

Evaluation TOR template

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

1. Background and context

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

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

More detailed background and context information (e.g., initial funding proposal, strategic plans, **logical framework or theory of change**, monitoring plans and indicators) should be included or referenced in annexes.

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

PROJECT/OUTCOME INFORMATION		
Project/outcome title		
Atlas ID		
Corporate outcome and output		
Country		
Region		
Date project document signed		
Project dates	Start	Planned end
Project budget		
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation		
Funding source		
Implementing party ¹		

2. Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives

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

Scope and objectives of the evaluation should detail and include:

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

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

3. Evaluation criteria and key guiding questions

Evaluation questions define the information that the evaluation will generate. This section proposes the questions that, when answered, will give intended users of the evaluation the information they

¹ This is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

seek in order to make decisions, take actions or increase knowledge. Questions should be grouped according to the four or five OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: (a) relevance; (b) coherence; (c) effectiveness; (d) efficiency; and (e) sustainability (and any other criteria used).



Individual evaluation questions should be developed by the evaluation manager to address the key concerns of the evaluation and should not just copied from the list below, which is illustrative.

The TOR should contain a reasonable and not exhaustive range of questions which can be realistically covered under a limited time evaluative exercise.

Sample questions for different types of evaluation:

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

Outcome evaluation sample questions

Relevance/Coherence

- To what extent is the initiative in line with the UNDP mandate, national priorities and the requirements of targeting women, men and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent is UNDP support relevant to the achievement of the SDGs in the country?
- To what extent did UNDP adopt gender-sensitive, human rights-based and conflict-sensitive approaches?
- To what extent is UNDP engagement a reflection of strategic considerations, including the role of UNDP in a particular development context and its comparative advantage?
- To what extent was the method of delivery selected by UNDP appropriate to the development context?
- To what extent was the theory of change presented in the outcome model a relevant and appropriate vision on which to base the initiatives?

Effectiveness

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

Efficiency

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

Sustainability

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

Project evaluation sample questions:

Relevance/ Coherence

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

Effectiveness

- To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, and national development priorities?

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

Efficiency

- To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?
- To what extent were resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?
- To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?
- To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, male and female staff, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
- To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?
- To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?

Sustainability

- Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs affecting women, men and vulnerable groups?
- To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long-term?
- To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?
- Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?

- To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs, possibly affecting project beneficiaries (men and women) in a negative way? What is the chance that the level of stakeholder ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?
- To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?
- To what extent do stakeholders (men, women, vulnerable groups) support the project's long-term objectives?
- To what extent are lessons learned documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?
- To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies which include a gender dimension?
- What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability in order to support female and male project beneficiaries as well as marginalized groups?

Sample evaluation questions on cross-cutting issues

Human rights

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

Gender equality

All evaluation criteria and evaluation questions applied need to be checked to see if there are any further gender dimensions attached to them, in addition to the stated gender equality questions.

- To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?
- Is the gender marker assigned to this project representative of reality?
- To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Did any unintended effects emerge for women, men or vulnerable groups?

Disability

- Were persons with disabilities consulted and meaningfully involved in programme planning and implementation?
- What proportion of the beneficiaries of a programme were persons with disabilities?
- What barriers did persons with disabilities face?
- Was a twin-track approach adopted?²

4. Methodology

² The twin-track approach combines mainstream programmes and projects that are inclusive of persons with disabilities as well as programmes and projects that are *targeted* towards persons with disabilities. It is an essential element of any strategy that seeks to mainstream disability inclusion successfully. Also, see chapter 9 of the Technical Notes. Entity Accountability Framework. United Nations Disability and Inclusion Strategy: <https://www.un.org/en/disabilitystrategy/resources>

The TOR may **suggest** an overall approach and method for conducting the evaluation, as well as data sources and tools that will likely yield the most reliable and valid answers to the evaluation questions within the limits of resources. However, final decisions about the specific design and methods for the evaluation should emerge from consultations with the programme unit, the evaluators and key stakeholders about what is appropriate and feasible to meet the evaluation purpose and objectives and answer the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data.

Evaluation should employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach that ensures close engagement with the evaluation managers, implementing partners and male and female direct beneficiaries. Suggested methodological tools and approaches may include:

- **Document review.** This would include a review of all relevant documentation, inter alia
 - Project document (contribution agreement).
 - Theory of change and results framework.
 - Programme and project quality assurance reports.
 - Annual workplans.
 - Activity designs.
 - Consolidated quarterly and annual reports.
 - Results-oriented monitoring report.
 - Highlights of project board meetings.
 - Technical/financial monitoring reports.
- **Interviews and meetings** with key stakeholders (men and women) such as key government counterparts, donor community members, representatives of key civil society organizations, United Nations country team (UNCT) members and implementing partners:
 - **Semi-structured interviews**, based on questions designed for different stakeholders based on evaluation questions around relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.
 - Key informant and **focus group discussions** with men and women, beneficiaries and stakeholders.
 - All interviews with men and women should be undertaken in full confidence and anonymity. The final evaluation report should not assign specific comments to individuals.
- **Surveys and questionnaires** including male and female participants in development programmes, UNCT members and/or surveys and questionnaires to other stakeholders at strategic and programmatic levels.
- **Field visits** and on-site validation of key tangible outputs and interventions.
- **Other methods** such as outcome mapping, observational visits, group discussions, etc.
- **Data review and analysis** of monitoring and other data sources and methods. To ensure maximum validity, reliability of data (quality) and promote use, the evaluation team will ensure triangulation of the various data sources.
- **Gender and human rights lens.** All evaluation products need to address gender, disability, and human right issues.

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

5. Evaluation products (deliverables)

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

- **Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages).** The inception report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP after the desk review and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits) and prior to the country visit in the case of international evaluators.
- **Evaluation debriefings.** Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.
- **Draft evaluation report (within an agreed length).** A length of 40 to 60 pages including executive summary is suggested.
- **Evaluation report audit trail.** The programme unit and key stakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the evaluator within an agreed period of time, as outlined in these guidelines. Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments.
- **Final evaluation report.**
- **Presentations to stakeholders and/ or evaluation reference group** (if required).
- **Evaluation brief and other knowledge products** or participation in knowledge-sharing events, if relevant to maximise use.

6. Evaluation team composition and required competencies

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

- **Required qualifications:** education, length of experience in conducting/ managing evaluations, relevant knowledge, and specific country/regional experience.
- **Technical competencies:** team leadership skills and experience, technical knowledge in UNDP thematic areas, with specifics depending on the focus of the evaluation, data analysis and report writing etc.
- **Technical knowledge and experience:** Gender expertise/competencies in the evaluation team are a must. At least one evaluation team member or reference group member needs to have knowledge and/or experience of disability inclusion. Technical knowledge and experience in other cross-cutting areas such equality, disability issues, rights-based approach, and capacity development.
- **Language skills required.**

The section also should specify the type of evidence (resumes, work samples, references) that will be expected to support claims of knowledge, skills and experience.

The TOR should explicitly demand evaluators' independence from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing, or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation.³

7. Evaluation ethics

³ For this reason, UNDP staff members based in other country offices, regional centres and headquarters units should not be part of the evaluation team.

The TOR should include an explicit statement that evaluations in UNDP will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'.⁴

Standard text includes:

“This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The consultant must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The consultant must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses with the express authorization of UNDP and partners.”

8. Implementation arrangements

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

The section should describe the specific roles and responsibilities of the evaluators, including those of the members of the team, the evaluation manager, the commissioning programme unit and key stakeholders. The composition and expected roles and responsibilities of the advisory panel members or other quality assurance entities and their working arrangements should also be made explicit. The feedback mechanism regarding different evaluation products need to be outlined.

In case of a joint evaluation, the roles and responsibilities of participating agencies should be clarified. Issues to consider include: lines of authority; lines of and processes for approval; logistical considerations, such as how office space, supplies, equipment and materials will be provided; and processes and responsibility for approving deliverables.

9. Time frame for the evaluation process

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

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

In addition, the evaluators may be expected to support UNDP efforts in knowledge sharing and dissemination.

⁴ UNEG, 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', 2020. Access at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>

Required formats for the inception reports, evaluation reports and other deliverables should be included in the annexes of the TOR for the evaluation being commissioned. This section should also state the number of working days to be used by each member of the evaluation team and the period during which they will be engaged (e.g., 30 working days over a period of three months).

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

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED # OF DAYS	DATE OF COMPLETION	PLACE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Phase One: Desk review and inception report				
Meeting briefing with UNDP (programme managers and project staff as needed)	-	At the time of contract signing 1 June 2018	UNDP or remote	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Sharing of the relevant documentation with the evaluation team	-	At the time of contract signing 1 June 2018	Via email	Evaluation manager and commissioner
Desk review, Evaluation design, methodology and updated workplan including the list of stakeholders to be interviewed	7 days	Within two weeks of contract signing 1 to 15 June 2018	Home- based	Evaluation Team
Submission of the inception report (15 pages maximum)	-	Within two weeks of contract signing 15 June 2018		Evaluation team
Comments and approval of inception report	-	Within one week of submission of the inception report 22 June 2018	UNDP	Evaluation manager
Phase Two: Data-collection mission				
Consultations and field visits, in-depth interviews, and focus groups	15 days	Within four weeks of contract signing 1 to 21 July 2018	In country With field visits	UNDP to organize with local project partners, project staff, local authorities, NGOs, etc.
Debriefing to UNDP and key stakeholders	1 day	21 July 2018	In country	Evaluation team
Phase Three: Evaluation report writing				
Preparation of draft evaluation report (50 pages maximum excluding annexes), executive summary (4-5 pages)	7 days	Within three weeks of the completion of the field mission 21 July to 15 August	Home- based	Evaluation team
Draft report submission	-	15 August		Evaluation team
Consolidated UNDP and stakeholder comments to the draft report	-	Within two weeks of submission of the draft evaluation report 29 August 2018	UNDP	Evaluation manager and evaluation reference group
Debriefing with UNDP	1 day	Within one week of receipt of comments 4 September 2018	Remotely UNDP	UNDP, evaluation reference group, stakeholder, and evaluation team
Finalization of the evaluation report incorporating additions and comments provided by project staff and UNDP country office	4 days	Within one week of final debriefing 11 September 2018	Home- based	Evaluation team

Submission of the final evaluation report to UNDP country office (50 pages maximum excluding executive summary and annexes)	-	Within one week of final debriefing 11 September 2018	Home- based	Evaluation team
Estimated total days for the evaluation	35			

This is an illustrative example and individual evaluations will have their own requirements based on the nature and complexity of outcomes or projects, budget available, size of the evaluation team and deadline for completion, sharing or inclusion in other processes. Complex and larger programme and project evaluations often require more than 30 days.

The evaluation scope, number of days and budgets must be realistic and balanced, otherwise it could jeopardize the credibility and hence the utility of the evaluation.

10. Application submission process and criteria for selection

As required by the programme unit.

11. TOR annexes

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

- **Intervention results framework and theory of change.** Provides more detailed information on the intervention being evaluated.
- **Key stakeholders and partners.** A list of key stakeholders and other individuals who should be consulted, together with an indication of their affiliation and relevance for the evaluation and their contact information. This annex can also suggest sites to be visited.
- **Documents to be consulted.** A list of important documents and web pages that the evaluators should read at the outset of the evaluation and before finalizing the evaluation design and inception report. This should be limited to the critical information that the evaluation team needs. Data sources and documents may include:
 - Relevant national strategy documents.
 - Strategic and other planning documents (e.g., programme and project documents).
 - Monitoring plans and indicators.
 - Partnership arrangements (e.g., agreements of cooperation with governments or partners).
 - Previous evaluations and assessments.
 - UNDP evaluation policy, UNEG norms and standards and other policy documents.
- **Evaluation matrix** (suggested as a deliverable to be included in the inception report). The evaluation matrix is a tool that evaluators create as a map and reference in planning and conducting an evaluation. It also serves as a useful tool for summarizing and visually presenting the evaluation design and methodology for discussions with stakeholders. It details evaluation questions that the evaluation will answer, data sources, data collection and analysis tools or methods appropriate for each data source, and the standard or measure by which each question will be evaluated. Table 5 provides a sample evaluation matrix template.

Table 1. Sample evaluation matrix

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

- **Schedule of tasks, milestones, and deliverables.** Based on the time frame specified in the TOR, the evaluators present the detailed schedule.
- **Required format for the evaluation report.** The final report must include, but not necessarily be limited to, the elements outlined in the template for evaluation reports (see annex 4 below).
- **Dispute and wrongdoing resolution process and contact details** (annex 3)
- **Pledge of ethical conduct in evaluation.** UNDP programme units should request each member of the evaluation team to read carefully, understand and sign the ‘Pledge of Ethical Conduct in Evaluation of the United Nations system’.⁵

⁵<http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866#:~:text=The%20UNEG%20Ethical%20Guidelines%20for%20Evaluation%20were%20first%20published%20in%202008.&text=This%20document%20aims%20to%20support,day%20to%20day%20evaluation%20practice.>