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## 2 DECENTRALIZED EVALUATION IN UNDP

Section 2 provides an overview of the different types of decentralized evaluations carried out by UNDP programme units.

### 2.1 Introduction

UNDP implements a variety of evaluations at different levels, using varied approaches, in line with evaluation plans. Programme units, especially country offices, should ensure that their evaluation plans include a variety of evaluation approaches to capture a broad spectrum of evaluation results during the country programme cycle. This supports accountability and the capture of experience and knowledge to strengthen work within the country, the region, and the wider organization. All UNDP evaluations must adhere to the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation 2016.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1. Types of evaluations undertaken by UNDP



All evaluations conducted or commissioned by UNDP must integrate **human rights, gender equality and disability issues** to meet the requirements of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Evaluation Performance Indicator,<sup>2</sup> and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.<sup>3</sup> Integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in the scope, and throughout the terms of reference (TOR), is a critical first step in the evaluation process.

<sup>1</sup> <http://unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN\\_Disability\\_Inclusion\\_Strategy\\_english.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/assets/documentation/UN_Disability_Inclusion_Strategy_english.pdf)

### Box 1: Gender responsive evaluations

All evaluations should undertake a gender-responsive approach, even for projects that were not gender-responsive in their design. The UNEG guidance document, “Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations” provides examples of how to incorporate these elements into the purpose, objectives, context and scope of the evaluation, and to incorporate a gender dimension into the standard evaluation criteria.

- UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator Technical Note, April 2018, <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452>
- UN-SWAP - Individual Evaluation Scoring Tool, <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1452>

It is strongly recommended that all evaluations apply the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability set out in Box 2 below. In 2019, OECD/DAC revised and further specified their evaluation criteria, published in “Better Criteria for Better Evaluations: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use”,<sup>4</sup> and added a new criterion, coherence.

### Box 2: OECD/DAC evaluation criteria

**RELEVANCE: Is the Intervention doing the right things?** The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to global and national needs, policies and priorities and those of beneficiaries and partner institutions, and continue to do so as circumstances change.

**COHERENCE: How well does the intervention fit?** The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

**EFFECTIVENESS: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?** The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

**EFFICIENCY: How well are resources being used?** The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

**SUSTAINABILITY: Will the benefits last?** The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

This section includes examples from evaluations that have achieved quality assessment ratings of satisfactory (5) or highly satisfactory (6).

## 2.2 UNSDCF/ UNDAF evaluations

<sup>4</sup> Access at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>



**The evaluation of the Cooperation Framework is an independent system-wide process at country level that contributes to system-level oversight, transparency, accountability and collective learning.**

The UNSDCF – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework - replaced the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as the United Nations national-level guiding framework, following the Resident Coordinator delinking process in 2018 and 2019.<sup>5</sup>

### **Purpose and scope**

UNSDCF evaluations use the United Nations Country Common Assessment (CCA) report as a benchmark to assess progress towards expected (and unintended) results, and whether the Cooperation Framework made a worthwhile, coherent, durable and cost-efficient contribution to collective United Nations system outcomes and national development processes towards the 2030 Agenda.<sup>6</sup>

UNSDCF evaluations are **undertaken independently** and are vital for ensuring greater transparency on results achieved, promoting joint work and efficiencies, and generating knowledge to inform and improve development programming.

UNSDCF evaluations assess the extent of conformity with **Cooperation Framework Guiding Principles** in terms of both process and results. By identifying synergies, gaps, overlaps and missed opportunities, these evaluations provide the basis for critical inquiry to support the continuous improvement of performance and results. They also play a role in supporting **social and environmental safeguarding efforts**.

### **Methodology and guidelines**

UNSDCF evaluations must adhere to international best practices for evaluation and the UNEG Norms and Standards, and should reflect the evaluation indicators of the Funding Compact,<sup>7</sup> the United Nations SWAP on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment<sup>8</sup> and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Following the delinking of the United Nations resident coordinator position from UNDP in 2019, the UNDAF was renamed the UNSDCF and new guidance was issued. UNSDCF development and guidance are implemented by the United Nations resident coordinator's office under the United Nations Secretariat.

<sup>6</sup> [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019\\_1.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf), Paras 103-104

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/qcpr/DCO-FundingCompactUpdate-Indicators.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unsystem.org/content/un-system-wide-action-plan-gender-equality-and-empowerment-women-swap>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

### Box 3: UNSDCF evaluation guidance

Chapter 6 of the UNSDCF Internal Guidance, and chapter 8 of the UNSDCF Cooperation Framework Companion Package and Consolidated Annexes (forthcoming), provide further information for UNSDCF evaluation planning. The Companion Package will include tools and templates for Cooperation Framework evaluations including:

- Quality criteria;
- TORs for evaluators and the Evaluation Manager;
- Inception report template;
- Evaluation report template; and
- Management response and action plan templates.

#### Relevant Documents:

- UNSDCF Guidance<sup>10</sup>
- Guidelines for the Evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Framework (September 2021)<sup>11</sup>
- In Brief: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation<sup>12</sup>

### Management and implementation

UNSDCF evaluations are **mandatory** and should be commissioned in the **penultimate year** (year prior to completion) of the Cooperation Framework period. The evaluation findings and recommendations should be completed in time to feed into the development of the new Cooperation Framework.

**UNSDCF evaluations are managed by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's office, in cooperation with the United Nations country team (UNCT). Their role is to ensure that the final UNSDCF evaluation is independent and useful by:**

- a) Facilitating and promoting national ownership, through involvement of national partners throughout the process and the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into decision-making around subsequent United Nations CCAs and Cooperation Frameworks, as well as within the country development programming of respective United Nations development entities.
- b) Providing an independent evaluation team with all required information and access to national stakeholders, and coordinate entity-specific evaluations so they are relevant and timely in supporting the Cooperation Framework evaluation.
- c) Issuing an evaluation management response and action plan as a key accountability tool. They are responsible for publicly disclosing the final evaluation at the country level as part of an overall communications and dissemination strategy.

### Management responses and key actions

The UNSDCF management response is a crucial step to improve the timely and effective use of the evaluation. Through the management response process, the UNCT and other evaluation stakeholders can review the recommendations and agree the follow-up steps and actions to be taken, or reject recommendations (with justification). Management responses should include whether the recommendation is accepted, partially accepted, or rejected, and why. For those recommendations

<sup>10</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/united-nations-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-guidance>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2972>

<sup>12</sup> <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/In-Brief-UN-Sustainable-Development-Cooperation.pdf>

accepted, actions that will be taken, by whom and when should be indicated. If recommendations are rejected, an explanation and potential alternative actions to address the issues raised should be included.<sup>13</sup>

Final UNSDCF evaluations, its recommendations, management responses and key actions no longer need to be uploaded to the Evaluation Resource Center (ERC). UNSDCF evaluations are not quality assessed by UNDP.

#### Box 4: Sample UNDAF evaluations

- Niger, 2018, Evaluation finale de l'UNDAF 2014-2018
- Mauritania, 2017, UNDAF Final Evaluation, 2012 to 2017
- Cambodia, 2017, Evaluation of the UNDAF cycles 2011-2015, 2016-2018
- Mozambique, 2015, Evaluation of the UNDAF 2012-2016
- Uruguay, 2015, Evaluación de medio término del UNDAF 2011-2015
- Afghanistan, 2017, Midterm review report, 2015-2019

## 2.3 Decentralized country programme evaluations



**Decentralized country programme evaluations (D-CPEs) assess UNDP attainment of intended results and contributions to development results at country level. The evaluation examines key issues such as UNDP effectiveness in delivering and influencing the achievement of development results and UNDP strategic positioning. These evaluations contribute to UNDP accountability and learning.**

D-CPEs can be scheduled during (midterm) or towards the end (final) of a programme cycle.

### Midterm D-CPEs

The midterm evaluation assesses the **level of effectiveness** in delivering the intended results in the country programme document (CPD), as well as the **positioning** of UNDP. This provides an accountability tool as well as a means to review progress and adjust direction if needed (course correction). The process is also an opportunity to extend dialogue with the government and partners on UNDP progress and programme direction.

### Management and implementation

It is **highly recommended** that country offices consider commissioning midterm evaluations of country programmes, as an opportunity to review the attainment of intended results across all (or most) outcome areas.

Regional bureaux and policy and practice units may also decide to carry out midterm evaluations of their global or regional programmes to allow for course correction.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2972>, p.19.

## Final D-CPEs

A **final evaluation** should be conducted in the penultimate year (year prior to completion) of a UNDP country programme, to feed into the process of developing the new country programme. It focuses at the **outcomes** defined in the CPD.

### Management and implementation

All new CPDs being presented to the Executive Board of UNDP should be accompanied by either a D-CPE, an ICPE or a Country Programme Performance Survey (CPPS).<sup>14</sup>

### Methodology and guidelines

Midterm and final D-CPEs should follow the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (see Box 2). Section 4 includes a list of possible questions to guide these evaluations, and a sample is provided below.

#### Sample evaluation questions

<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent have the intervention logic / theory of change and the underlying assumptions of the country programme integrated gender equality and other cross-cutting issues?</li><li>• To what extent are they still valid or do they need to be adapted to changes in the needs or priorities of the country?</li></ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent has progress been made towards the programme goals, including gender equality, women's empowerment and other cross-cutting issues?</li><li>• What key results and changes (stated in the CPD) have been attained for men, women and vulnerable groups?</li></ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent has the country programme delivered, or is likely to deliver, its interventions and results in an economic<sup>15</sup> and timely manner?</li><li>• To what extent were resources (funds, expertise, time) sufficient?</li></ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To what extent did UNDP establish mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of the programme benefits for women, men and other vulnerable groups?</li><li>• To what extent have partners committed to provide continuing support (financial, female and male staff etc.) to sustain the programme results?</li></ul>

## 2.4 Independent Country Programme Evaluations

### Purpose and scope

The UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) undertakes Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs)<sup>16</sup> of selected countries as they are coming to the end of their country programme

<sup>14</sup> <https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPSubject.aspx?SBJID=461&Menu=BusinessUnit>

<sup>15</sup> Economic in this sense refers to the conversion of inputs – funds, expertise, time - into outputs, outcomes and impacts, in the most cost-effective manner.

<sup>16</sup> Access at: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/assessment-of-development-results.shtml>

cycles. ICPE findings, conclusions and recommendations serve as inputs to the UNSDCF evaluation process, as well as the process of developing the new UNSDCF and UNDP country programme.

### Management and implementation

ICPEs come under the IEO plan and budget and therefore **do not need to be included in programme unit evaluation plans or budgets**. The IEO will inform a regional bureau of those country programmes to be subject of an ICPE, and make every effort to coordinate ICPE implementation with the units responsible for the country programme and UNSDCF development processes.

ICPEs cover one country programme cycle, and are carried out in **the penultimate year** (year prior to completion) of the programme cycle. They accompany new CPDs presented to the UNDP Executive Board for approval.

### Methodology and guidelines

Key ICPE questions are:

- What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
- To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
- What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP performance and, eventually, to the sustainability of results?

#### Box 5: Sample decentralized country programme evaluations examples

- Nepal, 2020, Mid Term Review of Country Programme Document, 2018 to 2022
- Cambodia, 2019, Evaluation of UNDP Country Programme Action Plan, 2016 to 2018
- Ghana, 2017, UNDP country programme, 2012-2017
- Niger, 2017, Evaluation mi-parcours CPAP 2014- 2018
- Togo, 2017, Evaluation du CPAP, 2014 to 2018
- All ICPEs are available on the ERC website.

## 2.5 Outcome evaluations



**Outcome evaluations focus on UNDP contributions to the achievement of outcomes identified in the CPD.**

#### Box 6: Definition of an outcome

*“Outcomes are **actual or intended changes** in development conditions that interventions are seeking to support.”*

*“Outcomes describe the intended changes in development conditions that result from the interventions of governments and other stakeholders, including international development agencies such as UNDP. They are medium-term development results created through the delivery of outputs and the contributions of various partners and non-partners. Outcomes provide a clear vision of what has changed or will change globally or in a particular region, country, or community within a period of time. They normally relate to **changes in institutional performance or behaviour among***

*individuals or groups. Outcomes cannot normally be achieved by only one agency and are not under the direct control of a project manager.”*

**IMPORTANT: Outcomes are not the sum of outputs delivered through UNDP programmes and projects, rather they occur when outputs are used by primary stakeholders to bring about change.**

### Purpose and scope

Outcome evaluations **provide evidence of UNDP contributions to outcomes**. This evidence supports the accountability of programmes, and can be used by UNDP in its accountability requirements to its investors.

Outcome evaluations **guide the improvement of performance** within ongoing programmes by identifying areas of strength, weaknesses and gaps, especially in respect to the appropriateness of the UNDP partnership strategy and obstacles to achievement of outcomes. This can support mid-course adjustments to the theory of change; and lessons learned for the next programming cycle.

Outcome evaluations can provide evidence for and inform **higher-level evaluations**, such as of the UNSDCF, country, regional and global programmes, as well as support subsequent planning.



**It is highly recommended that country offices evaluate at least one outcome during the country programme cycle period.**

### Management and implementation

Outcome evaluations can be managed and commissioned at midterm or towards the end of the programming cycle.

- **Midterm outcome evaluations** can highlight progress towards an outcome, and provide an opportunity to identify outcome implementation challenges and opportunities for course correction. **Midterm outcome evaluations can also support and inform D-CPEs and ICPEs.**
- **Final outcome evaluations** are ideally timed so that the findings and recommendations can support the development of the new UNSDCF and UNDP country programme. This should be in the **penultimate year** of the programme, and before the UNSDCF evaluation.

### Methodology and guidelines

Outcome evaluations begin with the outcome(s) to be assessed and work backwards.<sup>17</sup> Taking the outcome(s) as the starting point, the evaluation can assess a number of variables, including:

- (a) whether an outcome has been achieved, or the progress made towards it;
- (b) how, why and under what circumstances the outcome has changed;
- (c) the UNDP contribution to progress towards, or achievement of, the outcome; and
- (d) the UNDP partnership strategy in pursuing the outcome.

<sup>17</sup> UNDP Outcome Level Evaluation, 2011.

[http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/UNDP\\_Guidance\\_on\\_Outcome-Level%20Evaluation\\_2011.pdf](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/UNDP_Guidance_on_Outcome-Level%20Evaluation_2011.pdf)



**Outcome evaluations do not start by analyzing individual projects, as this approach is unlikely to yield useful or complete information. They only enquire what is happening at the outcome level.**

Outcome evaluations are expected to apply the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Some possible outcome evaluation questions might include:

- 1) Were the stated outcomes or outputs achieved?
- 2) What progress has been made towards the outcomes?
- 3) Which factors have contributed to achieving (or not) the intended outcomes?
- 4) To what extent have UNDP outputs and assistance contributed to outcomes?
- 5) Has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective? What factors contributed to effectiveness?

#### **Box 7: Sample outcome evaluations**

- Mauritania, 2020, Analyse des interventions du PNUD en appui à la conception et à la mise en œuvre, S&E de politiques publiques pro-pauvres
- Turkmenistan, 2019, Partnership Framework for Development evaluation
- El Salvador, 2019, Evaluación de la contribución del PNUD a la generación de capacidades de planificación y ejecución de la inversión pública a nivel nacional y local y su efecto en la cobertura y acceso universal a los servicios básicos de salud"
- Lebanon, 2019, Energy and Environment Outcome Evaluation
- Tanzania, 2019, Midterm evaluation of democratic governance outcome

## **2.6 Regional programme evaluations**



**Regional evaluations assess the attainment of intended results, as well as UNDP contributions to development results, as articulated in the regional programme document.**

### **Purpose and scope**

Regional programme evaluations are intended to reinforce the substantive accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board, and are timed to contribute to the preparation and approval of the subsequent regional programme.

### **Methodology and guidelines**

Regional programme evaluations are similar to D-CPEs, may follow a similar methodology, and can be at midterm or towards the end of the programme cycle.

## **2.7 Project evaluations**



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

## Purpose and scope

Project evaluations yield useful information on project implementation arrangements and the achievements of outputs, and also draw linkages between a project's outputs and its contribution to broader programme outcomes.

The primary purpose of a project evaluation is to improve, continue or scale up an initiative; to assess its sustainability and replicability in other settings; to demonstrate accountability for results; or to consider alternatives. **Project evaluations play an important role in accountability to donors and governments involved in financing projects.** For their own accountability reasons, donor agencies and other cost-sharing partners may request UNDP to include evaluation requirements in the UNDP-donor partnership agreements.

## Management and implementation

Project evaluation budgets should be agreed with partners and stakeholders and included in project documents and plans. **For all mandatory evaluations, plans and budgets need to be included in the respective project document.**

## When to conduct a project evaluation

To ensure learning and accountability, and that results are being achieved, projects representing a significant financial investment and/or extending over a longer period should be evaluated (see table 1). Project evaluations are mandatory when required by partnership protocols, as in the case of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund (GCF).



**Project evaluations are mandatory when projects are expected to reach or pass certain thresholds as indicated in the table below:**

Table 1. Thresholds for mandatory project evaluations

MANDATORY PROJECT EVALUATION THRESHOLDS	EVALUATIONS
Projects with a planned budget or actual expenditure of more than US\$ 5 million. If the project is under four years, then only one evaluation is required. <sup>18</sup>	Midterm <b>and</b> final evaluation
Projects with a planned budget or actual expenditure of between \$3 million and \$5 million.	Midterm <b>or</b> final evaluation
Projects with duration of more than five years.	At least one evaluation, midterm or final
Projects entering a second or subsequent phase <sup>19</sup>	One evaluation before moving into the new phase
Development initiatives being considered for scaling up	An evaluation before expansion

## Methodology and guidelines

<sup>18</sup> <https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPSubject.aspx?SBJID=448&Menu=BusinessUnit&Beta=0>

<sup>19</sup> A project is entering a second phase when it proposes to scale up results, through a substantive project revision or a new project.

Project evaluations can use some of the following guiding questions based on OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and cross-cutting issues (see also Section 4, Annex 1):

<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was the project in line with national development priorities, country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What have been the key results and changes attained for men, women and vulnerable groups?</li> <li>In which areas has the project had greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was the management structure outlined in the project document efficient to generate the expected results?</li> <li>To what extent were the resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular?</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent will targeted men, women and vulnerable people benefit from the project interventions in the long term?</li> <li>To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?</li> </ul>

#### Box 8: Sample project evaluations

- Pakistan, 2020, Midterm evaluation of upscaling of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods Project
- Tunisia, 2020, Évaluation finale - Assistance électorale
- Nepal, 2020, Final Evaluation of Resilient Reconstruction and Recovery of Vulnerable Communities Severely Affected by 2015 Earthquake (EU II)
- Regional Bureau for Africa, 2020, Midterm Evaluation of project “Accelerating the Ratification and Domestication of African Union Treaties”
- Haiti, 2020, Évaluation finale du projet Promotion de la Cohésion sociale à Jérémie
- El Salvador, 2020, Evaluación final del Proyecto "Apoyo al Ciclo Electoral de El Salvador" 2018-2019

## 2.8 Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund evaluations

### GEF evaluations

#### Management and implementation

Terminal evaluations are mandatory for **all medium- and full-sized projects** financed by GEF.

- All **full-sized projects** (with a GEF grant value of more than \$2 million) and all programmes must complete a midterm review *and* a terminal evaluation.
- All **medium-sized projects** (with a GEF grant value of between \$500,000 and \$2 million) must complete a terminal evaluation. Midterm reviews are optional for medium-sized projects.

**Joint agency projects** require just one evaluation, managed by the lead agency.



**Both midterm and terminal evaluations should be included in UNDP evaluation plans (for the country office or regional bureau) and uploaded to the ERC.**

### Methodology and guidance

**Separate GEF guidance for terminal<sup>20</sup> and midterm<sup>21</sup> evaluations** outline the procedures and approaches that must be followed. These include guidance on evaluation processes, roles and responsibilities, templates and outlines for TORs and evaluation reports, and sample evaluation criteria matrices.

#### Box 9: GEF evaluation guidelines

- Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects, 2020
- Guidance for conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects, 2014

GEF evaluations must be **independently implemented and quality-assured** as the GEF Independent Evaluation Office compares the quality of terminal evaluations between GEF agencies.

#### Box 10: Sample GEF terminal evaluations

- India, 2020, Mainstreaming Coastal & Marine Biodiversity Conservation in Andhra Pradesh
- Bangladesh, 2020, Terminal Evaluation of Expanding the Protected Area System to Incorporate Important Aquatic Ecosystems project
- China, 2019, Final Evaluation for Wetlands Portfolio - National
- Jordan, 2019, Mainstreaming Rio Convention Provisions into National Sectoral Policies

## Adaptation Fund evaluations

### Management and implementation

All Adaptation Fund regular projects (those with a grant budget of over \$1 million) are subject to a final evaluation by an external evaluator selected by the implementing entity. The Adaptation Fund Evaluation Framework states that: *“Projects and programmes that have more than four years of implementation will conduct an independent midterm evaluation after completing the second year of implementation.”*<sup>22</sup> All small size projects (of up to \$1 million), as well as readiness grant projects, are subject to a final evaluation if deemed appropriate by the Adaptation Fund Board.

Final evaluation reports will be submitted to the Adaptation Fund Board as stipulated in the project agreement.<sup>23</sup> **Adaptation Fund midterm and final evaluations should be included in UNDP (country office and regional bureau) evaluation plans and uploaded to the ERC.**

### Methodology and guidelines

<sup>20</sup> [http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE\\_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> [http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/midterm/Guidance\\_Midterm%20Review%20\\_EN\\_2014.pdf](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/midterm/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Access at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/evaluation-framework-4/>

<sup>23</sup> Access at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/OPG-amended-in-October-2017-1.pdf>

Evaluations will be conducted following a process decided by the Board and using templates approved by the Board.

## Green Climate Fund evaluations

### Methodology and guidelines

The GCF Evaluation Policy is currently under development.<sup>24</sup>

### Management and implementation

**All GCF evaluations should be included in UNDP evaluation plans (country office or regional bureau evaluation plans) and uploaded to the ERC.**

## 2.9 Multi-country project evaluations



**Multi-country project evaluations are of projects being implemented in multiple countries.<sup>25</sup>**

### Management and implementation

Though considered a single project for project management purposes, the offices involved are accountable for their contributions to joint results on equal terms. In this scenario, the implementation modality **is similar to a joint evaluation (see below)**, with participating UNDP offices agreeing on the management structure, and collaborating in drafting the TOR, selecting evaluators, reporting, dissemination, developing management responses, and following up and implementing recommendations. The UNDP country office managing and commissioning the evaluation is designated the “coordination office”.

## 2.10 Portfolio evaluations



**Portfolio evaluations refer to those evaluating the work of a group or portfolio of projects designed to contribute to a country programme output or outcome(s).**

### Purpose and scope

A portfolio evaluation is similar to an outcome evaluation, but may focus on part of an outcome, or a group of projects that are linked to different outcomes in the country programme results framework. For instance, a country office may evaluate a set of interventions contributing to strengthening access to justice and the judiciary, which is a component of a larger outcome referring to strengthened governance.

### Management and implementation

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<sup>24</sup><https://jeu.greenclimate.fund/evaluation-policy-of-the-gcf>

<sup>25</sup> [https://popp.undp.org/\\_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP\\_POPP\\_DOCUMENT\\_LIBRARY/Public/PPM\\_Design\\_Multi-country%20and%20South-South%20Cooperation%20Projects.docx&action=default](https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Design_Multi-country%20and%20South-South%20Cooperation%20Projects.docx&action=default)

From a practical perspective, conducting a portfolio evaluation may allow several projects to contribute to the financing of the evaluation, rather than funding separate project evaluations. This should be planned in advance and budgets agreed across projects if needed, and the approach included in the evaluation plan of the implementing unit.

Portfolio evaluations are managed and commissioned by the UNDP country office, and **should be included in UNDP evaluation plans and uploaded to the ERC.**

## 2.11 Thematic evaluations



**Thematic evaluations assess UNDP performance in areas that are critical to ensuring sustained contribution to development results. They may focus on one or several cross-cutting themes that have significance beyond a particular project or initiative, across several outcomes or results areas in a country, such as gender mainstreaming, capacity development, human rights or democratic governance.**

The IEO undertakes thematic evaluations as part of its mandate to look closely at the achievements and challenges of the organization. Examples of thematic evaluations in UNDP include areas such as democratic governance, or cross-cutting themes such as gender mainstreaming.

### Methodology and guidance

The objectives, scope and questions for thematic evaluations will vary depending on the subject matter. However, evaluation questions should adhere to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (see Box 2).

The following evaluation questions were developed for a **thematic evaluation on gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment**. More guiding questions are available in Section 4.

<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent has UNDP contributed to gender equality and women’s empowerment development results at the policy and implementation level?</li> <li>▪ To what extent does UNDP operationalize gender concerns in its programme/project designs (results frameworks, theories of change) and identify indicators for projects to ensure “quality-at-entry” of gender-mainstreamed interventions?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How effective has UNDP been in implementing gender mainstreaming and contributing to institutional change?</li> <li>▪ To what extent have UNDP programmes, projects and other interventions contributed to promoting gender equality that benefits women, men and other vulnerable groups?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent are UNDP resources (financial, time, male/female staff, technical and gender expertise) adequate to address gender inequalities and root causes?</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent will the benefits of UNDP programmes, projects and other interventions in respect to gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment continue, or are likely to continue in future?</li> </ul>

### Box 11: Sample thematic evaluations

- Mauritania, 2020, Analyse des interventions du PNUD en matière de promotion de l'égalité genre.
- Tanzania, 2018, Gender impact midterm evaluation across the three programme outcomes
- Panama, 2018, Evaluación temática de diálogos facilitados por PNUD en Panamá en marco de Programa de País 2016-2020
- BPPS, 2017, External Assessment of the UNDP Gender Seal

## 2.12 Impact evaluations



**An impact evaluation explores the effects (positive or negative, intended or not) on individual households and institutions, and the environment created, by a given development activity such as a programme or project. Such an evaluation refers to the long-term impact as well as medium-term effects at the outcome level.**

### Purpose and scope

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

### Methodology and guidance

UNDP undertakes very few impact evaluations as many of our projects contribute to a broader outcome or development goal or play a role for which it is difficult to attribute impact.<sup>26</sup> When projects are being designed and an impact evaluation is expected, programme units should consider the type of impact that is expected and the indicators which can illustrate this. A baseline measure will give the pre-project levels and realistic targets can then be built into the project goals, monitored regularly and finally checked and validated (or not) through an impact evaluation.

UNEG has developed detailed impact evaluation guidance.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.13 Joint evaluations

<sup>26</sup> Between 2016 and 2017, UNDP implemented 600 decentralized evaluations, which included only one impact evaluation.

<sup>27</sup> Access at: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1433>



**Joint evaluations refer to evaluative effort by more than one entity of a topic of mutual interest, or of a programme or set of activities which are co-financed and implemented. The degree of ‘jointness’ varies from cooperation in the evaluation process, to the pooling of resources for combined reporting.<sup>28</sup>**

**Any evaluation can be conducted as a joint evaluation.**

UNDP is increasingly being asked to undertake joint evaluations. Depending on the extent to which individual partners cooperate in the evaluation process, it requires discussions with the evaluation partners as to:

- **whose procedures** should be used, both for the evaluation and for the procurement;
- **which funding modalities** and contributions from different parties should be applied; and
- **how** the process is managed and reported to all parties.

At country level, an obvious example of a joint evaluation is the UNSDCF evaluation, where several United Nations organizations and national government participate. In addition, a UNDP country office may wish to conduct a joint outcome evaluation together with a partner, government and / or donor.

### Purpose and scope

Joint evaluations can have greater **benefits and challenges**, highlighted in the UNEG Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations,<sup>29</sup> 2014 and summarised in Table 2. In general, joint evaluations take longer to plan, implement and finalize in comparison to other evaluations, and require more coordination efforts and commitment among evaluation stakeholders. All steps in the evaluation process, such as agreeing on TORs, selecting the evaluation team, commenting on the draft inception and final reports need to be conducted jointly.

*Table 2. Benefits and possible challenges of joint evaluations*

Benefits	Possible Challenges
• Increased objectivity and legitimacy	• Different terminology
• Broader scope and picture of situation	• Developing TORs
• Mutual capacity development and peer learning	• Complexity of coordination arrangements
• Helps foster a collective sense of accountability	• Power differentials among partners
• Promotes cost-sharing and a sense of partnership among United Nations evaluation offices and units	• Longer time frames
• Useful for developing consistent policy messages	• Findings may not address individual agency accountability requirements
• Greater credibility and broader ownership of findings and recommendations	• Diffusion of responsibility for follow-up can weaken evaluation impact
• Builds coordination and collaboration	• Multisector data may be more complicated to interpret
• Often yields higher quality evaluations	
• May help reduce the overall number of evaluations undertaken – thereby reducing	

<sup>28</sup> Access at: <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1620>

<sup>29</sup> Access at <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1620>

### Management and implementation

Experiences from previous joint evaluations have provided the following lessons and recommendations for effective joint evaluation:<sup>30</sup> A check list is available in the annexes of this section that will help to plan and organize any joint evaluations.

- Keep a simple and light management structure
- It is critical to have a core group of four or five (or less) agencies involved at an early stage to move it forward
- Delineate clear roles and responsibilities
- Decide which evaluation guidelines will be used
- Be clear of any donor or funding agency evaluation requirements and processes.
- Ensure adequate resources since joint evaluations require full-time coordination, administration, and research support
- Develop and apply a good communications and participation strategy to keep agencies involved
- Agree to speak with one voice to the evaluation team
- Ensure adequate funding, including a contingency budget (if, indeed, the dissemination and follow-up are not funded upfront)
- Start writing the TOR as early as possible
- Be as specific as possible about the purpose and objective of the evaluation in the TOR
- Ensure that all partner organizations/agencies have started early in collecting relevant information for the evaluation team
- Ensure sufficient time for drafting TORs, selecting evaluators, a kick-off meeting, and reviewing the draft inception and final reports.



**Joint evaluations follow the same approach as other evaluations, but each step in the evaluation process needs to be agreed by all parties. These steps are described in the annex of this section.**

## 2.14 Evaluations commissioned by donors or multilateral organizations

### Purpose and scope

Donor-funded projects and programmes may require evaluations, and these must be planned in advance and included in project documents. If evaluations are mandatory, this will be stated in the agreement between UNDP and the donor, and the timing and funding will be agreed in the project contract. These evaluations may be commissioned directly by the donor agencies or by UNDP.

### Management and implementation

Evaluations commissioned by donors should be planned and completed collaboratively, including developing the scope and methodology, and procedural matters should be agreed in advance with the donor. UNDP should ensure that donor partners share the draft report for comment prior to final issuance and completion.

**These evaluations should be included in programme unit evaluation plans and uploaded to the ERC website.** All UNDP evaluations are treated as public documents and this should be communicated to

<sup>30</sup> Adopted from UNEG, 2014, Resource Pack on Joint Evaluations. <http://uneval.org/document/detail/1620>

the donor. Where an evaluation is not planned and has not been included in the evaluation plan, the plan must be revised to include the new evaluation, and this must be uploaded to the ERC.

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

### Methodology and guidance

Commissioning donors and organizations may have their own evaluation guidance documents and standards, which will need to be followed alongside UNDP and UNEG guidance.

## Peace Building Fund (PBF) project evaluations

### Purpose and scope

According to the Guidance Note on PBF Project Operational and Financial Closure,<sup>31</sup> an independent project evaluation is one of the requirements for closing a project. The objectives of a PBF project evaluation are set out in the standard TOR and include:

- Assess the **relevance and appropriateness** of the project in terms of:
  - addressing key drivers of conflict and the most relevant peacebuilding issues;
  - alignment with National Peacebuilding Policy and national priorities of the country;
  - whether the project capitalized on the United Nations added value in the country; and
  - the degree to which the project addressed cross-cutting issues such as cross-border conflict dynamics, youth- and gender-responsiveness in the country.
- Assess the extent to which the PBF project has made a concrete **contribution to reducing a conflict factor** in the country and advancing achievement of the SDGs, in particular SDG 16.
- Evaluate the project's **efficiency**, including its implementation strategy, institutional arrangements, management and operational systems and value for money with particular regard to distribution of labour across multiple fund recipients through joint projects.
- Assess whether the support provided by the PBF has promoted the **Women, Peace and Security agenda**, allowed a specific focus on women's participation in peacebuilding processes, and was accountable to gender equality.
- Assess whether the project has been implemented through a **conflict-sensitive approach**.
- Document **good practices, innovations and lessons** emerging from the project.
- Provide **actionable recommendations** for future programming.

### Management and implementation

The evaluation is managed by the recipient agencies, under the supervision of the PBF Secretariat where this exists. Recipient agencies should be reminded about the evaluation requirements and need to provide support and oversight to the evaluation process, including on TORs and evaluation deliverables. PBF guidance stresses the need to ensure sufficient budgets relative to the investment to support high-quality evaluations, and PBF policies stipulate a minimum of 5-7 percent of the total project budget dedicated to monitoring and evaluation.

### Methodology and guidance

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<sup>31</sup> [https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf\\_guidance\\_note\\_on\\_project\\_closure\\_-\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/pbf_guidance_note_on_project_closure_-_2020.pdf)

PBF has developed a template for TORs of project evaluations, which are available to guide evaluation managers in the particular features of evaluations of peacebuilding interventions. PBF project evaluations can be structured around the following types of guiding questions:

<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was the project relevant in addressing the conflict drivers and factors for peace identified in the conflict analysis?</li> <li>▪ Was the project appropriate and strategic to the main peacebuilding goals and challenges in the country at the time of the project design? Did relevance continue throughout implementation?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent did the PBF project achieve its intended objectives and contribute to the Fund’s strategic vision?</li> <li>▪ To what extent did the PBF project substantively mainstream gender and support gender-responsive peacebuilding?</li> <li>▪ How appropriate and clear was the PBF project targeting strategy in terms of geographic and beneficiary targeting?</li> <li>▪ Was the project monitoring system adequately capturing data on peacebuilding results at an appropriate outcome level?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How efficient was the overall staffing, planning and coordination within the project (including between fund recipients, implementing partners and stakeholders)? Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent did the PBF project contribute to the broader strategic outcomes identified in nationally-owned strategic plans, legislative agendas and policies?</li> <li>▪ Did the project design include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project?</li> <li>▪ To what extent was the project financially catalytic?</li> </ul>
<b>Conflict-Sensitivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Did the PBF project have an explicit approach to conflict-sensitivity?</li> <li>▪ Were United Nations and non-UN recipient organizations’ internal capacities adequate for ensuring an ongoing conflict-sensitive approach?</li> <li>▪ Was the project responsible for any unintended negative impacts?</li> <li>▪ Was an ongoing process of context monitoring and a monitoring system that allows for monitoring of unintended impacts established?</li> </ul>

The PBF has also developed a checklist for evaluative exercises in the context of COVID-19.<sup>32</sup>

#### Box 12: European Commission Directorate evaluation guidance documents

- [Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development \(DG DEVCO\)](#)<sup>33</sup>
- [Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations \(DG ECHO\)](#)<sup>34</sup>
- [Directorate-General Regional and Urban Development \(DG REGIO\)](#)<sup>35</sup>

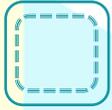
<sup>32</sup> Access at: <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund/documents/guidelines>

<sup>33</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-impact/monitoring-and-evaluation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/our-impact/monitoring-and-evaluation_en)

<sup>34</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/evaluations\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding-evaluations/evaluations_en)

<sup>35</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/evaluations/guidance/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/guidance/)

## Annex 1. Joint evaluation consideration checklist



### 1. Deciding on the need for a joint evaluation

It is important to assess whether the programme or project warrants a joint evaluation.

- Is the focus of the programme on an outcome that reaches across sectors and agencies?
- Is the programme co-financed by multiple partners?
- Would a joint evaluation reduce evaluation transaction costs?
- Can the project be evaluated (evaluability)?



### 2. Determining partners

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



### 3. Management structure

A recommended structure for a joint evaluation could have a steering group that oversees the evaluation process and a smaller management group to ensure smooth implementation.

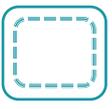
- The steering group comprises a representative from each partner organization and government entity.
- The steering group approves the TOR, and the evaluation team ensures oversight of the evaluation, introduces balance in the final evaluation judgements and takes responsibility for the use of results.



### 4. Division of work

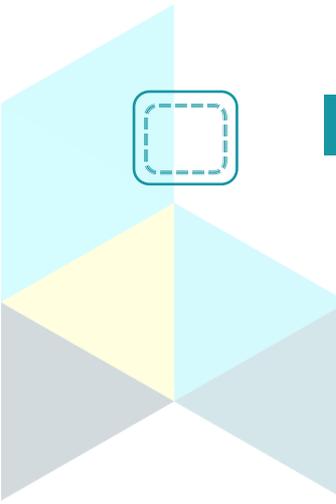
Senior management of the UNDP programme unit should agree with the evaluation partners on the decision-making arrangements and the division of labour at the outset of the evaluation process.

- This includes who in the management group takes the lead role in each of the subsequent steps in the evaluation.
- A conflict resolution process should be determined to deal with any problems that may arise.



### 5. Drafting the TOR

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

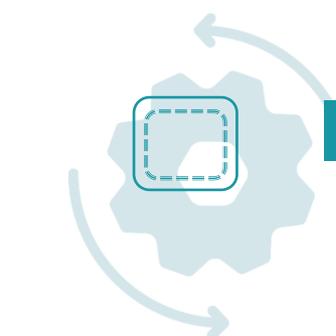


## 6. Determining whose procedures will be used

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

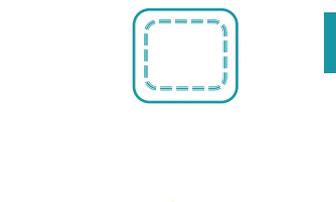
- Agree that the evaluation will be managed using the systems and procedures of one agency or
- Split the evaluation into components and agree whose systems will be used to manage which components.

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



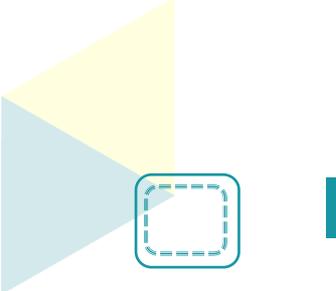
## 7. Funding modalities

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



## 8. Selecting evaluators

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



## 9. Report dissemination strategies

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



## 10. Management response, follow-up and implementing recommendations

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