultation with the evaluation function
- Core learning partners
- Relevant technical units
- National, regional and international evaluation organizations



It is very important that evaluators have full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially and express their positions independently.

The evaluation function is able to provide recommendations of suitable candidates, especially regarding their experience and substantive expertise. Profiles of evaluation experts and substantive experts are available. Some of these candidates have already been assessed on the basis of their previous evaluation performance in a UNODC evaluation or through a review of their CVs and phone interviews. National evaluators are usually recruited through the field office (UNDP) and not the Human Resources and Management Service (HRMS) at UNODC headquarters.

Conflicts of interest

When selecting the evaluation team, the manager must ensure that there are no conflicts of interest. In order to avoid conflicts of interest and undue pressure being placed on evaluators, the consultants must be independent. This requires them to be external to UNODC and to have no vested interest in the intervention to be evaluated and no prior involvement in its design or implementation.

It is very important that evaluators have full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially and express their positions without potential negative effects on their career development. If a conflict of interest arises during the evaluation, the evaluation function will determine whether the evaluator needs to be dismissed or the evaluation terminated. The main potential sources of conflicts include past engagement or possible future involvement in the programme/project being evaluated, and involvement in multiple assignments.

Selection process

Managers select evaluators by means of a transparent process, usually with the assistance of the evaluation function. The process is guided by the UNEG norms and standards to ensure the best-possible candidates are chosen and any conflicts of interest and other ethical issues are averted. Selection needs to follow the official United Nations recruitment process, which includes interviews and, potentially, a short written or oral assessment, as deemed necessary. The identified candidates need to be reviewed by the evaluation function and their selection cleared before recruitment.

Contracting process

Sufficient time is needed for the recruitment of the evaluators. Experienced and well-qualified evaluators typically have limited availability and must often be contacted months in advance. In addition, the contracting process itself may take a significant amount of time. Once an evaluation is scheduled, the manager may inquire into the interest and availability of potential evaluators for the upcoming consultancy.

As part of the contracting process, evaluators need to complete a declaration of interest that attests that they will abide by the UNEG code of conduct for evaluation in the United Nations system. This form has to be attached to the ToR and must be signed by the evaluators prior to their engagement. It can be found on the UNODC evaluation website.



DECLARATION OF INTEREST FORM



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/EVALUATION/GUIDELINES/EVALUATION_CONSULTANTS_DECLARATION_OF_INTEREST_FORM.PDF](https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/guidelines/evaluation_consultants_declaration_of_interest_form.pdf)

Fee rates for evaluators are not negotiated. Fees are calculated on the basis of the experience of the consultant and can be obtained from UNODC HRMS.

Programme/project managers need to consult with the UNODC human resources management service regarding the exact recruitment process.

PREPARATION PHASE CHECKLIST

- ✓ Has the required information been entered in the evaluation application?
- ✓ Has the evaluation process been discussed with the evaluation function?
- ✓ Have the background documents for the desk review been assembled?
- ✓ Has the initial draft ToR been developed and shared with the evaluation function for quality review?
- ✓ Has the next draft ToR been shared with the core learning partners (CPLs) and any comments been incorporated?
- ✓ Has the ToR received final approval from the evaluation function?
- ✓ Has the final ToR been uploaded to the evaluation application?
- ✓ Has the search for evaluation consultants/firm included consultation with the evaluation function and CLPs?
- ✓ Has an independent, external evaluation team with expertise in the evaluation process, the subject matter of the evaluation and knowledge of HR and GE been recruited after approval by the evaluation function?
- ✓ Is there gender balance within the evaluation team?
- ✓ Is the evaluation team geographically diverse?
- ✓ Has the contracting process been finalized?



PHASE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

Once the planning and preparation are finished, and recruitment has taken place, the evaluation team can get to work. The main components of the implementation phase are the development of the inception report, data collection and analysis activities, and the preparation of the draft and final evaluation report.

The UNODC evaluation function begins the implementation phase by welcoming the evaluation team on board, outlining the process, steps and requirements, and providing all necessary documents and templates for a successful evaluation. In most cases, a kick-off meeting is arranged in order to facilitate the implementation planning. The meeting can be held either face-to-face or virtually, and includes staff from the evaluation function as well as members of the programme/project management team. The meeting provides the opportunity for the parties outlined above to be introduced to the team, have a substantive discussion on how the evaluation will be carried out, and discuss logistical and administrative issues. This is another opportunity to set the foundations for a human rights and gender equality-responsive evaluation process. It is important that all evaluation stakeholders are aware of the conditions (time, mainly), capacity, responsibilities, and approaches and methods required.

Once the evaluators are oriented, the manager's responsibilities shift to providing support and input to the team as the evaluators undertake their activities. The general requirements for facilitating the inception and evaluation reports steps are outlined below. More detail about the structure and content of the reports can be found in chapter five, which is focused on the responsibilities of the evaluators.

STEP 4 - THE INCEPTION REPORT

The inception report is a roadmap that ensures a shared understanding between the evaluators and the UNODC evaluation function of how the evaluation will be carried out. It is one of the key deliverables produced by the evaluators and should provide:

- A summary of the desk review of the programme/project documentation undertaken by the evaluation team outlining the preliminary findings regarding each evaluation criterion. This should include a review of the results framework as well as of the programme theory/theory of change (if available). If necessary, additional context or thematic-related documentation should be reviewed (for example documentation on gender aspects related to the substantive topic to be evaluated).
- Further elaboration of the methodology that was proposed in the ToR; the methodology will specify the approaches (including a specific section on a HR and GE approach), strands of inquiry, the evaluation questions, sampling strategy, and the data collection and analysis processes and instruments.

- A comprehensive evaluation matrix which will guide the evaluation team through the evaluation process outlining the evaluation criteria and questions, the indicators and data for each question, the data collection methods, data sources, sampling and lines of inquiries.
- A detailed stakeholders map to identify key informants for the evaluation, ensuring the participation of both women and men and marginalized groups, and representation of rights holders organizations. Human rights and gender equality actors should be identified and consulted to ensure knowledge, reflection and views on these aspects.
- A workplan with associated activities, deliverables, timetable, roles and responsibilities as well as the travel schedule for the field missions for data collection

Role of programme/project manager

In order to support the inception phase, the manager is required to gather and provide access to all necessary desk review materials before the inception phase starts. For an in-depth evaluation, all desk review material also needs to be made available to the evaluation function. Additionally, complementary materials and references can be requested by the evaluation team at any time during the inception phase as well as later during data collection.

Further information for developing the inception report is provided in chapter five. More specific guidance and the required template for the report can be found on the UNODC evaluation website.



INCEPTION REPORT GUIDELINES



INCEPTION REPORT TEMPLATE



[HTTP://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/EVALUATION/GUIDELINES/UNODC-IEU_INCEPTION_REPORT_GUIDELINES.PDF](http://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/guidelines/UNODC-IEU_INCEPTION_REPORT_GUIDELINES.PDF)

Review and approval

Once the inception report is submitted by the evaluators, the evaluation function reviews the report for its overall quality and suitability for meeting the expectations that were set out in the ToR. Specific issues to consider in the review process are whether:

- The evaluators have addressed the adequacy of the programme/project results framework
- The design of the evaluation is suitable for answering the evaluation questions and addresses each of the required UNODC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, cooperation and partnerships, human rights and gender equality)



Once approved, the inception report complements the ToR as one of the key reference documents for the evaluation process.

- The methodology includes strategies to engage all stakeholder groups, integrates gender equality and human rights principles, and has mechanisms to ensure confidentiality of sources
- The methodology and tools appear sufficiently robust to reliably and validly provide and analyse data

More specific information and guidance about the evaluation design and methodology, including individual data collection techniques and tools, sampling strategy, data analysis and triangulation can be found in the practical guide in part 3 of this handbook.

The inception report is shared with the evaluation function through the evaluation application for thorough review and comments. This review ensures a sound, comprehensive and inclusive evaluation methodology, which is essential for the successful implementation of the evaluation and especially the data collection and analysis.

As the review process may encompass several rounds in order for it to meet the required quality standards, sufficient time must be allotted to the inception report step. It is important that the final version of the report be approved by the evaluation function before the evaluators depart on field missions for data collection. Once approved, the inception report complements the ToR as one of the key reference documents for the evaluation process. After the inception report has been cleared by the evaluation function, the data collection commences, including any field missions.

STEP 5 - DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This step focuses on obtaining multiple types of evidence that the evaluators require to make judgments about the programme/project. It also entails organizing and analysing the evidence to produce the main findings. These activities should be followed by a brief, informal meeting in order to share the preliminary findings with key stakeholders.

Data collection

A rigorous evaluation process requires that data be collected from a range of stakeholders. In addition, different data collection tools and methods need to be applied and employed in a variety of ways. Key stakeholders invited to share their experiences and opinions can include UNODC staff at headquarters and in field offices, government counterparts, programme/project managers, programme/project participants, donors, direct beneficiaries, other international organizations, CSOs, academia and other partners. As already mentioned, participation of both women, men and marginalized groups, and representatives of rights holders organizations should be ensured. Human rights and gender equality actors are also key informants in HR and GE-responsive evaluation processes.

Common methods for collecting information about stakeholders' experiences and perspectives, as well as for assessing changes that have occurred as a result of UNODC activities, include individual and group interviews, focus group discussions, case studies, surveys and observations. More details about these and other data collection techniques can be found in the practical guide in part 3 of this handbook.

Role of programme/project manager

The primary responsibility for managers during data collection is ensuring that (a) logistical support is provided for the evaluation team; (b) agendas for fieldwork are finalized on time; and (c) access to the broad diversity of stakeholders is facilitated. The type of support will vary immensely depending on the evaluation methodology. All travel and visas have to be arranged for the evaluation team well in advance of the field missions selected by the evaluation team. In addition, managers and the project teams will provide logistical support during the field missions, such as setting up any interviews or meetings requested by the evaluation team, providing contact details of any additional stakeholders to be interviewed and contracting independent interpretation. At any time during the evaluation process, the programme/project managers should be ready to supply the evaluation team with any additional desk review materials they may require as well as to clarify any outstanding questions regarding the programme/project to be evaluated.

General data collection approach

Field missions. The evaluation team will undertake field missions in order to collect primary data from those most closely involved or affected by the programme/project activities. During the field missions, the corresponding field office or HQ section/branch will provide the required administrative and logistical support and help the evaluation team setup meetings with key stakeholders and any other informants deemed necessary by the evaluation team. It is important that field missions devote enough time and resources to ensuring broad consultations. Staff may also need to provide logistical support such as organizing transport, recommending accommodation and ensuring the security of the evaluation team. It is important that the evaluation team members undertake relevant United Nations security training and be aware of, and compliant with, any relevant security protocols.

Remote methods. Data is often collected remotely via phone or web-based interviews, and e-mail or web-based surveys. In the case of interviews, the managers may need to assist in arranging these meetings (scheduling, providing contact details, potentially allocating a room and phone, etc.). In the case of surveys, there will be a need to provide the evaluators with contact information as well as to support the evaluation team with follow-up reminders in order to increase survey responses.



Document review. Data are also obtained from programme/project reports and a range of other documents. These are considered secondary data sources. Although much of the information is likely to be found in the desk review material, managers may need to provide access to additionally requested documents throughout the evaluation. Moreover, evaluation team members may identify context and thematic-related documentation through their interaction with stakeholders. If available, it is very important to identify, access and analyse sex and age-disaggregated data.

There is a delicate balance between providing adequate support for the evaluation and maintaining the independence of the exercise. While UNODC managers are expected to organize meetings and visits, only the evaluation team and staff members of the evaluation function are allowed to participate in these evaluation activities. In cases where interpretation is required, independent interpreters (contracted in advance for the purpose of the specific evaluation) will also participate in the interviews. This practice helps to ensure interviewees and participants feel comfortable and speak freely. As part of a gender-responsive evaluation methodology, the evaluation approach will be designed to be inclusive, participatory as well as sensitive, as outlined in detail in chapter 2. It is of utmost importance that the evaluators remain independent throughout the evaluation process.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD, RIGOROUS EVALUATION METHODOLOGIES

In general, the evaluation methodology should be based on a mixed-methods approach, be HR and GE-responsive and inclusive, and be guided by triangulation. As part of a good evaluation report, the methodology should be clearly outlined and explained. In particular, any limitations and mitigating measures should be discussed. The following reports are useful resources for evaluators looking for examples of sound methodology:

Independent in-depth cluster evaluation of the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends Programme (GLOJ88) and the Global Scientific and Forensic Programme—Support Project (GLOU54), 2016.

- A comprehensive survey was developed in order to capture feedback from training participants. One important aspect when conducting a survey is the assessment of the response rate, which has been carried out thoroughly in this evaluation.

In-depth evaluation of the Counter Piracy Programme Combating Maritime Piracy in the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean Increasing Regional Capacities to Deter, Detain and Prosecute Pirates (XAMT72, XEAX20, XSSX11, SOMX54, MUSX55, XEAX67), 2013.

- As part of the methodology, a most significant change (MSC) narration analysis was conducted in order to assess perceived change and impact in a systematic way.

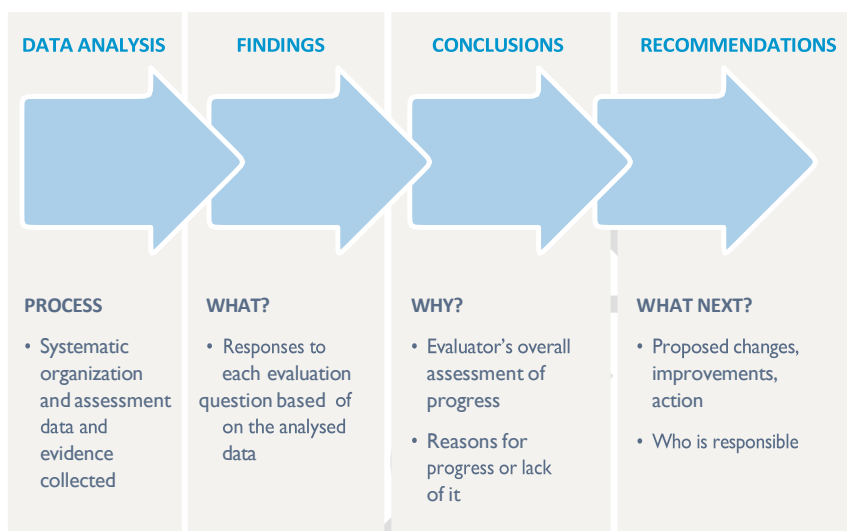
In-depth cluster evaluation of the Global Programme against Human Trafficking (GLOT 59) and Migrant Smuggling (GLOT 92), 2017.

- A human rights and gender-responsive evaluation methodology was developed under the leadership of a gender expert who was specifically hired to be part of the evaluation team. In particular, additional desk review materials and informants were identified to be included and consulted as part of the data collection in order to gain understanding of the context of the two global programmes regarding human rights and gender equality.

Data analysis

Although analysis of information and data occurs throughout the implementation stage, once it has all been collected, a different analytical process is undertaken. This involves systematically organizing, comparing and synthesizing information that was obtained through all methods. All data analysis should be strongly based on triangulation. Thus, it should enable evaluators to make judgments based on the evidence and to develop their findings, which their conclusions and recommendations will be based upon. Figure 4.2 illustrates this process. More details about undertaking data analysis can be found in the practical guide in part 3 of this handbook.

FIGURE 4.2 USE OF ANALYSED DATA IN EVALUATION REPORT



Presentation of preliminary findings

For all evaluations, it is strongly recommended that an internal debriefing session be held once data collection and preliminary data analysis have been completed at the end of the field mission. Participants should include the evaluation team, the manager and programme/project staff members. The presentation can be held in the field and/or at headquarters, in person or via Skype, etc. In the case of evaluating a country-level programme/project, it is advantageous to hold the session in the field.

These debriefing sessions can be instrumental in ensuring ownership. During a debriefing session, the evaluation team can give a brief, oral report of its initial findings and preliminary conclusions so as to allow the programme/project manager to react to the conclusions reached. In addition, participants can provide feedback and also clarify points that may have been misunderstood by the evaluators. Debriefing sessions can also be used as an opportunity to conduct or arrange follow-up interviews as deemed necessary by the evaluation team.



STEP 6 - DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

After the field mission, the evaluation team prepares a draft evaluation report. It is the main product of the evaluation and should be a well-written and carefully constructed report that is first presented in full draft form. The report describes the programme/project being evaluated and the evaluation methodology, but its main purpose is to present evidence-based findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

The report must be developed according to the UNEG norms and standards as well as other specific requirements of UNODC. The draft evaluation report should be fully formatted in accordance with the guidelines and templates, be fully proofread regarding spelling and grammar and should contain all the required components, including an executive summary with a matrix and annexes. Further information on developing the evaluation report is provided in chapter five. More specific guidance and the required template for the report can be found on the UNODC evaluation website.

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary will be read more closely than any other part of the report. The evaluators have to make sure that it briefly and clearly highlights the evaluation's purpose and methodology, and the main conclusions and recommendations. It should be no more than five pages long plus the summary matrix. The executive summary should be a stand-alone document, which can be consulted independently of the main body of the report.

A good example of a well-executed executive summary can be found in the 2014 in-depth evaluation of the UNODC Global Programme on HIV/AIDS.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2014/In-Depth_Evaluation_UNODC_HIV-AIDS_programme_2008-2012_published_2014.pdf



EVALUATION REPORT GUIDELINES



EVALUATION REPORT TEMPLATE



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/NORMATIVE-TOOLS.HTML#EVAL_REPORT](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/normative-tools.html#eval_report)

Evaluation reports are submitted to the evaluation function in English. There are exceptions for the official United Nations languages, but this needs prior discussion and agreement from the evaluation function. Evaluation reports written in a language other than English need to be accompanied by an English translation of the executive summary prepared by a competent translator who is cleared in advance by the evaluation function.

Review and approval

The primary responsibility of the evaluation function is to make sure that the draft corresponds with the inception report, particularly the agreed upon evaluation questions and methodologies. The evaluation function also considers what improvements may be needed for the document to meet UNODC's quality criteria for evaluation reports. The UNODC evaluation quality assessment form can be found in the annex and on the UNODC evaluation website.



EVALUATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/EVALUATION/TOOLS/EVALUATION_QUALITY_ASSESSMENTS_UNODC_EVALUATION_REPORTS.PDF](https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/tools/evaluation_quality_assessments_unodc_evaluation_reports.pdf)

Role of programme/project manager

The draft evaluation report is shared with the evaluation function through the evaluation application after the programme/project management has reviewed it for factual errors in case of independent project evaluations. As part of in-depth evaluations, the evaluation function reviews the draft report first. The programme/project manager comments on any factual errors that may be apparent in the draft evaluation report. A revised and provisionally cleared draft report will be shared with the CLPs for their review and comments, particularly with regard to the conclusions and recommendations.

CORE LEARNING PARTNERS

The involvement of core learning partners throughout the evaluation process is recognized as a hallmark of a strong evaluation process. Their involvement should include reviewing and providing input to the ToR and the draft evaluation report as well as facilitating the dissemination and application of the results and other follow-up action.

STEP 7 - FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

The final evaluation report is the main output of the entire evaluation process. It provides the basis for a decision to either continue the intervention in its current form or to take corrective action. Evaluation reports can have substantial impact; the results can influence how new programmes/projects are developed and the organization's operational procedures are changed or adjusted. They are also crucial for UNODC's accountability to donors, governments, beneficiaries, other partners and staff.



The evaluation process does not end with the receipt of the final evaluation report. The steps in the follow-up phase are critical for ensuring all the effort put into conducting a good evaluation produces impact.

During this step, the evaluation team has to carefully consider all comments and questions received after the draft report has been shared with the evaluation function, the manager and CLPs. The feedback may be minor, requiring only small changes or edits to the final report. Or it may be substantive, with the evaluators being compelled to do additional research, more data analysis or even significantly reworking the entire evaluation document. The process of review and commenting might entail several rounds between the evaluation function and the evaluation team.

It is important that the independence of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations is ensured. As long as these sections are based on sound reliable methods of data collection and analysis, there is no requirement for the evaluators to adjust their report in response to general criticism. Factual errors should be rectified and the language used needs to be appropriate for an official United Nations document.

The evaluation function undertakes the role of quality control by ensuring that all relevant input, comments and corrections have been considered before clearing the final evaluation report. All finalized UNODC evaluation reports are publically available on the UNODC evaluation website.

PHASE 4: FOLLOW-UP

The evaluation process does not end with the receipt of the final evaluation report. The steps in the follow-up phase are critical for ensuring all the effort put into conducting a good evaluation produces impact. As part of in-depth evaluations, this phase includes a formal management response to the final evaluation report. For independent project evaluations, management response is optional.

Role of programme/project manager

Managers are also responsible for the development of the evaluation follow-up plan, to be reviewed and cleared by the evaluation function. The manager is required to update the follow-up plan once a year. The dissemination of the evaluation report, as well as the implementation of the recommendations, lessons learned and best practices is a further responsibility of the manager. This ensures that the results of the evaluation are shared so that others can learn from it, and can use the results to improve UNODC programming.

STEP 8 - MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

In the light of the recommendations of the final evaluation report, programme/project managers, discuss and liaise with relevant parties, including senior management, other UNODC sections, donors, etc. and prepare a management response accordingly. The management response has to be finalized within one month of completion of the evaluation. This is a written response (approximately 1–2 pages) that presents the opportunity to:

- Share the organization's reactions to the evaluation results, including the feasibility of the recommendations made. Managers can accept, partially accept or reject recommendations and are required to provide appropriate justification for the particular choice
- Provide general feedback on the overall evaluation process and its quality
- Provide initial direction for the evaluation follow-up plan

The management response is presented to key stakeholders, including UNODC sections, senior management, Member States, donors, the CLPs and other stakeholders, at a presentation of the overall evaluation.

The management response is an opportunity to create stronger programming and to work closely with partners to make the necessary changes. Ultimately, the management response will be attached to and published with the final evaluation report. It forms an integral part of the report and significantly increases the agency's transparency and accountability.

STEP 9 - PRESENTATION AND DISSEMINATION

Effective communication and sharing of evaluation results contributes to organizational learning and greater accountability of UNODC. Moreover, these activities enable internal and external stakeholders to become more aware of the important work of the organization. As part of human rights and gender-responsive evaluations, it is essential to grant access to the evaluation results for all informants as well as stakeholders.

After the evaluation report is finalized, internal and external stakeholders for the project/programme, in particular the CLPs, are invited to a presentation on the evaluation. The presentation should include the most important findings, recommendations and lessons learned that emerge from the evaluation process, as well as the management response. This oral presentation by the evaluation team leader, accompanied by a brief slide presentation, promotes informed discussion of the findings and the overall evaluation process, and facilitates organizational learning.



In the case of in-depth evaluations, the evaluation reports are accompanied by an evaluation brief (2-pager). Managers are strongly encouraged to further disseminate the evaluation report and share, in particular, the best practices and lessons learned with other programmes/projects and key internal and external stakeholders. Thus, all stakeholders will be able to truly learn and benefit from the evaluation in an inclusive and comprehensive way. The final evaluation report along with the evaluation brief in the case of in-depth evaluations, is published and made available to the public on the UNODC evaluation website.

What stakeholders have to say about attending the presentation of evaluation findings:

Programme/project management: "The presentation is a great way to disseminate the evaluation report and also contributes to our transparency and accountability."

UNODC evaluation function: "The presentation is essential in order to utilize the evaluation activity. This is one of the key moments of the process. All efforts crystalize to transform the future of interventions."

UNODC senior management: "This sharing of knowledge will inform future decision-making."

Donors: "We can see the worth of our investments, progress made and challenges encountered."

Member States: "It is a good way to get an overview of UNODC's operations, policies and their effect."

STEP 10 - EVALUATION FOLLOW-UP PLAN

The evaluation follow-up plan (EFP) is an action plan outlining the responsibilities and timelines for implementing the evaluation recommendations. Managers are responsible for preparing the EFP within one month of the issue of the evaluation report and uploading it to the evaluation application. The required EFP template can be found on the UNODC evaluation website. Managers are also required to track the implementation of the recommendations by regular, yearly updates to the EFP, with one further alternate responsible person being identified for this task. In addition, managers should make use of the recommendations as well as the lessons learned for future decision-making, planning and organizational learning, and work closely with partners to make the necessary changes for any future phase of the programme/project or for a new programme/project design. Any changes in the programme/project as well as the implementation status of the recommendations should further be reported on in annual progress reports. The extent to which recommendations were implemented will also be assessed as part of future evaluations.



EVALUATION FOLLOW-UP
PLAN TEMPLATE



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/
EN/EVALUATION/NORMATIVE-TOOLS.
HTML#FOLLOW-UP](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/normative-tools.html#follow-up)

The evaluation function facilitates the systematic follow-up of the status of the implementation of the EFP. This includes reporting annually to the Executive Director and senior management of UNODC as well as to Member States on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations.

EVALUATION KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

The UNODC evaluation application has an evaluation knowledge database of recommendations and lessons learned. It includes the complete set of recommendations and lessons learned emerging from all completed evaluations since 2011.

In order to analyse the available data according to individual needs and foci of programmes/projects, the data can be sorted according to key aspects such as region, thematic area and specific programmes/projects. All UNODC staff are encouraged to consult the evaluation knowledge data base for future planning and programme/project design.

SUMMARY

UNODC has clearly established processes for managing and using evaluations. These processes are organized into four phases comprising ten steps as outlined in this chapter. Managers and evaluators are encouraged to familiarize themselves with this handbook, and seek guidance from the evaluation function. Doing so will strengthen the overall quality of evaluations, ultimately leading to better use of evaluations and improved programming.

The next chapter provides more specific information about the final phase of the evaluation process, with a focus on UNODC expectations for inception reports and evaluation reports.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- IEU Guiding Document “Gender Responsive Evaluations in the Work of UNODC”, 2017 <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/human-rights-and-gender.html>
- OECD-DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>
- UNEG Ethical Guidelines <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>
- UNEG Evaluation Competency Framework <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1915>
- United Nations Evaluation Group (2014). Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. New York: UNEG. <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>
- UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>



CHAPTER 5

Conducting the evaluation

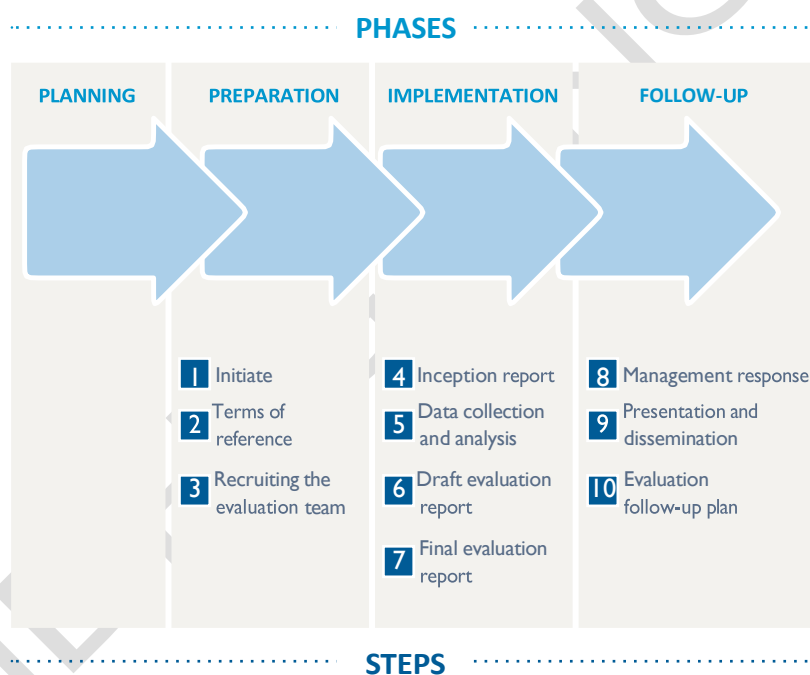
This chapter provides guidance primarily to the evaluation team hired by UNODC to conduct the evaluation. It addresses the steps that the evaluators are directly involved in and discusses the expectations for the quality of the main outputs of the evaluation process, namely the inception and evaluation reports. The inception report outlines the methodology and therefore steers the evaluation process. The evaluation reports are oriented towards usability and learning for UNODC and are publically available in order to ensure the accountability and transparency of the evaluation process.

STEPS OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

For the evaluation team, the evaluation process begins with signing the contractual agreement with UNODC. By this time, programme/project managers as well as the UNODC evaluation function will have already invested heavily in preparing for the process by carefully developing the terms of reference (ToR) and recruiting a strong evaluation team with expertise in the thematic area being studied and in the field of evaluation, including in human rights and gender-based approaches.

The evaluators' responsibilities are primarily focused on phase 3, the implementation of the evaluation. This phase comprises the steps of developing the inception report, undertaking data collection and analysis, as well as drafting and finalizing the evaluation report. The evaluators are also responsible for the subsequent presentation of the findings and recommendations as part of phase 4. This is again illustrated in figure 5.1 below, which outlines the phases and steps of the UNODC evaluation process.

FIGURE 5.1 FOUR PHASES AND TEN STEPS OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS



These steps were also covered in chapter four, but primarily from the perspective of those responsible for managing the entire evaluation process. This current chapter provides more specific direction to the evaluation team on the steps they are responsible for undertaking. It emphasizes the expectations that UNODC has regarding the quality of the process as well as the products, and points to additional guidance and report templates.



The inception report ensures a shared understanding between the evaluators and the UNODC evaluation function of all aspects of evaluation process.

All reports have to be written in accordance with the templates, guidelines, and norms and standards provided by the UNODC evaluation function.

Following the recommendations in this chapter should help evaluators to clearly understand the “ingredients” for producing effective and useful evaluation products.

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Chapter seven of this handbook is a practical guide to planning and carrying out quality, credible and useful evaluations with a specific focus on the methodological aspects of the evaluation. It includes the most common approaches and methods used in UNODC evaluations, and provides links to additional guidance and helpful resources. As the guide is focused on the fundamentals of implementing evaluations, it is most relevant to those who want to know more about what constitutes good evaluation practice, including managers of evaluations and in particular the evaluators.

INCEPTION REPORT

As noted in chapter four, the inception report is a roadmap that explains how the evaluation will be carried out. More specifically, the inception report summarizes the review of documentation (the “desk review”), and outlines the evaluation methodology, the strands of inquiry as well as the tools that will be used for data collection and analysis.

The inception report ensures a shared understanding between the evaluators and the UNODC evaluation function of all aspects of the evaluation process.

The process for developing the inception report begins with a review and analysis of the desk material, the development of preliminary hypotheses and the refinement of the evaluation questions. The evaluators then turn to developing the scope and methodological approach in accordance with the requirements of the evaluation ToR, including the schedule for field missions. The evaluators also develop a sex-disaggregated stakeholder map to identify key actors, different roles and informants for the evaluation.

DESK REVIEW

The material for the review is provided by the programme/project manager. It will generally include documents specific to the intervention. These can include the needs assessment and stakeholder analysis, original and updated programme/project plans, monitoring data, progress reports, and reports of any previously conducted evaluations.

It will also include material relevant to the topic and geographic location such as UNODC strategy documents, country/region specific plans and lessons learned from similar interventions. In addition, this might include relevant strategies of other international or regional organizations on the topic under evaluation, documents and strategies in the light of the SDGs, previous evaluation reports, research publications, etc. Moreover, the UNODC evaluation function will provide standard publications about the evaluation process, including expected quality of deliverables, and guidance on human rights and gender responsive approaches, which will need to be considered by the evaluation team (see box below).

The initial list for the desk review can be refined during the evaluation process. Once the evaluation has started, the evaluators can request additional information based on the initial review of the background documentation. In fact, the team is expected to identify other material, internal and external, that they consider relevant to the evaluation.

Essential information to consider within the programme/project planning documents will be the logical framework and, if it exists, the theory of change. Both are important foundations for the evaluation process as they depict the cause and effect relationship between an intervention's activities and its intended results.

The evaluation team will be required to assess the adequacy of these tools in capturing the chain of results and providing a basis from which progress and impact can be assessed. If they are found to be inadequate, in most cases it is preferred that the evaluators improve or develop at least one of these tools. More information about logical frameworks, theories of change and results chains can be found in the practical guide in the third part of the handbook.

KEY DOCUMENTS TO BE REVIEWED

As part of the desk review process, evaluators will also be given a standardized set of documents to help ensure that both the evaluation process and products adhere to UNODC quality standards. These include the:

- UNEG evaluation norms and standards
- UNEG ethical standards
- UNODC evaluation handbook, guidelines and templates
- Guidance note for UNODC staff: Gender mainstreaming in the work of UNODC, 2013
- UNODC and the promotion and protection of human rights position paper, 2012
- UNODC evaluation quality assessment template
- UNODC guiding document on gender-responsive evaluation, 2017
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- Relevant United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks



ADDRESSING THE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY QUESTIONS

The evaluation criteria that have to be assessed as part of any UNODC evaluation have been outlined in detail in the second chapter of this handbook and include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, cooperation and partnerships, and human rights (HR) and gender equality (GE). The ToR confirms the criteria to be addressed and also identifies the main questions for each criterion.

Based on the documentation reviewed and conversations with the programme manager and team, the evaluators will need to review and refine the evaluation questions that are presented in the ToR. It is important that the number of questions is manageable and that it will be feasible to answer them within the scope of the evaluation process. Justification will need to be provided for any changes to the original questions.

More information on addressing evaluation criteria and key questions can be found in the practical guide in part 3 of this handbook.

DEVELOPING THE EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The next part of the inception process involves determining the evaluation scope and methodology. The scope is generally specified in the ToR and covers issues such as units of analysis, time frames, geographic reach and stakeholders to be consulted. However, there may be some parts of the scope that the evaluators may suggest changing in order to sharpen or adjust the focus of the study. These might include aspects such as countries to be covered or specific stakeholders who should be involved. In this regard, a revised stakeholder map is highly recommended.

The methodology is specific to how the evaluation questions will be answered. These revolve around what the overall approach will be, which design will be adopted, what methods will be used to collect data, what the sources of data will be, and how the data will be analysed. The methodology will also need to indicate how the quality and rigour of the evaluation process will be ensured, including what strategies will be employed for sampling and for the triangulation of data.

The ToR also typically indicate aspects of the methodology that are necessary. UNODC requires a mixed-methods approach that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods. Additional requirements are a HR and GE-responsive, inclusive and participatory evaluation methodology. There may be other specific requirements depending on the nature of each evaluation but generally evaluators are expected to use their expertise to determine how the evaluation should be carried out in order to best address the questions that need to be answered.

More specific information regarding evaluation approaches, methods, data collection techniques and tools, sampling strategy, data analysis and triangulation can be found in chapter seven, the practical guide.

FORMAT AND CONTENTS OF THE INCEPTION REPORT

The inception report should clearly and concisely reflect the issues discussed above. UNODC has specific requirements as to what is to be included in the report as well as for the format of the report. The report should not be concise in length (10–15 pages, excluding the annexes). The table of contents showing what needs to be included is presented in table 5.1 below. Specific instructions for each section are provided in the UNODC guidelines for inception reports. There is also a mandatory template to be followed. Links to each are provided below.

UNODC requires a HR and GE responsive mixed-methods approach that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods.

TABLE 5.1 CONTENTS OF THE INCEPTION REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR UNODC INCEPTION REPORTS
1. Introduction
2. Preliminary findings of the desk review
3. Evaluation questions
4. Data collection instruments
5. Sampling strategy
6. Limitations to the evaluation
7. Evaluation matrix
8. Annexes:
(a) Table of documents reviewed
(b) Draft data collection instruments
(c) List of stakeholders and identified informants



INCEPTION REPORT GUIDELINES



INCEPTION REPORT TEMPLATE



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/NORMATIVE-TOOLS.HTML#INCEPTION_REPORT](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/normative-tools.html#inception_report)



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DEVELOPING THE INCEPTION REPORT

The following, primarily methodological considerations are important for the evaluators to bear in mind. These are also discussed in more detail in chapter seven, the practical guide.

Lines of enquiry. An aim of the inception process is to formulate lines of enquiry for the evaluation based on a thorough desk review and assessment of the intervention logic of the programme/project in order to develop further questions and identify gaps in the data as well as lines of inquiry for the overall approach of the evaluation.

Data collection instruments. All data collection instruments that are to be applied during the evaluation have to be introduced and explained in the inception report. Evaluators should explain how the instruments relate to the evaluation questions they address. Key sources of survey data and key interviewees that were identified as part of the stakeholder map have to be mentioned. Furthermore, the evaluation team has to explain how data will be triangulated. Draft versions of all data collection instruments (such as interview guides and questionnaires) are to be included as annexes to the inception report.

Sampling strategy. The sampling techniques have to be elaborated for each collection instrument that will be applied. It is important to ensure fair representation of both women and men and marginalized groups, and of the diversity of stakeholders.

Field missions. In consultation with both the programme/project management and the evaluation function, the evaluation team has to finalize the selection of countries to be visited for data collection.

Limitations. The limitations to the evaluation based on the applied methodology, information obtained as well as analysed so far have to be outlined. In that regard, the mitigating measures that will be applied also have to be discussed.

Evaluation matrix. The methodology is to be summarized in an evaluation matrix. The matrix is a planning tool that lays out how the evaluation process will address each of the evaluation criteria and key questions. The matrix needs to contain the indicators, data collection methods, data sources, sampling as well as any other comments corresponding to each evaluation question.

REVIEW PROCESS

As the inception report is one of the key deliverables from the evaluation team, it is shared with the UNODC evaluation function for review and clearance before any field missions or data collection take place. There needs to be enough time for the review and the incorporation of comments by the evaluation team in order to ensure it meets UNODC needs and quality standards. This process may take several rounds.

The inception report is to be directly submitted to the evaluation function. Ideally, the inception report is submitted directly via the evaluation application. It is important to note that the review, as well as clearance, is provided only by the UNODC evaluation function due to their expertise in evaluations and the focus on methodological quality assurance.

The primary focus of quality assurance for the inception report will be on:

- Whether there is sufficient clarity in the programme/project logic or theory to assess the links between the intervention's activities and intended results
- Whether the proposed methodology and tools adequately address the ToR, particularly the evaluation questions, and UNODC norms and standards for evaluation
- Whether the proposed methodology and tools are able to reliably and validly provide data to explore the different aspects of the evaluation criteria
- Whether the proposed methodology and tools are able to capture HR and GE issues and the different experiences, views and assessments of the variety of stakeholders
- Whether relevant stakeholders were identified for data collection

Evaluators are encouraged to use additional approaches beyond those that are most common in order to obtain the most comprehensive data feasible within the scope of the evaluation.

DATA COLLECTION AND FIELD MISSIONS

Once the inception report is approved, the evaluation team typically undertakes field missions to collect information (data) on the programme/project being evaluated. A variety of methods should be used as part of data collection, in order to elicit stakeholders' views, opinions and assessments. The most common methods are individual and group interviews, surveys and questionnaires as well as visits to project sites and observation. The evaluators have to ensure gender-sensitive language is used in all data collection tools and consultation spaces.

As every method has the potential to bring new information and insights, evaluators are encouraged to use additional approaches beyond those that are most common in order to obtain the most comprehensive data feasible within the scope of the evaluation.



It is of utmost importance that the evaluators remain independent throughout the evaluation process.

Field missions should pay particular attention to ensuring a balance of perspectives when planning how to enquire into the effectiveness of the intervention. It is this variety of methods and stakeholders that helps to confirm (triangulate) the evidence obtained. The list of stakeholders invited to share their experiences and opinions generally includes staff in field offices, government counterparts, programme and project managers, other beneficiaries of the intervention, donors, and other partners. Additional stakeholders not directly involved in the intervention but who have expertise in the thematic area of the evaluation and in particular in relation to aspects of HR and GE may also be included. It is important to get the experiences and assessments of rights holders and ultimate beneficiaries of the interventions.

In order to allow for broad consultation with the variety of stakeholders, field missions should be carefully planned in advance, devoting a sufficient number of days for this exercise that includes consultation with a variety of stakeholders, some of them hard to reach (often the case with rights holders).

Although the majority of data is generally collected during field missions, information is often also collected remotely via phone or web-based interviews, and e-mail or web-based surveys.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACHIEVING AN INCLUSIVE EVALUATION PROCESS

As evaluation exercises are limited in terms of time and resources, it is not always possible to interview all relevant stakeholders or to visit all programme/project sites. In such circumstances, the evaluation team may consider other cost-effective data collection methods to elicit the views of as many stakeholders as possible. This can include phone interviews or surveys. Often evaluators will use a sampling strategy to get views that are representative of a particular stakeholder group. Particular care needs to be taken in order to include the views of rights holders and specifically of underrepresented groups. These are stakeholders that might not have been involved in the programme/project design and implementation. Specific strategies should be deployed to reach them in order for the evaluators to understand the relevant issues, the programme/project approaches and results from a perspective beyond that of the programme/project team, partners and authorities. In this regard, evaluators may decide to seek the perspective of support services, CSOs, rights holders' representatives or human rights advocates). Last but not least, fair representation of female and male stakeholders is very important.

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT

During the field mission, the corresponding field office or HQ section/branch is responsible for all logistical arrangements and support for the evaluation team. This includes setting up meetings with key stakeholders (and any additional interlocutors deemed necessary by the evaluation team), developing a comprehensive agenda for the field missions, travel and transport, as well as translation and interpretation services if needed. The support also includes ensuring the safety of the evaluation team. The evaluation team members must undertake relevant United Nations security training and be aware of and compliant with related security protocols.

There is a delicate balance between providing adequate support for the evaluation and maintaining the independence of the exercise. It is of utmost importance that the evaluators remain independent throughout the evaluation process. While UNODC programme/project managers are expected to organize meetings and visits, only the evaluation team and the evaluation function are allowed to participate in them in order to make interviewees and participants feel comfortable and speak freely. Independent interpreters might be present for translation during the interviews.

Debriefing sessions can be instrumental in ensuring ownership of the evaluation.

PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

For all evaluations, it is strongly recommended that the evaluation team organizes an internal debriefing session once data collection and preliminary data analysis have been concluded at the end of the field mission. Participants should include the evaluation team, the evaluation function and the manager and other programme/ project staff members. This can be done either in person or via Skype, etc. Debriefing sessions can be instrumental in ensuring ownership of the evaluation.

During a debriefing session, the evaluation team can give a brief, oral report of its initial findings and preliminary conclusions so as to allow participants to react to the conclusions reached. In addition, feedback can be provided and any misunderstandings clarified. Debriefing sessions, including the presentation of preliminary findings, can be used as an opportunity to conduct follow-up interviews as deemed necessary by the evaluation team.

After the data collection, the evaluation team prepares a draft evaluation report. This draft evaluation report is based on the data collected during the desk review, the field missions, including any interviews and observations, data from any additional instruments, as well as the subsequent analysis.



The evaluation report needs to be evidence-based, well-structured, balanced, clear and concise.

DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

The main output of the evaluation process, the evaluation report, is first presented by the evaluation team in draft form. Draft reports are expected to adhere to the same standards as final versions.

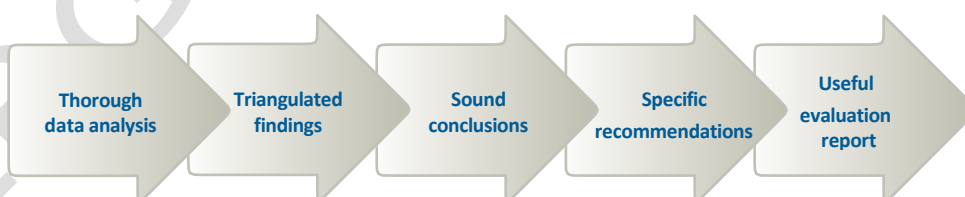
The main purpose of the evaluation report is to inform stakeholders about the context of the intervention being assessed, the way in which the assessment was carried out, and evidence-based findings, conclusions and recommendations. It needs to be presented in accordance with UNEG norms and standards, and it is of particular importance that the products emanating from evaluations be designed according to the needs of their intended users.



UNEG NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION
[HTTP://WWW.UNEVAL.ORG/DOCUMENT/DETAIL/1914](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914)

As figure 5.2 helps to illustrate, useful and quality reports are those that systematically link evidence from the findings through to the conclusions and recommendations. The questions are connected to findings and the findings are based on solid data collection as well as analysis. Conclusions are drawn from those findings, and provide the basis for the recommendations given. This is also illustrated in the figure below. The draft evaluation report needs to be evidence-based, well-structured, balanced, clear and concise in order to ensure the effectiveness and utility of the evaluation.

FIGURE 5.2 ARGUMENTATIVE FLOW OF AN EVALUATION



Evaluators need to be able to present the value of an evaluation in a way that will have a positive outcome. The language and tone will have an impact on how stakeholders interpret the findings, and whether there will be resistance to the evaluation results. The degree of receptivity will also be increased if the report is delivered in time for UNODC decision-making. Equally importantly, stakeholders will be receptive if the consultative processes during the evaluation have already awakened interest and created a broad agreement with the findings of the report.

FORMAT AND CONTENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

The evaluation report also has to be written in line with the UNODC template and guidelines for evaluation reports. Links to each are provided below. The text box below highlights the table of contents for both the draft and final evaluation reports. Specific instructions for each section are provided in UNODC's guidelines for evaluation reports.

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR UNODC EVALUATION REPORTS

Executive summary (including a summary matrix)

1. Introduction

2. Background and context

3. Evaluation methodology

4. Evaluation findings

- (a) Design
- (b) Relevance
- (c) Efficiency
- (d) Partnerships and cooperation
- (e) Effectiveness
- (f) Impact
- (g) Sustainability
- (h) Partnership and cooperation
- (i) Human rights and gender equality

5. Conclusions

6. Recommendations

7. Lessons learned and best practices

8. Annexes:

- (a) Terms of reference of the evaluation
- (b) List of persons contacted during the evaluation
- (c) Evaluation tools (questionnaires, interview guides, etc.)
- (d) Desk review list

There must be clear links between the findings, the conclusions and the recommendations.



GUIDELINES FOR UNODC
EVALUATION REPORTS



TEMPLATE FOR UNODC
EVALUATION REPORTS



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/NORMATIVE-TOOLS.
HTML#EVAL_REPORT](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/normative-tools.html#eval_report)



Having the UNODC evaluation function and the CLPs carefully review the draft evaluation report ensures accuracy as well as transparency during the evaluation process.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DEVELOPING THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

The following considerations are important for the evaluators to bear in mind when developing the draft evaluation report.

Methodology. The evaluation approach has to be based on a thorough methodology, guided by a HR and GE approach, applying triangulation throughout and carefully considering any limitations as well as mitigating measures.

Argumentative flow. Useful and quality reports are those that systematically link evidence from the findings through to the conclusions and recommendations.

Context. The background of the programme/project under evaluation has to be carefully described and outlined in order to anchor the analysis in the relevant context of the social phenomenon. Sex-disaggregated data has to be presented and analysed to understand gender context-related aspects.

Length. In most cases, the main body of the report should not exceed 25-30 pages. Annexes should be kept to an absolute minimum. Although the ToR for the evaluation are to be included, it is not necessary to include the ToR for each team member. Furthermore, the list of stakeholders from the ToR should not appear in the annex.

Language. Evaluation reports are submitted to the UNODC evaluation function in English. There may be some exceptions for official United Nations languages, however this has to be discussed and agreed upon with the UNODC evaluation function. When evaluation reports are written in a language other than English, programme/project managers are responsible for arranging to have the executive summary translated into English by a translator cleared by the evaluation function. Evaluation reports must avoid sexist or discriminatory language and stereotypes, and use inclusive and gender-sensitive writing.

Format. The UNODC template for evaluation reports must be used. The report should be carefully checked regarding format, spelling and grammar before being submitted for review.

Logic. There must be clear links between the findings, the conclusions and the recommendations. The report must draw overall conclusions based on the evaluation findings, which are developed from the data collection and analysis. Furthermore, the lessons learned also need to be based on the findings and evidence presented in the report. The lessons learned should not be written as recommendations, nor as observations or descriptions.

Usability. The report should provide clear, useful, time-bound and actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing the project performance and improving the sustainability of results.

References. Sources of information used should be referenced in a consistent manner and as footnotes.

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT

In the case of an independent project evaluation, once the draft evaluation report has been prepared by the evaluation team, it is first sent by e-mail to the programme/project manager, with the evaluation function copied. The manager reviews and comments on any factual errors that may be apparent in the report. Once the evaluation team has considered these comments, the manager submits the draft report to the evaluation function through the evaluation application. The evaluation function then carefully reviews the draft evaluation report to make sure it corresponds with the original ToR, the proposed evaluation questions and methodology, ensuring that it is in line with the UNODC evaluation guidelines and templates, as well as UNODC quality criteria for evaluation reports. The process of review and revision between the evaluation function and the evaluation team can entail various rounds. After all the comments made by the evaluation function have been carefully addressed and incorporated by the evaluation team, the provisional draft is cleared by the evaluation function. The cleared draft report is thereafter shared with the CLPs for their review and comments in order to ensure the involvement of the key stakeholders during the evaluation process.

For an in-depth evaluation, the evaluation function first reviews and comments on the draft report, followed by the project manager and, after clearance by the evaluation function, the evaluation is shared with the CLPs for their review.

The evaluators are independent and, as long as findings and recommendations of the evaluation report are reliably based on sound methods for data collection and analysis, the evaluators are not required to adjust their report in response to general criticism.

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

The final evaluation report is the most tangible element of the whole evaluation process. As part of its preparation, the evaluation team has to carefully consider all comments and questions received on the draft report. However, the evaluators are independent and as long as findings and recommendations of the evaluation report are reliably based on sound methods for data collection and analysis, they are not required to adjust their report in response to general criticism. That said, factual errors do need to be rectified and the language used needs to be appropriate for an official United Nations document.

The UNODC evaluation function, as a matter of quality control, does monitor whether relevant input, comments and corrections are adequately considered, and subsequently clears the final version.



All evaluation team members are required to review the evaluation quality assessment template and criteria during the evaluation process.

The final evaluation report provides the basis for any follow-up action such as management response and the evaluation follow-up plan, and needs to be disseminated widely within UNODC and to UNODC stakeholders and counterparts. All finalized UNODC evaluation reports are publically available on the UNODC evaluation website.

EVALUATION QUALITY ASSURANCE

The quality of all evaluation reports is assessed internally by the UNODC evaluation function at the draft and final report stages. In line with UNEG norms and standards for evaluations, finalized evaluation reports commissioned by UNODC are subsequently subject to a further quality assessment process conducted by external reviewers. Both the internal and external processes focus on a set of criteria that form the basis for a strong and credible evaluation report.

This section provides an overview of each assessment criterion. Selective examples are provided when a criterion has been implemented very well in a published evaluation report. Additional details can be found in the UNODC evaluation quality assessment (EQA) template, which is available on the UNODC evaluation website. All evaluation team members are required to review the EQA template and criteria during the evaluation process in order to ensure that the evaluation report complies with UNODC evaluation standards.



EVALUATION QUALITY
ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Structure, completeness and clarity of the report

This criterion focuses on the overall presentation of the report. It considers whether:

- The report is formatted and written in a reader-friendly and respectful style
- The language is non-sexist or discriminatory, clear and without errors
- Visual aids such as maps, figures and charts are used to present information
- It complies with all aspects of the ToR including the need to integrate a human rights and gender equality approach and focus
- It follows the required logical sequence of evidence-assessment-findings-conclusions-recommendations

Example: Independent in-depth evaluation of Prevention of Transmission of HIV among Drug Users in the SAARC Countries—Phase II

https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2016/UNODC_RASHI3_In-Depth_Evaluation_December_2016.pdf

Executive summary

The executive summary should serve as a stand-alone section that succinctly presents the main results of the evaluation as well as a brief description of the intervention and evaluation methodology. As this is often the most carefully, and frequently only, read part of the report, it is important that it should be well written and complete. This section needs to include a summary matrix which links key recommendations to the data source and to the stakeholder group to whom they are addressed. The matrix should include short, focused main findings (positive or negative) and action-oriented recommendations identifying the responsible parties. This criterion focuses on the content as well as the structure and length of the executive summary. (The text should not exceed four pages, excluding the matrix.)

The executive summary is followed by a summary matrix of findings, evidence and recommendations. This section of the report aims at consolidating all key findings and recommendations of the evaluation report so readers gain immediate accessibility to the core of the issues presented in the evaluation report.

The role of the evaluation team in producing this matrix entails the selection of those findings and recommendations in the report that are worth highlighting. This is the case for recommendations that are strategic and essential for the intervention under evaluation and recommendations that are related to operational elements of the intervention but are still important for the management team to follow up on.

Example: In-depth evaluation 2014 of the UNODC global programme on HIV/AIDS 2008–2012

https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2014/In-Depth_Evaluation_UNODC_HIV-AIDS_programme_2008-2012_published_2014.pdf

Background of programme/project evaluated

This criterion considers whether there is a clear description of the intervention, of the logic model or theory of change, and the context. The implementation status of the intervention as well as the key stakeholders should be outlined.

Example: Final in-depth evaluation of the “Regional Programme for South Eastern Europe (2012-2015)” (XCE/U60)

http://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2015/Final_Evaluation_Report_RP_SEE_incl_Management_Response_May_2015.pdf

The executive summary should serve as a stand-alone section that succinctly presents the main results of the evaluation as well as a brief description of the intervention and evaluation methodology.



Evaluation purpose and scope

The review of this section aims at a clear description of what the evaluation was intended to do, including why it was commissioned, what it evaluated, and what the study's objectives, scope and target audience were.

Example: Final in-depth evaluation 2015 of the Regional Programme on Drug Control, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Reform in the Arab States (2011-2015)

https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2015/RP_Arab_States_Final_Evaluation_July_2015.pdf

Evaluation methodology

The methodology section is expected to explain the process of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, and how rigour, credibility and ethical conduct were ensured. It should include a transparent description of all data collection methods, sources and sampling techniques, along with acknowledgements of the limitations of the study and measures taken to mitigate the limitations. Furthermore, the section will be reviewed to judge the extent to which HR and GE-responsive as well as participatory, evaluation methodologies were applied. In this regard, the section should provide information as to whether specific actions were taken in order to effectively engage different stakeholder groups, and whether data techniques were able to capture HR and GE issues. Moreover, it should be outlined how tools and approaches were inclusive and respectful, data sources were disaggregated by gender, and preliminary findings were shared with CLPs.

Example: Cluster mid-term in-depth evaluation 2017 of the Global Programmes on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling.

http://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2017/GLOT59_and_GLOT92_Human_Trafficking_and_Migrant_Smuggling_Mid-term_In-Depth_Evaluation_Report_Sept2017.pdf

Findings and analysis

This criterion examines the extent to which the report demonstrates sound analysis and credible findings. The findings should be clearly formulated, addressing each of the evaluation criteria and questions. They should be based on rigorous analysis of data, and triangulation should be evident. Additionally, the cause and effect links between the intervention and its intended and unintended results should be explained, and the reasons for accomplishments and/or lack of progress identified.

Example: Independent in-depth cluster evaluation of the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends Programme (GLOJ88) and the Global Scientific and Forensic Programme (GLOU54)

http://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/UNODC_SMART_and_Forensic_In-Depth_Cluster_Evaluation_2016.pdf

Conclusions

The conclusions are expected to emerge from, but also add value to the findings. They should succinctly address each of the evaluation criteria, and also present a comprehensive picture of the intervention's overall strengths and weaknesses. This criterion also looks at whether the conclusions were developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders, thereby enhancing the probability of ownership and use of results.

Example: Mid-term in-depth evaluation of the Global Maritime Crime Programme

http://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/2015/GMCP_In-Depth_Evaluation_Report_2015.pdf

Recommendations

The quality assessment of recommendations is based on whether they are clearly derived from the findings and conclusions, and whether they have utility. Utility is promoted when the recommendations are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Results-oriented, Time-bound), prioritized, of a manageable number, and appropriately pitched to the target group responsible for taking action.

Example: Final independent project evaluation 2016 of the "Strengthening Criminal Justice Responses to Human Trafficking in Lao People's Democratic Republic" Project

https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Independent_Project_Evaluations/2016/LAOX26_UNODC_FinalEvaluationReport_2016.pdf



Lessons learned

These should focus on the most significant lessons that emerge from the evaluation, especially those that are applicable to other programmes or contexts. Usually, this chapter also includes reference to best practices identified in the evaluation of a project/programme. The following text box explains why lessons learned are so important.

WHY LESSONS LEARNED NEED MORE ATTENTION

Evaluation reports are not only supposed to outline findings and provide an assessment of performance to increase accountability, but they should also come up with a set of lessons learned and best practices. As this is the last section of the evaluation report, it often does not get the attention it deserves. However, lessons learned are key components of any knowledge management system and are important for continuously improving the performance of organizations such as UNODC. During the lifetime of all projects and through evaluations conducted, it is expected that lessons and best practices will emerge that are valuable and worth sharing. Sometimes they will be lessons from success and sometimes they will be hard but useful lessons learnt from failure. Either way, they can help the organization to build on what worked well and what to avoid in the future.

DEFINING TERMS

Lessons learned are generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programmes or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact.* They should provide a potential answer to the “why” question: what factors can explain strong or weak performance? The lessons are expected to come from supporting evidence: the more rigorous the evidence and the greater the triangulation of sources, the more meaningful the lesson is. Lessons learned that are only based on one source of evidence would be considered as “lessons learned hypothesis”.

Best practices are the shining examples of processes or activities that have helped produce positive outcomes. As with lessons learned, these should have applicability to other programmes and contexts.

* J. Zall Kusek and R.C. Rist (2004). *Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System: A Handbook for Development Practitioners*. World Bank.

Example: Subprogramme on Counter-Terrorism: East and South-East Asia Partnership on Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism

https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Independent_Project_Evaluations/2016/XAPX37_Sub-Programme_Counter-Terrorism_East_and_Southeast_Asia_final_evaluation_report_2016.pdf

PRESENTATION AND DISSEMINATION

After the finalization of the evaluation report, the programme/project's internal and external stakeholders, in particular the CLPs, are invited to a presentation of the most important findings, recommendations and lessons learned from the evaluation as well as the management response. This oral presentation promotes an informed discussion of the findings as well as of the overall evaluation process, and facilitates organizational learning. The presentations are usually given with Power Point and should include a clear narrative. Visual aids and pictures should be used throughout. In conclusion, the evaluation function expects a concise and clear presentation, which is targeted to the audience and conveys the findings, recommendations and lessons learned well.

In addition to making the presentation, for in-depth evaluations, the evaluation team is expected to prepare a two-page evaluation brief, in the form of a hand-out, outlining the main aspects of the evaluation, which will be published along with the final evaluation report on the UNODC website. Moreover, as part of in-depth evaluations, the programme/project manager also presents the management response during the presentation by the evaluation team leader.

SUMMARY

UNODC has clear guidance, templates and quality standards to assist the evaluation team in producing strong and useful inception reports and evaluation reports. Evaluators are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these expectations and requirements during the initial planning stages of the evaluation and seek clarification, guidance and support from the UNODC evaluation function as needed. Ultimately, all final evaluation reports are crucial for learning, change and accountability purposes within UNODC.

The following chapter further outlines how evaluation reports can best be used to instigate change and learning within UNODC.



CHAPTER 6

Using evaluation results

Evaluations are undertaken in order to improve accountability, organizational learning and knowledge generation. However, evaluations can only be effective in advancing UNODC's work if they are used. This chapter begins by considering how the use of evaluation is critical for managing results and improving programming, and how results are integrated into the programme life cycle. It looks at how evaluations are shared at UNODC and concludes with good practices for communicating results.

FOCUS ON UTILIZATION

So much of the focus of evaluation processes tends to be on getting the evaluations done and on doing so in time to meet deadlines. There is often less emphasis placed on how to use the information and evidence gained from evaluations beyond the formalities of distributing the report to management, donors and other stakeholders. In addition, evaluation is not only the end product in the form of an evaluation report but a whole evaluation process. The evaluation process itself provides space for reflection (e.g., during data collection and analysis and when sharing preliminary findings, etc.) where valuable learning is generated.

A question that needs to be asked when considering what information is needed from an evaluation is “so what will we do with the answers?”. Ultimately, the real value of an evaluation exercise is in what is done with the results, specifically how results are used in decision-making processes to improve and accelerate development outcomes. Moreover, how results can serve audiences beyond the programme/ project teams and even UNODC.

Concerns about learning being lost as a result of too many reports just sitting on shelves or in e-mail in-boxes has prompted action from UNEG and other organizations, including UNODC. Utilization has become central to the terminology and discussions in the field of evaluation and a major focus of both the planning and follow-up phases of evaluations.

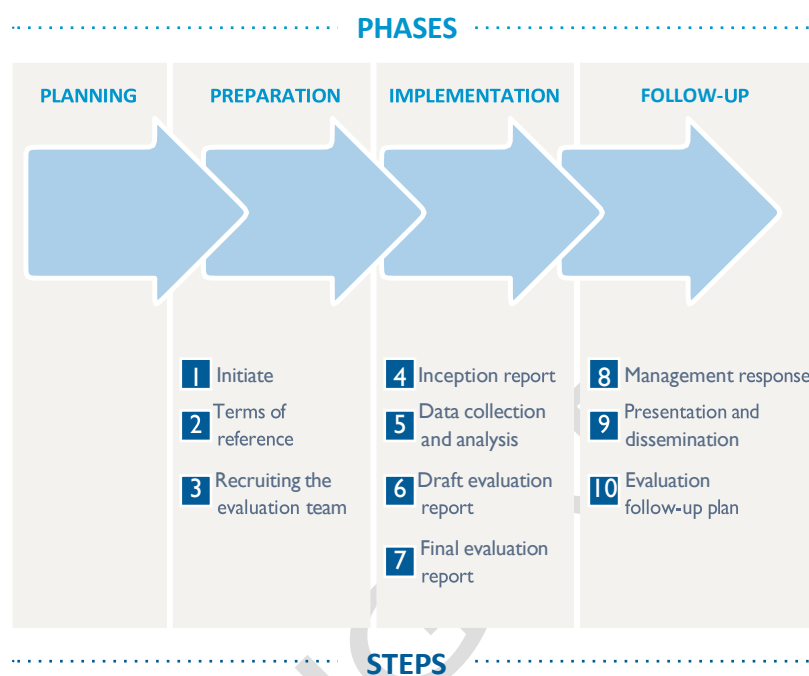
Use is emphasized in the UNEG definition of evaluation. The 2016 UNEG norms and standards for evaluation state that evaluations “should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of the organizations and stakeholders.” Furthermore, one of the ten UNEG general norms for evaluation is focused on utility:

In commissioning and conducting an evaluation, there should be a clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. The utility of evaluation is apparent from its use in making relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, informed decision-making processes and accountability for results. Evaluations could also be used to contribute beyond the organization by generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders.

Ultimately, the real value of an evaluation exercise is in what is done with the results, specifically how results are used in decision-making processes to improve and accelerate development outcomes.



FIGURE 6.1 FOUR PHASES AND TEN STEPS OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS



The evaluation should be designed with use in mind; this is a hallmark of a utilization-focused evaluation.

UNODC's follow-up phase to each evaluation is focused on planning for utilization. As depicted in figure 6.1, this phase involves three steps to address and share the evaluation's main findings and results:

- Preparation of a management response
- Presentation of the evaluation to the core learning partners (CLPs) and other stakeholders
- Development of an evaluation follow-up plan.

Sharing, officially responding and developing a follow-up plan to the evaluation are the preliminary steps for utilization. However, they do not guarantee use. Little will happen if managers do not take actions to respond to recommendations. It is also imperative for other stakeholders to be engaged if results are to be fully integrated into organizational learning and change processes.

Evaluation evidence and learning can support multiple functions, as described in the following text box. Therefore, it is important to start thinking about how results will be used during the initial planning stages of an intervention. The evaluation should be designed with use in mind; this is a hallmark of a utilization-focused evaluation.

TYPES OF USE

Within UNODC, evidence gathered from evaluations is used in a number of ways. First and foremost, evidence shows stakeholders whether any actual benefits accrued from the intervention and, if so, of what nature. Learning is used to adapt or expand current interventions, to make decisions about replication or even scaling up successful practices, and for designing future interventions. In some cases, evaluations change ideas and understanding about an issue. Evaluations are also useful to identify the capacity and resources gaps, for example for HR and GE goals.

Results also help to guide policy, strategy and funding decisions. One example is the 2015 evaluation of GLOU61 global e-Learning programme. This evaluation was instrumental in securing additional funding to continue and significantly expand the programme. The programme was initially centred in Asia, but the evaluation recommended the programme be expanded to all geographical areas and themes in UNODC and, as a result, it is now a hallmark of UNODC in the provision of on-line training to Member States worldwide.

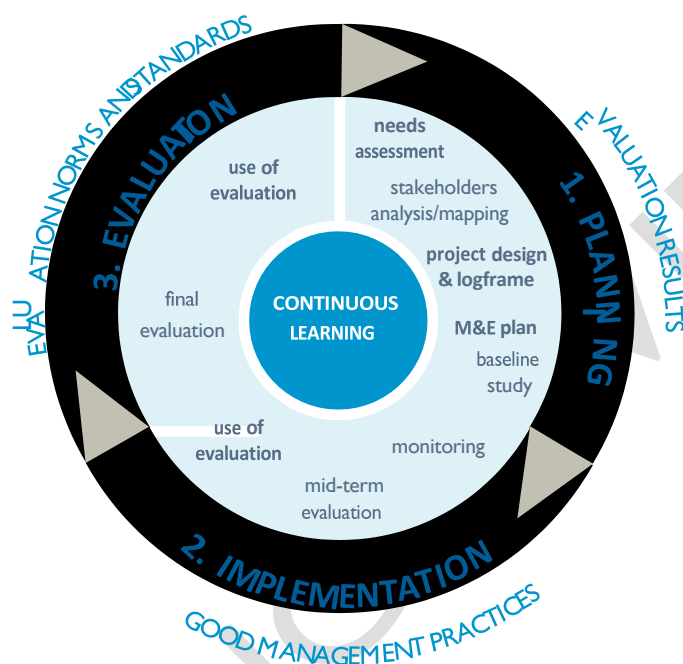
The use of evaluation results is a central part of the programme life cycle. Evaluation results (which include the findings, recommendations and lessons learned) are expected to contribute to improving programming and informing future initiatives.

USING RESULTS IN THE PROGRAMME CYCLE

The use of evaluation results is a central part of the programme life cycle. As illustrated in figure 6.2, evaluation results (which include findings, recommendations and lessons learned) are essential for improving programming and informing future initiatives. The activities marked in the diagram in bold type that are undertaken as part of the planning phase—the development of the needs assessment and stakeholder analysis, programme/project design, theory of change and the logical framework (logframe), as well as the monitoring and evaluation plan—will all improve when the lessons and recommendations emerging from previous relevant evaluations are taken into account.



FIGURE 6.2 USE OF EVALUATION RESULTS DURING THE PROGRAMME CYCLE*



* This figure does not reflect the official UNODC figure of the project cycle but has been developed with a specific focus on evaluation for this handbook.

Managers are encouraged to look beyond the evaluations of their own projects to learn from other UNODC interventions.

Managers are encouraged to look beyond the evaluations of their own projects to learn from other UNODC interventions. Relevant work may include similar thematic programmes undertaken in other regions or by other organizations, or unrelated programmes that had similar geographic reach, implementing partners, implementing techniques or activities. Therefore, there is a benefit to searching for relevant evaluation products (such as evaluation reports, briefs and synthesis documents) on the websites and knowledge portals of UNODC and other development organizations. The UNODC evaluation database provides a wealth of lessons learned and best practices from evaluations conducted across all UNODC thematic areas. In addition, evaluation-based knowledge products provide synthesized information after detailed analysis is carried out by the evaluation function.

UNODC endeavours to encourage a culture of continuous knowledge exchange and sharing of experiences in order to inform the planning phase and contribute to evidence-based decision-making.

HOW RESULTS ARE SHARED

It is important for managers to use results from other evaluations in their planning processes and for evidence-based decision-making. However, it is equally important for managers to share results from their own evaluations to support broader organizational learning and knowledge generation. UNODC has a number of systems and procedures in place to promote the dissemination and further use of evaluations. These include:

Presentation of evaluation results: Each in-depth evaluation process includes a formal presentation by the lead evaluator where the evaluators present and obtain feedback on the main results. Presentations are attended by CLPs for the evaluation under discussion and other internal and external stakeholders. Programme/project management also presents the management response during those presentations.

Posting of evaluation reports: The full final reports of all UNODC-commissioned evaluations are made publically available on the IEU website. The reports are categorized by type (in-depth and independent project evaluation) and year published, as well as by thematic focus of the programme/project that was evaluated.

Posting evaluation briefs: The evaluation briefs of all in-depth evaluation reports are also made publically available on the UNODC evaluation website. These are two-page documents prepared by the evaluation team that succinctly highlight the background and purpose of the programme under review, and the evaluation's key results. Visual aids such as photographs, maps and charts are incorporated into the briefs to help to make the content easily accessible. The briefs are also distributed during the presentation meetings in order to give participants and stakeholders a quick overview of the evaluation and guide discussion.

Posting meta-analysis reports: These synthesis reports cover evaluations conducted over the previous two years and are prepared by the evaluation function. The evaluation reports from that time frame, and particularly their recommendations, are systematically analysed. The main results are reported and used to initiate discussion at the organizational level. The results are also used to inform overarching thematic priorities such as questions of planning and design, human rights and gender, and RBM.

Database of recommendations and lessons learned: The UNODC evaluation application includes an evaluation knowledge database with a complete set of recommendations and lessons learned from all completed evaluations undertaken since 2011. The database enables searching by criteria such as region and thematic area. It is an internal resource for all UNODC staff.



"EVALUATION-BASED KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS": [HTTP://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/EVALUATION/EVALUATION-BASED-KNOWLEDGE-PRODUCTS.HTML](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/evaluation-based-knowledge-products.html)



More informal opportunities for sharing results include:

Professional networks: Participating in sector-specific or evaluation-related conferences, communities of practice, working groups, etc. provides beneficial networking opportunities for learning about and sharing evaluation results.

National stakeholder meetings or coordination groups: At the country level national stakeholder meetings or coordination groups are strategic spaces to share the results of the evaluation to improve understanding of the national context, inform similar interventions and generate dialogue on issues of common interest.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND TAILOR THE MESSAGE

Managers are encouraged to think about who might be interested in what has been learned from an evaluation. There are likely to be several types of audiences—such as donors, partners who were not part of the CLP, government counterparts, colleagues from other departments, CSOs and social media networks. The key is to think about what aspects of the results each audience might be most interested in and then tailor your communication accordingly.

A few examples of opportunities to broadcast evaluation results include conference presentations, a web-story on the UNODC website, meetings with Member States and donors, coordination groups at the national level, UNEG working groups and social media.

STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING LEARNING INTO ACTION

After all the work that goes into producing a high-quality evaluation, it is essential for managers to make it meaningful and make it count. They must both promote the use of evaluation and lead by example in creating an organizational culture that sees evaluation as central to the work. As Secretary-General Guterres has said, “We need a culture of evaluation, independent and real-time evaluation with full transparency”. This involves preparation, timing, an enabling culture and the use of accessible forms of communication.

As mentioned earlier, good preparation includes considering the likely users and uses of results during the design and planning stage of the intervention as well as at the initiation of the evaluation process. Anticipating who the different audiences may be and in what ways they might use the results of an evaluation will help guide both mid-term and final evaluations and determine the best ways to organize and present the results of each.

Timing and timeliness are crucial factors. The impact of an evaluation can depend on how well and how quickly its findings can be made available to inform strategic priorities and communicated in appropriate ways to stakeholders at the time when they need it. Evaluators should be aware of any time sensitive issues and be prepared to share preliminary key findings as they emerge.

Evaluations are more likely to be viewed positively and acted upon when managers and in particular senior management embrace these exercises as useful for managing results and improving programming. An evaluation culture and an enabling environment is one where it is understood that learning comes from both successes and failures.

Finally, adoption of evaluation results is enabled when the information is disseminated in a user-friendly manner. Traditional and text-heavy evaluation reports may not be equally accessible to all stakeholders. Good practices for effectively communicating results in reports and other evaluation products, described in more detail in chapter five, include, for instance, the following approaches:

- *Telling a story*: A report can be brought to life by using stories to communicate key findings.
- *Keeping things simple*: Avoid extraneous information or words. Write in an accessible style using plain language and minimize the use of technical terms as much as possible.
- *Being purpose driven*: Focus on what aspects are most relevant to the audience.
- *Segmenting the audience*: Present messages in simple and easily understandable formats tailored to the specific needs of different users.
- *Visualizing results*: Make frequent use of visual aids such as diagrams, pictures, charts, graphs and maps. Also use formatting techniques such as section and subsection headings, short paragraphs, bullet points, pull-quotes and other tools to draw attention to key points and increase readability.

The following table highlights actions that can be undertaken by managers, evaluators and other decision-makers at UNODC and partnering organizations in order to promote use of evaluation results.



TABLE 6.1 PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING EVALUATION USE

WHAT MANAGERS CAN DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an initial plan for use of evaluation results early in the planning phase of an intervention• Consider different users of and audiences for results when developing the evaluation ToR, particularly for the evaluation questions and deliverables• Work with evaluators to ensure utilization-focused evaluation; ideally develop a communication strategy that recognizes the different needs of different users• Use results and lessons in planning for continued and future programming
WHAT EVALUATORS CAN DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan for use of results when designing the evaluation• Share preliminary results with key stakeholders• Prepare the evaluation report in an accessible and user-friendly style, with clear and understandable language• Use visual aids to convey key findings• Use a communication strategy for formulating the summary matrix in the executive summary section of the evaluation report
WHAT DECISION MAKERS CAN DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure procedures are in place for sharing evaluation reports and key results• Foster an evaluation culture (commitment to using evaluation where both failures and successes are embraced as learning opportunities)• Use evaluation results for policy development

SUMMARY

Each evaluation should be viewed as a systematic and operations-oriented learning experience. The results provide an important opportunity to improve the intervention being assessed, to improve programming throughout UNODC, and to generate dialogue and knowledge that is useful beyond the organization.

The way that results are shared is important. The evaluation report is the starting point but reaching a wider range of audiences requires communications strategies that make it easy for people to understand and determine how the results may be useful for their own situations.

Ultimately, evaluations are only worthwhile when they are credible and when they are used. Hopefully this handbook serves as a resource to build the quality of evaluations and to inspire stakeholders to view evaluation, when done well, as a positive opportunity for improving the important work of UNODC.

RESOURCES

Bonbright, D., (2012). Use of Impact Evaluation Results, InterAction. Retrieved from: <https://www.interaction.org/resources/training/guidance-note-4-use-impact-evaluation-results>



CHAPTER 7

Practical guide

This chapter provides practical and basic guidance for planning and carrying out quality, credible and useful evaluations. It includes common approaches and methods used in UNODC evaluations, and provides links to additional guidance and helpful resources. As the guide is focused on the fundamentals of implementing evaluations, it is most relevant to those who want to know more about what constitutes good evaluation practice, including managers of evaluations and, in particular, evaluators.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Evaluation is an investigative, multidisciplinary endeavour, and in order to be credible, certain principles need to be upheld, including the use of ethical standards and a rigorous methodology that adheres to UNODC requirements. This guide is not a comprehensive resource for evaluation methodology, however it does provide an overview of the fundamental requirements of good evaluation practice.

The terms of reference (ToR) provide the scope and general direction for an evaluation. However, it is up to the evaluation team to sharpen the focus of the study and determine precisely how it will be carried out. This guide aims to provide assistance along the way by addressing the main issues that the evaluation team needs to attend to in preparing and implementing a typical evaluation.

This chapter begins with a reminder of the ethical guidelines for conducting evaluations within the United Nations system.

This is followed by advice for determining the key issues to consider in an evaluation. This includes guidance on developing the preliminary hypotheses, addressing the key criteria and evaluation questions that are stated in the ToR, and ensuring that the evaluation is responsive to human rights and gender equality.

The next section addresses the overarching picture of the intervention being evaluated, specifically the theory of change and the logical framework, and the differences between them.

The chapter moves on to designing the evaluation process, including developing an evaluation matrix, determining the methodological approach, and choosing the tools for data collection and analysis. Several options for tools and brief descriptions of each are provided, although the list is by no means exhaustive. It is the responsibility of the evaluation team to develop a sound and thorough methodological approach specific to the needs of each evaluation.

The last set of guidance addresses some of the common challenges encountered in evaluation processes, and potential solutions.

The chapter concludes with a list of useful resources for evaluators. These include more in-depth information about evaluation methods, tools and technologies as well as on-line and in-person training opportunities around the globe. There are also mailing lists (listservs) to keep updated on the most recent developments in evaluation and connect with other evaluation practitioners.



ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

UNODC has clear ethical and quality standards to guide evaluation practice. All independent external evaluators undertaking UNODC evaluations are required to abide by the UNEG ethical guidelines and to sign the UNEG code of conduct. The guidelines and code are discussed in chapter two and can be accessed through the links below. Of particular relevance to evaluators is the importance of:

- Maintaining independence, objectivity and impartiality
- Respecting the rights and safety needs of stakeholders involved in the evaluation process
- Having personal and professional integrity
- Ensuring that issues of human rights and gender equality are adequately considered in the scope of the evaluation and within the evaluation process itself
- Ensuring the evaluation conforms to internationally accepted norms and standards, and the quality standards of the UNODC evaluation function
- Delivering a high-quality, timely and utility-focused product (a clear evaluation report with valid conclusions and useful recommendations)



UNEG ETHICAL GUIDELINES:
[HTTP://WWW.UNEVALUATION.ORG/
DOCUMENT/DETAIL/102](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102)



UNEG CODE OF CONDUCT:
[HTTP://WWW.UNEVALUATION.ORG/
DOCUMENT/DETAIL/100](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100)



UNODC EQA TEMPLATE: [HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/EVALUATION/TOOLS/
EVALUATION_QUALITY_ASSESSMENTS_UNODC_EVALUATION_REPORTS.PDF](https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/tools/evaluation_quality_assessments_unodc_evaluation_reports.pdf)

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

It is important that steps be taken to protect the physical and psychological safety of respondents and data collectors. These include ensuring that:

- Data collection processes and tools are designed in ways that are culturally appropriate and inclusive of women and minority groups.
- Power dynamics in group settings are taken into account, and that everyone has opportunities to contribute regardless of job status, gender or other type of difference.
- Data collection visits are organized at times and places that minimize risk to respondents and that enable underrepresented groups to participate and have their voices heard.

- The anonymity and confidentiality of respondents is safeguarded (UNODC evaluators cannot identify respondents by name in reports or in any information shared with UNODC and its partners).
- All respondents are treated with respect in all interactions.

When collecting data from people who may have been directly affected by sensitive issues such as victimization, trafficking and drug use, additional steps should include:

- Having a plan in place for protecting the rights and privacy of respondents
- Ensuring the processes and tools do not create distress for respondents
- Informing interviewees about the purpose of the evaluation and asking if they agree to participate in the evaluation before they are interviewed (informed consent)
- Preparing for an emergency intervention if the participant asks for urgent or immediate help
- Ensuring interviewers are trained in collecting sensitive information and are able to provide information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support

It is important that steps be taken to protect the physical and psychological safety of respondents and data collectors.

Further guidance on the care to be taken when interviewing people who have been victimized can for instance be found in the World Health Organization's "Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Women".



[HTTP://WWW.WHO.INT/MIP/2003/OTHER_DOCUMENTS/EN/ETHICAL_SAFETY-GWH.PDF](http://www.who.int/mip/2003/other_documents/en/ethical_safety-gwh.pdf)

KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER

DEVELOPING A HYPOTHESIS

Most evaluations involve the testing of hypotheses to determine whether the predicted effects of the intervention were achieved as well as the magnitude of this effect. In many cases, the hypothesis is not explicitly stated but doing so sharpens the focus of the intervention and makes it very clear what the evaluation process is measuring. Clarifying the hypothesis is often a task for the evaluator.

A hypothesis for the evaluation formulates what the most likely explanation or theory behind an intervention is, and if and why it is effective. The hypothesis will be assessed and can be tested by various scientific methods.



A hypothesis needs to be based on a clearly stated objective that indicates that the desired change is based on certain variables. There may be a series of variables that state activities A, B and C will produce results X, Y and Z.

EXAMPLES OF HYPOTHESES FOR UNODC INTERVENTIONS

1. An intervention that aims to reach vulnerable groups who use drugs in rural areas may invest in mobile clinics to reach this particular population. The hypothesis would therefore be that the outreach programme reaches vulnerable populations and can deliver drug dependency treatment to them. An evaluation has to collect data in order to test this hypothesis and decide if there is enough evidence supporting it or if the hypothesis has to be rejected.

2. A training project that aims to improve interviewing skills of law enforcement officials when investigating human trafficking cases may have as its hypothesis that the trainees will conduct better interviews when they have participated in the training. During the evaluation process, data has to be collected accordingly in order to be able to test this hypothesis.

Additional information regarding hypothesis testing and evaluation can be found in chapter 10 “Hypothesis testing and evaluation” by C. R. M. McKenzie in the 2007 publication *Blackwell handbook of judgment and decision making* by D. J. Koehler and N. Harvey.

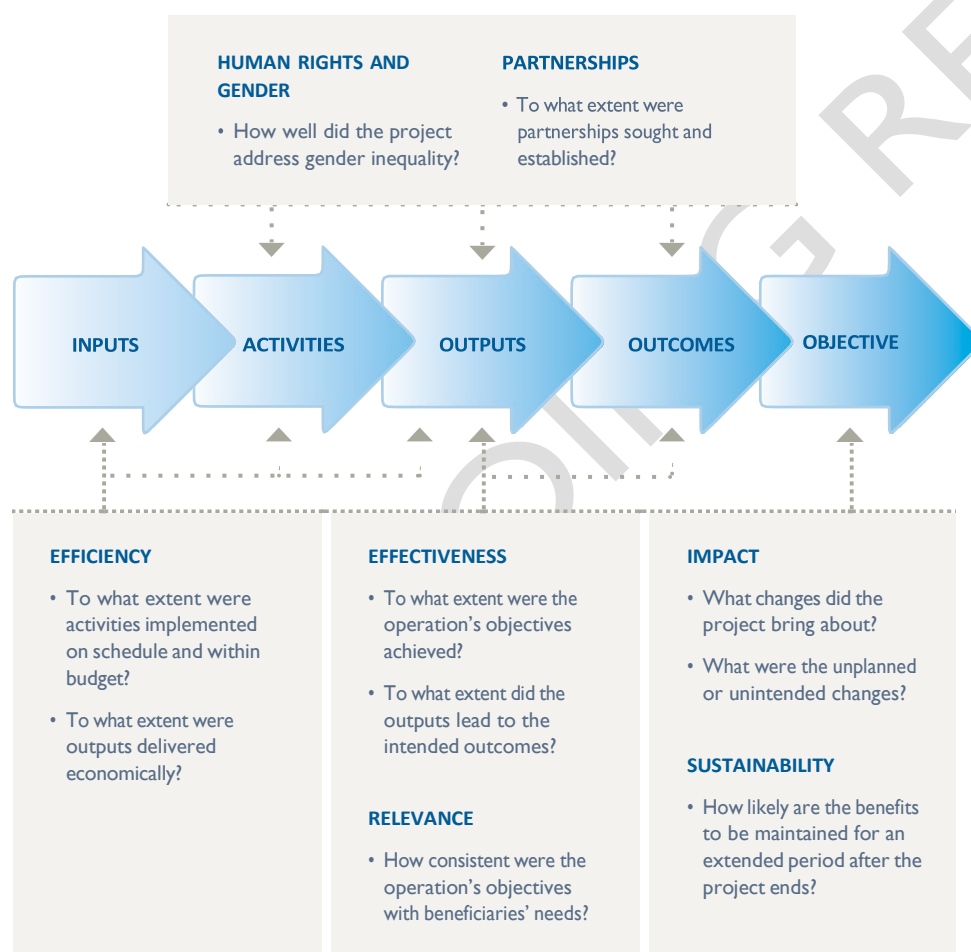
ADDRESSING THE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY QUESTIONS

Next, evaluators need to take into account the OECD-DAC as well as UNEG evaluation criteria. Although not a requirement for all international development organizations, these are a standard feature of United Nations evaluations.

The criteria define the benchmarks against which to assess the evaluand. UNODC generally requires evaluators to address between six to eight criteria. Those that are mandatory include relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and human rights and gender equality. Usually the criteria of partnerships and cooperation and, less frequently, innovation are also included. An assessment regarding the design of the intervention might be included under relevance. Descriptions of each are provided in chapter two.

The required evaluation criteria will be identified in the evaluation ToR and accompanied by key questions that the programme/project manager has determined are most important to address. Figure 7.1 shows how evaluation criteria correspond to the different levels of results in a logical framework (logframe). It also provides generic examples of questions for each criterion (the examples used are only for illustrative purposes and must not be seen as exhaustive). The criteria above the results chain, human rights and gender equality, and partnerships are cross-cutting themes that, depending on the type of intervention, can be relevant to the full range of results.

FIGURE 7.1 EXAMPLES OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND THE CHAIN OF RESULTS*



* These questions are by no means exhaustive but rather provide a limited selection for illustration. Furthermore, aspects such as human rights and gender equality might also be relevant to look at on the input level.

Source: Adapted from the IFRC (2011) *Project/programme M&E Guide*, p.14.



During the inception phase, it is critical for the evaluators to carefully review and refine the evaluation questions in the ToR and plan for how each will be answered during the evaluation.

During the inception phase, it is critical for the evaluators to carefully review and refine the evaluation questions in the ToR and plan for how each will be answered during the evaluation. It is acceptable for the evaluators to adapt, group, prioritize and sometimes even eliminate questions as long as the reasons are clearly explained and justified.

At this point, evaluators should consider the following key issues:

- Do the ToR questions adequately address all required evaluation criteria?
- Is the information that would be gained from each question of high importance to stakeholders?
- Is the number of questions manageable? Ideally, there should be no more than 2–3 questions per criterion, as having too many may result in the evaluation losing focus.
- Is it feasible for the questions to be answered accurately within the scope, timeframe and budget of the evaluation?
- Can the questions be answered by more than one source of information in order to triangulate (confirm) data?

Reaching agreement with the programme/project manager on the key questions is important before proceeding with the evaluation planning process.

We strongly discourage the use of pure Yes/No questions as evaluation questions because they are very limited in their scope and the analysis and answer that they require. Furthermore, leading questions that already implicate part of the analysis and response are also not valid evaluation questions. The same is true for multiple questions that comprise several questions in one question. Evaluation questions should be clear, well-grounded in the scope, purpose and objective of the evaluation as well as methodologically sound.³³

CONDUCTING A HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

Increasing emphasis and scrutiny is being placed on ensuring all United Nations evaluations address human rights and gender equality (HR and GE). All UNODC evaluations have to be HR and GE-responsive. HR and GE-responsive evaluations pay attention to the principles of non-discrimination and equality, inclusion and participation as well as fair power relations in two ways: (a) in what is examined in the evaluation, and (b) in how the evaluation itself is carried out.

³³ Oxburgh, G. E. G., Myklebust, T. T., and Grant, T. T. (2010). "The question of question types in police interviews: A review of the literature from a psychological and linguistic perspective." *International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law*, 17(1), 45–66.

What does a HR and GE-responsive evaluation examine? Such an evaluation looks at the intervention's strategies, processes, practices and results. Specifically, the:

- HR and GE issues and relations that are central to the intervention
- Extent to which HR and GE were integrated (mainstreamed) into the intervention's design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices
- Progress (or the lack thereof) towards intended results regarding HR, GE and women's empowerment
- Degree to which gender relations have changed as a result of the intervention
- Extent to which the intervention has responded to and affected the rights, needs and interests of different stakeholders, including women, men, boys, girls, sexual minorities, people with disabilities, etc.

How is a HR and GE-responsive evaluation undertaken? HR and GE-responsive evaluations focus on creating space for the diversity of stakeholders involved in the intervention to engage directly in the evaluation and take some ownership over the evaluation process.³⁴ Depending on the type of intervention, stakeholder groups may include direct and indirect beneficiaries, partner organizations, as well as the line staff and senior managers of UNODC and government. At times, it may also be useful to include external stakeholders with specific expertise in human rights and/or gender such as UN Women, UNHCR, research institutions, relevant women's organizations, etc. Evaluators should aim to ensure there is diversity within each stakeholder group that is part of any evaluation process.

HR and GE-responsive evaluations are those that thoughtfully:

- Integrate HR and GE into the evaluation scope of analysis, criteria and key questions
- Use mixed, inclusive, respectful and participatory approaches, methods and tools
- Reflect HR and GE analysis in the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations

The importance and need for incorporating HR and GE into United Nations evaluations is discussed in chapter two. Practical guidance to mainstream a HR and GE perspective in the four phases of the UNODC evaluation process are provided in chapter four as well as the guiding document "Gender Responsive Evaluations in the work of UNODC".

HR and GE-responsive evaluations focus on creating space for the diversity of stakeholders involved in the intervention to engage directly in the evaluation and take some ownership over the evaluation process.

³⁴Miller, C. and Haylock, L. (2014). "Capturing changes in women's lives: the experiences of Oxfam Canada in applying feminist evaluation principles to monitoring and evaluation practice." (291–310). *Gender and Development* 22 (14).



The following UNEG and UNODC documents are highly recommended resources for further information and are mandatory for all evaluators who conduct UNODC evaluations. The 2011 version provides practical guidance for preparing, conducting and using HR and GE evaluations. The 2014 version provides more in-depth theoretical and practical information, tools and lessons learned.



UNEG GUIDELINES (2011):
[HTTP://WWW.UNEVAL.ORG/
DOCUMENT/DETAIL/980](http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980)



UNEG GUIDELINES (2014):
[HTTP://WWW.UNEVALUATION.ORG/
DOCUMENT/DETAIL/1616](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616)



UNODC GUIDANCE NOTE (2013):
[HTTP://WWW.UN.ORG/
WOMENWATCH/DIRECTORY/DOCS/
UNODC-GUIDANCENOTE-
GENDERMAINSTREAMING.PDF](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/docs/unodc-guidancenote-gendermainstreaming.pdf)



LINK TO UNODC HUMAN RIGHTS
POSITION PAPER (2012):
[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/
DOCUMENTS/JUSTICE-AND-PRISON-
REFORM/UNODC_HUMAN_RIGHTS_
POSITION_PAPER_2012.PDF](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/unodc_human_rights_position_paper_2012.pdf)



GUIDANCE DOCUMENT "GENDER
RESPONSIVE EVALUATION":
[HTTP://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/
EN/EVALUATION/HUMAN-RIGHTS-
AND-GENDER.HTML](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/human-rights-and-gender.html)

CONDUCTING AN EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

An evaluability assessment examines the extent to which an intervention can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. This type of assessment can be undertaken as a formal process before the actual evaluation is commissioned (e.g. already at the design stage), either by staff or by external consultants in close coordination and under the methodological guidance of the UNODC evaluation function. The purpose is to assess whether sufficient funding exists and whether the environment is sufficiently secure to carry out a good evaluation. Furthermore, it examines the existence and adequacy of a programme theory of change or logical framework (logframe), whether indicators are sufficiently SMART, and the general quality and availability of data, particularly baseline and monitoring data. If a formal evaluability assessment has not been done, these latter issues will need to be considered by the evaluator as part of the inception phase.



UNODC EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT: [HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/UNODC/EN/
EVALUATION/NORMATIVE-TOOLS.HTML#EVAL_CRITERIA_AND_PLAN](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/normative-tools.html#eval_criteria_and_plan)

THE THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Theories of change (also referred to as programme theories) and logical frameworks address the need to depict the cause and effect relationship between an intervention's activities and its intended results, the pathways to change.³⁵ One or both are developed during the planning stage of an intervention and provide the foundation for its evaluation. The two terms are often used interchangeably but there are notable differences between them.

A *theory of change* (ToC) focuses on the dynamics of change. Although there are different interpretations, ToCs are generally understood to be “a way to describe the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps that lead to a long term goal, and the connections between these activities and the outcomes of an intervention of programme”.³⁶

A ToC can show different levels of change, different actors and different causal pathways. It generally includes contextual factors (such as the role of the State versus civil society, the different values people hold about the topic, etc.) that help or hinder the envisioned change, and the assumptions on which it is built (conditions necessary for the change to happen but which are not under the control of the implementers). There are endless variations in how ToCs are presented. Most often they are depicted in diagram form along with a narrative description. The level of detail can vary, but simpler forms are generally more useful for sharing with a range of stakeholders.

A *logical framework* (or *logframe*) is a planning, management and evaluation tool that is based on, and reflects, the underlying ToC. All UNODC project/programme documents include a developed logframe outlining the objective, outcomes, outputs, indicators and activities of the intervention. It is usually presented as a matrix with columns that show the logical and linear relationships between an intervention's inputs, outputs, outcomes and its objective.

The focus of a logframe is typically on the results of the interventions. In order to be useful for evaluative purposes, the results need to be stated in ways that can be easily measured. For example, terms such as “enhanced or strengthened capacity” should be avoided as they do not clearly state the change that is expected. A useful resource for more information about logical frameworks is the *Results-Based Management Handbook* from the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).



UNDG RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK: [HTTPS://UNDG.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-HANDBOOK-2012.PDF](https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-HANDBOOK-2012.PDF)

³⁵ http://devinfofive.info/impact_evaluation/img/downloads/Theory_of_Change_ENG.pdf

³⁶ Weiss, C.H. (1995). “Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families.” In J. Connell, A. Kubisch, L. Schorr and C. Weiss (eds.) *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives: Concepts, Methods and Contexts*. New York, Aspen Institute (65-92)



When used as a tool for monitoring and evaluation purposes, the logframe generally includes columns for the indicators that will be used to measure progress towards outcomes, available baseline data, and the associated data collection processes and sources for each indicator. Logframes are an essential component of results-based management (RBM) processes.

A section of the logframe used in the evaluation of the 2010–11 in-depth evaluation of the Global Programme Against Money-Laundering (GLOU 40) is shown in table 7.1 as an example. The complete logframe can be found in the full evaluation report, starting on page 101. A useful resource for more information about logical frameworks is the *Results-Based Management Handbook* from the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).



UNDG RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK: [HTTPS://UNDG.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-HANDBOOK-2012.PDF](https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UNDG-RBM-HANDBOOK-2012.PDF)



[HTTPS://WWW.UNODC.ORG/DOCUMENTS/EVALUATION/INDEPTH-EVALUATIONS/INDEPTH_EVALUATION_OF_THE_UNITED_NATIONS_GLOBAL_PROGRAMME_AGAINST_MONEY_LAUNDERING_PROCEEDS_OF_CRIME_AND_THE_FINANCING_OF_TERRORISM.PDF](https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/indepth-evaluations/indepth_evaluation_of_the_united_nations_global_programme_against_money_laundering_proceeds_of_crime_and_the_financing_of_terrorism.pdf)

TABLE 7.1 PARTIAL LOGFRAME FOR THE IN-DEPTH EVALUATION OF GLOU 40

Specific objective 1: Legislative bodies, criminal justice officials (FIU personnel, law enforcement agencies and their personnel, anticorruption agencies officials), supervisory and regulatory authorities and the private sector aware of the negative economic and social impact of money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.	
OUTPUT	Output 3: AML/CFT policies and institutional frameworks, and possible links with existing anticorruption, good governance and antiterrorism policies reviewed and developed: Mentoring
OUTCOME	AML/CFT regulatory and supervisory frameworks developed and implemented by financial and supervisory authorities and the private sector using UNODC-provided information or services of mentors.
PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	Number of regulatory frameworks developed using UNODC information or mentoring.
SOURCE OF DATA	Reports to the CND on the number of Member States criminalizing money-laundering produced; interviews and survey results used to identify direct links between assistance provided/model laws used and amendments or laws passed.
METHOD	Content analysis; interviews with beneficiary jurisdiction; beneficiary survey results.

ToCs have increased in popularity over the years. Proponents suggest ToCs are a better depiction of the complex environment in which most development interventions take place, in particular the logical pathway of an intervention, clearly connecting activities to the envisioned effects.

A concern expressed about logframes is that they often deal only superficially with assumptions and do not make explicit the values and context of the environment in which the intervention takes place.

The logframe's focus on results is also considered by some to be problematic because the processes and relationships that are also important for success get minimal attention. For these reasons, theory-based approaches to evaluations that include a ToC are often preferred in cases where there is an interest in obtaining an in-depth understanding of the workings of an intervention.

Most development organizations, including UNODC, encourage the use of both logframes and theories of change.

On the other hand, well-developed logframes can include both assumptions and contextual factors, and indeed, these were fundamental components of the original logframe models. Proponents of logframes say the emphasis on results is critical, particularly in regard to evaluation purposes. They suggest that the most important issue to explore in an evaluation is the extent to which different levels of results were achieved and that there should be less emphasis on the processes involved in getting there.

Most development organizations, including UNODC, encourage the use of both logframes and ToCs. ToCs are useful because they portray the bigger picture and logframes are useful because they include the type of information needed for results-based management and evaluation processes. However, ToCs and logframes should both be:

- Based on a solid situation analysis
- Developed with the participation of key stakeholders, including beneficiaries
- Reviewed periodically and adapted as necessary in order to ensure their continued relevance.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE IS NO TOC OR LOGFRAME

As stated above, in order to carry out a useful evaluation, evaluators need to know what changes the intervention was supposed to make and the pathways to those changes. If the intervention does not have a ToC or logical framework that specifies the intended results in ways that are measurable, or if these are judged by the evaluators to be inadequate or outdated, then the evaluators may be asked to develop or revise at least one of these instruments. This task should be done as a consultative process that involves multiple stakeholders, in particular the project/programme teams, in order to clarify assumptions and the evaluators' understanding of the intervention.

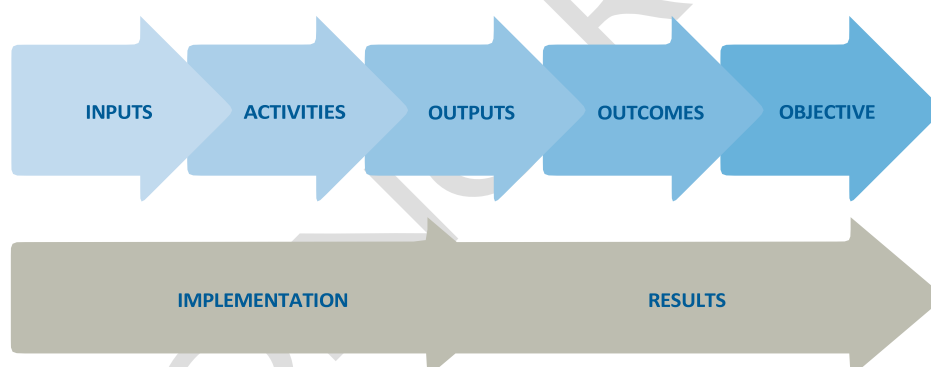


If the intervention does not have a theory of change or logical framework that specifies the intended results in ways that are measurable, or if these are judged by the evaluators to be inadequate or outdated, then the evaluators may be asked to develop or revise at least one of these instruments.

There are several ways for evaluators to proceed with reconstructing a ToC or logframe:

- Facilitate programme team meetings or stakeholder workshops for this purpose
- Review programme documents and any previous studies for information about intended and actual outcomes and impact, and important aspects of context and implementation
- Interview key stakeholders to obtain their perspectives on what the intervention is expected to achieve as well as its results to date
- At a minimum, construct a basic results chain that shows the links between what the intervention did and what the results were supposed to be. Figure 7.2 shows all of the stages of a results chain. When using this as an evaluation framework, the results chain could focus on just specifying the intervention's outputs, outcomes and objective.

FIGURE 7.2 RESULTS CHAIN



CASE EXAMPLE

A first step in conducting the mid-term evaluation of the Global Programme on Money-Laundering was to translate the objectives and outcomes in the project document into a logical framework that could be measured and therefore evaluated.

This process involved connecting the outputs and activities of the project to the outcomes that were expected to result from the activities, and organizing these in terms of the objectives that were to be achieved by 2012. The revised logframe for the evaluation was based on existing objectives and outcomes, which were converted into end-states that could be observed.

In several cases, the results were originally drafted as activities (for example, the overall objective was stated as “To assist member states in building effective legal, regulatory and law enforcement capacity . . .”) and were therefore difficult to measure. The evaluators reformulated the statements where necessary. In the case of the overall objective, it was simply restated as, “Assisted States to build effective legal, regulatory and law enforcement capacity . . .”. This is an end state on which results data can be collected.

Source: Adapted from the methodology section of the 2010–11 In-depth mid-term evaluation of GPML (GLOU40).

WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE IS NO BASELINE DATA

A baseline serves as a point of reference for measuring change over time. Baseline data are the initial data collected prior to the intervention (such as the number of arrests for drug trafficking or the laws regarding human trafficking already in place). The baseline data can later be compared to data collected during project monitoring and evaluation.

In cases where baseline data or specific data such as sex-disaggregated data for instance does not exist, it may be necessary to recreate it. The inception report should identify which of the evaluation questions require baseline data and how data collection ought to proceed in order to provide a plausible proxy for the assessment of the initial condition. To establish baselines, evaluators may conduct in-depth interviews or focus groups with key stakeholders and have them reconstruct, from memory, the original situation and the changes generated by the project. It is important for this information to be acquired from more than one source (triangulation). As already mentioned, it is also important that sex-disaggregated data is acquired and available for a proper gender-sensitive analysis.

In cases where baseline data or specific sex-disaggregated data does not exist, it may be necessary to recreate it.

DESIGNING THE EVALUATION PROCESS

GETTING ORGANIZED WITH AN EVALUATION MATRIX

A key piece in the preparation of the inception report is the development of an evaluation matrix. It is a planning as well as analysis tool used to ensure that the evaluation process addresses the key questions in a sufficiently robust manner.³⁷

Also referred to as an evaluation framework, the matrix should clearly show how data will be collected on all evaluation criteria and key questions, and how triangulation between data sources will be accomplished. The matrix is also used as the basis for designing the data collection instruments.

An example of a basic template is shown in table 7.2. The “lines of enquiry” column can be used to highlight areas that require special focus such as how to find types of data that are missing. When multiple people are developing or reviewing the matrix, it can be useful to add another column for comments.

³⁷ http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/UNDP_Guidance_on_Outcome-Level%20Evaluation_2011.pdf



TABLE 7.2 EVALUATION MATRIX TEMPLATE

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation questions	Indicators/subquestions to respond to each question	Collection method(s) and sources

DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE APPROACH AND METHODS

The wide range of approaches and plethora of tools for undertaking evaluations can be both exciting and overwhelming. There is no single perfect methodology as each has comparative advantages for addressing particular concerns and needs. Evaluations have to be designed for their specific purpose, customized for the specific circumstances of the intervention, and take into account the political or decision-making context and the available budget. However, in the end, choosing the best possible approach and tools may require balancing what is ideal from a methodological perspective and what is practical and feasible.

The evaluation methodology typically addresses the broader principles that will guide how the evaluation is done. Mandatory aspects of the methodology will be specified in the ToR. For example, UNODC requires that the methodology adopts a participatory process that involves all relevant stakeholders. The need for the evaluation to be based on human rights and gender equality principles and to adhere to the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation are also standard methodological requirements for all UNODC evaluations.

The ToR may also specify types of data collection processes that are to be part of the methodology. In the end, the evaluation team is responsible for more fully developing the evaluation methodology and for clearly explaining in the evaluation report the approach, what it entails, and their rationale for selecting the specific design and methods used.

The evaluation design generally refers to the type of methodological evaluation approach that will be used.³⁸ There are many types but the most common ones for use in evaluations are:

- *Experimental*: involves the random assignment of subjects to treatment and non-treatment conditions and the pre- and post-measurement of each group
- *Quasi-experimental*: involves comparison groups and post measurements of each group to take into account the difficulties of doing a true experiment in real life
- *Non-experimental*: considers the extent of change only for those affected by the intervention and does not involve a comparison group

The type(s) of design to be used is (are) typically determined by the commissioners of the evaluation and specified in the ToR.

³⁸http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/96311/1/9789241548687_eng.pdf

The evaluation methods are the tools, techniques or processes used to collect data. Examples of these include document review, interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, questionnaires, case studies and participant observation. Methods and how they are used are shaped by the methodology of the evaluation. Different types of data collection methods are discussed later in this chapter.

IMPACT EVALUATIONS CAN USE EXPERIMENTAL OR QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Although impact can be explored and measured in various ways, the term is increasingly associated with evaluation processes that rely on evidence obtained from counterfactual analysis, with the emphasis on a valid comparison group. Impact evaluations are commissioned with the intent of objectively and rigorously measuring issues of attribution, contribution and impact.

The “gold standard” for these types of studies calls for the use of randomized control trials along with other experimental and non-experimental approaches. Well-designed and implemented impact evaluations should normally provide useful and credible information on whether the intended results have been achieved and the efficacy of the underlying programme theory.

However, such studies generally require the implementation of strong monitoring systems designed to gather impact information. They are also usually costly to undertake due to the need for large amounts of data as well as the considerable amount of time and resources to collect data and ensure its quality.

The following World Bank publication by P. J. Gertler, S. Martinez, P. Premand, L. B. Rawlings and C. M. J. Vermeersch from 2011 is a useful resource for impact evaluations: https://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTHDOFFICE/Resources/5485726-1295455628620/Impact_Evaluation_in_Practice.pdf

Evaluations are considered more credible, and therefore are more useful, when the methodology is sound and rigorous.

A sound approach includes the use of valid and reliable methods of data collection and analysis, and the use of triangulation for developing the findings.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA

Evaluations are considered more credible, and therefore are more useful, when the methodology is sound and rigorous. A sound approach includes the use of valid and reliable methods of data collection and analysis, and the use of triangulation for developing the findings. In addition, the methodology has to adhere to validity as well as reliability.³⁹

- *Validity* refers to the accuracy and relevance of the data, i.e. whether or not the data collection tools are measuring what they are intended to measure.
- *Reliability* refers to having consistency in results using the same method, i.e. whether similar findings would come from using the same tool multiple times.

³⁹<https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>



It is a good and necessary practice to test all data collection tools to ensure high validity and reliability.

There are multiple methods for ensuring that data collection tools exhibit high validity and reliability. For example, to ensure validity, information obtained from using a tool multiple times should be reviewed to ensure it corresponds to the evaluation question. To ensure reliability, the tool could be tested more than once on the same individual; the tool could be administered by several people; or the tool could contain multiple questions that are aimed at answering the same question. It is a good and necessary practice to test all data collection tools to ensure high validity and reliability.

Another important concept for ensuring the credibility of data is triangulation. Evaluation findings are strengthened when multiple pieces of evidence point in the same direction. Triangulation is accomplished when different data or types of information are used that come to broadly the same conclusion.

- *Triangulation* refers to using multiple approaches, methods and sources for data collection and analysis to verify and substantiate information.⁴⁰ It enables evaluators to overcome the bias that comes from single informants, methods, observations or points of view. The purpose of triangulation is to increase the reliability of evaluation findings.

TRIANGULATION ILLUSTRATED

An example of triangulation in a UNODC context is found in the 2016 independent project evaluation of the Aircop programme.* Thorough triangulation was achieved by combining several methods of data collection and by including different stakeholder groups as informants in the evaluation.

The evaluation team conducted thorough desk research, situational analyses of the regions where the programme implemented activities, 116 interviews with different stakeholders and core learning partners, observations in the field, as well as an online survey. This sound evaluation methodology enabled the evaluation team to triangulate their findings by method, source as well as by evaluator.

* https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Independent_Project_Evaluations/2016/XAWU72_AIRCOP_mid-term_evaluation_report_September_2016.pdf

Rigorous methodologies are generally characterized as those that use sound approaches following strict standards. Although evaluations carried out using experimental designs are often held up as being the most rigorous, rigor is also essential to qualitative approaches and is also achieved by using a mixed methods approach.

⁴⁰ UNEG Norms and Standards 2016.

QUANTITATIVE, QUALITATIVE AND MIXED METHODS⁴¹

Evaluation studies can use a quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods approach, as the evaluators try to find a workable balance between procedures that ensure the validity of findings, and those that make findings timely, meaningful and useful to those who commission evaluations.

The terms qualitative (QUAL) and quantitative (QUANT) can be used to describe an evaluation design, method and type of data. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages; they each provide important evidence to an evaluation process but neither is without bias.

A mixed-methods evaluation approach is recommended for all UNODC evaluations.

Quantitative approaches are experimental or quasi-experimental and answer the “what” questions. They measure and explain what is being studied with numbers. At a basic level these measurements give counts, ratios and percentages.

QUANT methods tend to use structured approaches that provide precise data that can also be statistically analysed and replicated for comparison. Statistical analysis provides for a more complex understanding of the data, such as a comparison of means, comparison of differences, and making predictions.

Although QUANT data is considered to be objective, there are subjective elements to designing QUANT processes, such as determining what variables to measure, what questions to ask, and the ways in which results are analysed and reported.

Qualitative approaches are non-experimental and answer the “why” and “how” questions. They analyse and explain what is being studied with words (notes taken of respondents’ perceptions, documented observations). They focus on the constructed nature of social programmes and consider context, perspectives and values as part of determining the results of an intervention.

QUAL methods use semi-structured techniques to gather data that potentially provide in-depth understanding of attitudes, beliefs, motives and behaviours. They tend to be more participatory and reflective in practice than QUANT methods.

QUAL methods are primarily subjective but should be designed in ways that provide objective and quantifiable data. The rigor of QUAL approaches is achieved through use of structured and systematic data analysis processes (such as content analysis), and incorporating practices such as inter-rater reliability and self-reflection.

⁴¹ Cresswell, J. W. (2014). *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research*. London: Sage.



As it is usually not feasible to obtain information from all stakeholders or locations affected by an intervention, sampling is used to enable the evaluator to generalize findings to a broader population.

A *mixed-methods* evaluation approach is recommended for all UNODC evaluations. This allows evaluators to utilize the advantages of both, measuring what happened with QUANT data and examining and why it happened with QUAL data.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SAMPLING

Most evaluations will need to use some type of sampling process in order to be considered credible. As it is usually not feasible to obtain information from all stakeholders or locations affected by an intervention, sampling is used to enable the evaluator to generalize findings from a representative selection to the broader population.

Sampling can be employed for a number of purposes: to select respondents, destinations for field visits, projects to observe and documents to review. There are two broad categories of sampling approaches: probability and non-probability (or purposive sampling).⁴² Examples of each are provided in table 7.3.

With probability sampling, each case or member of the target population has a known probability of being selected. If there is a need for the sample to be statistically representative of the total target group (universe), as would be the case in impact evaluations, the number of units required in the sample must be calculated. Sampling errors (the degree to which the sample might differ from the total population) can then also be derived.

With non-probability sampling, a purposeful process is used to select relevant and information-rich cases. It is generally up to the evaluator to determine the size of a purposeful sample. It needs to be large enough to be credible given the purpose of the evaluation.

Any probability sampling, if it is well done and therefore if it is statistically representative, will have a balanced gender representation. In the case of non-probabilistic sampling the sampling strategy has to ensure a gender balanced representation and, if it is not possible, explain why as well as outline mitigating factors.

⁴² http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/sub_landing/files/10_4-Intro-to-triangulation-MEF.pdf

TABLE 7.3 APPROACHES TO SAMPLING

PROBABILITY SAMPLING	
Random sampling	Selection is completely by chance, with all units having the same likelihood of being chosen. This approach avoids selection bias. If the sample size is relatively small, a simple process to select a random sample is to write all possibilities on individual pieces of paper. Once the number of units to be chosen is known, that number of papers can be chosen from a pile without looking at them. Random sampling is a feature of evaluation processes using an experimental design.
Stratified random sampling	Used when there are different groups that you know need to be represented in your sample (based on location, gender, stakeholder group, budget size or other attribute). Applies random selection of all units within each group. This is a feature of quasi-experimental design, and also addresses concerns of selection bias.
NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING	
Maximum variation sampling	This aims to capture cases that represent the most diverse characteristics of the universe, i.e. the sample includes the cases where the intervention was the most successful and where it was least successful.
Opportunistic sampling	When new opportunities arise in the course of data collection, these are added to the sample. Such situations may occur during field visits when evaluators come across individuals or situations they feel are relevant and useful for inclusion in the study.
Snowball sampling	A strategy that aims to discover new informants who might be particularly useful to the study by asking the people interviewed for others who might know about a particular topic. It is helpful for finding key persons who are otherwise not known to the evaluator.
Purposive sampling	This sampling technique relies on the researcher's/evaluator's judgement as to who to include as a study participant or interviewee from a certain population. This might be appropriate when only a limited number of people can serve as primary data sources. It is cost and time effective, but can however introduce a high level of bias.
Convenience sampling	This means that informants are included due to their accessibility and proximity. Representativeness is not carefully considered and this might introduce a sampling bias and limits to generalization. This strategy is easy, fast and inexpensive.

METHODS AND TOOLS FOR COLLECTING DATA

There are many options for gathering data and interesting tools and technologies are constantly being developed. The use of innovative methods is encouraged but choices need to take into account the challenges and realities of the context in which they will be used. Tools and technologies also have to be adapted for the purpose and scope of the evaluation.



Evaluators are required to use multiple tools for triangulation purposes but are also encouraged to select a varied mix of methods and tools in order to get a richer set of data.

Tools are often assumed to be either QUAL or QUANT, but most often the line is blurred. Tools that are categorized as QUAL can often have QUANT elements, such as interviews that include ranking questions. QUANT tools typically include what are considered to be QUAL elements, for instance in form of open-ended questions in questionnaires. In addition, most methods require some level of subjective judgment that is based on the evaluators' interpretation of the context and therefore introduce an element of bias. This is the case, for example, in the choice of questions that are selected to be included in surveys.

Evaluators are required to use multiple tools for triangulation purposes but are also encouraged to select a varied mix to get a richer set of data. It is all too common to restrict data collection to document review and key informant interviews. But there is a far greater range of QUAL tools, in particular, which can be used to provide vital context information and that often produce more robust findings.

Table 7.4 includes 17 different methods that are commonly used and relevant for UNODC evaluations. The methods are listed in alphabetical order and not in order of relevance. The resources cited at the end of the chapter provide more in-depth information about these methods and many more method options to choose from.

Please note that the methods refer to both primary and secondary types of data. If the data is collected for the first time directly by the evaluation team it is considered primary data. Secondary data is data collected by using already available sources (usually in document form).⁴³

TABLE 7.4 METHODS FOR DATA COLLECTION*

Case study	A detailed description of a limited number of observations (i.e., of a community, work team, project, time period, etc.). Case studies are useful for evaluating complex situations and exploring qualitative impact. This approach generally involves multiple cases for comparison purposes in order to see commonalities. The evaluator looks at patterns of data in order to identify main issues that emerge, triangulates key observations, sees if there are alternative interpretations to pursue, and is then able to make generalizations about the cases. Comparing experiences of high-, medium- and low-performing cases can help to identify what factors made a particular intervention successful.
Checklist, rating scale, scorecard	Tools that state specific items or criteria to help an evaluator see the extent to which outcomes and standards are being met. They allow for data to be collected in a systematic way, and can be useful for enabling data to be expressed in a quantitative way.

*Adapted from the IFRC (2011) *Project/programme M&E Guide*, p.101-102

⁴³ https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/brief_10_data_collection_analysis_eng.pdf

Document review	Can include a wide range of material that has relevance to the intervention being studied. This can include internal documents (programme/project reports and records, prior reviews and evaluations, training materials, policies, administrative databases, videos, photos) and externally produced documents (reports and surveys from national governments, research institutions and other development organizations). Such documents are considered secondary sources of data. They can provide a cost-effective way of collecting baseline data, context, and a historical perspective of the intervention.
Expert panels	A variety of experts engaged when highly specialized input and opinion is required. The experts typically represent different fields. They are brought together during an evaluation in real-time, via on-line discussion forums, or e-mail exchanges to debate and discuss various courses of action and make recommendations. The experts should be identified by, or in consultation with, the programme/project manager and CLP.
Focus group discussion (FDG)	A discussion undertaken with a small group of participants (preferably fewer than 12) to obtain perspectives and beliefs relevant to the issue being examined. A facilitator uses a prepared list of question areas to guide the discussion but not to control it. It is important that facilitators use techniques that enable all participants to contribute to the conversations. In contrast to group interviews, the aim of FDGs is for participants to discuss and debate issues with each other with the facilitator taking the role of guide, observer and recorder. It is highly recommended to have another person taking notes.
Interview	A standard method in all evaluations that can be conducted on an individual or group basis. A structured (closed-ended) interview follows a structured set of pre-prepared questions that generally only allow for a limited range of answers (such as yes/no or expressed by a number/rating on a scale). Responses can then be coded for statistical analysis. A semi-structured (open-ended) interview allows for more in-depth responses to questions. The interviewer still has pre-prepared questions but these are for guiding the discussion, and the interviewer generally has the discretion to probe issues of particular interest more deeply.
Key informant interviews	Done with people selected because they have specific or specialized information about a particular topic. The interviews typically follow an open-ended format.
Most significant change (MSC)	A participatory technique whereby participants are asked to describe the most important change that has happened from their perspective as a result of the intervention. MSC is often used when no, or only limited, baseline data or indicators exist. The stories that emerge can provide a rich picture of the impact and can provide the basis for further discussion of the intervention's value and programme theory.

(cont.)



Participatory methods	A wide variety of techniques that actively engage participants and generate open discussions that often bring out a wider range of ideas and perspectives than more conventional forums. They are also useful for starting conversations about challenging topics and building relationships between the evaluators and respondents, as well as between respondents. Examples include ranking exercises and having participants draw diagrams, maps, timelines and other visual displays to examine the study topics. The techniques can be particularly effective in situations with mixed-language or low-literacy groups, where not all participants would otherwise feel comfortable contributing ideas, where the desired information is not easily expressed in words or numbers, or where a group that may have grown tired from a more structured question and answer session needs to be energized. Participatory methods require sufficient time for planning as well as for the actual implementation.
Participatory rapid (or rural) appraisal	A process used to engage communities in an evaluation. Community views on a particular issue are gained in an intensive manner over the course of up to two to three weeks through a series of methods such as focus groups, community mapping and interviews.
Observation	Generally involves spending considerable time observing events, processes or people as they go about their typical activities, and recording these observations. In the case of participant observation, the evaluator interacts with people as a participant in their community or group. This technique is useful for gathering insights that may be missed in more structured forms of data collection.
Questionnaire	A data-collection instrument that contains a set of systematically organized questions. It typically includes a set of instructions about how to ask the questions so that the data collectors/interviewers implement the questionnaire in a standardized way. The questions can be aimed at eliciting quantitative data but also qualitative data in the form of free answer formats.
Statistical data review	A review of existing data from sources such as research studies, government-generated census information, etc.
Story	An account of an individual's experiences and how that person has been affected by the intervention being reviewed. Typically, some background information is provided in order to provide context for the account. The stories are usually framed as success stories, which are based on interviews with participants and focus on the positive impacts the intervention has had on participants' lives.
Survey	<p>A set of questions designed to systematically collect information from a defined population, usually by means of interviews or questionnaires administered to a sample of people representative of the target population. An enumerated survey is one which is administered by a trained data collector. A self-administered survey is completed by the respondent.</p> <p>On-line surveys are a common and cost-effective method of collecting data in UNODC programme-level evaluations, particularly from staff as well as training participants. However, it can be difficult to get a sufficient response rate in order for the results to be useful. Techniques for increasing the response rate include keeping the survey short, using clear and concisely worded questions, ensuring questions are relevant to and in the language of the target group(s), sending multiple reminder notices to targeted respondents, and having managers encourage their teams to complete the survey.</p>

RANKING: A SIMPLE AND ADAPTABLE PARTICIPATORY METHOD*

Participatory techniques might be challenging for some evaluators. However, they are widely accepted and particularly useful for unpacking complexity. For those wanting to expand their toolkit, ranking is one example of a participatory method that can be easily applied to almost any evaluation process.

There are many ways of ranking or ordering information. For example, performance ranking can be done with staff to understand how they rank specific elements of a project: what worked, what is not working so well, and what improvements could take place. Respondents can also be asked to brainstorm a list of challenges they face and then vote on which are the most important to be addressed for subsequent phases of the project (i.e. making the work environment more supportive for women).

* http://devinfofive.info/impact_evaluation/img/downloads/Participatory_Approaches_ENG.pdf

HARNESSING THE POWER OF BIG DATA FOR EVALUATION*

What is big data?

In essence the concept refers to the collection and analysis of large volumes of data through innovative means and the integration of a diversity of sources of data. It aims to discover patterns in data and predict outcomes of interventions using passive acquisition methods to collect data and algorithmic and machine learning techniques to analyse it.

Why is it useful?

The world is flooded with data. It is estimated that 90 per cent of the data in the world today has been created in the last two years and the majority of this data is never analysed. The possibility to transform a wealth of disorganized data into actionable evidence is one of the potential benefits that big data brings to the evaluation field.

How can UNODC benefit from using it in evaluation?

UNODC frequently operates in complex settings with data paucity where traditional methods of data collection are neither possible nor advisable. The passing of a law against corruption in a specific country as a result of UNODC initiatives by providing legal advice and technical assistance to legislative operators triggers a myriad of cause and affects relations (e.g. awareness, budget allocations, changes in the criminal code, etc.).

Capturing different strands of data from different social media platforms, national statistics and third-party monitoring systems could show changes that UNODC intervention alone would not be able to generate. In this specific case, variables such as the perception of the population on corruption, reduction or increase of offences on corruption, etc. before and after the passing of a law fighting corruption, could help to estimate UNODC contributions to transformative change.

* http://unglobalpulse.org/sites/default/files/IntegratingBigData_intoMEDP_web_UNGP.pdf



Carefully recorded notes make it easier to triangulate data and data sources.

Keeping track of data sources

It is important to keep an ongoing record of all sources of data. UNODC policy does not permit the names of respondents to be reported, however other types of data on sources need to be included in evaluation reports and records. Data collection instruments should include space to record stakeholder group, organization represented, gender of respondent and other information such as age, as identified in the evaluation matrix or data collection plan. This will enable the evaluator to provide disaggregated statistics on respondents in the methodology section of the evaluation report. The documents reviewed should also be tracked. Listing these according to categories as they are used will ease the process of pulling together the final report.

Careful recording of data

Taking good notes throughout the data collection phase reduces the risk of losing potentially valuable data and eases the report writing process. Detailed records should be kept of what is said during interviews, discussions and debriefing meetings with other evaluation team members.⁴⁴ As such notes are often taken hastily, it is advisable to review, improve and transcribe (if recorded) them the same day.

The memories of these sessions will always be selective and there is a risk of losing crucial information. Translations should also be done as soon as possible in case any information needs to be clarified with the translator. It is also helpful to keep a field diary where insights gained and questions that arise can be recorded on a daily basis.

Although the above may be stating the obvious, field trips to collect data are typically very tightly scheduled and there are many logistical issues to attend to, which take time. It is good practice to block out part of each day for reviewing notes.

In addition to the need for accurate records when it comes to writing the report, it is important to keep in mind that these notes constitute raw data that may need to be referred to later. Carefully recorded notes make it easier to triangulate data and data sources.

CODING QUALITATIVE DATA TO PREPARE FOR ANALYSIS

Qualitative data collected from document review and field missions needs to be organized in a way that allows for thorough data analysis. Coding is the process of systematically organizing text-based information (from field notes, interviews, documents) into usable empirical data, in other words, breaking down large amounts of text into manageable categories.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Sutton, J. and Austin, Z. (2015). "Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management," pp. 226-231. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy* 68(3).

⁴⁵Ibid.

A code is a label to tag a concept or value found in the text, usually related to the outcome indicators (such as key words and themes). The coding process can be done in steps that progressively develop unsorted data into more refined categories, themes and concepts. Numerical codes can be assigned to produce quantitative statistics.

EXAMPLE: CODING OF INTERVIEW DATA

It is good practice to have two evaluators conducting each interview. This allows for one person to be the main note taker and the other to be the main interviewer. The second evaluator can then check and complement the notes that were taken.

The notes should then be coded and categorized in accordance with the evaluation questions and regarding their relevance for answering different aspects of the evaluation criteria. The coding process should also be conducted by more than one person in order to minimize bias, increase objectivity and inter-rater reliability.

The process of data analysis should be led by exchange and discussion among the evaluation team as well as a process of consensus finding. The systematic and accurate data coding process will enable the evaluation team to revisit the data throughout the evaluation process in order to reassess certain questions or provide evidence of careful data triangulation.

The inception report should lay out a clear plan for how different types of data collected will be organized, triangulated, analysed and presented in the findings section of the evaluation report.

MAKING SENSE OF THE DATA THROUGH ITS ANALYSIS

Data analysis involves systematically identifying trends, clusters or other relationships between different types of data. This aggregation and synthesizing of evidence is an essential part of the evaluation process.⁴⁶ The inception report should lay a clear plan out for how different types of data collected will be organized, triangulated, analysed and presented in the findings section of the evaluation report.

The data analysis phase is also time for internal quality assurance, keeping in mind that the quality of evidence is the backbone of a credible evaluation.⁴⁷ The evaluators should assess the strengths and validity of the evidence that has been collected, and see if there are gaps or shortcomings that need to be addressed.

⁴⁶ https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/brief_10_data_collection_analysis_eng.pdf

⁴⁷ Donaldson, S. I. (2014). "Examining the backbone of contemporary evaluation practice: Credible and actionable evidence." In S. I. Donaldson, C. A. Christie, and M. M. Mark (Eds.). *Credible and actionable evidence: The foundation of rigorous and influential evaluations*. Newbury Park: Sage.



The quality of evidence is the backbone of a credible evaluation.

All data collection and analysis processes have some type of limitation and this needs to be reported. Data analysis is always based on interpretation of material drawn from sources that may have unreliable elements. For example, samples may not be representative, and there may be information gaps in key documents or data sets. It is critical to take note of these factors and clearly explain the limitations of the study in the Methodology section of the evaluation report. However, it is also similarly important to outline the mitigating measures that have been developed and implemented in order to address any limitations.

Table 7.5 provides a brief overview of different methods that can be used for analysing and interpreting different types of data. They ensure varying levels of robustness. More information about these and other methods can be found in the resources section at the end of this chapter.

TABLE 7.5 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS*

Benchmarking	Compares the performance of an organization's interventions with similar work conducted by other development organizations working in similar environments. The challenge of benchmarking is that rarely do organizations have the same processes and methods for establishing indicators and collecting results data, which makes direct comparisons challenging.
Content analysis	<p>A common approach to analysing qualitative data. The data, once coded, is reviewed and analysed for trends, patterns, similarities, etc. Coding and content analysis can be done by using software programmes such as NVivo, Atlas, RQDA, etc., word processing applications, databases such as Excel and Access, or by hand, i.e., using different coloured markers to highlight different themes in text documents.</p> <p>There are both deductive and inductive approaches to content analysis. Deductive approaches are those that look to confirm or reject a hypothesis. Inductive approaches are more exploratory and look at the range of individual data in order to make broader generalizations.</p>
Cost-benefit analysis (CBA)	An approach for assessing efficiency by calculating and comparing the positive and negative consequences of an intervention in monetary terms. Although data on the financial costs can be readily obtainable, assigning value to benefits is more complex. CBA uses methods to assess people's willingness to pay for the benefits (often intangible) they will receive as the result of an intervention. As CBA has limitations in terms of how people assign values to different items such as social benefits, it is often best used as part of a multi-criteria analysis.
Cost-effectiveness analysis	An approach for assessing whether results are being achieved at a reasonable cost. Also used to assess efficiency, it typically considers the cost per unit of a service given or the cost per beneficiary. The usefulness of this approach is increased when unit costs can be compared with other similar interventions.

Multi-criteria analysis	A set of methods that address cost and benefits of an intervention that take into account monetary values as well as non-monetary values relevant for a successful intervention such as time savings, project sustainability, and social and environmental impacts.
Qualitative data base	A system for organizing data by categories, particularly useful for arranging evidence from document review by outcome-level results. This can be done using a basic Excel spreadsheet.
Statistical analysis	A way of summarizing and analysing quantitative data, usually obtained from surveys. Descriptive statistics are used to understand characteristics of the sample studied (i.e. average age, percentage exhibiting a certain behaviour, income range). Inferential statistics are used for testing hypotheses and drawing conclusions about a larger population set, based on the sample, by using basic processes such as T-Tests, confidence intervals and regression (i.e. percentage of border control officers likely to implement new behaviour from training if they take a supplementary e-learning module). Descriptive statistics are automatically generated by many on-line survey tools. Excel or more robust statistical packages such as SPSS and SAS can be used for both inferential and descriptive analysis.
SWOT analysis	A basic method of assigning qualitative evidence into the four broad categories of strengths and weaknesses (internal factors which project implementers have some control over) and opportunities and threats (external factors that can significantly affect project success). It can be used as a participatory tool for gathering data, whereby respondents are asked for their perspectives on an intervention according to each category, and as a tool for evaluators to draw conclusions from evaluation findings.

*Josselib, J.-M. and Maux, B. (2017). *Statistical tools for program evaluation*. Springer.; https://www.portugal2020.pt/Portal2020/Media/Default/Docs/AVALIACAO/02-Evalued_Sourcebook_Set2013.pdf

COMMON CHALLENGES

COMMON RISKS AND NECESSARY ACTIONS

As with any other evaluation process or study/research approach, there are certain challenges implicit in UNODC evaluations that need to be outlined in order to increase awareness from the beginning as well as strengthen the provision of mitigating measures. The challenges can be broadly categorized in the following four areas: (a) evaluation process; (b) expertise of the evaluation team; (c) methodology and (d) UNODC topics. Each area comprises different aspects that pose a risk to or are challenging for the UNODC evaluation process if due consideration and careful planning is not paid. The four areas are outlined in more detail below.



Evaluation process

Aspects that could be a challenge for the evaluation in this category are the resources allocated for the evaluation process as well as the time designated for certain steps of the evaluation process. In addition, the inclusive outreach during the overall process could be another challenge.

Resources. As outlined repeatedly throughout the handbook as well as emphasized in the UNODC evaluation policy, it is essential for a successful and quality evaluation to reserve sufficient budget when planning an evaluation.

Time. In particular, two aspects are essential regarding the issue of time. On the one hand, the planning and initiation of the overall evaluation process has to be started way in advance in order to allow for adequate time for all steps of the evaluation process and successful coordination with the evaluation function. On the other hand, enough time has to be allocated for each of the steps in the evaluation process, especially the inception phase, data collection and writing of the report. Furthermore, the review phases with several rounds between the evaluation team and the UNODC evaluation function also have to be considered when drafting the time frame for the evaluation.

Inclusiveness. The UNODC evaluation function requires inclusive, participatory evaluation approaches. Therefore, strong CLP engagement as well as outreach to as many stakeholders as possible are encouraged. In addition, different perspectives and underrepresented groups should also be included and considered in the evaluation.

Expertise of the evaluation team

Another challenge for UNODC evaluations is the recruitment of highly experienced and qualified external evaluators who conduct the evaluations. The high expectations as well as requirements placed on the consultants hired for the evaluation team, constitute yet another challenge for the overall evaluation process.

Evaluation expertise. The consultants hired to be part of the evaluation team should be highly experienced in developing sound evaluation approaches and conducting evaluations. Evaluators working with UNODC are required to have several years of substantive evaluation experience and knowledge.

Substantive expertise. In addition to the evaluation expertise, substantive expertise in the topic to be evaluated is expected from at least one of the team members of the evaluation team.

Expertise in human rights and gender mainstreaming. Expertise or sound experience in human rights based and gender equality-responsive evaluation approach is expected from at least one of the evaluation team members.

Methodology

Data collection tools. Data collection tools have to be carefully developed based on the evaluation questions and in particular strongly anchored in the evaluation matrix in order to fulfil the requirements of the evaluation ToR and collect data for thorough and sound data analysis, which is the basis for the evaluation report.

Triangulation. All data has to be rigorously triangulated in order to ensure thorough data analysis. Thus, the findings, conclusions and recommendations are based on triangulated data. Triangulation should be done by theory, source, method as well as evaluator.

Confidentiality. Participants who take part in the evaluation as informants, survey respondents or interviewees have to receive assurance that their information will be treated confidentially. In addition, the report will not provide identifiable information but findings will be reported anonymously, relating to group findings only.

Survey response rates. Many UNODC evaluation approaches include a survey component in addition to face-to-face or phone interviews. This practice is on the one hand beneficial in reaching a wider stakeholder group and asks for information in a more systematic and often quantitative way. However, on the other hand the response rate to surveys usually remains a challenge. Continuous and close follow-up of potential respondents as well as a sophisticated design and flow of the survey are essential in attracting relevant responses.

UNODC topics

Sensitive topics. The thematic areas UNODC engages in are of course often sensitive, for instance terrorism prevention, criminal justice reform or human trafficking. These issues often involve aspects of national security as well as involvement of the criminal justice system. For the evaluation, this means that sometimes data is protected and not easily available; counterparts are reluctant to share their experience and projects sites are difficult to access. These factors need to be considered when planning the evaluation and especially during the field missions of the evaluation team.

Gender neutrality. Some thematic areas of UNODC might be considered neutral to gender. However, there is no such thing as a gender-neutral theme, rather we have gender-blind areas of practice. Thus, gender-blind interventions risk perpetuating and reinforcing existing patterns of discrimination and exclusion. A gender-responsive evaluation approach as followed and emphasized by UNODC will contribute to assessing all thematic projects and programmes in accordance with the principles of inclusiveness, participation, gender equality and the empowerment of women.



Marginalized groups or groups in a vulnerable situation. Another factor inherent in the field of UNODC mandates is that it often involves groups in a vulnerable situation such as for instance victims of crimes, vulnerable prison populations or marginalized groups with less access to the legal system. The evaluation has to be aware of these rights holders, involve them in the evaluation process and also evaluate the programme/project with regard to the effects that it has on them. The human rights-based and gender equality-responsive evaluation approach should ensure that this aspect is seriously considered and the evaluation adapted accordingly.

Hidden populations. Some of the stakeholders of a programme/project or an intervention might be hidden populations that are difficult to reach. The evaluation team has to be aware and considerate of these hidden populations and has to develop creative, inclusive approaches in order to recognize their perspectives and include the information obtained from them in the data analysis.

Overrepresentation of men in law enforcement and government positions. Globally, men outnumber women as judges and magistrates. Furthermore, women make up fewer than 35 per cent of police personnel in countries with available data.⁴⁸ Thus, the gender equality-responsive evaluation approach required for all UNODC evaluations aims at capturing gender perspectives and the voices of women and other marginalized groups, even though originally men might be overrepresented as evaluation stakeholders in the initial evaluation approach. The evaluation teams are strongly encouraged to reach out to female stakeholders, minorities and marginalized groups as well as other United Nations organizations and CSOs in order to arrive at a representative analysis of the relevant context for a human rights and gender perspective on the topic under evaluation.

The challenges outlined above clearly illustrate the complexity of UNODC topics that are being evaluated. This complexity is another challenge implicit in the thematic focus of the work of UNODC. The aspect of complexity will be outlined and discussed in more detail in the section below.

ADDRESSING COMPLEXITY⁴⁹

Why is complexity important?

Whether in professional settings or in a personal context, we are all surrounded by complexity. As managers, decision makers or evaluators we all contribute and suffer the effects of complexity. The picture of a butterfly flapping its wings in the Brazilian rain forest being the original cause of a chain of events triggering a hurricane in the northern hemisphere is a metaphor that summarizes the importance of small actions interacting with diverse elements part of a larger system (the butterfly as part of the biosphere as part of the weather system).

⁴⁸ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/worldswomen.html>

⁴⁹ <http://www.fsg.org/publications/evaluating-complexity>. Report by Preskill, H., Gopal, S., Mack, K. and Cook, J.

UNODC is an office within a wider system of organizations, the United Nations. This system is literally a system to change “the system”. The United Nations contributes to solving societal problems related to peace, security and development. Not a single day passes in which in your capacity as managers, decision makers or evaluators requires engagement with and management of complex situations and problems.

What is complexity?

In its most simple form complexity is the phenomenon that emerges from a collection of interacting objects.⁵⁰ There is not a unified definition of complexity but there is certainty about the elements comprising it. Complexity contains non-linear relationships among elements, behaves in an emergent, adaptive and co-evolutionary fashion guided by feedback loops (knock-on effect), displaying a mixture of ordered and disordered behaviour that gives the impression that the system has a life on its own (e.g. the stock market, a traffic jam, etc.).

A project or a programme is not always designed and implemented in a linear way. Internal and external factors such as political changes at country level, or internal changes of policies or donor requirements can have a strong impact on the plans designed and being implemented. Thus, there will be a need to adapt the project to the specific context where it is being implemented.

The project itself is a collection of elements interacting with a specific societal problem occurring in a local context. The project aims at improving the problem or situation. However, many projects or programmes are conceived and implemented as linear solutions to problems that are dynamic and multidimensional (human trafficking, corruption or terrorism cannot be tackled in a linear fashion. Using linear methods to design, implement and evaluate these types of programmes and projects imposes strong limitations to their effectiveness and impact.

How do you apply complexity to evaluation and programmes/projects?

UNODC interventions vary widely in terms of their levels of intricacy and complexity. One intervention alone can have some simple aspects, some complicated aspects, and some complex aspects. These differences have profound implications for evaluations. Few interventions are simple and have all the ideal aspects: a clearly defined outcome, a single causal pathway, SMART indicators, robust monitoring data, and stable implementation process that would make an evaluation relatively straightforward.

⁵⁰Johnson, Neil: *Two's Company, Three is Complexity* (2007)



Complicated interventions have many components, such as programmes providing technical assistance in the form of workshops, material and advice to improve the border security in a country. They are complicated for different reasons. They may have long causal chains with many intermediate outcomes, outcomes that require multiple interventions, or they may involve multiple implementing agencies with different agendas. Although they may have many moving parts, the parts generally come together in predictable ways to produce a result. In such cases, evaluations need to be sufficiently sophisticated in order to capture all the parts and interactions, and be clear about the limitations of the evaluation.

Complex interventions, on the other hand, are those with elements that are not predictable, such as regional programmes covering many diverse and interlinked mandates of UNODC (drug prevention, fighting against corruption, terrorism, etc.). Features of complexity include having to respond to constantly changing environments, uncertain funding, and new opportunities and challenges. Where many different dynamics are at play, it is more difficult to develop a ToC or logframe that clearly shows the pathways of change and the intended results. In such cases, evaluators may require more flexible evaluation processes, need to be attentive to inter-relationships, and benefit from incorporating elements of evaluative and systems-thinking. For example, instead of focusing on “what happened and why”, evaluators should be attentive to the need to question the evidence and expand their focus to “what works, for whom, and under what conditions”. There is also likely to be the need to look beyond linear relationships to interrelationships and issues of non-linearity. The resources below will be helpful in this regard.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Inspiration for this chapter came from a variety of sources, several of which are listed below.

American Evaluation Association (AEA): an international professional association of evaluators focused on improving practice and supporting practitioners. Among its resources are free virtual professional development opportunities, including tips of the day, brief 20-minute webinars designed to introduce new tools, techniques and strategies, and more in-depth webinars. www.eval.org

Better Evaluation: an international collaboration dedicated to improving the practice and theory of evaluation by sharing information about tools, methods and approaches. www.betterevaluation.org

DME for Peace: a global community of practitioners, evaluators, donors and academics who share best and emerging practices on how to design, monitor and evaluate peacebuilding programmes. Through greater collaboration and transparency, this group works to increase the effectiveness of the peacebuilding field. www.dme4peace.org

EvalCommunity: a site to access information on evaluation-related events, resources, jobs and tenders, as well as to post resumes and find evaluators by country and area of technical expertise. www.evalcommunity.com

EvalPartners: an international forum aimed at strengthening national evaluation capacities jointly founded by the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) and UNICEF. A range of training opportunities, tool-kits, manuals and other evaluation resources including an e-learning programme in development evaluation can be found on its website at www.evalpartners.org

International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie): an international grant making NGO that promotes and funds impact evaluation. Its site includes impact studies, research grants, practitioner tools, publications, events and other resources, including an expert roster. www.3ieimpact.org

Wageningen Center for Development Innovation, Wageningen University: a resource for approaching and applying theory of change. www.theoryofchange.nl

LISTSERVS

Eval Gender+ Website: a global partnership to promote the demand, supply and use of Equity Focused and Gender Responsive Evaluations under the Eval Partners umbrella. <http://evalpartners.org/evalgender>

EVALTALK: the official discussion list of the American Evaluation Association. <https://listserv.ua.edu/archives/evaltalk.html>

Monitoring and Evaluation News: a news service focused on developments in monitoring and evaluation methods. www.mande.co.uk

Pelican: a platform for evidence-based learning and communication for social change. Members post and answer evaluation-related questions and share resources. Join at: www.dgroups.org

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UNDERGOING REVIEW



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