United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Independent Evaluation Unit

Evaluation Handbook

A Practical Guide for use by UNODC Staff to plan, manage and follow up an evaluation

2008

Contents

Foreword

The present handbook was prepared for those involved in managing evaluations (evaluation managers) in UNODC. It is specifically aimed at assisting:

- Project and programme managers at headquarters and in field offices managing independent project evaluations and self-evaluations

- Field representatives supervising projects and programmes, including the evaluation of those projects and programmes

- The staff of the Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU) undertaking major and desk evaluations

- Independent consultants working as evaluators.

The handbook was produced as a reference document rather than as a book to be read from cover to cover. It can be accessed on the UNODC Intranet, as well as on the UNODC public Website (www.unodc.org).

This handbook supersedes the 2004 evaluation guidelines and subsequent guiding documents, takes into account the rapidly changing organizational structure of UNODC and aims to incorporate the current state of the art in evaluation of international technical assistance. It complements the UNODC evaluation policy.

Guiding principles

Based on the Norms for Evaluation in the United Nations System published by the United Nations Evaluation Group [1], the guiding principles of any evaluation should be the following:

- Evaluations must be utility-focused as a fundamental requirement for guaranteeing ownership by addressing the needs of stakeholders in UNODC projects and programmes .

- Evaluation is a learning tool which is why the evaluation process should be transparent and consultative. Participation enhances learning, since the reflection of different interests, needs and perceptions empowers all parties involved.

- Evaluations should lead to the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the policies, strategies and decision-making processes of UNODC.

- Overall the independence, objectivity and impartiality of the evaluation process must be upheld at all times, as these qualities give credibility and legitimacy to evidence-based evaluation results.

[1] See Annex II of the present handbook.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL EVALUATION GUIDANCE

A. What is evaluation?

UNODC agrees with the following definition of evaluation:

> **Evaluation** is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability[2].

B. UNODC evaluation criteria

As indicated in the above definition, UNODC focuses its evaluations on the criteria of **relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability**, each of which translates into a different set of questions to be answered.

Depending on the size of the project, the stage at which the evaluation is taking place and the time and budget available, an evaluation might focus on only some of these criteria, while putting less emphasis on others. All of this is to be specified in the terms of reference (ToR).

- The **relevance** of a project or programme is the extent to which its objectives are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies[3];

- **Efficiency** is a measure of how well inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into outputs[4];

- **Effectiveness** is the extent to which a project or programme attains its objectives and expected accomplishments and delivers planned outputs;[5]

- **Impact** is the positive or negative, primary and secondary long-term effect(s) produced by a project or programme, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended[6];

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[2] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* (Paris, 2002). For more definitions of evaluation terms, see the glossary in annex I.

3 Ibid.

[4] Office of Internal Oversight Services, Glossary of Monitoring and Evaluation Terms, available at: http://www.un.org/Depts/oios/mecd/mecd_glossary/index.htm.

[5] Ibid

- **Sustainability** is the extent to which the benefits of the project or programme will last after its termination and the probability of continued long-term benefits[7].

C. Why evaluate?

Evaluation provides a lesson-learning and management tool as well as a system for independent accountability both for UNODC and Member States, covering policy issues, programme and project design and implementation as well as management issues.

Evaluation as a tool for learning

UNODC is primarily interested in the **lessons to be learned from the work evaluated.** In other words, it wants **to learn about the factors that led to either success or failure of a particular activity, the results achieved and the wider applicability of those lessons**. The process of evaluation itself also creates an opportunity to **share insight and knowledge.** Evaluation should therefore be seen as a learning tool that empowers all stakeholders by expanding their knowledge base and enhancing their skills.

With a view to informing ongoing implementation, as well as future policy-making and new projects and programmes, evaluation at UNODC specifically looks at **best practices** and **lessons learned**.

> **Best practices** are the planning, organization, managerial and/or operational practices that have proven successful in particular circumstances and that can have both specific and/ or universal applicability. Best practices are used to demonstrate what works most effectively and to accumulate and apply knowledge about how and why they work in different situations and contexts[8].
>
> A **lesson learned** is a generalization derived from evaluation experiences with programmes, projects or policies that is applicable to a generic situation rather than to a specific circumstance and has the potential to improve future actions. It summarizes knowledge at a point in time, while learning is an ongoing process. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact[9].

Evaluation as a tool for ensuring accountability

> **Accountability** refers to the obligation that a manager of resources has to demonstrate that work has been conducted in compliance with the established plans, budgets, rules and standards and to report fairly and accurately on performance results. It includes responsibility for the

[6] OECD, op. cit.
[7] OIOS, op. cit
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid and OECD, op.cit.

justification of expenditures, decisions or results of the discharge of authority and official duties, including duties delegated to a subordinate unit or individual[10.]

With respect to accountability, evaluation is not a decision-making process per se, but rather serves as an input to provide decision-makers with knowledge and evidence about performance and good practices[11].

In UNODC, evaluation is aimed more specifically at:

- **accounting for the use of resources** to all UNODC stakeholders, including staff and management, donors, Member States and implementing partners, by providing objective evidence of what UNODC has achieved and what impact has been produced using the resources provided to the Office.

- **contributing to institutional policymaking, development and organizational effectiveness** by informing managerial decisions, present and future planning and strategies and policies within UNODC and among donors and Member States.

The balanced approach to evaluation adopted by UNODC

Lesson learning and accountability might appear to be in opposition, since participation and dialogue are necessary for learning, while independent, objective, impartial and external evaluation is usually considered a precondition for accountability.

The approach to evaluation adopted by UNODC is therefore to **balance** these twin purposes by **encouraging the wider participation and consultation of internal and external stakeholders during the planning, design and conduct of evaluations and the follow-up to them**, while **maintaining strict impartiality in framing conclusions and recommendations** (self-evaluation constituting an exception to the rule).

Evaluations carried out by UNODC are not scientific research. They are selective investigations aimed at collecting and analysing data, formulating conclusions and making recommendations of practical relevance to the operations of UNODC and its partners.

Evaluation is not fault-finding, nor does it aim at attributing praise or blame to particular individuals or institutions. Where the expected results have not been achieved, evaluation helps staff and partners to understand the reasons and offers advice on how to address them. Evaluation must therefore be understood as a service to the project or programme and to UNODC management.

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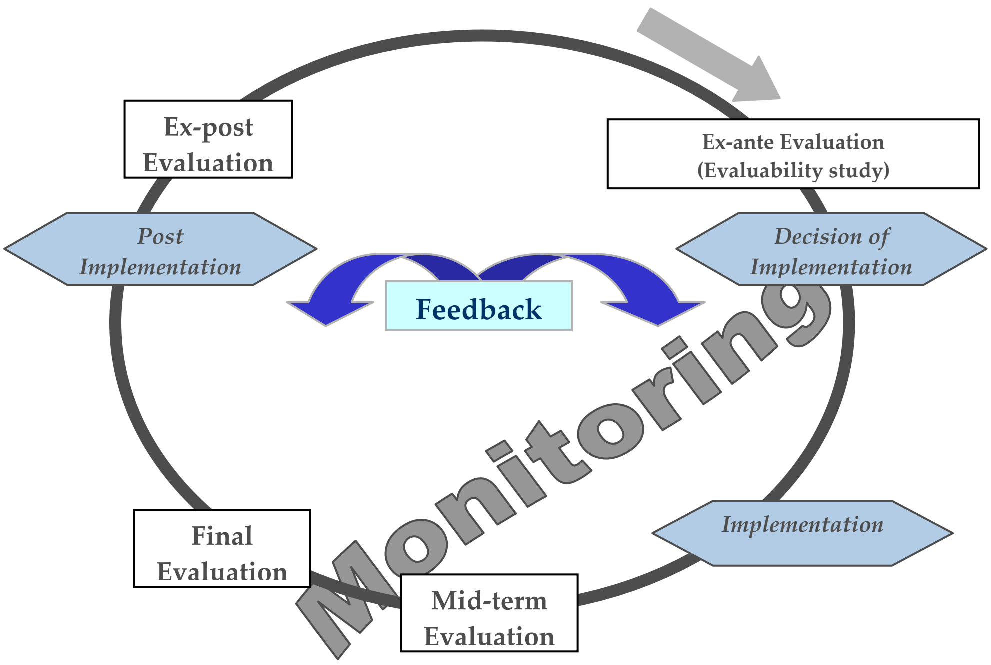
[10] OIOS, op.cit..
[11] United Nations Evaluation Group, *Norms for Evaluation in the UN System* (2005). See Annex II of the present handbook.

D. Evaluation in the project-cycle management and results-based management systems of UNODC

Monitoring and evaluation activities are integral parts of project cycle management (PCM) and a pre-requisite for successful results-based management (RBM).



In the planning phase of a project or programme, an **ex-ante evaluation** can be conducted **before the proposal is submitted for approval**. This evaluation assesses the design and logic of the intervention in order to estimate in advance whether it can achieve the expected results[12]. It also identifies the relevance of the project or programme with regard to UNODC policy and strategic priorities, and appraises the costs and possible alternative interventions.

When planning a whole new project or programme (or a new project or programme phase), **relevant recommendations, best practices and lessons learned from previous evaluations** (first phase or similar project or programme in the same country or elsewhere) should be **integrated into the new project or programme document**.

In the project or programme document, provision should be made by the project or programme manager, in consultation with counterparts in the country, for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the project or programme. The costs for related activities ought to be included in the

[12] OECD, op.cit.

proposed budget. Important **elements of a monitoring and evaluation system** are:

- the logical framework matrix of the project or programme, including key indicators (for all results levels: objective(s), outcome(s), outputs, and key activities);
- the identification of milestones and risks;
- the establishment of a baseline and of a mechanism to collect data throughout the project.

Before the project or programme has started, an **evaluability study** may take place to determine the extent to which a project or programme can later be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion[13]. Such a study examines the monitoring and evaluation system, in particular determining whether the project or programme indicators are defined adequately, whether the results are verifiable and whether the baselines and performance indicators enable a credible evaluation to be undertaken in the future.

Once implementation has started, the monitoring and evaluation plan can be refined as needed to take into account any change in the project environment. The performance indicators will then be used for **regular monitoring** to assess progress made towards the achievement of the project objective.

Half-way through the implementation of a project or programme, a **mid-term evaluation** is usually performed (depending on the size and budget of the project, as indicated in chapter I section E.1.1 below on independent project evaluations). This evaluation uses baseline and monitoring data, among other items of information, to assess whether the performance indicators and milestones have been reached and whether sufficient progress has been made for the objectives to be achieved on time and within the available resources, and it recommends corrective measures if needed.

In UNODC **ex-post evaluations** are usually conducted shortly before or after the end of a project or programme (**final evaluation**). The intention is to identify the factors of success or failure, to assess the sustainability of the benefits generated and the potential long-term effects of the project or programme after funding has ceased, and to draw conclusions that may inform other interventions[14].

E. Types of evaluation in UNODC

Different types of evaluation are conducted in UNODC. Staff in headquarters units and sections, as well as field offices, manage self-evaluations and independent project evaluations, while the Independent

[13] OIOS, op.cit.
[14] Based on the definition given in OECD, op.cit.

Evaluation Unit (IEU) conducts desk evaluations and major evaluations and prepares an Annual Evaluation Report.

1 Evaluations conducted by project and programme managers from headquarters and field offices

1.1 Independent project evaluation

A project evaluation is the evaluation of an individual project designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources, in an adopted time span and following an established plan of action, often within the framework of a broader programme. The basis of evaluation should be built into the project document[15].

In UNODC, projects are independently evaluated whenever **at least one of the criteria listed below applies**[16]. The evaluation process is managed by the project or programme manager in consultation with the Independent Evaluation Unit.

Area	Criteria
Budget threshold	• US$ 500,000 or more as total budget, including cost-sharing, donor contributions and possible successor phases • US$ 250,000 or more in the case of pilot projects
Duration	• Four years or more, including possible successor phases, even if the budget is less than US$ 500,000 • When the duration of the project is to be at least 50 per cent longer than originally planned
Risks	• The preconditions for the project have changed significantly • The project is difficult to implement successfully in view of the risks involved or the uncertainty of the assumptions identified in the project document • The project has encountered serious operational difficulties • The project is expected to fall significantly short of the planned outputs and objectives
Relevance	• The project has demonstrated innovation and extraordinary success that promises to deliver lessons learned and best practices to other projects or to UNODC as a whole • The project is expected to significantly exceed the planned outputs and objectives
Funding	• Donor requirement

[15] Based on the definition given in OIOS, op.cit.
[16] See UNODC/MI/7/Rev.1, Annex 1.

A **mid-term evaluation** will be performed towards the middle of the period of implementation for projects whose duration is four years or more or at the end of a project phase (in the case of a phased approach). A **final evaluation** must take place for all projects fulfilling at least one of the above criteria.

For both mid-term and final evaluations, the **project or programme manager acts as evaluation manager** during the planning process, the actual evaluation exercise and the drafting and finalisation of the report.

The project or programme manager is **supported by the Independent Evaluation Unit** who provides **guidelines, formats**, **assistance and advice** on evaluation procedures and practices. The Unit also ought to provide **clearance** at the different stages of the process, namely of the terms of reference (ToR), of the final selection of evaluators and of the final draft evaluation report.

Best practices and lessons learned from the project evaluation will then be extracted by the Independent Evaluation Unit for wider circulation in order to promote organizational learning. The implementation of evaluation **recommendations** is the responsibility of project and programme managers, who should develop and monitor implementation plans. The main issues from each project evaluation are also incorporated into the Annual Evaluation Report, prepared by the Unit.

The planning and management of evaluations is presented in greater detail in chapter II below, which provides step-by-step guidance.

1.2. Self-evaluation: a specific case of evaluation

> **A self-evaluation** is an evaluation carried out by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of a project or programme[17].

Self-evaluations promote **self-learning** and enhance the ownership of evaluation results. They provide the team managing a project, however small, with an opportunity to **take a step back and reflect**, to examine what it has done and how it has done it, to learn from that implementation experience and to improve project management. Self-evaluation strengthens annual monitoring and helps to create a culture of evaluation.

Within UNODC, self-evaluations are performed for projects which do not fit the criteria for an independent project evaluation. They are undertaken **on an annual basis by project and programme managers** together with the project team, following a specific format (see Annex VI).

2 Evaluations managed by the Independent Evaluation Unit

2.1. Desk Evaluation

[17] OECD, op.cit.

The Independent Evaluation Unit has the authority to undertake desk evaluations for projects with a budget of between US$ 100,000 and US$ 500,000, and for projects that are considered strategically important for UNODC. This may include for example comprehensive assessments of a number of self-evaluations in order to bring about a better understanding of cross-cutting themes or issues affecting various regions.

The Unit, in consultation with project and programme managers, identifies projects for desk evaluation. The evaluation process makes use of self-evaluation reports, semi-annual and annual project progress reports, quarterly reports by field offices and financial reports available on the Programme and Financial Information Management System (ProFi). These are supplemented by further information obtained through e-mail, telephone and possibly face-to-face interviews at headquarters. Draft and final desk evaluation reports are shared with the relevant offices.

2.2. Major evaluations

Major evaluations are usually large-scale strategic evaluations, such as **country programme evaluations, regional evaluations** and **thematic evaluations**. The range of possible major evaluations is wide, depending on the focus, purpose or complexity of the analysis required and on the human and financial resources available to conduct it.

Over the four years of the strategy for the period 2008-2011 for UNODC (Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/12, annex), the Unit aims to evaluate the **full range of UNODC areas of assistance through major evaluations**. This is done on the basis of the Unit's **medium term evaluation framework,** which is aligned to the Strategy for the period 2008-2011 for UNODC and has been approved by the Executive Committee of UNODC.

Each year, the Executive Committee endorses the **Units annual work plan,** which is based on the medium term evaluation framework and details the evaluation priorities for the year. The Unit conducts between two and four major evaluations each year.

Possible focus/subject **WHAT** will be looked at in the evaluation?	• Overall UNODC strategy • Specific theme or result area within the UNODC strategy • Regional or country programme: geographical area (country or region), where one or several themes would be evaluated • Topic proposed by UNODC staff or donors as an area of particular interest • Global project or programme • Specific project or programme (for example, evaluation of a large project for which the Unit supports project and programme managers more intensively than during an independent project evaluation)

Possible purpose **WHY** is this evaluation being conducted?	• To learn lessons and determine best practices that can be used for the design of new projects and programmes • To increase accountability towards donors • To share knowledge within UNODC and with key stakeholders • To make decisions about whether to extend or roll out a project or programme • To assess impact

Methodology used and complexity of the analysis **HOW** detailed will the methodology be, keeping in mind the purpose of the evaluation and the time and resources available?	• Level 1: desk review of relevant documents • Level 2: desk review of documents in addition to interviews over the phone and, perhaps, questionnaires sent by e-mail (without a need for travel) • Level 3: desk review of documents in addition to field visits, face-to-face interviews at headquarters and in field offices and, possibly, specific data collection exercises (e-mail questionnaires, workshops, telephone interviews etc.)

Undertaking major evaluations differs from undertaking other types of UNODC evaluations because of their relative size, geographical scope, the longer time frame covered and the greater complexity of methodological evaluation instruments used. Major evaluations usually require extensive consultation, take longer to complete, command significantly larger budgets, produce reports shared with a wider audience and are complex processes to manage.

The Independent Evaluation Unit uses its own staff alongside external consultants to undertake major evaluations. The Unit also ensures that the **relevant UNODC headquarters units/sections and/or field offices** that will use the findings of these major evaluations are **involved throughout the whole evaluation process** (through a Core Learning Partnership), and, specifically, at the different key stages: preparation of the terms of reference; selection of the evaluators, briefing of and interviews with the evaluation team, holding of a feedback session after the field missions and submission of comments on the draft evaluation report before finalization.

2.3 Annual Evaluation Report

The Unit is responsible for preparing the Annual Evaluation Report a **meta-evaluation, that summarizes the major findings from evaluations undertaken both by the Unit and by project and programme managers during a given year**.

The Annual Evaluation Reports offer UNODC senior management, donors, stakeholders and the wider public an overview of major issues raised by the evaluations, including recommendations, lessons learned and emerging best practices.

A management response by the UNODC's Executive Committee constitutes part of the final version of the reports, which are then published on the Internet.

F. The different actors involved in an evaluation

1 Evaluation managers

Field offices and units and sections at headquarters are **responsible for funding and managing self-evaluations and independent project evaluations**.

For independent project evaluations, the Independent Evaluation Unit **should be consulted** to obtain guidance, methodological support and **final clearance** of the terms of reference (ToR), the selection of consultants and the final evaluation report. A detailed explanation will follow in section II below.

For **self-evaluations**, a copy of the completed report (also accessible on ProFi) should be **forwarded to IEU**, which will extract major findings and recommendations and include them in its Annual Evaluation Report for that year.

IEU staff are responsible for funding and managing major and desk evaluations.

The role of IEU in the UNODC evaluation process is described in greater details in the terms of reference of the Unit annexed to the UNODC Evaluation Policy.

2 Evaluation Team

An evaluation team consists of a **team leader**, and depending on the size and complexity of the project evaluated, of **inter-disciplinary local and international team members with evaluation expertise**. The involvement of local consultants is important since they speak the local language and are familiar with the local socio-cultural context. Furthermore, involving local evaluators helps to strengthen the local evaluation capacity.

Given the scope of most independent project evaluations, the evaluation is conducted by only one consultant with both technical and evaluation expertise.

Independent project evaluations ought to be conducted by evaluators who have had no prior involvement in the design or implementation of the project or programme to be evaluated. These are usually independent consultants, external to UNODC. In the case of **major evaluations and desk evaluations**, the evaluation manager of IEU is also a member of the evaluation team. He or she may even fulfil the function of team leader.

The evaluation **team leader** acts as the primary liaison **with the evaluation manager** (in the respective units and sections at headquarters and field offices or in IEU). He or she bears the **primary responsibility for the evaluation, coordinates the input provided by the various team members and ensures the timely undertaking of the evaluation and a smooth evaluation process**. This requires technical expertise, evaluation skills and experience, as well as good interpersonal, management, facilitation, writing and presentation skills. The specific tasks of the team leader ought to be reflected in the terms of reference (ToR). The following text provides an example of how a description of the tasks of the team leader might read:

- Works closely with the evaluation manager and manages the team throughout the process to ensure that all aspects of the terms of reference are fulfilled;

- Oversees the finalization of the evaluation methodology, in compliance with the evaluation norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) (see annexes II and III of the present handbook);

- Facilitates discussion among the team members on the findings, conclusions and recommendations;

- Together with the evaluation manager, facilitates the feedback session at the end of the field mission and receives comments from the different stakeholders;

- Finalizes the draft evaluation report, with the input received from the different team members;

- Produces the final report, incorporating relevant comments from stakeholders, and presents it at a stakeholder workshop (if required).

Each **team member** is responsible for a certain part of the evaluation exercise, usually for conducting some of the data collection and drafting input for parts of the evaluation report, including findings, conclusions and recommendations. The terms of reference ought to provide a detailed description of the qualifications required for each team member and the deliverables expected.

In the case of independent project evaluations, each party (UNODC, beneficiary Government and donors) to the project or programme is invited to nominate an evaluator and/or to participate in the selection of the evaluation team. The parties may also nominate observers to the evaluation team. The parties and IEU should jointly approve the evaluation team. In cases where the contribution of another funding agency exceeds that of UNODC, the team leader may be nominated by that agency in consultation with IEU.

In the specific case of self-evaluations, project or programme managers, together with the project team, are in charge of undertaking the full process. This usually does not involve any external consultant. At any point during the process IEU may be consulted for advice and guidance. A copy of the final report should also be sent to the Unit.

3 A participatory approach: involving stakeholders

A key lesson learned from evaluation practice over the past 20 years is that **the higher the degree of participation by the stakeholders throughout the evaluation, the stronger their commitment to the process, their ownership of the subsequent evaluation results, and their willingness to implement the recommendations**. Lessons can also be shared more quickly as they emerge during the evaluation itself, making it unnecessary to wait for the circulation of a final report.

Stakeholders in the UNODC evaluation context include **staff from relevant units and sections of UNODC headquarters and in field offices, beneficiary Governments, implementing partners**, **donors, project beneficiaries** and other actors involved in activities related to the programme or project evaluated (Non-Governmental Organisations, United

Nations organizations, other international organizations, research institutes etc.), as appropriate.

Taking into account the time and cost implications of a wider participatory approach, evaluation managers must often strike a balance between the value of interested parties' contributions and the costs of consultative events.

As presented in more details below ("Forming core learning partnerships"), **key stakeholders** may participate in the evaluation process through core learning partnerships. These partnerships are formed as early as during the planning stage of an evaluation exercise in order to create a common understanding among key stakeholders regarding the purpose, approach to and future use of the evaluation and to ensure consensus on the focus to be adopted and the methodology to be used. **Other stakeholders** may still be involved as key informants at a later stage in the evaluation process.

UNODC staff members ought to be invited to **contribute their viewpoints** during independent project evaluations and major evaluations. It is up to the independent evaluation team, however, to decide which of their comments, conclusions, and recommendations will be included in the evaluation report.

In the specific case of self-evaluation however, project or programme managers together with the project team are expected to draft the evaluation report. IEU provides support upon request.

All stakeholders need to be treated with **sensitivity**. It is in particular important to ensure that the voices of women and other vulnerable groups are heard and recognized during consultations.

4 Forming core learning partnerships

Core learning partnerships[18] bring together a small group of UNODC staff who represent different sections and units at headquarters and in field offices and relevant key stakeholders with an **interest in the outcomes of the evaluation**.

Establishing a core learning partnership is **recommended** as a way of encouraging a **participatory evaluation process** from the planning to the reporting stage. This creates a common understanding of the evaluation approach and helps promote the use of evaluation results throughout UNODC. Furthermore the formation of such a partnership helps to ensure regular, structured and formal two-way communication during an often long and complex process.

In the case of independent project evaluations the members of the core learning partnership might be project staff, representatives of the project or programme implementers and partners, and project or programme

[18] Core Learning Partnerships are already operating successfully in the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

beneficiaries. This idea, which has long been applied in UNODC through the concept of tripartite review (involving UNODC, the beneficiary Governments and the donors), could also be used for self-evaluations.

For evaluations conducted by IEU, the core learning partnership may involve key people from UNODC headquarters and field offices, as well as other stakeholders as deemed relevant.

Despite the challenge posed by different time zones, limited access to telecommunication services and difficult working environments, **the involvement of field office staff in the** core learning partnership is encouraged.

The core learning partnership should be established at the planning stage of the evaluation, and its members ought to be invited to comment on the draft terms of Reference (ToR). At the end of a field mission, the evaluation team should submit its preliminary findings to the members of the core learning partnership and invite them to give feedback. It is advisable to organize a specific meeting for this purpose (in addition to a session involving all stakeholders if necessary). The discussion with the core learning partnership allows evaluators to discuss the concerns raised in the draft report. This process also helps to avoid or at least reduce possible resistance to conclusions and recommendations. Once the data collection process is finalised members of the core learning partnership will be invited to provide feedback on the draft evaluation report.

The intensive involvement of the core learning partnership also affords an opportunity for its members to understand the lessons emerging from the evaluation and, in some cases, to start applying those lessons even before the evaluation report is published. Once the final report is circulated, the members of the core learning partnership may also act as advocates for the recommendations, thereby speeding up the spread of good practices.

G. The UNODC evaluation process step by step

This figure gives a complete overview of the evaluation process at UNODC. The chapters below provide a more detailed and practical step-by-step description of the evaluation process.

Planning the evaluation
❑ Building evaluation into the project or programme design
❑ Clarifying responsibilities
❑ Assessing evaluability
❑ Clarifying the purpose of the evaluation
❑ Clarifying the scope of the evaluation
❑ Scheduling an evaluation
❑ Budgeting for an evaluation
❑ Determining the skills needed in the evaluation team
❑ Forming core learning partnerships
❑ Drafting the terms of reference of the evaluation
❑ Recruiting the evaluation team
❑ Determining logistics and carrying out preparatory work
Undertaking the evaluation
❑ Briefing the evaluation team
❑ Carrying out a desk review of existing documentation
❑ Finalizing the evaluation methodology
❑ Inviting stakeholders' views: field missions and interviews
❑ Arranging a debriefing session
❑ Drafting an evaluation report
❑ Finalising an evaluation report
❑ Filling in the evaluation assessment questionnaire
❑ The specific case of self-evaluation
Using the evaluation
❑ Involving the users of an evaluation.
❑ Drafting an implementation plan for evaluation recommendations
❑ Disseminating the evaluation report
❑ Disseminating lessons learned and best practices
❑ Implementing evaluation recommendations

CHAPTER II

PLANNING AN EVALUATION IN UNODC

Planning an evaluation process early and carefully, in consultation with key stakeholders in UNODC and with other partners lays the groundwork for a successful evaluation. Planning for a large scale evaluation may take as long as six months, in order to finalize the terms of reference, to recruit an evaluation team and to sort out the logistics, before the team is able to start working.

A. Building evaluation into the programme or project design

Evaluation must be built into the programme or project design. Most importantly, all newly designed programmes or projects (or phases) should **integrate** the **recommendations and lessons learned from previous evaluation exercises**. These include results of evaluations of pilot projects, of previous phases and of similar programmes or projects.

The programme and project document should also **clearly state what kind of evaluation will be conducted** and indicate the **proposed timing.**

Furthermore, programme and project documents ought to include a **detailed logical framework** as well as a **systematic monitoring and evaluation plan.** The monitoring and evaluation system comprises the identification of key performance indicators (both for progress and for impact), milestones and risks, as well as the establishment of a baseline (if none already exists) and of a mechanism to collect data throughout the project. The costs of related activities must be included in the proposed budget.

In addition, enough money should be set aside to cover evaluation costs. It is advised that **2 to 3 per cent of the project budget** should be reserved already **at the project design stage** (under budget line 1600) for independent project evaluation (mid-term and/or final as appropriate).

Under the decentralized procedure of UNODC[19] it is the responsibility of the UNODC's Programme and Project Committee, in the case of Headquarters-based programmes and projects [20], and of UNODC Representatives, in the case of new field-based projects and revisions approved at the field level, to ensure that adequate funds are provided for evaluation.

[19] See UNODC Management Instruction 2007/2.
[20] See UNODC Management Instruction 2007/1.

On a yearly basis, all units and sections of UNODC headquarters and field offices must prepare a list of projects to be evaluated during a particular year, and submit the list to the Direction of Operations, with a copy to IEU.

On the basis of this list, each unit, section and field office should also plan adequately in advance the time and resources needed for each evaluation to be undertaken under its responsibility, in order to ensure that each exercise is performed in a timely and efficient way.

B. Clarifying responsibilities

At the beginning of every evaluation, it is important for the evaluation manager to **clarify which headquarters unit/section or field office is responsible for undertaking the evaluation**. The respective responsibilities should then be clearly spelled out in the terms of reference for the evaluation.

For independent project evaluations managed by project and programme managers, IEU should be consulted for guidance and methodological support, as well as comments and final clearance in respect of the terms of reference, the selection of consultants and the final report. It is the responsibility of the relevant unit or section at headquarters or field office in charge to draft the terms of reference, to organize the recruitment of the evaluation team, to make all relevant documentation available, to seek the participation of and liaise with relevant stakeholders in briefings of and discussions with the evaluation team, to interact with the team on the findings and recommendations and to support the logistics of the field mission.

For self-evaluations, IEU will also provide support throughout the process and clear the final document.

IEU manages and funds all major evaluations. It is its responsibility to draft the terms of reference, to select the evaluation team, to make all relevant documentation available, to seek the participation of relevant field offices or units and sections at headquarters in briefings of and discussions with the evaluation team, to liaise with key stakeholders, to interact with the team on the findings and recommendations, to support the logistics of the field mission and to clear the final report.

C. Assessing evaluability

Before involving key stakeholders in the planning process for an evaluation, it is worth assessing **the extent to which it is actually possible to evaluate the project or programme.** The following questions might guide this process:

- Are baseline data available to track change processes?
- Have monitoring reports been produced and stored?

- Are key informants available for interviews?

- Is the political context in the country conducive to consultation with and the participation of key stakeholders?

- Does the timing of the evaluation fit into the programme or project cycle?

- Does the security situation in the country allow for field missions?

- Is the budget sufficient for the evaluation exercise envisaged?

In the case of complex evaluations, in particular for major evaluations, a **pre-evaluation field mission** may be planned to carry out a first assessment of the situation and to gather information on the evaluability of the project or programme in order to be able to draft more specific Terms of Reference; and hence to better plan the actual evaluation mission.

D. Clarifying the purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation manager needs to clarify for what purpose the evaluation is being carried out at this specific time. Several issues need to be addressed:

- **Who initiated the evaluation?**

The evaluation might have been foreseen in the project document, decided on by UNODC senior management, requested by donors or identified for strategic reasons by IEU.

- **What type of evaluation is planned?**

The exercise might be a self-evaluation, an independent project evaluation, a desk evaluation or a major evaluation.

- **Who is the evaluation manager?**

Field offices or units or sections at headquarters are responsible for funding and managing self-evaluations and independent project evaluations, while it is the responsibility of IEU to fund and manage all other evaluations.

- **Why is the evaluation being undertaken and what will it seek to accomplish?**

Usually the purpose of an evaluation is to derive recommendations, best practices and lessons learned from measuring the achievements, outcomes and impact (both positive and negative) produced by the programme or project, to be used for improving project and programme planning, design and management. Evaluation results can also be used to feed into a specific decision-making process, e.g. for continuing, rolling out or terminating the project or programme.

- **Why is it being undertaken now?**

An evaluation can be undertaken halfway through a project or after the project has been implemented. The reasons for choosing the specific timing for an evaluation must be documented.

- **Who are the main stakeholders of the evaluation and how will they be involved?**

The evaluation manager needs to identify the stakeholders who are expected to make use of the evaluation results. This group ought to be involved throughout the entire evaluation process. The level and nature of stakeholders' involvement ought to be specified as early as possible during the planning stage. Some stakeholders might be invited to participate in a **core learning partnership**.

The evaluation manager also needs to identify those stakeholders who will be consulted in the course of the evaluation exercise. This group includes the future users of the evaluation results (as mentioned above) and others, for example stakeholders who are consulted because they are key informants or because they have an interest or stake in the programme or project to be evaluated.

E. Clarifying the scope of the evaluation

The scope of the evaluation constitutes the core of the terms of reference of the evaluation. The part of the terms of reference on scope should state clearly **what the evaluation aims to find out** and **what the evaluation will focus on**. This aspect should, to the extent possible, be discussed with all major stakeholders.

In clarifying the scope, the following points should first be determined:

- **The period** to be covered by the evaluation (e.g. 2000 -2004);

- **The geographical coverage of the evaluation** (e.g. global, regional, sub-regional, national or sub-national);

- **The thematic coverage of the evaluation**.

The key questions to be answered by the evaluation relate to the quality criteria that UNODC programmes and projects are expected to fulfil: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability** and **impact**. They can be connected to the project concept and design, the project implementation and deliverables (outputs and outcomes), and management issues.

Depending on the purpose of the evaluation exercise, the size of the programme or project, the stage at which the evaluation is taking place and the resources available (in terms of time, budget and staff), the evaluation might focus on selected quality criteria (for instance on the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the programme or project) and put less emphasis on other criteria.

Please note that the questions below are generic sample questions that need to be tailored to the particular project or programme and to the specific context; they should not simply be copied from these guidelines.

Key evaluation questions should **cover some or all of the following** areas:

- **Relevance**

To what extent is the project or programme aligned with the policies and strategies of the partner country, UNODC, other United Nations organizations and bilateral donors?

Is the project or programme the appropriate solution to the problems it is intended to address?

Does the project or programme eliminate the root causes of the problems?

Are the objectives of the project or programme still relevant? Is the problem addressed still a major problem?

What is the value of the project or programme in relation to other priority needs and efforts made to solve it?

Is the project or programme in line with the priority areas for technical cooperation identified by UNODC and does it make use of the Office's comparative advantage?

- **Effectiveness**

Has the project or programme achieved its objectives and results (outputs, outcomes, and impact)? If not, has some progress been made towards their achievement?

What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the project or programme objectives?

Has a project or programme monitoring system been set up, including a baseline survey, to make possible proper monitoring throughout the project or programme?

To what extent is the progress made so far the result of the project or programme rather than of external factors?

What can be done to make the project or programme more effective?

Were recommendations, lessons learned and best practices from evaluations of similar projects and previous phases considered when planning the project?

- **Efficiency**

Has the budget been allocated and spent as planned?

Is the project delivering on time?

Has the staff been selected and recruited in a timely manner?

Compared with alternative approaches to accomplishing the same objectives, has progress been made at an acceptable cost?

Could more have been achieved with the same input?

Could the same have been achieved with less input? Would alternative approaches accomplish the same results at a lower cost?

What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?

To what extent are the organizational structure of UNODC, the managerial support provided to the programme or project, and the coordination mechanisms used by UNODC supporting the project or programme?

- **Impact**

This part is especially important with regard to human and institutional capacity-building in developing countries.

What difference has the project or programme made to beneficiaries?

What are the intended or unintended positive and negative long-term social, economic, technical, environmental, and other effects on individuals, communities, and institutions?

What are the micro- or macro-level long-term social, economic, technical, environmental, and other effects on individuals, communities, and institutions?

- **Sustainability**

This part is especially important with regard to human and institutional capacity-building in developing countries.

To what extent will the benefits generated through the programme or project be sustained after the end of donor funding?

Have the beneficiaries taken ownership of the objectives to be achieved by the project or programme? Are they committed to continue working towards these objectives once the programme / project has ended?

Is their engagement likely to continue, be scaled up, replicated or institutionalized after external funding ceases?

Is the host institution developing the capacity and motivation to efficiently administer the initiative?

Can the initiative become self-sustaining financially?

- **Lessons learned and best practices**

What lessons can be learned from the project or programme implementation in order to improve performance, results and effectiveness in the future?

What best practices emerged from the project or programme implementation? Can they realistically be replicated?

What lessons can be drawn from unintended results?

F. Scheduling an evaluation

Bearing in mind that the evaluation should provide information in a timely manner, so that it becomes available when the programme or project needs it most, the evaluation manager should determine a **schedule for when to carry out a mid-term or final evaluation**, taking into account:

- The time needed for the evaluation team to gather and organise the data needed to answer the key evaluation questions (desk review, briefing of evaluators, field visits, interviews, debriefing);

- The time needed for data analysis and preparation of the draft report;

- The time needed for stakeholders (including IEU) to comment on the draft report;

- The time needed for the consultants to accommodate those comments;

- The time needed for IEU to clear the final report;

- Travel days and national holidays.

A **detailed timetable** and a **breakdown of days** worked by **consultants** should be included in the terms of reference of the evaluation.

G. Budgeting for an evaluation

UNODC **independent project evaluations** and **self-evaluations** are financed from **project budgets**. IEU advises that **2 to 3 per cent of a project budget** should be reserved for independent project evaluations (mid-term and/or final evaluation) **at the project design stage** (under budget line 1600). Although **self-evaluations** may not entail extra staff costs, they also need to be scheduled and budgeted, as they may involve additional travel costs or workshop costs for consulting with stakeholders.

IEU finances **major evaluations** from **its own budget**. However, a major evaluation managed by the Unit sometimes looks at a UNODC global project or encompasses independent project evaluations (mid-term or final) that were due as per the project schedule. In that case, the Unit and the relevant units or sections at headquarters and field offices could consider sharing the costs of the major evaluation, using the money that was set aside for evaluation in the initial project budget.

When drafting the terms of reference for an evaluation, a more detailed evaluation budget ought to be prepared, which will also help to remain realistic when describing the focus and scope of the evaluation. A budgetary shortfall towards the end of the evaluation (resulting, for example, in the impossibility of gathering all the data needed or in the cancellation of field visits) can be avoided right from the outset, if the components of the evaluation budget are made explicit.

The following elements need to be taken into account when calculating the costs of an evaluation:

- **The number of** external **consultants** who are part of the evaluation team;

- The fees to be paid;[21]

- **The number of UNODC staff** (from headquarters and field offices) who need to **travel with the team;**

- **The number of people** involved with the evaluation team in the **initial briefing, the location** of this briefing and **whether getting there implied any** additional **travel costs**;

- The number of days required for reading the background documentation (**desk study**) and **finalizing the details** of the evaluation (methodology and evaluation matrix);

- The number of **countries and locations** in each country to be visited, the kind of international and local **travel arrangements** required and the cost of such travel;

- The number of people staying away from their home bases, and the location and the length of their stay as well as the **daily subsistence rates**[22] in the different locations to be visited;

[21] Fees depend on the experience of the consultant and can be obtained from the Human Resources Management Service.
[22] The relevant daily subsistence allowance rates for various countries and cities are available on Profi.

- The kind of **linguistic support** (for example interpretation) required in the different locations, the number of days for which such support is needed and the related cost;

- Whether the evaluators need to meet with particular groups during **stakeholders' workshops and debriefing sessions** and whether it is necessary to book accommodation for the meeting and cover the cost of refreshments and meals;

- The number of days needed by the consultants to **write the first draft**, **respond to comments** from stakeholders and **amend the final report** (as they may write from home, no daily subsistence allowance will be required, but fees will need to be covered);

- Whether the team leader will have to **present the final report** in person and, if so, whether travelling costs and fees need to be included.

H. Determining the skills and qualifications the evaluation team members ought to have

For small-scale projects, one consultant supported by the evaluation manager might be able to undertake the whole evaluation on his or her own. However, for large-scale evaluations or evaluations of technically complex projects, a well-balanced evaluation team composed of members with complementary skills is usually required.

Evaluation consultants are selected for their technical and evaluation skills and experience and their local or country knowledge, depending on the specificity of each project. They must also have an understanding and experience of evaluation concepts, techniques and ethics, and know how to work well as part of an international team. Whenever possible, local consultants should also be included since they are familiar with the local context and speak the local language. The involvement of local consultants also contributes towards building local evaluation capacity.

When a team of several consultants is needed, the team leader plays a key role in getting the team to work together in a smooth and efficient way. Besides having relevant technical and evaluation experience the team leader should therefore have effective management, interpersonal, facilitation, writing and presentation skills, as the team leader's working style may also affect the acceptance of evaluation results.

In order to promote transparency and ensure the maximum objectivity of evaluations, UNODC relies on external evaluators selected on the basis of their competence, independence and integrity. **No member of the evaluation team should have been previously involved in the design or implementation of the project or programme to be evaluated**. To ensure a professional evaluation, the evaluators are guided by the norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system produced by the United Nations Evaluation Group.

In addition to external evaluators, evaluations managed by IEU should always include have a Unit staff member, appointed by the Chief of the Unit, in the evaluation team (in some cases, acting as the team leader). This staff member also fulfils the function of evaluation manager.

Getting the gender balance right in an evaluation team is important as female evaluators may have easier access to women and can encourage them to participate in discussions and express their views. However, even more important than the sex of the evaluators is their knowledge and commitment to gender issues. It is better to have on the team a gender-sensitive man who has received training on gender issues than a gender-insensitive woman.

I. <u>Drafting the terms of reference (ToR) of the evaluation.</u>

Most of the chapters above (on purpose, scope, timing, budgeting etc.) actually come together in the various parts of the terms of reference, as described below, since the terms of reference of the evaluation reflect the evaluation manager's understanding of the overall framework of the evaluation.

Usually the terms of reference of the evaluation are developed by the evaluation manager in close consultation with the key evaluation stakeholders including the members of the core learning partnership. The terms of reference furthermore constitute the basic agreement with the evaluators regarding the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the procedures to be followed and the deliverables the evaluators are expected to produce. The terms of reference form an integral part of the contract between UNODC and the independent evaluators.

Well-considered and well-written terms of reference, with sufficient clarity and details, are therefore the foundation of a good evaluation and should contain the following information:

- Background information on the project or programme;
- Purpose of the evaluation;
- Scope of the evaluation (including evaluation questions grouped around UNODC evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability);
- Evaluation methodology;
- Composition of the evaluation team;
- Planning and implementation arrangements (including time frame and budget).

The full requirements and format for UNODC terms of reference of evaluation are set out in annex IV to these guidelines.

Project and programme managers are responsible for drafting the terms of reference for independent project evaluations and self-evaluations. The cost of fulfilling the terms of reference should not exceed the evaluation budget earmarked in the initial project document. Terms of reference should always be developed in a participatory manner, through consultations with the core learning partnership. IEU offers guidance during the drafting process, and reviews, comments and clears the terms of reference. Once the terms of reference are cleared the project and programme managers proceed with the actual evaluation.

For major and desk evaluations, IEU drafts the terms of reference, in consultation with relevant units and sections at headquarters and field offices.

J. Recruiting the evaluation team

Clear terms of reference provide the evaluation manager with a solid basis for selecting evaluators with the relevant evaluation skills, technical knowledge and understanding of the local context. Special attention should be paid to the selection of the team leader and the inclusion of local consultants.

In the case of independent project evaluations, the project and programme managers should submit three curricula vitae of proposed evaluators to IEU for review and clearance before finalizing the contract. Upon request the Unit may also provide recommendations and curricula vitae from its own roster of experts; other stakeholders may also have valuable suggestions to make with regard to the identification of potential evaluators, and relevant technical units should also be consulted for advice on prospective evaluators.

In independent project evaluations, each party to the project (UNODC, the beneficiary government and donors) may be invited to nominate an evaluator, participate in the selection of the evaluation team members, and nominate observers to be assigned to the evaluation team. The parties and IEU then jointly approve the evaluation team. The cost of the participation of observers is borne by the organization they represent. UNODC nominates the leader of the evaluation team. In cases where the contribution of another funding agency exceeds that of UNODC, the team leader may be nominated by that agency in consultation with IEU.

In all cases, IEU will **review the curricula vitae of the proposed candidates against the criteria set down in the terms of reference** and may (a) have no objection to the recommended candidates; (b) suggest candidates other than those recommended; or (c) request new candidates.

For major evaluations, evaluators are identified by IEU in consultation with the relevant units and sections at headquarters and field offices.

Sufficient time needs to be allowed for the recruitment of the evaluators, especially since the availability of experienced evaluators is limited and well-qualified evaluators must often be contracted months in advance. In addition, the recruitment process itself may take a significant amount of time. The evaluation manager can help by indicating to consultants as early as possible what they need to do to fulfil UNODC requirements for contract signature. In other words the evaluation manager may provide guidance on providing an updated curricula vitae in United Nations format (Personal History Form), completing all the forms, passing the basic or advanced security training, obtaining security clearance as necessary and supplying an up-to-date medical certificate.

Fee rates are not negotiated, They are calculated on the basis of the experience of the consultant and can be obtained from the Human Resources Management Service while up-to-date daily subsistence allowances rates are available on ProFi.

K. Logistics and preparatory work

Once the members of the evaluation team have been recruited, **logistical arrangements** need to be made for the visits of the team members. This may include arranging **visits** to headquarters, field offices and specific operational sites, arranging **meetings** with key stakeholders, booking **transportation** and **hotels** and providing for **translators and interpreters** when needed.

Local holidays and **any obstacles to movement (for example, security reasons)** should be taken into account so as to avoid delays during the field visits.

Background documentation (such as baseline data, project progress reports and other regular reporting data) should also start being gathered at an early stage, as some of the material might not be easily accessible. Too often, evaluators spend valuable and scarce time searching for relevant documents that could have been collected by UNODC evaluation managers before the start of the evaluation.

CHAPTER III

UNDERTAKING THE EVALUATION

The actual evaluation exercise consists of a set of steps for collecting and analysing data. Most evaluations involve gathering data from existing documentation, interviews with UNODC staff, partners and beneficiaries, and from surveys. They also involve comparing findings with baseline data (when available). The findings are presented in the evaluation report, on the basis of which conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made.

A. Briefing the evaluation team

The actual evaluation starts with the evaluation manager briefing **the evaluation team.** The purpose of the briefing is to place the evaluation in context, clarify the terms of reference and discuss logistical arrangements. During this meeting, the respective roles of the evaluation manager and the evaluator (or of the team leader and the rest of the team when appropriate) are also clarified. In addition, the consultants are reminded of the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation in the United Nations system and of UNODC's evaluation policy, which should be followed throughout the whole process.

Key documents that have not already been sent to the consultants in advance to read at home should be shared at this point.

A separate **meeting with the members of the core learning partnership** could also be scheduled at this stage, to reassure stakeholders that there is a common understanding about the aims and methodology of the evaluation. Telephone or video conferencing technology might be used where applicable and needed. Time spent on the initial briefing and on reaching agreement concerning the evaluation process is time well invested.

B. Performing a desk review of existing documentation

The **desk review** is the first stage of a **triangulation process** to independently assess and validate evidence gathered with regard to the project or programme from at least three different sources of information.

Each UNODC project or programme is required to produce **planning, monitoring and regular reporting documents** that are shared at this stage with the evaluators (most of the documents are available on ProFi). Each project or programme should also ideally have collected **baseline data** on the situation at the beginning of the project or programme. The evaluation uses the baseline data to compare with the data collected about the progress made towards the achievement of project objectives. Project objectives and expected results are shown in the **logical framework,** which is part of the programme or project document.

Additional documents, such as policies of UNODC and other stakeholders, and information on projects and programmes undertaken by others in a relevant area, can also be part of this comprehensive desk review. This will help the evaluators gain a historical and contextual understanding of the situation in which the UNODC project or programme is being implemented.

All these documents, together with earlier evaluation reports or reports on evaluations undertaken by other partners if available, should be **assembled as early as possible, and sent to the evaluation team in advance** so that the team can start with the desk review as soon as possible. The desk review can be carried out by evaluators from their home-base.

The evaluators use the material collected to compare the situation prior to the UNODC intervention with the current situation in order to understand how and why the project or programme developed as it did. At this point, the desk review may **raise new questions about the overall scope of the evaluation** and about the evaluation methodology to be used. The evaluators ought to raise these issues with the UNODC evaluation manager and clarify them.

C. Finalising the evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology is the approach used to collect and analyse data on the programme or project being evaluated. The refinement of the questions specified in the terms of reference and the selection of adequate tools to gather the data required to answer these questions are important as they provide the basis for the credibility of the evaluation results. Sample evaluation questions are provided in Chapter II.E above.

Primary sources of data include:

- Interviews with key stakeholders (face-to-face or by telephone)
- Field visits
- Questionnaires and surveys
- Observation and other participatory techniques such as focus group discussions.

Secondary data sources for the desk review include the project document and its revisions, progress and monitoring reports, previous evaluation reports, self-evaluations, policy documents, relevant projects implemented by UNODC or other stakeholders, related literature, etc.

If stipulated in the terms of reference, the evaluators are expected to summarize the review of documentation in an **inception report,** which by building on the terms of reference, specifies the evaluation methodology and determines the exact focus and scope of the exercise, including the evaluation questions. This step is recommended both for independent project evaluations and for major evaluations.

This step is particularly useful because it enables the evaluation manager, the members of the core learning partnership and the evaluators to check whether the evaluation is proceeding as desired and to discuss any previously unidentified challenges or limitations that may have emerged. Inputs from the core learning partners should be recorded and taken into account by the evaluator if relevant and appropriate.

In the case of **major evaluations**, IEU **requires** the evaluators to prepare, prior to the evaluation field mission, a comprehensive evaluation **design matrix** with a detailed list of questions and sub questions relating to the evaluation criteria, indicators and measures, data to be collected, data sources, methods of data collection and methods of data analysis. This model of design matrix can also be used as a **good practice for independent project evaluations**.

A sample of the evaluation design matrix can be found on the following page.

QUESTIONS	**Sub-questions**	**Indicators / Measures**	**Source of information**	**Data collection method**	**Type of analysis**	**Comments**
Relevance						
Effectiveness						
Efficiency						
Sustainability						
Impact						

Note: the number of questions per criteria is not limited.

D. Inviting stakeholders' views : field missions and interviews

Key stakeholders at UNODC's headquarters and in field offices, the beneficiary government, project and programme implementers, other project and programme beneficiaries, donors and other relevant partners are invited to share their experiences and opinions with regard to the project or programme being evaluated. Various methodologies, such as individual or group interviews, can be used to elicit stakeholders' views, opinions and assessments.

During the field mission, the field office concerned will support the evaluation team in liaising and meeting with the key stakeholders (and any additional interlocutors as deemed necessary by the evaluator), make all relevant material available to the team, make its staff available to discuss with the team and take a lead role in discussing with stakeholders the implementation of the recommendations once the evaluation has been finalized. The office will also provide support for in-country logistics.

As evaluation exercises are limited in terms of time and resources, it is not always possible to interview all the relevant stakeholders or to visit all project or programme sites. In such circumstances, focused questionnaires and surveys can be a cost-effective way to elicit the views of as many stakeholders as possible.

E. Organising a debriefing session

For all evaluations, it is **strongly recommended to organise an internal debriefing session with the members of the core learning partnership**, which **may be followed by an external debriefing session involving all the stakeholders interviewed**.

Arranging an internal **discussion of evaluation recommendations with the core learning partners** is essential for promoting understanding of the evaluation results. It is indeed more likely that users will find evaluation recommendations useful and that they will be prepared to implement them if they meet to discuss them face–to-face with the evaluators rather than if they just receive a report for comments.

At the end of the field mission, it is also good practice to provide **feed-back** on the **key evaluation findings to the relevant stakeholders who were interviewed**, so as to clarify points that may have been misunderstood by the evaluators. During a debriefing session, the evaluation team will present an oral report of their initial findings and preliminary conclusions so as to allow participants to react to the conclusions reached.

F. Drafting the evaluation report

On the basis of the evidence gathered during the desk review, field missions and interviews, the evaluators prepare a draft evaluation report taking into consideration the discussion with stakeholders held during the debriefing session.

A **well-structured, clear and concise report**, sensitive to the feelings of all the parties affected, is crucial to the effectiveness and utility of the evaluation. The use of **non-defensive language** and a **constructive writing** style stimulate the acceptance of evaluation reports. Experience has shown that even the most controversial evaluation findings can find acceptance when they are backed with evidence and presented in **a sensitive and fair-minded way**.

The degree of receptivity will also be increased if the report is delivered **in time** for UNODC decision-making and if the consultative processes during the evaluation have already awakened interest and created a broad agreement with the findings of the report.

When drafting an evaluation report, evaluators should pay attention to the following:

- The report should be well structured, clear and concisely written using appropriate headings and sub headings (in line with the UNODC standard format and guidelines for evaluation reports given in Annex V);

- The report should be focused on the main purpose of the evaluation;

- The report should reply to the evaluation questions contained in the terms of reference;

- The background, context and approach of the project or programme being evaluated should be explained well enough for the reader to understand the relevance of the findings;

- The overall evaluation methodology should be explained, including any limitations encountered in following the methodology in practice;

- Findings should be based on evidence, not on opinion;

- Negative findings should be presented constructively and putting blame on specific individuals must be avoided. At the same time critical issues should not be hidden away in footnotes or annexes;

- The information put forward in the report should be presented in the most accessible way possible, for example by using graphics, tables and illustrations, especially to convey quantitative information;

- Difficult technical terminology and jargon ought to be avoided;

- Findings, conclusions and recommendations should flow logically from one to the next. This will ensure credibility;

- The recommendations made should be:
  - Understandable and clear;
  - Useful and relevant;
  - Actionable and implementable;
  - Timely.

To facilitate quick reading, the report ought to also include at the beginning (see figure hereunder) a matrix of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations, followed by an executive summary. The main body of the report provides a more detailed presentation and analysis of findings.

Summary matrix for findings, conclusions and recommendations

Main Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations

G. Finalizing the evaluation report

When finalizing the evaluation report, factual errors should be corrected and comments made by the stakeholders on the findings, conclusions and recommendations should be taken into consideration and either be accepted or rejected.

Consulting key stakeholders throughout the evaluation helps them to engage with the content of the evaluation. The feedback round on the draft report and the inclusion of stakeholders' comments in the final report allows participants to recognize their contribution once the final report has been published. This also helps to ensure the subsequent utilization of evaluation results.

Interested parties may try to influence the content of the evaluation report. While the evaluation team should always be open to receiving the input of stakeholders, it is important that the team hold to its findings and conclusions where no clear evidence can be found for changing them. Difficult discussions of findings can be expected, but intimidation or other unethical behaviour by third parties aimed at influencing the independent evaluators should be reported to the evaluation manager and to IEU.

Independent project evaluations

The draft evaluation report is submitted by the evaluation team to the evaluation manager, who is responsible for checking the draft report for factual errors, assessing the validity of the evaluation findings, general editing and **initial quality control**, in line with UNODC evaluation guidelines and formats.

The evaluation manager then submits the draft to **IEU**, which is in charge of **final quality control** (assurance of compliance with UNODC evaluation guidelines and formats) and provides **comments** on the draft (within 1-2 weeks).

The report is also circulated to **relevant units and sections at UNODC headquarters and field offices for comments**.

The comments of IEU and of the relevant sections and units at headquarters and field offices are forwarded to the evaluation team, which **incorporates relevant inputs** and finalizes the report.

The evaluation manager sends the final evaluation report to **IEU** for **clearance before publication**.

Major Evaluations

The draft evaluation report prepared by the evaluation team, including IEU staff, is **shared with the relevant units and sections** at **headquarters and field offices** for their comments, input and corrections of factual information (within 2-3 weeks).

Relevant comments, input and corrections provided are incorporated by the evaluation team to produce the final report (two weeks). The Chief of IEU, as a matter of quality control, ensures that all relevant input, comments and corrections are considered.

Concerned units, sections and field offices prepare a draft **implementation plan** that shows when, how and by whom the recommendations made in the report will be implemented. In the exceptional case that recommendations are not accepted, and therefore are not to be implemented, an explanation ought to be presented in the implementation plan. A response can also be included, if deemed necessary by the management.

The final report, the draft implementation plan and the response to the plan are submitted to the Executive Director and the Executive Committee of UNODC for discussion.

The units, sections and field offices finalize the implementation plan within one month after the Executive Committee meeting. The plan is then submitted to the Executive Director for signature.

H. Filling in the evaluation assessment questionnaire

At the end of each independent project evaluation or major evaluation, an evaluation assessment questionnaire (see Annex VII) must be completed by the evaluation team and submitted to IEU.

The evaluators are required to rate each of the following items: (a) quality of performance; (b) implementation; (c) results; and (d) recommendations. These ratings are based on the findings of the evaluation and therefore correspond to the evaluation results.

This information will be summarized by IEU and used to provide an overview of the overall performance of UNODC programmes and projects. The summary will also be included in the Annual Evaluation report of IEU.

I. Handling the specific case of self-evaluations

By definition self-evaluations are internal and more subjective than evaluations conducted by an independent evaluator; a detailed format (with guidance) is provided on ProFi[23] with a view to increasing the objectivity and credibility of self-evaluations (see also Annex VI).

The project manager is responsible for carrying out a self-evaluation of the project he or she is managing. A self-evaluation should be conducted annually, using the format for self-evaluation available on ProFi. The completed finalized report ought to be forwarded to IEU.

The recommendations, best practices and lessons learned from self-evaluations will be analyzed, summarized and included in that year's Annual Evaluation Report of IEU.

The self-evaluation process ought to be conducted in a participatory and inclusive manner and follow standard evaluation principles. The final results of the process are recorded in the self-evaluation format. A self-evaluation process affords an important opportunity to develop the ownership of the intervention outcomes by the project team and other stakeholders. Comments and inputs from stakeholders therefore ought to be solicited during the self-evaluation process and reflected in the self-evaluation report.

Findings, conclusions and recommendations of self-evaluations might also be discussed with stakeholders in a joint workshop, which could be the starting point for agreeing to act on the recommendations. Such an agreement should be noted in the final report.

[23] The self-evaluation report format can be found on the upper left-hand side of the Profi portal under *Profi Tasks / Create Project Self-Evaluation*.

CHAPTER IV

USING THE EVALUATION

A. Involving the users of the evaluation

The evaluation report constitutes the final product of the evaluation process, but is not necessarily the main product of an evaluation. The engagement of key stakeholders throughout the evaluation process is as important as producing a good evaluation report. Stakeholder involvement creates ownership of the results of the evaluation, including its recommendations, the best practices identified and the lessons to be learned. It thereby increases the commitment of stakeholders to use the findings and to implement the suggested recommendations. Therefore, and as shown earlier in these guidelines, thinking about the use of an evaluation should start at the planning stage rather than when the final report is submitted.

Users are involved throughout the whole evaluation process, including through the core learning partnerships. The involvement of users starts with the planning phase, when they are invited to contribute to the evaluation questions. They are also invited to discuss preliminary evaluation findings at a debriefing session and to comment on the draft report.

B. Drafting the plan for the implementation of evaluation recommendations

Once the evaluation report has been finalized, evaluation managers are required to develop a **plan for the implementation of evaluation recommendations**. The plan outlines when, how and by whom the recommendations made in the report will be implemented.

Template for the plan for the implementation of evaluation recommendations

Recommendation	Action to be taken	By whom	Resource Implications	Timing	Comments

For **independent project evaluations and major evaluations**, the use of such a plan is **standard practice** for securing the agreement and support of all the stakeholders regarding the implementation of the evaluation recommendations.

For **major evaluations**, a response to the implementation plan may also be included, if deemed necessary by the management.

The final report, the draft implementation plan and, when relevant, the response are submitted to the Executive Director and the Executive Committee of UNODC for discussion. The relevant units, sections and field offices finalize the implementation plan within one month of the Executive Committee meeting and submit it to the Executive Director for signature.

The implementation plan should be attached to the final evaluation report. A copy of the implementation plan for major evaluations ought to be sent to IEU, which can then ensure the regular monitoring of how the recommendations are being implemented.

In exceptional cases, evaluation recommendations may be rejected by the UNODC Executive Committee in the case of major evaluations, and by the evaluation manager in consultation with his or her supervisor (head of section, unit or field office) in the case of independent project evaluations. In such an event, a detailed justification must be given in the implementation plan.

C. Disseminating the evaluation report

As part of the organization's commitment to transparency, evaluation reports are disseminated to relevant stakeholders.

In the case of **independent project evaluations**, once the report has been finalized and cleared by IEU, the project or programme manager distributes the report to various stakeholders (implementing partners, donors etc). IEU posts the report on the UNODC's intranet.

In the case of **major evaluations**, the final report (including the management response to the report if so decided by the Executive Committee) is submitted simultaneously to UNODC staff and to Member States and posted on the UNODC's public website to make it accessible to the general public and on the Intranet.

In both cases (independent project evaluations and major evaluations), all stakeholders involved in the evaluation process and other interested parties should receive a hard and an electronic copy of the evaluation reports.

A **dissemination workshop** may be organized to discuss the final evaluation report. This provides stakeholders with an opportunity to fully appreciate the value of the evaluation by receiving additional information and explanations. It should also afford an opportunity to disseminate the implementation plan.

D. Disseminating lessons learned and best practices

As part of UNODC knowledge management system, IEU aims to effectively share lessons learned and best practices identified in evaluation reports.

These can be used to contribute to organizational learning, to strengthen current project and programme implementation and to influence future projects and programmes and policy.

Lessons learned and best practices are therefore extracted from evaluations reports for broader circulation by IEU, and included in its Annual Evaluation Report.

In addition, the Unit has been working towards creating a **database of lessons learned and best practices** as an effective mechanism for enabling project and programme managers to access information more easily.

E. Implementing evaluation recommendations

Appropriate evaluation follow-up mechanisms are required in order to ensure that evaluation recommendations are properly utilized and implemented in a timely fashion, and that future activities take into account the results of previous evaluations.

With regard to **major evaluations**, UNODC management is responsible for the implementation of recommendations in line with the implementation plan they agreed on.

For **independent project evaluations**, the tripartite review group (involving UNODC, the beneficiary Governments and the donors) is responsible for the implementation of project evaluation recommendations.

The relevant units and sections at headquarters and field offices reports every six months to the Independent Evaluation Unit on the progresses achieved in implementing recommendations.

IEU reports to management every six months on the implementation of evaluation results and to member states on a yearly basis through its annual evaluation report.

The project cycle management and evaluation focal points designated in each unit and section at headquarters and each field office will assist the Field Representatives in monitoring the use of lessons learned and best practices in new projects during the project approval process.

CHAPTER V

OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION CYCLES WITHIN UNODC

A. Independent project evaluations

1. Project and programme managers of units and sections at headquarters, in consultation with those in field offices, identify the projects to be evaluated during the year (based on the project documents, UNODC criteria for independent project evaluations and self-evaluations and any specific agreement with donors) and communicate this to the Director of the Division for Operations with a copy to IEU.

2. The Division for Operations provides all that information to IEU, which may also contribute to the list (based on UNODC criteria for independent project evaluations). The **yearly project evaluation plan** is then finalized by IEU. Any update on evaluations from the units and sections at headquarters and from field offices should be sent to the Director of Operations, with a copy to IEU.

3. The Direction of Operations and IEU jointly monitor the implementation of the yearly project evaluation plan.

4. The relevant programme or project manager drafts **evaluation terms of reference** and sends them to IEU for **review, comments and clearance**.

5. Once the terms of reference have been cleared by IEU, the project or programme manager submits **three curricula vitae** of proposed evaluators to be hired as consultants to IEU for **review and clearance**. The three curricula vitae ought to be ranked in order of preference. Upon request IEU is prepared to recommend evaluators from its own roster.

6. The Unit reviews candidates against the criteria set in the terms of reference and may (a) have no objection to the recommended candidate; (b) suggest a different candidate on the list from the one ranked first; or (c) request the project or programme manager to submit a new set of candidates in case the curricula vitae do not fulfil the criteria set out in the terms of reference.

7. A **draft project evaluation report** is prepared by the evaluation consultant/team and is submitted to the project or programme manager.

8. The draft report is circulated to relevant units and sections at headquarters and to field offices for comments.

9. The project or programme manager also submits the draft to IEU, which reviews and comments. (1-2 weeks)

10. The comments of the Unit and those of the relevant units and sections at headquarters or field offices are forwarded to the consultant, who considers and integrates those that are relevant. He or she subsequently finalizes the report.

11. The project or programme manager sends the **final evaluation report** to IEU for **clearance**.

12. Once the project evaluation report has been finalized and cleared, the project or programme manager distributes the report to various stakeholders (implementing partners, donors etc…). IEU posts the cleared project evaluation report on the UNODC Intranet.

13. Project or programme managers then prepare a plan for the implementation of evaluation recommendations that shows when, how and by whom those recommendations will be implemented. In the exceptional case that recommendations are not to be implemented, the reason for this also ought to be presented in the implementation plan.

14. Project or programme managers will later be held accountable for the implementation of the recommendations in accordance with the implementation plan. The development of the plan also helps to secure the agreement and support of all the stakeholders (including the tripartite review group involving UNODC, beneficiary governments and the donors) regarding the implementation of the evaluation recommendations.

15. IEU reports to management every six months on the implementation of evaluation results and to member states on a yearly basis through its annual evaluation report.

B. Major evaluations

1. The workplan of IEU, including the major evaluations planned for the year, is approved by the UNODC Executive Committee on a yearly basis.

2. The Unit drafts evaluation terms of reference in collaboration with units and sections at headquarters and field offices.

3. The Unit establishes evaluation teams comprising Unit staff members (one of whom sometimes acts as team leader) and consultants.

4. The evaluation team carries out the evaluation, in coordination with the relevant units and sections at headquarters and field offices.

5. The evaluation team prepares a draft evaluation report.

6. The draft evaluation report is shared with relevant UNODC staff for comments, inputs and corrections of factual information (2-3 weeks).

7. Relevant comments, inputs and corrections provided by UNODC staff are incorporated by the evaluation team to produce the final report (two weeks). The Chief of IEU, as a matter of quality control, ensures that all relevant input, comments and corrections have been taken into account.

8. The relevant units and sections at headquarters and field offices prepare a draft **implementation plan** that shows when, how and by whom the recommendations made in the report will be implemented. In the exceptional case that recommendations are not to be implemented, the reason for this also ought to be presented in the implementation plan. A response can also be included, if deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.

9. The final report and the draft implementation plan are submitted to the Executive Director and the Executive Committee of UNODC for discussion.

10. The final report (and the response if so decided by the Executive Committee) is then submitted simultaneously to all UNODC staff and to Member States, and posted on the UNODC's public website and Intranet.

11. The relevant units and sections and field offices finalize the implementation plan within one month of the Executive Committee meeting, and submit it to the Executive Director for signature.

12. UNODC management is responsible for the implementation of recommendations agreed by the Executive Committee, in line with the implementation plan.

13. IEU is responsible for following up on the implementation of recommendations agreed by the Executive Committee. The Unit reports to management on the implementation of evaluation recommendations through bi-annual monitoring reports and its annual evaluation report.

C. Annual evaluation report

1. The annual evaluation report is prepared by IEU, using as the main sources the information from major and independent project evaluations. Self-evaluations are used to a lesser extent in order to complement the data.

2. The final report is presented to the UNODC Executive Committee for discussion.

3. The Executive Committee, under the leadership of the Executive Director, prepares a management response to the report within a month,

including an implementation plan that shows when, how and by whom the recommendations made in the report will be implemented.

4. The report (and the response when so decided by the Executive Committee) is distributed to UNODC staff and to Member States, and posted on the UNODC public website Internet and Intranet.

5. Management is responsible for the implementation of recommendations agreed by the Executive Director in line with the implementation plan.

6. IEU is responsible for following up on the implementation of recommendations agreed by the Executive Director. It reports to management every six months on the implementation of evaluation results and to member states on a yearly basis through its annual evaluation report.

Annex I: Evaluation Glossary

Accountability: obligation for a manager of resources to demonstrate that work has been conducted in compliance with the established plans, budgets, rules and standards and to report fairly and accurately on performance results. It includes responsibility for the justification of expenditures, decisions or results of the discharge of authority and official duties, including duties delegated to a subordinate unit or individual. [a]

Activity: action taken or work performed to transform inputs into outputs. [a]

Assumption: hypothesis about risks, influences, external factors or conditions that could affect the progress or success of a project or programme. Assumptions highlight external factors that are important for the success of a project or programme, but are largely or completely beyond the control of management. [a]

Attribution: a causal link between changes observed (or expected to be observed) and a specific intervention. Attribution refers to that which is to be credited for the changes observed or results achieved. With regard to attribution for the achievement of results, evaluations aim to ascertain a credible link between outputs and results achieved. In assessing this link, attribution takes account of the effects of other interventions that are independent of the effort being evaluated. [a]

Audit: an independent, objective assurance activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to assessing and improving the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. [b]

Baseline data: data describing the situation prior to interventions under a programme, project or management initiative, which serve as the starting point for measuring or demonstrating changes in that situation. These data are used to determine the results of intervention and serve as an important reference for monitoring and evaluation.

Benchmark: reference point or standard against which performance or achievement can be assessed. A benchmark often refers to an intermediate target to measure progress within a given period as well as to the performance of other comparable organizational entities. [a]

Beneficiary: the individual, group or organization that benefits, directly or indirectly, from a development intervention. [b]

Best practice: a planning, organizational, managerial and/or operational practice that has proven successful in particular circumstances and that can have both specific and/or wider applicability. Best practices are used to demonstrate what works most effectively and to accumulate and apply knowledge about how and why something works in different situations and contexts. [a]

Capacity-building: the process by which individuals, groups, organizations and States develop, organize and enhance their systems, resources and knowledge, reflected in their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives. Technical assistance in the form of

[a]Office of Internal Oversight Services, Glossary of Monitoring and Evaluation Terms, available at: http://www.un.org/Depts/oios/mecd/mecd_glossary/index.htm.
[b]Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee, *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* (Paris, 2002).

knowledge transfer activities such as training, fellowships and study tours, is used to increase capacity. [a]

Data collection method: the method to be used to collect information and data on a given performance indicator. The term is one of the elements of the indicator methodology form for reporting through the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS).[a]

Data source: the origin of the data or information collected. Data sources may include informal and official records, individuals, documents etc. [a]

Effectiveness: the extent to which a project or programme attains its objectives and delivers expected results. [a]

Efficiency: a measure of how well inputs (funds, expertise, time etc.) are converted into outputs. [a]

Evaluability: the extent to which an activity or programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. [a]

Evaluation: the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives and to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. [b]

Ex ante evaluation: an evaluation that is performed before implementation of a development intervention. It assesses the design and logic of the intervention in order to estimate in advance whether the intervention can achieve the expected results. [b]

Ex post evaluation: evaluation of a development intervention after it has been completed. It may be undertaken immediately or long after completion. The intention is to identify the factors of success or failure, to assess the sustainability of results and impacts, and to draw conclusions that may influence other interventions. [b]

External evaluation: an evaluation performed by entities outside of the programme being evaluated. As a rule, external evaluation of a project, programme or subprogramme is conducted by entities free of control or influence by those responsible for the design and implementation of the project and programmes. [a]

Highlights of programme results: the most salient results achieved by a department/office during the biennium based on the results/accomplishments of the various subprogrammes under it. [a]

Impact: positive or negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. [b]

Implementation plan: the implementation plan builds on the UNODC strategy and is part and parcel of the institutionalization of the results-based management in UNODC. It is a management tool used to show objectives and the corresponding funding needs for a two-year budget period. It is a programmatic and appeal mechanism linked to the budget process. It is an Office-wide compendium of projects, ongoing and proposed, as well as activities funded from the regular budget of the United Nations. While the strategy presents themes (main objectives) and results at the macro-level for the period 2007-2011, the implementation plan provides the means to operationalize them within a defined two-year period.

Indicator: Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor. [b]

Input: personnel, finance, equipment, knowledge, information and other resources necessary for producing the planned outputs. [a]

Integrated Monitoring and Documentation Information System (IMDIS): IMDIS is an online tool for planning, monitoring and reporting results-based programme performance at the United Nations Secretariat since 1998. IMDIS enables programme managers as well as the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to verify Organization-wide progress throughout the biennium and to extract all necessary information for final performance analysis and reporting. [a]

Lesson learned: generalization derived from evaluation experiences with programmes, projects or policies that is applicable to a generic situation rather than to a specific circumstance and has the potential to improve future actions. A lesson learned summarizes knowledge at a point in time, while learning is an ongoing process. Frequently, lessons learned highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcome and impact. [a, b]

Logical framework: a tool for improving the planning, implementation and management of programmes and projects through the logical analysis and presentation of information. It is a way of structuring the main elements in a programme or project (objective, outcomes, outputs, indicators, means of verification and assumptions) and highlighting the logical linkages between them. [a]

Mandatory external evaluation: an evaluation mandated by an intergovernmental body that is managed and performed by an entity outside the programme being evaluated. Mandatory external evaluations are mandated by bodies such as the Committee for Programme and Coordination, functional commissions, regional and sectoral intergovernmental bodies and other technical bodies. Mandatory external evaluations are generally managed and conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit as part of its United Nations-wide mandate and by OIOS, as well as by appointed external evaluators. [a]

Means of verification: these define the source of data necessary to verify the indicators. Means of verification can be official documents and statistics, project reports, etc. Means of verification tell evaluators and others interested in the project where to obtain the data to assess the progress and success of the project based on the indicators defined in the logical framework.

Metaevaluation: the term is used for evaluations designed to aggregate findings from a series of evaluations. It can also be used to denote the evaluation of an evaluation to judge its quality and assess the performance of its evaluators. [b]

Midterm evaluation: evaluation performed towards the middle of the period of implementation of the intervention. [b]

Monitoring: a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specific indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. [b]

Objective: description of an overall desired achievement involving a process of change and aimed at meeting certain needs of identified end-users within a given period of time. A good objective meets the criteria of being impact-oriented, measurable, time-limited, specific and practical. In the logical framework, the objective is set at a level higher than the outcome. [a]

Outcome: the short and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs that are likely to be achieved or have already been achieved. [b]

Output: the product or service which results from the completion of activities within an intervention.

Performance indicator: a quantitative or qualitative variable that makes it possible to verify what changes have been produced by an intervention relative to what was planned.

Planning: is a management function necessary to ensure efficient and effective use of resources and the achievement of results within a specified timespan.

Programme: a set of interventions aiming to achieve a common global, regional, national or sectoral development objective (expected accomplishment). A development programme is a time bound intervention involving multiple activities that may cut across sectors, themes and geographical areas. [b]

Programme and Financial Management Information System: the Programme and Financial Management Information System (ProFi) is the UNODC enterprise resource planning and workflow system providing financial and substantive information for projects executed by UNODC.

Programme evaluation: evaluation of a set of interventions to attain specific global, regional, national or sectoral development objectives. [b]

Project: a planned activity or a set of planned, interrelated activities designed to achieve certain specific objectives within a given budget, organizational structure and time period. [a]

Project cycle management: a tool for understanding the tasks and management functions to be performed in the course of a project or programme. This usually includes the stages of identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. [a]

Project document: a formal document covering a project, which sets out, inter alia, the needs, objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities, workplan, budget and any special arrangements applicable to the execution of the project in question. Once a project document has been approved, the project represents a commitment of resources. [a]

Project evaluation: evaluation of an individual project designed to achieve specific objectives within specified resources, in a given time frame and following an established plan of action, often within the framework of a broader programme. The basis of evaluation should be built into the project document. [a]

Proxy indicator: a proxy indicator is used when it is difficult to identify direct indicators to measure the result. They may indicate, indirectly, whether a result has been achieved.

Qualitative data: information that is not easily (but can be) captured in numerical form. Qualitative data are typically rendered in words and normally describe people's opinions, knowledge, attitudes or behaviours. [a]

Quantitative data: information measured or measurable by, or concerned with, quantity and expressed in numerical form. [a]

Relevance: the extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with the beneficiaries' requirements, the country's needs, global priorities and the partners' and donors' policies. [b]

Result: deliberate changes in a state or condition which derive from an action.

Results-based budgeting: approach adopted by the United Nations to plan for budget allocation and monitoring.

Results-based management: a management strategy that ensures that processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of results (impact, outcomes and outputs). This strategy is focused on achieving results and improving performance, integrating lessons learned into management decisions and in the monitoring of and reporting on performance. [a]

Risk analysis: an analysis or an assessment of factors (called assumptions in the logical framework) that affect or are likely to affect the successful achievement of an intervention's objective. Risk analysis makes it possible to consider strategies to manage identified risks. Some external factors may be beyond the control of programme managers and implementers, but other factors can be addressed with slight adjustments to the programme approach or strategy. It is recommended that stakeholders take part in the risk analysis, as they offer different perspectives and may have key information about the programme context.

Self-evaluation: an evaluation by those who are entrusted with the design and delivery of a development intervention. [b]

Stakeholders: agencies, organizations, groups or individuals that have a direct or indirect interest in the development intervention or its evaluation. [b]

Strategy: the strategy translates the mission of UNODC to make the world safer from crime, drugs and terrorism into a platform for action. It is derived from UNODC mandates and provides a structure to plan for, implement and report on results contained in it.

Sustainability: the extent to which the benefits of the project or programme will last after its termination; the probability of continued long-term benefits. [a]

Terms of reference: written document presenting the purpose and scope of the evaluation or inspection, the methods to be used, the issues to be addressed, and the resources, schedule and reporting requirements. [a]

Thematic evaluation: evaluation of a selection of development interventions, all of which address a specific development priority that cuts across countries, regions and sectors. [b]

Validity: the extent to which the data collection methods or tests accurately measure what they are supposed to. [a]

Workplan: a detailed document stating outputs to be delivered and activities to be carried out in a given time period, how the activities will be carried out and what progress towards expected accomplishments will be achieved. It contains time frames and responsibilities and is used as a monitoring and accountability tool. The workplan is designed according to the logical framework. [a]

Annex II

Norms for Evaluation in the United Nations System of the United Nations Evaluation Group

Towards a UN system better serving the peoples of the world; overcoming weaknesses and building on strengths from a strong evidence base

29 April 2005

Preamble

The United Nations system consists of various entities with diverse mandates and governing structures that aim to engender principles such as global governance, consensus building, peace and security, justice and international law, non-discrimination and gender equity, sustained socio-economic development, sustainable development, fair trade, humanitarian action and crime prevention. Above all, the UN system is collectively committed to furthering the Millennium Declaration.

The regulations that govern the evaluation of United Nations activities were promulgated on 19 April 2000 in the Secretary General's bulletin24. Similar regulations and policies have been issued in recent years in several UN system organizations. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), as a group of professional practitioners, undertook to define norms that aim at contributing to the professionalization of the evaluation function and at providing guidance to evaluation offices in preparing their evaluation policies or other aspects of their operations. This initiative was undertaken in part in response to General Assembly resolution A/RES/59/25025 of December 2004, which encouraged UNEG to make further progress in a system-wide collaboration on evaluation, in particular the harmonization and simplification of methodologies, norms, standards and cycles of evaluation.

Resolutions of the General Assembly and governing bodies of UN organizations imply particular characteristics for the evaluation function within the United Nations system. Evaluation processes are to be inclusive, involving governments and other stakeholders. Evaluation activities require transparent approaches, reflecting intergovernmental collaboration. In addition, the General Assembly has requested that the UN system conducts evaluations in a way that fosters evaluation capacity building in member countries, to the extent that this is possible.

The norms seek to facilitate system-wide collaboration on evaluation by ensuring that evaluation entities within the UN follow agreed-upon basic principles. They provide a reference for strengthening, professionalizing and improving the quality of evaluation in all entities of the United Nations system, including funds, programmes and specialized agencies. The norms are consistent with other main sources26 and reflect the singularity of the United Nations system, characterized by its focus on people and respect for their rights, the importance of international values and principles, universality and neutrality, its multiple stakeholders, its needs for global governance, its multidisciplinarity, and its complex accountability system. Last but not least, there is the challenge of international cooperation embedded in the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals.

[24] Document ST/SGB/2000/8 of 19 April 2000.
[25] Document A/C.2/59/L.63 of 17 December 2004, paragraph 69.
[26] These sources include, *inter alia,* the evaluation policies and guidelines existing within the various organizations of the United Nations system; OECD/DAC evaluation principles; national standards of OECD countries; evaluation policies of the international financial institutions; evaluation policies of the European Union; standards of evaluation associations; evaluation guidance developed by ALNAP for humanitarian action.

To fulfil their mission of contributing to the greater effectiveness and the greater good of the world's peoples, evaluation units within the UN system will strive for excellence and relevance by following the norms as outlined in this document.

0 - Introduction

0.1 The present document outlines the norms that are the guiding principles for evaluating the results achieved by the UN system, the performance of the organizations, the governing of the evaluation function within each entity of the UN system, and the value-added use of the evaluation function.

0.2 Complementary to these norms, a set of standards has been drawn from good practice of UNEG members. These will be revised from time to time and are intended to be applied as appropriate within each organization.

1 - N1 - Definition

1.1 Purposes of evaluation include understanding why and the extent to which intended and unintended results are achieved, and their impact on stakeholders. Evaluation is an important source of evidence of the achievement of results and institutional performance. Evaluation is also an important contributor to building knowledge and to organizational learning. Evaluation is an important agent of change and plays a critical and credible role in supporting accountability.

1.2 An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc27. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. It aims at determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the UN system. An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of the organizations of the UN system and its members.28

1.3 Evaluation feeds into management and decision making processes, and makes an essential contribution to managing for results. Evaluation informs the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting cycle. It aims at improving the institutional relevance and the achievement of results, optimizing the use of resources, providing client satisfaction and maximizing the impact of the contribution of the UN system.

1.4 There are other forms of assessment being conducted in the UN system. They vary in purpose and level of analysis, and may overlap to some extent. Evaluation is to be differentiated from the following:

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

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

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

d) Inspection: a general examination that seeks to identify vulnerable areas and malfunctions and to propose corrective action.

[27] Hereinafter referred to as an "undertaking".
[28] This definition draws on Regulation 7.1 of Article VII of ST/SGB/2000/8 and from the widely accepted Principles for Evaluation of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD DAC).

e) *Investigation:* a specific examination of a claim of wrongdoing and provision of evidence for eventual prosecution or disciplinary measures.

f) *Audit:* an assessment of the adequacy of management controls 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 established policies; the effectiveness of risk management; and the adequacy of organizational structures, systems and processes.

g) *Research:* a systematic examination designed to develop or contribute to knowledge.

h) *Internal management consulting:* consulting services to help managers to implement changes that address organizational and managerial challenges and improve internal work processes.

1.5 Evaluation is not a decision-making process per se, but rather serves as an input to provide decision-makers with knowledge and evidence about performance and good practices. Although evaluation is used to assess undertakings, it should provide value-added for decision-oriented processes to assist in the improvement of present and future activities, projects, programmes, strategies and policies. Thus evaluation contributes to institutional policy-making, development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness.

1.6 There are many types of evaluations, such as those internally or externally-led, those adopting a summative or formative approach, those aimed at determining the attribution of an organization's own action or those performed jointly to assess collaborative efforts. An evaluation can be conducted in an ex-post fashion, at the end of phase, mid-point, at the terminal moment or real-time. The evaluation approach and method must be adapted to the nature of the undertaking to ensure due process and to facilitate stakeholder participation in order to support an informed decision-making process.

1.7 Evaluation is therefore about *Are we doing the right thing?* It examines the rationale, the justification of the undertaking, makes a reality check and looks at the satisfaction of intended beneficiaries. Evaluation is also about *Are we doing it right?* It assesses the effectiveness of achieving expected results. It examines the efficiency of the use of inputs to yield results. Finally, evaluation asks *Are there better ways of achieving the results?* Evaluation looks at alternative ways, good practices and lessons learned.

2 - N2 – Responsibility for Evaluation

2.1 The Governing Bodies and/or the Heads of organizations in the UN system are responsible for fostering an enabling environment for evaluation and ensuring that the role and function of evaluation are clearly stated, reflecting the principles of the UNEG Norms for Evaluation, taking into account the specificities of each organization’s requirements.

2.2 The governance structures of evaluation vary. In some cases it rests with the Governing Bodies in others with the Head of the organization. Responsibility for evaluation should be specified in an evaluation policy.

2.3 The Governing Bodies and/or the Heads of organizations are also responsible for ensuring that adequate resources are allocated to enable the evaluation function to operate effectively and with due independence.

2.4 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that evaluations are conducted in an impartial and independent fashion. They are also responsible for ensuring that evaluators have the freedom to conduct their work without repercussions for career development.

2.5 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations are responsible for appointing a professionally competent Head of the evaluation, who in turn is responsible for ensuring that the function is staffed by professionals competent in the conduct of evaluation.

2.6 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that evaluation contributes to decision making and management. They should ensure that a system is in place for explicit planning for evaluation and for systematic consideration of the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in evaluations. They should ensure appropriate follow-up measures including an action plan, or equivalent appropriate tools, with clear accountability for the implementation of the approved recommendations.

2.7 The Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations and of the evaluation functions are responsible for ensuring that there is a repository of evaluations and a mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons to improve organizational learning and systemic improvement. They should also make evaluation findings available to stakeholders and other organizations of the UN system as well as to the public.

3 - N3 – Policy

3.1 Each organization should develop an explicit policy statement on evaluation. The policy should provide a clear explanation of the concept, role and use of evaluation within the organization, including the institutional framework and definition of roles and responsibilities; an explanation of how the evaluation function and evaluations are planned, managed and budgeted; and a clear statement on disclosure and dissemination.

4 - N4 - Intentionality

4.1 Proper application of the evaluation function implies that there is a clear intent to use evaluation findings. In the context of limited resources, the planning and selection of evaluation work has to be carefully done. Evaluations must be chosen and undertaken in a timely manner so that they can and do inform decision-making with relevant and timely information. Planning for evaluation must be an explicit part of planning and budgeting of the evaluation function and/or the organization as a whole. Annual or multi-year evaluation work programmes should be made public.

4.2 The evaluation plan can be the result of a cyclical or purposive selection of evaluation topics. The purpose, nature and scope of evaluation must be clear to evaluators and stakeholders. The plan for conducting each evaluation must ensure due process to ascertain the timely completion of the mandate, and consideration of the most cost-effective way to obtain and analyse the necessary information.

5 - N5 – Impartiality

5.1 Impartiality is the absence of bias in due process, methodological rigour, consideration and presentation of achievements and challenges. It also implies that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account. In the event that interested parties have different views, these are to be reflected in the evaluation analysis and reporting.

5.2 Impartiality increases the credibility of evaluation and reduces the bias in the data gathering, analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations. Impartiality provides legitimacy to evaluation and reduces the potential for conflict of interest.

5.3 The requirement for impartiality exists at all stages of the evaluation process, including the planning of evaluation, the formulation of mandate and scope, the selection of evaluation teams, the conduct of the evaluation and the formulation of findings and recommendations.

6 - N6 – Independence

6.1 The evaluation function has to be located independently from the other management functions so that it is free from undue influence and that unbiased and transparent reporting is ensured. It needs to have full discretion in submitting directly its reports for consideration at the appropriate level of decision-making pertaining to the subject of evaluation.

6.2 The Head of evaluation must have the independence to supervise and report on evaluations as well as to track follow-up of management's response resulting from evaluation.

6.3 To avoid conflict of interest and undue pressure, evaluators need to be independent, implying that members of an evaluation team must not have been directly responsible for the policy-setting, design, or overall management of the subject of evaluation, nor expect to be in the near future.

6.4 Evaluators must have no vested interest and have the full freedom to conduct impartially their evaluative work, without potential negative effects on their career development. They must be able to express their opinion in a free manner.

6.5 The independence of the evaluation function should not impinge the access that evaluators have to information on the subject of evaluation.

7 - N7 – Evaluability

7.1 During the planning stage of an undertaking, evaluation functions can contribute to the process by improving the ability to evaluate the undertaking and by building an evaluation approach into the plan. To safeguard independence this should be performed in an advisory capacity only.

7.2 Before undertaking a major evaluation requiring a significant investment of resources, it may be useful to conduct an evaluability exercise. This would consist of verifying if there is clarity in the intent of the subject to be evaluated, sufficient measurable indicators, assessable reliable information sources and no major factor hindering an impartial evaluation process.

8 - N8 – Quality of Evaluation

8.1 Each evaluation should employ design, planning and implementation processes that are inherently quality oriented, covering appropriate methodologies for data collection, analysis and interpretation.

8.2 Evaluation reports must present in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations. They must be brief and to the point and easy to understand. They must explain the methodology followed, highlight the methodological limitations of the evaluation, key concerns and evidenced-based findings, dissident views and consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. They must have an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, and facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons.

9 - N9 - Competencies for Evaluation

9.1 Each organization of the UN system should have formal job descriptions and selection criteria that state the basic professional requirements necessary for an evaluator and evaluation manager.

9.2 The Head of the evaluation function must have proven competencies in the management of an evaluation function and in the conduct of evaluation studies.

9.3 Evaluators must have the basic skill set for conducting evaluation studies and managing externally hired evaluators.

10 - N10 –Transparency and Consultation

10.1 Transparency and consultation with the major stakeholders are essential features in all stages of the evaluation process. This improves the credibility and quality of the evaluation. It can facilitate consensus building and ownership of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

10.2 Evaluation Terms of Reference and reports should be available to major stakeholders and be public documents. Documentation on evaluations in easily consultable and readable form should also contribute to both transparency and legitimacy.

11 - N11 – Evaluation Ethics

11.1 Evaluators must have personal and professional integrity.

11.2 Evaluators must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators must take care that those involved in evaluations have a chance to examine the statements attributed to them.

11.3 Evaluators must be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environments in which they work.

11.4 In light of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality.

11.5 Evaluations sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Also, the evaluators are not expected to evaluate the personal performance of individuals and must balance an evaluation of management functions with due consideration for this principle.

12 - N12 - Follow-up to Evaluation

12.1 Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and management addressed by its recommendations. This may take the form of a management response, action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities.

12.2 There should be a systematic follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management and/or the Governing Bodies.

11.3 There should be a periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations. This report should be presented to the Governing Bodies and/or the Head of the organization.

13 - N13 – Contribution to Knowledge Building

13.1 Evaluation contributes to knowledge building and organizational improvement. Evaluations should be conducted and evaluation findings and recommendations presented in a manner that is easily understood by target audiences.

13.2 Evaluation findings and lessons drawn from evaluations should be accessible to target audiences in a user-friendly way. A repository of evaluation could be used to distil lessons that contribute to peer learning and the development of structured briefing material for the training of staff. This should be done in a way that facilitates the sharing of learning among stakeholders, including the organizations of the UN system, through a clear dissemination policy and contribution to knowledge networks.

Annex III

Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System of the United Nations Evaluation Group

Towards a UN system better serving the peoples of the world; overcoming weaknesses and building on strengths from a strong evidence base

29 April 2005

Preamble

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), as a group of professional practitioners, undertook to define norms and standards that aim at contributing to the professionalization of the evaluation function and at providing guidance to evaluation offices in preparing their evaluation policies or other aspects of their operations. This initiative was undertaken in part in response to General Assembly resolution A/RES/59/250[29] of December 2004, which encouraged UNEG to make further progress in a system-wide collaboration on evaluation, in particular the harmonization and simplification of methodologies, norms, standards and cycles of evaluation.

These standards build upon the Norms for Evaluation for the UN system. They are drawn from best practice of UNEG members[30]. They are intended to guide the establishment of the institutional framework, management of the evaluation function, conduct and use of evaluations. They are also a reference for the competencies of evaluation practitioners and work ethics, and are intended to be applied as appropriate within each organization. UNEG will periodically update, elaborate and expand the coverage of these standards in the service of the UN system organizations[31].

1. Institutional Framework and Management of the Evaluation Function

Institutional Framework

Standard 1.1: United Nations organizations should have an adequate institutional framework for the effective management of their evaluation function.

1. A comprehensive institutional framework for the management of the evaluation function and conduct of evaluations is crucial to ensure an effective evaluation process.

2. Such an institutional framework should address the following requirements:

− Provide institutional and high-level management understanding of and support for the evaluation function's key role in contributing to the effectiveness of the organization.

− Ensure that evaluation is part of the organization’s governance and management functions. Evaluation makes an essential contribution to managing for results.

− Promote a culture that values evaluation as a basis for learning.

[29] Document A/C.2/59/L.63 of 17 December 2004, paragraph 69

[30] In addition to evaluation policies and guidelines existing within the various organizations of the United Nations system, the standards have also drawn from the following sources: OECD/DAC evaluation principles; national standards of OECD countries; evaluation policies of the international financial institutions; evaluation policies of the European Union; standards of evaluation associations; evaluation guidance developed by ALNAP for humanitarian action.

[31] UN organizations refer hereinafter to all organizations, funds and programmes as well as specialized agencies of the UN system.

– Facilitate an independent and impartial evaluation process by ensuring that the evaluation function is independent of other management functions. The Head of evaluation should report directly to the Governing Body of the organization or the Head of the organization.

– Ensure adequate financial and human resources for evaluation in order to allow efficient and effective delivery of services by a competent evaluation function and enable evaluation capacity strengthening.

– Encourage partnerships and cooperation on evaluation within the UN system, as well as with other relevant institutions.

Standard 1.2: UN organizations should develop an evaluation policy and regularly update it, taking into account the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN system.

3. The evaluation policy should be approved by the Governing Bodies of the organizations and/or Head of the organization, and should be in line with the applicable UNEG Norms for Evaluation, and with organizational corporate goals and strategies. The evaluation policy should include:

– clear explanation of the concept and role of evaluation within the organization;

– clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the evaluation professionals, senior management and programme managers;

– an emphasis on the need for adherence to the organization's evaluation guidelines;

– explanation of how evaluations are prioritized and planned;

– description of how evaluations are organized, managed and budgeted;

– an emphasis on the requirements for the follow-up of evaluations;

– clear statement on disclosure and dissemination.

Standard 1.3: UN organizations should ensure that evaluation plans of evaluation activities are submitted to their Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations for review and/or approval.

4. The Governing Bodies and/or the Head of the organization should receive not only the evaluation plan, but also a progress report on the implementation of both the evaluation plan as well as the recommendations emanating from the evaluations.

Standard 1.4: UN organizations should ensure appropriate evaluation follow-up mechanisms and have an explicit disclosure policy.

5. Appropriate evaluation follow-up mechanisms should exist within the organization, ensuring that evaluation recommendations are properly utilized and implemented in a timely fashion and that evaluation findings are linked to future activities.

6. A disclosure policy should ensure the transparent dissemination of evaluation results, including making reports broadly available to the Governing Bodies and the public, except in those cases where the reasonable protection and confidentiality of some stakeholders is required.

Management of the Evaluation Function

Standard 1.5: The Head of evaluation has a lead role in ensuring that the evaluation function is fully operational and that evaluation work is conducted according to the highest professional standards.

7. Within the comprehensive institutional framework, the management of the evaluation function, entrusted to the Head of evaluation, should ensure that:

– an evaluation policy is developed and regularly updated;

– the budget for evaluations is managed in an efficient manner;

− an evaluation plan of evaluation activities is developed as part of the organization's planning and budgeting cycle, on an annual or biannual basis. The plan should prioritize those areas most in need of evaluation, and specify adequate resources for the planning, conduct and follow-up of evaluations;

− adequate evaluation methodologies are adopted, developed and updated frequently;

− the evaluations are conducted according to defined quality standards, in a timely manner, in order to serve as a useful tool for the intended stakeholders/users;

− reporting to high-level management is timely and relevant to their needs, thereby supporting an informed management and policy decision-making process;

− regular progress reports are compiled on the implementation of the evaluation plan and/or the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the evaluations already carried out, to be submitted to the Governing Bodies and/or Heads of organizations;

− lessons from evaluations are distilled and disseminated as appropriate.

Standard 1.6: The Head of evaluation is responsible for ensuring the preparation of evaluation guidelines.

8 . Evaluation guidelines should be prepared and include the following:

− evaluation methodologies that should reflect the highest professional standards;

− evaluation processes, ensuring that evaluations are conducted in an objective, impartial, open and participatory manner, based on empirically verified evidence that is valid and reliable, with results being made available;

− ethics, ensuring that evaluations are carried out with due respect and regard to those being evaluated.

Standard 1.7: The Head of evaluation should ensure that the evaluation function is dynamic, adapting to new developments and changing needs both within and outside the organization.

9. In particular the management of the evaluation function should include:

− raising awareness and/or building evaluation capacity;

− facilitation and management of evaluation networks;

− design and implementation of evaluation methodologies and systems;

− ensuring the maintenance of institutional memory of evaluations through user-friendly mechanisms;

− promoting the compilation of lessons in a systematic manner.

2. Competencies and Ethics

1. All those engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities should aspire to conduct high quality and ethical work guided by professional standards and ethical and moral principles.

Competencies

Standard 2.1: Persons engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities should possess core evaluation competencies.

2. Evaluation competencies refer to the qualifications, skills, experience and attributes required by those employed within the evaluation function to carry out their duties as stipulated and to ensure the credibility of the process.

3. Competencies are required for all those engaged in designing, conducting and managing evaluation activities, managing evaluators, conducting training and capacity development and designing and implementing evaluation methodologies and systems.

4. Some skills are particularly useful for persons conducting evaluations as “evaluators”, while others are needed for persons who manage evaluations as “evaluation managers”. The term “evaluators” used below encompasses both roles.

5. Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to clients before embarking on an evaluation project, and at any point where such conflict occurs. This includes conflict of interest on the part of either the evaluator or the stakeholder.

6. Evaluators should accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge. Similarly, evaluators should practice within the limits of their professional training and competence, and should decline to conduct evaluations that fall substantially outside those limits.

Standard 2.2: Evaluators should have relevant educational background, qualification and training in evaluation.

7. Evaluators should preferably have an advanced university degree or equivalent background in social sciences or other relevant disciplines, with specialized training in areas such as evaluation, project management, social statistics, advanced statistical research and analysis.

8. Evaluators should continually seek to maintain and improve their competencies in order to provide the highest level of performance in their evaluations. This continuing professional development might include formal seminars and workshops, self-study, evaluations of one's own practice, and working with other evaluators to learn from their skills and expertise.

Standard 2.3: Evaluators should have professional work experience relevant to evaluation.

9. Evaluators should also have relevant professional experience in:

− design and management of evaluation processes, including with multiple stakeholders;

− survey design and implementation;

− social science research;

− project/programme/policy planning, monitoring and management.

Standard 2.4: Evaluators need to have specific technical knowledge of, and be familiar with, the methodology or approach that will be needed for the specific evaluation to be undertaken, as well as certain managerial and personal skills.

10. Specialized experience and/or methodological/technical knowledge, including some specific data collection and analytical skills, may be particularly useful in the following areas:

− understanding of human rights-based approaches to programming;

− understanding of gender considerations;

− understanding of Results Based Management (RBM) principles;

− logic modelling/logical framework analysis;

− real-time, utilization-focused, joint, summative and formative evaluation;

− quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis;

− rapid assessment procedures;

− participatory approaches.

11. The evaluator, whose responsibilities include the management of evaluation, needs specific managerial skills:

− management of evaluation process;

− planning, setting standards and monitoring work;

− management of human and financial resources;

– team leadership;

– strategic and global thinking;

– foresight and problem solving.

12. The evaluator also needs certain personal skills that are particularly useful in evaluation:

– team work and cooperation;

– capability to bring together diverse stakeholders;

– communication;

– strong drafting skills;

– analytical skills;

– negotiation skills;

– language skills adapted to the region where the evaluation takes place.

Ethics

Standard 2.5: Evaluators should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relationships with all stakeholders.

13. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions, evaluators should operate in accordance with international values.

14. Evaluators should be aware of differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction and gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and be mindful of the potential implications of these differences when planning, carrying out and reporting on evaluations.

15. Evaluators must ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process. Evaluators also have an overriding responsibility to ensure that evaluation activities are independent, impartial and accurate.

Standard 2.6: Evaluators should ensure that their contacts with individuals are characterized by respect.

16. Evaluators should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation.

17. Knowing that evaluation might often negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

Standard 2.7: Evaluators should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants.

18. Evaluators should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people’s right to privacy.

19. Evaluators must respect people’s right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. They should also inform participants about the scope and limits of confidentiality.

20. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.

21. Evaluators have a responsibility to note issues and findings that may not relate directly to the Terms of Reference. They should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues, such as evidence of wrongdoing, should be reported.

Standard 2.8: Evaluators are responsible for their performance and their product(s).

22. Evaluators are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.

23. Evaluators should be responsible for the completion of the evaluation within a reasonably planned time, acknowledging unprecedented delays resulting from factors beyond the evaluator's control.

3. Conducting Evaluations

Design

Standard 3.1: The evaluation should be designed to ensure timely, valid and reliable information that will be relevant for the subject being assessed.

1. The conduct of evaluations follows the cyclical planning at various levels, which is comprised of different stages: planning, design, implementation and follow-up.

Standard 3.2: The Terms of Reference should provide the purpose and describe the process and the product of the evaluation.

2. The design of an evaluation should be described as precisely as possible in the Terms of Reference, which should include the following elements:

− context for the evaluation;

− purpose of the evaluation;

− scope (outlining what is covered and what is not covered by the evaluation);

− evaluation criteria (inter alia relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability);

− key evaluation questions;

− methodology – approach for data collection and analysis and involvement of stakeholders;

− workplan, organization and budget;

− products and reporting;

− use of evaluation results, including responsibilities for such use.

Standard 3.3: The purpose and context of the evaluation should be clearly stated, providing a specific justification for undertaking the evaluation at a particular point in time.

3. The purpose of the evaluation must be clearly and accurately defined bearing in mind the main information needs of the intended users of the evaluation. The purpose discusses why the evaluation is being done, what triggered it and how it will be used. The purpose also relates to the timing of the evaluation at various junctions in the management cycle. This adds to the clarity of the evaluation and should provide the broad orientation, which is then further elaborated in the objectives and scope of the evaluation.

Standard 3.4: The subject to be evaluated should be clearly described.

4. The subject to be evaluated should be described in terms of what it aims to achieve, how the designers thought that it would address the problem they had identified, implementation modalities, and any intentional, or unintentional, change in implementation.

5. Other elements include the importance or parameters of the subject to be evaluated including its cost and its relative weight with respect, for example, to the organization’s overall activities. At the very least, the description should include the number of participants/people reached by the undertaking.

Standard 3.5: Evaluation objectives should be realistic and achievable, in light of the information that can be collected in the context of the undertaking. The scope of the evaluation also needs to be clearly defined.

6. The objectives of the evaluation should follow from the purpose of the evaluation. They should be clear and agreed upon by all stakeholders involved.

7. Scope determines the boundaries of the evaluation, tailoring the objectives and evaluation criteria to the given situation. It should also make the coverage of the evaluation explicit (time period, phase in implementation, geographical area and the dimensions of stakeholder involvement being examined). The limits of the evaluation should also be acknowledged within the scope.

8. Evaluations may also be oriented by evaluation questions. These add more detail to the objectives and contribute to defining the scope.

9. The objectives and scope of the evaluation are critical references to determine the evaluation methodology and required resources.

Standard 3.6: The evaluation design should clearly spell out the evaluation criteria against which the subject to be evaluated will be assessed.

10. The most commonly applied evaluation criteria are the following: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, value-for-money, client satisfaction and sustainability. Criteria for humanitarian response should also include: coverage, coordination, coherence, connectedness and protection. Not all criteria are applicable to every evaluation.

Standard 3.7: Evaluation methodologies should be sufficiently rigorous to assess the subject of evaluation and ensure a complete, fair and unbiased assessment.

11. The evaluation methodologies to be used for data collection, analysis and involvement of stakeholders should be appropriate to the subject to be evaluated, to ensure that the information collected is valid, reliable and sufficient to meet the evaluation objectives, and that the assessment is complete, fair and unbiased.

12. Evaluation methods depend on the information sought, and the type of data being analysed. The data should come from a variety of sources to ensure its accuracy, validity and reliability, and that all affected people/stakeholders are considered. Methodology should explicitly address issues of gender and under-represented groups.

13. The limitations of the chosen evaluation methods should also be acknowledged.

Standard 3.8: An evaluation should assess cost effectiveness, to the extent feasible.

14. Using a range of cost analysis approaches, from the elaborate cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analysis, to cost-efficiency analysis, to a quick cost comparison, an evaluation should, to the extent possible, pursue the following broad questions:

− How do actual costs compare to other similar benchmarks?

− What is the cheapest or most efficient way to get the expected results?

− What are the cost implications of scaling up or down?

− What are the costs of replicating the subject being evaluated in a different environment?

− Is the subject being evaluated worth doing? Do economic benefits outweigh the costs?

− How do costs affect the sustainability of the results?

15. Cost analysis in evaluation builds on financial information, but may also involve calculating “economic costs” such as human resources, labour-in-kind, opportunity costs, etc.

16. The scope of cost analysis, i.e. whether cost comparison is made concerning impacts, outcomes or outputs, will depend on the purpose of the evaluation and the evaluation questions posed. Cost analysis must be explicit in terms of the different perspectives from which costs are analysed (donors, a single organization, primary stakeholders) and the limitations – the complexity of the subject (multiple programme objectives, partners, financial systems), the availability of data and the time and resources invested.

17. Cost analysis is not always feasible. Where no cost analysis is included in an evaluation, some rationale for this exclusion should be included in the objectives or methodology section.

18. It is expected that evaluators point out areas of obvious inefficient use of resources.

Standard 3.9: The evaluation design should, when relevant, include considerations as to what extent the UN system's commitment to the human rights-based approach has been incorporated in the design of the undertaking to be evaluated.

19. UN organizations are guided by the United Nations Charter, and have a responsibility and mission to assist Member States to meet their obligations towards the realization of the human rights of those who live within their jurisdiction. Human rights treaties, mechanisms and instruments provide UN entities with a guiding frame of reference and a legal foundation for ethical and moral principles, and should guide evaluation work. Consideration should also be given to gender issues and hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups.

20. The evaluation design might in addition include some process of ethical review of t he initial design of the undertaking to be evaluated, including:

− the balance of cost and benefits to participants including potential negative impact;

− the ethics of who is included and excluded in the evaluation and how this is done;

− handling of privacy and confidentiality;

− practices of obtaining informed consent;

− feedback to participants;

− mechanisms for shaping and monitoring the behaviour and practice of evaluators and data collectors.

Process

Standard 3.10: The relationship between the evaluator and the commissioner(s) of an evaluation must, from the outset, be characterized by mutual respect and trust.

21. The responsibilities of the parties who agree to conduct an evaluation (specifying what, how, by whom, and when what is to be done) should be set forth in a written agreement in order to obligate the contracting parties to fulfil all the agreed upon conditions, or if not, to renegotiate the agreement. Agreements, such as Terms of Reference, should be established at least in the following areas: financing, time frame, persons involved, reports to be produced or published, content, methodology, and procedures to be followed. Such an agreement reduces the likelihood that misunderstandings will arise between the contracting parties and makes it easier to resolve them if they do arise. Providing an inception report at the start of the evaluation is a useful way of formalizing such an agreement and ensuring proper interpretation of the Terms of Reference.

22. Evaluators should consult with the commissioner(s) of the evaluation on contractual decisions such as confidentiality, privacy, communication, and ownership of findings and reports.

Standard 3.11: Stakeholders should be consulted in the planning, design, conduct and follow-up of evaluations.

23. Stakeholders must be identified and consulted when planning the evaluation (key issues, method, timing, responsibilities) and should be kept informed throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation approach must consider learning and participation opportunities (e.g. workshops, learning groups, debriefing, participation in the field visits) to ensure that key stakeholders are fully integrated into the evaluation learning process.

24. When feasible, a core learning group or steering group composed of representatives of the various stakeholders in the evaluation may be created. This group's role is to act as a sounding board, facilitate and review the work of the evaluation. In addition, this group

may be tasked with facilitating the dissemination and application of the results and other follow-up action.

Standard 3.12: A peer review, or reference group, composed of external experts may be particularly useful.

25. Depending on the scope and complexity of the evaluation, it may be useful to establish a peer review or reference group composed of experts in the technical topics covered by the evaluation. This group would provide substantive guidance to the evaluation process (e.g. provide inputs on the Terms of Reference and provide quality control of the draft report).

Selection of Team

Standard 3.13: Evaluations should be conducted by well-qualified evaluation teams.

26. The number of evaluators in a given team depends on the size of the evaluation. Multi-faceted evaluations need to be undertaken by multi-disciplinary teams.

27. Evaluators should be selected on the basis of competence, and by means of a transparent process.

28. The members selected must bring different types of expertise and experience to the team. If possible, at least one member of the team should be experienced in the sector or technical areas addressed by the evaluation, or have a sound knowledge of the subject to be evaluated. At least one other should preferably be an evaluation specialist and be experienced in using the specific evaluation methodologies that will be employed for that evaluation. The evaluation team should also possess a broad knowledge and understanding of the major economic and social development issues and problems in the country(ies) where the evaluation is taking place or in similar countries in the region. Background or familiarity with emergency situations may also be required, both for the conduct of the exercise itself, and for understanding the particular context of the evaluation.

Standard 3.14: The composition of evaluation teams should be gender balanced, geographically diverse and include professionals from the countries or regions concerned.

29. Qualified, competent and experienced professional firms or individuals from concerned countries should be involved, whenever possible, in the conduct of evaluations, in order, inter alia, to ensure that national/local knowledge and information is adequately taken into account in evaluations and to support evaluation capacity building in developing countries. The conduct of evaluations may also be out-sourced to national private sector and civil society organizations. Joint evaluations with governments or other stakeholders should equally be encouraged.

30. Members of the evaluation team should also familiarize themselves with the cultural and social values and characteristics of the recipients and intended beneficiaries. In this way, they will be better equipped to understand and respect local customs, beliefs and practices throughout the evaluation work.

Implementation

Standard 3.15: Evaluations should be conducted in a professional and ethical manner.

31. Evaluations should be carried out in a participatory and ethical manner and the welfare of the stakeholders should be given due respect and consideration (human rights, dignity and fairness). Evaluations must be gender and culturally sensitive and respect the confidentiality, protection of source and dignity of those interviewed.

32. Evaluation procedures should be conducted in a realistic, diplomatic, cost-conscious and cost-effective manner.

33. Evaluations must be accurate and well-documented and deploy transparent methods that provide valid and reliable information. Evaluation team members should have an opportunity to disassociate themselves from particular judgments and recommendations. Any unresolved differences of opinion within the team should be acknowledged in the report.

34. Evaluations should be conducted in a complete and balanced manner so that the different perspectives are addressed and analysed. Key findings must be substantiated through triangulation. Any conflict of interest should be addressed openly and honestly so that it does not undermine the evaluation outcome.

35. Evaluators should discuss, in a contextually appropriate way, those values, assumptions, theories, methods, results, and analyses that significantly affect the interpretation of the evaluative findings. These statements apply to all aspects of the evaluation, from its initial conceptualization to the eventual use of findings.

36. The rights and well-being of individuals should not be affected negatively in planning and carrying out an evaluation. This needs to be communicated to all persons involved in an evaluation, and its foreseeable consequences for the evaluation discussed.

Reporting

Standard 3.16: The final evaluation report should be logically structured, containing evidence-based findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations, and should be free of information that is not relevant to the overall analysis. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible.

37. A reader of an evaluation report must be able to understand:

• the purpose of the evaluation;

• exactly what was evaluated;

• how the evaluation was designed and conducted;

• what evidence was found;

• what conclusions were drawn;

• what recommendations were made;

• what lessons were distilled.

38. If evaluators identify fraud, misconduct, abuse of power and rights violation, they should confidentially refer the matter to the appropriate UN authorities to investigate such matters. Evaluations should not substitute, or be used for, decision-making in individual human resources matters.

39. Evaluators should allow all relevant stakeholders to have access to appropriate evaluative information, and should actively disseminate that information to stakeholders if possible. Communications to a given stakeholder should always include all important results that may bear on the interests of that stakeholder. In all cases, evaluators should strive to present results as clearly and simply as possible so that clients and other stakeholders can easily understand the evaluation process and results.

Follow-up

Standard 3.17: Evaluation requires an explicit response by the governing authorities and management addressed by its recommendations.

40. As per the Norms, this may take the form of a management response, action plan and/or agreement clearly stating responsibilities and accountabilities.

41. Follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management and/or the Governing Bodies should be systematically carried out.

42. Periodic reporting on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations should also be conducted. This report should be presented to the Governing Bodies and/or the Head of the organization.

4. Evaluation Reports

Standard 4.1: The title page and opening pages should provide key basic information.

1. The following information should be easily accessible in the first few pages of the report:

− name of the subject (i.e. activity, programme, policy etc.) being evaluated;

− date;

− table of contents, including annexes;

− name and organization(s) of the evaluators;

− name and address of the organization(s) that commissioned the evaluation.

Standard 4.2: The evaluation report should contain an Executive Summary.

2. An Executive Summary should provide a synopsis of the substantive elements of the evaluation report. To facilitate higher readership, the Executive Summary should be short, two to three pages, and should “stand alone”. The level of information should provide the uninitiated reader with a clear understanding of what was found and recommended and what has been learned from the evaluation.

3. The Executive Summary should include:

− a brief description of the subject being evaluated;

− the context, present situation, and description of the subject vis-à-vis other related matters;

− the purpose of the evaluation;

− the objectives of the evaluation;

− the intended audience of the report;

− a short description of methodology, including rationale for choice of methodology, data sources used, data collection and analysis methods used, and major limitations;

− the most important findings and conclusions;

− main recommendations.

Standard 4.3: The subject being evaluated should be clearly described, including the logic model and/or the expected results chain and intended impact, its implementation strategy and key assumptions.

4. The evaluation report should clearly describe what the purpose of the subject being evaluated is and how the designers thought it would address the identified problem. Additional important elements include: the importance, scope and scale of the subject being evaluated; a description of the recipients / intended beneficiaries and stakeholders; and budget figures.

5. The description of the subject being evaluated should be as short as possible while ensuring that all pertinent information is provided. If additional details are deemed necessary, a description including the logic model can be provided in an annex.

Standard 4.4: The role and contributions of the UN organizations and other stakeholders to the subject being evaluated should be clearly described.

6. The report should describe who is involved, their roles and their contributions to the subject being evaluated, including financial resources, in-kind contributions, technical assistance, participation, staff time, training, leadership, advocacy, lobbying, and any contributions from primary stakeholders, such as communities. An attempt should be made to clarify what partners contributed to which outcome.

7. Users will want to compare this with who was involved in the evaluation to assess how different points of view were included.

Standard 4.5: The purpose and context of the evaluation should be described.

8. The purpose should discuss why the evaluation is being done, how it will be used and what decisions will be taken after the evaluation is complete. The context should be described in order to provide an understanding of the setting in which the evaluation took place.

Standard 4.6: The evaluation report should provide an explanation of the evaluation criteria that were used by the evaluators.

9. Not all criteria are applicable to every evaluation. The rationale for not using a particular criterion should be explained in the report, as should any limitations in applying the evaluation criteria. Performance standards or benchmarks used in the evaluation should also be described.

10. It is important to make the basis of value judgments transparent.

Standard 4.7: The evaluation report should provide a clear explanation of the evaluation objectives as well as the scope of the evaluation.

11. The original objectives of the evaluation should be described, as well as any changes made to the evaluation design.

12. The scope of the evaluation should be described, making the coverage of the evaluation explicit. The limits of the evaluation should also be acknowledged.

13. The original evaluation questions should be explained, as well as those that were added during the evaluation. These are critical references against which the content of the report ought to be compared to.

14. The objectives and scope of the evaluation are also critical references to judge whether the methodology selected and resources allocated were adequate.

Standard 4.8: The evaluation report should indicate the extent to which gender issues and relevant human rights considerations were incorporated where applicable.

15. The evaluation report should include a description of, inter alia:

− how gender issues were implemented as a cross-cutting theme in programming, and if the subject being evaluated gave sufficient attention to promote gender equality and gender-sensitivity;

− whether the subject being evaluated paid attention to effects on marginalized, vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups;

− whether the subject being evaluated was informed by human rights treaties and instruments;

− to what extent the subject being evaluated identified the relevant human rights claims and obligations;

− how gaps were identified in the capacity of rights-holders to claim their rights, and of duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations, including an analysis of gender and marginalized and vulnerable groups, and how the design and implementation of the subject being evaluated addressed these gaps;

− how the subject being evaluated monitored and viewed results within this rights framework.

Standard 4.9: The applied evaluation methodology should be described in a transparent way, including any limitations to the methodology.

16. A comprehensive, but not excessive, description of the critical aspects of methodology should be contained in the evaluation report to allow the user(s) of the evaluation to come to their own conclusions about the quality of the data. Any description of the methodology should include:

− data sources;

− description of data collection methods and analysis (including level of precision required for quantitative methods, value scales or coding used for qualitative analysis);

− description of sampling (area and population to be represented, rationale for selection, mechanics of selection, numbers selected out of potential subjects, limitations to sample);

− reference indicators and benchmarks, where relevant (previous indicators, national statistics, etc.);

− evaluation team, including the involvement of individual team members;

− the evaluation plan;

− key limitations.

The annexes should include the following:

− more detail on any of the above;

− data collection instruments (surveys, checklists, etc.);

− system for ensuring data quality through monitoring of data collection and oversight;

− a more detailed discussion of limitations as needed.

Standard 4.10: The evaluation should give a complete description of stakeholders' participation.

17. The level of participation of stakeholders in the evaluation should be described, including the rationale for selecting that particular level. While not all evaluations can be participatory to the same degree, it is important that consideration is given to participation of stakeholders, as such participation is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in the use of conclusions, recommendations and lessons. A human rights-based approach to programming adds emphasis to the participation of primary stakeholders. In many cases, this clearly points to the involvement of people and communities. Also, including certain groups of stakeholders may be necessary for a complete and fair assessment.

Standard 4.11: The evaluation report should include a discussion of the extent to which the evaluation design included ethical safeguards where appropriate.

18. The report should have a good description of ethical considerations, including the rationale behind the evaluation design and the mechanisms to protect participants where appropriate. This includes protection of the confidentiality, dignity, rights and welfare of human subjects, including children, and respect for the values of the beneficiary communities.

Standard 4.12: In presenting the findings, inputs, outputs, and outcomes / impacts should be measured to the extent possible (or an appropriate rationale given as to why not).

19. Findings regarding inputs for the completion of activities or process achievements should be distinguished clearly from outputs, outcomes and impact.

20. Outcomes and impacts should include any unintended effects, whether beneficial or harmful. Additionally, any multiplier or downstream effects of the subject being evaluated should be included. To the extent possible, each of these should be measured either quantitatively or qualitatively. In using such measurements, benchmarks should be referred to.

21. The report should make a logical distinction in the findings, showing the progression from implementation to results with an appropriate measurement and analysis of the results chain, or a rationale as to why an analysis of results was not provided.

22. Data does not need to be presented in full; only data that supports a finding needs to be given, and full data can be put in an annex. Additionally, reports should not segregate findings by data source.

23. Findings should cover all of the evaluation objectives and use the data collected.

Standard 4.13: Analysis should include appropriate discussion of the relative contributions of stakeholders to results.

24. Results attributed to the subject being evaluated should be related back to the contributions of different stakeholders. There should be a sense of proportionality between the relative contributions of each, and the results observed. This is an integral element of accountability to partners, donors and primary stakeholders.

25. If such an analysis is not included in the report, the reason why it was not done should be clearly indicated. For instance, if an evaluation is done early in the management cycle, results or any link to a stakeholder's contribution may not be found.

Standard 4.14: Reasons for accomplishments and difficulties of the subject being evaluated, especially constraining and enabling factors, should be identified to the extent possible.

26. An evaluation report should go beyond a mere description of implementation and outcomes and include an analysis, based on the findings, of the underlying causes, constraints, strengths on which to build on, and opportunities. External factors contributing to the accomplishments and difficulties should be identified and analysed to the extent possible, including the social, political or environmental situation.

27. An explanation of context contributes to the utility and accuracy of the evaluation. An understanding of which external factors contributed to the success or failure of a subject being evaluated helps determine how such factors will affect the future of the subject being evaluated, or whether it could be replicated elsewhere.

Standard 4.15: Conclusions need to be substantiated by findings consistent with data collected and methodology, and represent insights into identification and/or solutions of important problems or issues.

28. Conclusions should add value to the findings. The logic behind conclusions and the correlation to actual findings should be clear.

29. Conclusions must focus on issues of significance to the subject being evaluated, determined by the evaluation objectives and the key evaluation questions. Simple conclusions that are already well known and obvious are not useful, and should be avoided.

30. Conclusions regarding attribution of results, which are most often tentative, require clear detailing of what is known and what can plausibly be assumed in order to make the logic from findings to conclusions more transparent, and thereby increase the credibility of the conclusions.

Standard 4.16: Recommendations should be firmly based on evidence and analysis, be relevant and realistic, with priorities for action made clear.

31. For accuracy and credibility, recommendations should be the logical implications of the findings and conclusions. Recommendations should also be relevant to the subject being evaluated, the Terms of Reference and the objectives of the evaluation, and should be formulated in a clear and concise manner. Additionally, recommendations should be prioritized to the extent possible.

32. Recommendations should state responsibilities and the time frame for their implementation, to the extent possible.

Standard 4.17: Lessons, when presented, should be generalized beyond the immediate subject being evaluated to indicate what wider relevance they might have.

33. Not all evaluations generate lessons. Lessons should only be drawn if they represent contributions to general knowledge. They should be well supported by the findings and conclusions of the evaluation. They may refine or add to commonly accepted lessons, but should not be merely a repetition of common knowledge.

34. A good evaluation report has correctly identified lessons that stem logically from the findings, presents an analysis of how they can be applied to different contexts and/or

different sectors, and takes into account evidential limitations such as generalizing from single point observations.

Standard 4.18: Annexes should be complete and relevant.

35. Additional supplementary information to the evaluation that should be included in annexes includes:

− list of persons interviewed (if confidentiality allows) and sites visited;

− data collection instruments (copies of questionnaires, surveys, etc.);

− the original Terms of Reference for the evaluation;

− list of abbreviations.

36. The annexes increase the usability and the credibility of the report.

Annex IV

Guidelines for the preparation of terms of reference for evaluation

The aim of these guidelines is to assist project and programme managers and staff of the Independent Evaluation Unit in the preparation of terms of reference for evaluation and, by so doing, to improve the quality of evaluation in UNODC. The guidelines below are general and must be tailored to the needs of each project or programme. They can be used as a check list for quality control by evaluation managers.

For <u>independent project evaluations</u>, project and programme managers are in charge of drafting the terms of reference, in cooperation with the relevant units and sections at headquarters and field offices and (where possible) members of the core learning partnership. IEU can offer guidance during the drafting process, and will review, comment on and clear the terms of reference.

For <u>major and desk evaluations</u>, IEU will draft the terms of reference, in consultation with relevant units and sections at headquarters and field offices.

Although terms of reference are not required for <u>self-evaluations</u>, IEU offers support to project and programme managers willing to draft them.

The following sections are to be included in the terms of reference:

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background information should include:

(a) Information on why, when and how the project or programme was established, including information on the original project document and overall budget;

(b) Reference to any amendments or revisions of the original project document;

(c) Main objectives, expected results and performance indicators of the project or programme.

2. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

In order for the evaluation manager to identify the purpose of the evaluation, the following issues need to be addressed (see also chapter II. D. in the main body of the present handbook):

(a) Who initiated the evaluation;

(b) What type of evaluation is planned;

(c) Who is the evaluation manager;

(d) Why is the evaluation being undertaken and what will it seek to accomplish;

(e) Why is the evaluation being undertaken now;

(f) Who are the main stakeholders of the evaluation and how will they be involved.

3. EVALUATION SCOPE

In clarifying the scope of the evaluation, the following points should first be determined:

General

(a) The time period to be covered by the evaluation (e.g. the period 2000-2004);

(b) The geographical coverage of the evaluation (e.g. global, regional, subregional or national);

(c) The thematic coverage of the evaluation (and, in the case of major evaluations, the specific projects to be covered).

Key evaluation questions to be answered by the evaluation.

These evaluation questions relate to the quality criteria that UNODC’s programmes and projects are expected to fulfil: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability** and **impact.** (see also chapter II. E. in the main body of the present handbook).

In addition, attention should be paid to the **lessons learned and best practices**.

Such questions can be related to the project concept and design, the project implementation and deliverables (outputs and outcomes), and management issues.

4. EVALUATION METHODS

The quality of the evaluation depends very much on the methods used to collect and analyse data (see also chapter III C. in the main body of the present handbook).

The terms of reference must clearly state that the evaluation team should provide a detailed description of evaluation methods prior to the field mission (for example, in the shape of a design matrix).

5. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

In choosing the members of an evaluation team, the following should be kept in mind:

(a) Number of evaluators;

(b) Required areas of expertise (evaluation skills, technical skills, knowledge, experience and language skills);

(c) Identification of the team leader;

(d) Clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of each team member;

(e) Names of the nominating parties (UNODC, donors, recipient Governments, implementing partners etc.).

While evaluators may be nominated by other stakeholders, it should be made clear in the terms of reference that evaluators will not act as representatives of any party and must remain independent and impartial.

6. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Management arrangements

Clarify responsibilities of the field offices and units and sections at headquarters (where appropriate) and mention agreements with other relevant stakeholders where relevant (for example, in the case of a joint evaluation).

Logistical support

Specify what kind of travel will be required, what kind of materials, office space and support will be needed, and who will be in charge of providing logistical support.

Timeframe for the evaluation process

Specify starting and ending dates and give a detailed breakdown of days for consultants (see table).

The period during which stakeholders will comment on the report should be included in the timetable. Consultants are not paid during this period but their work will be finished only once they have integrated relevant comments and the final report has been cleared by IEU.

Table - Sample matrix for calculating the number of days to be worked by consultants

When (Tentative dates)	Consultant 1 (Who and for how many days)	Consultant 2 (Who and for how many days)	What tasks	Where (location)
			Desk review	Home
			Briefing of evaluators	Field office / headquarters
			Field mission/visit	Country /location A
			Field mission/visit	Country /location B
			Debriefing session	Headquarters
			Preparation of the draft report	Home
			Round of comments among relevant stakeholders	

			Finalization of the report	
Total working days				

Detailed budget

This should include consultants' fees (based on the number of days worked), daily subsistence allowances, travel-related costs, translation and interpretation costs and any other logistics costs.

Expected deliverables

These could include an inception report (including a finalized design matrix), a draft evaluation report, debriefing meetings or presentations and workshops, and the final evaluation report.

The UNODC standard format and guidelines for evaluation reports should also be attached to the terms of reference.

7. PAYMENT

Consultants will be issued consultancy contracts and paid in accordance with United Nations rules and procedures.

For major evaluations, for example, a lump-sum is usually paid in three instalments:

- The first payment will be made upon signature of the contract (travel expenses plus 75 per cent of the daily subsistence allowance);

- The second payment (50 per cent of the consultancy fee and 25 per cent of the daily subsistence allowance) will be made upon receipt of the draft report by the relevant units and sections at headquarters or field offices and by the Independent Evaluation Unit;

- The third and final payment (50 per cent of the consultancy fee, i.e. the remainder of the fee) will be made only after completion of the respective tasks and receipt of the final report and its clearance by the Independent Evaluation Unit.

Annex V

Standard format and guidelines of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for Evaluation Reports

The model evaluation report contained in this Annex is intended to assist the evaluation team in drafting its evaluation report.

The evaluation report should contain the findings (clearly supported by evidence), conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

Although the structure of the report may be adapted to the particular circumstances of an evaluation exercise (for example, several projects may be covered by a joint report), major headings should be retained, while sub-headings may be added, as necessary.

Information should only be included in the report if it significantly affects the analysis and serves to clarify issues. Rather than repeating information already provided, references should be made to annexes, other parts of the report or documents used to obtain information. Sources of information used should be referenced in a consistent manner throughout the report.

A standard evaluation report starts with a sample cover page, a table of contents, a list of abbreviations and acronyms and an executive summary.

The main body of the report should not exceed 25-50 pages depending on the scope of the evaluation exercise. Annexes should be kept to an absolute minimum (no longer than 15 pages). Only those annexes that serve to demonstrate or clarify an issue related to a major finding should be included. Existing documents should be referenced but not necessarily annexed.

The report should be typed. Text lines should be spaced at 1.5 and be formatted top fit A4 paper. Pages should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals, with the numbers appearing in the lower right hand corners of the pages. Paragraphs should be numbered.

The report should be submitted in electronic format.

Date:

FINAL or MID TERM EVALUATION

Project number

Project title

Thematic area

Country

Report of the evaluation team

Names, titles

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

Vienna

CONTENTS

Summary matrix of findings, supporting evidences and recommendations

Findings: problems and issues identified	Supporting evidences	Recommendations
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The section should consist of a concise executive summary of no more than four pages, that includes:

a) A short description of the project or programme evaluated including its objectives;

b) The major findings of the evaluation;

c) Lessons learned and best practices;

d) Recommendations and conclusions.

The summary should be crisp and clear, communicating the most important information about the evaluation.

Evaluation reports written in a language other than English should be accompanied by an English translation of the executive summary prepared by a United Nations translator and cleared by the responsible backstopping office within UNODC.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and context

This sub-section should summarize the overall concept and design of the project or programme and include an assessment of the its strategy, the planned time and resources and the clarity, logic and coherence of the project document.

B. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation (objective) and its scope (what it has covered) must be clearly stated in this sub-section, in line with the terms of reference.

C. Executing Modalities of the programme or project

This sub-section should briefly describe implementation and management modalities used throughout the project or programme cycle. More details on potential issues that arose during implementation should be given in sub-section 2.D below).

D. Methodology

This is a brief statement of the methods used to obtain and collect the data, as well as the approach and methods used to analyze the data. This sub-section is important, as it provides the basis for the credibility of the evaluation results.

E. Limitations to the evaluation

The report should highlight major constraints that have had an impact on the evaluation process (for example, limited field missions due to security constraints, limited budget, limited time and unavailability of some major stakeholders for interviews) .

II. MAJOR FINDINGS and ANALYSIS

This section is the most important since it covers the analysis of information and articulates the major findings of the evaluation. It is the longest and most detailed section of the report. It should be based on facts. The other sections of the report draw on and reference to it.

A. Relevance of the programme or project

This part should address the relevance of the project or programme in meeting the needs, in solving the problems identified and in contributing to relevant national and international programmes and policies..

B. Attainment of the programme or project objectives

The report should show whether and how the objectives have been achieved.

Where objectives have been fully met the report should show how these are contributing to the attainment of the results, in line with the strategy for the period 2008-2011 for UNODC in the case of major evaluations, and in line with the relevant UNODC country strategic framework in the case of project evaluations.

Where some of the objectives have not been attained, the report should show what progress has been made towards achieving them and how they contribute to the attainment of the results, in line with the strategy for the period 2008-2011 for UNODC in the case of major evaluations, and in line with the relevant UNODC country strategic framework in the case of project evaluations.

C. Achievement of the project or programme outputs

The report should indicate the extent to which the planned outputs have been delivered and how they have contributed to the attainment of the objectives.

This sub-section should also show how the outputs have been delivered within the planned time frame and with the resources available to the project or programme.

D. Institutional and management arrangements and constraints

This part of the report should address how the project or programme has been implemented, noting any constraints. In particular, it should examine the following:

- The appropriateness and effectiveness of overall institutional and management arrangements and the impact that these have had on the implementation and delivery of the project or programme;

- The coordination and collaboration arrangements that have been made with implementing partners and other stakeholders;

- The kind of backstopping received from the relevant units and sections at UNODC headquarters or the relevant field office;

- Whether and how the project or programme was monitored during implementation.

The report should also highlight major constraints and problems that have impacted the implementation and delivery of the project or programme. The aim is to learn from these constraints and hence avoid them in the future, or find solutions to improve performance.

III. OUTCOMES, IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

A. Outcomes

The report should cover the outcomes of the project or programme and demonstrate the short and medium-term effects that the project or programme outputs are likely to achieve or have already achieved, e.g. whether the outputs have made a difference; how they have made a difference, etc.

B. Impact

This sub-section should try to capture the intended and unintended, positive and negative, long-term effects produced or expected to be produced by the project or programme, whether directly or indirectly.

C. Sustainability

This sub-section should deal with the extent to which the benefits of the project or programme will last beyond the end of the project or programme and, in particular, state whether the project or programme has created sufficient institutional and human capacity to sustain the benefits.

IV. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

A. Lessons learned

The lessons learned from a specific project or programme should highlight the strengths and weaknesses in preparation, design and implementation that affect performance, outcomes and impact. They are also applicable to other projects and programmes, as well as policies, and have the potential to improve future actions.

Lessons learned should be based on findings and evidences presented in the report. Lessons learned should not be written as recommendations, nor as an observation or description.

B. Best practices

This part of the report should identify specific experiences (planning, organizational, managerial and operational) gained from a project or programme that worked well in particular circumstances and that can have both specific or wider applicability in a similar development context.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the report should provide clear, useful, time-bound and actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing the project or programme performance and improving the sustainability of results. Recommendations should be linked to the findings.

A. Issues resolved during the evaluation

Several issues that come up during an evaluation might be resolved, and decisions might be taken or implemented during the evaluation.

This part of the report should summarize all such issues (which should not be included again in the section below).

B. Actions recommended

The report should clearly present major recommendations that are aimed, for example, at improving project or programme design, delivery and overall management or at changing policy.

Each recommendation should clearly indicate the action to be undertaken or the decision to be made, as well as the body to which the recommendation is addressed.

VI. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The report must draw overall conclusions based on all the information presented above (findings, outcomes, best practices, lessons learned, recommendations etc.). There must be a clear link between the overall conclusions, the findings and the recommendations.

Annex VI

Self-Evaluation report Format

The structure for a self-evaluation report, given below, is presented in more details (with more guidance for project or programme manager) on ProFi – where the report format can be found in the upper left-hand portion of the portal under *ProFi Tasks / Create Project Self-Evaluation.* **A self-evaluation report must be filled directly on ProFi – and a copy sent to the Independent Evaluation Unit.**

1. Project Title:

2. Project Number:

3. Programme

Sector/Technical Branch:

Unit or Field Office:

4. Performance Indicators:

5. Scope:

6. Implementation:

7. **Duration:**

	Planned	Actual
Start Date		
End Date		
Duration (Months)		

Reason for variance:

8. Cost:

9. Project status at the time of evaluation:

O Terminal O End of Project O Mid-term

10. Needs:

11. Expected results:

Actual Results.

12. Planned Outputs:

Actual Outputs

Reasons for variance

Corrective action

13. What are UNODC's substantive inputs to the project?

14. What are the catalytic effects or impacts of the project on other agencies or governments?

15. On Gender

16. Impact and Sustainability

17. Describe the problems encountered during project implementation:

18. Lessons learned from the achievement and/or weaknesses of the project

19. Recommendations: (Further follow-up action required):

Action Required:

Responsible unit(s):

Schedule:

Annex VII

Evaluation assessment questionnaire

Project/programme title:

Project/programme number:

The evaluators are required to rate each of the items shown below on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest), as follows:

5 = Excellent (90-100 per cent)

4 = Very good (75-89 per cent)

3 = Good (61-74 per cent)

2 = Fair (50-60 per cent)

1 = Unsatisfactory (0-49 per cent)

These ratings are based on the findings of the evaluation and thus are a translation of the evaluation results.

A.	**Planning**	**Rating**				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Project design (clarity, logic, coherence)					
2.	Appropriateness of overall strategy					
3.	Achievement of objectives					
4.	Fulfilment of prerequisites by Government					
5.	Adherence to project duration					
6.	Adherence to budget					

B.	**Implementation**	**Rating**				
		1	2	3	4	5
7.	Quality and timeliness of UNODC inputs					
8.	Quality and timeliness of government inputs					
9.	Quality and timeliness of third-party inputs					
10.	UNODC headquarters support (administration, management, backstopping)					
11.	UNODC field office support (administration, management, backstopping)					
12.	Executing agency support					

C.	**Results**	**Rating**				
		1	2	3	4	5
13.	Attainment, timeliness and quality of outputs					
14.	Achievement, timeliness and quality of outcomes					
15.	Programme/project impact					

16.	Sustainability of results/benefits					

D.	**Recommendations** ***The evaluator should choose ONE of the four options below.***	**Rating**				
	Continue/extend without modifications					
	Continue with modifications					
	Revise project completely					
	End project					

E.	**Comments** Provide relevant explanations and comment on issues such as clarification, replicability, best practices etc.