

Annex 1: Terms of reference

Review of the UNICEF Evaluation Database

Introduction

The evaluation database is a tool to facilitate information sharing within UNICEF on what has been learned from UNICEF supported studies and evaluations. Over the years Country Offices (COs) input into the database has grown enormously, and a large volume of data on evaluations and studies has been collected and disseminated. At the same time, a number of obstacles have been encountered in the accessibility and use of this tool. Given the experience to date, and of the possibilities offered by technological developments in UNICEF, it has been decided to review the database functionality and management. This review will provide a major input for the redesign of database, including upgrading the software platform and improving data entry and retrieval procedures for greater functionality, accessibility and users' satisfaction.

How a New EDB Should Look Like

- ✓ improved quality and relevance of database content;
- ✓ improved database management processes at country, regional and HQ levels, and;
- ✓ improved system's versatility in terms of accessibility and quality of data display through improved design, and making the database available over the UNICEF Intranet

Background to the UNICEF Evaluation Database (EDB)

The EDB contains summarised information on evaluations and studies of UNICEF-supported programmes/projects since 1987. The current version was released in July 1996, based on a previous DOS version with a data entry system more centralised but very similar in overall content. The EDB aims to strengthen UNICEF's institutional memory by making available information on the experience gained and lessons learned from UNICEF supported evaluations and studies. This information can improve experience sharing in evaluation and research methods and findings as well as the tracking of progress in evaluation practices in UNICEF.

Field offices are responsible for entering data on their evaluations and studies, ensuring the completeness and accuracy of this data and for sending it to HQ. Submitting this data is a required part of the country office annual report. HQ maintains the master database containing data on all countries, and periodically produces updated CD-ROMs to distribute this information to all offices.

The EDB system is dependent on the quality and completeness of the data entered by country offices. It now contains details of over 11,000 studies and evaluation. Although

Issues to consider might be:

- Should the database cover UNICEF funded evaluations and studies only, or should also include evaluations and studies related to UNICEF projects, regardless of funding.
- Should entries be selected by quality of evaluation/study or quality of report, or by relevance of subject or findings?
- Who should do the selection and how?

Database Content

What key information should be recorded for evaluations and studies? Issues to consider might be:

- Which information is essential for the database to be useful?
- What should be the balance between achieving completeness of information and reducing reporting burden?

Database management

What 'management' arrangements should be used to maintain the database? Issues to consider might be:

- Who should enter data (centralised or de-centralised, M&E officer, intern or evaluator)?
- Should COs continue to maintain individual country databases or should country data be entered directly into the global database?
- Should the database be linked to reporting requirements, such as annual reports?
- What steps can be taken to improve compliance with the database updating and use procedures?
- What quality control procedures should be put in place, and who should carry them out (CO, RO, HQ, network of experts)?

The review should consider not only who is best able to perform a task, but also whether it is reasonable to expect that they will do so.

Accessibility

What steps can be taken to improve accessibility and use of database?

- How many COs can access database via Internet?
- Should release of CD-ROM format be maintained for some users?
- What are the various categories of database users
- How can the retrieval function best address the needs of these various categories of users?

Skills required

1. Good understanding of evaluation in a decentralised development organisation.
2. Good conceptual understanding of databases, database design and information technology in general.
3. Skills in drafting of questionnaires, questionnaire analysis and telephone interviewing.
4. Skills in drafting IT project proposals.

Deliverables

1. Questionnaires for direct interviews and e-mail-based survey to send out to field offices.
2. Written report of review conclusions based on results of literature review, questionnaire analysis and interviews.
3. Draft project proposal document for the redesign of the evaluation database based on conclusions of written report.
4. Finalised project proposal after feedback from a selected group of EDB users. This should provide basis for a proposal for subsequent database redesign.

Duration

This proposal will require 3 person-months of consultant time over a time period of 5 months. Estimated as follows:

- Undertake Review - 2 person months
- Prepare proposal - 1 person months.

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KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF DATABASE						
1. *	Do you have access to a computer where the database is installed?	Yes	No			
2. *	How often do you use the database? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several times a week <input type="checkbox"/> • 2-3 times a month <input type="checkbox"/> • 3-5 times a year <input type="checkbox"/> • Never <input type="checkbox"/> 					
3. *	Is the database widely used in your office?	Don't know	1	2	3	4
4. *	To what extent are people/organisations outside UNICEF expressing interest in the database?	Don't know	1	2	3	4
5. *	To what extent do the following factors affect the use of the database:					
	(a) The database is not available		1	2	3	4
	(b) People are not aware of its existence		1	2	3	4
	(c) The database is insufficiently promoted		1	2	3	4
	(d) There is a general low interest in M&E work		1	2	3	4
	(e) Evaluation findings are not used		1	2	3	4
	(f) The content of the database is not relevant for my work		1	2	3	4
	(g) Quality of data and information in the database is poor		1	2	3	4
	(h) The database is difficult to use		1	2	3	4
	(i) Others		1	2	3	4
6.	If you use the database, for what purpose are you using it?					
	(a) To generate information for reporting and queries		1	2	3	4
	(b) When planning a new programme/project		1	2	3	4
	(c) For designing an evaluation (to get ideas about design, methods, consultants, etc.)		1	2	3	4
	(d) As a general source of information about lessons learnt		1	2	3	4
	(e) As a tool for policy development		1	2	3	4
	(f) For advocacy/public information		1	2	3	4
	(g) For monitoring the M&E function		1	2	3	4
7. *	What do you think should be the main purpose(s) of the database:					
	(a)					
	(b)					
	(c)					

CONTENT OF DATABASE							
10.	What kind of data and information do you find most useful in the current database?						
	• Bibliographic information (type, title, author, etc.)	1	2	3	4		
	• Programme information (objectives, context, results, expenditure, etc.)	1	2	3	4		
	• Report abstracts (findings, recommendations, lessons learnt, etc.)	1	2	3	4		
	• Feed back information (technical comments, field review, follow up, etc.)	1	2	3	4		
11.	What kind of data and information would you like to find in a future database? *						
	• Bibliographic information (type, title, author, etc.)		<input type="checkbox"/>				
	• Programme information (objectives, context, results, expenditure, etc.)		<input type="checkbox"/>				
	• Report abstracts (findings, recommendations, lessons learnt, etc.)		<input type="checkbox"/>				
	• Feed back information (technical comments, field review, follow up)		<input type="checkbox"/>				
	• Performance rating of programme		<input type="checkbox"/>				
	• Performance rating of evaluation		<input type="checkbox"/>				
	• Full text of report		<input type="checkbox"/>				
	• Others (please state)		<input type="checkbox"/>				
12.	How do you assess existing data and information applicable to your country or area of interest:						
	(a) Quality of data entered	Don't know	1	2	3	4	
	(b) Quantity of data available	Don't know	1	2	3	4	
	(b) Relevance of data available	Don't know	1	2	3	4	

INFORMATION ENTRY AND DATA MANAGEMENT							
13.	Does your office have a focal person for entering data and maintaining the data base? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know: <input type="checkbox"/>						
14.	Are clear routines and procedures established for entering data?	Don't know	1	2	3	4	
15.	Do you have clear criteria for selecting reports to include in the database?	Don't know	1	2	3	4	
16.	Does your office comply with procedures/deadlines for updating the database?	Don't know	1	2	3	4	
17.	Do you have effective systems and procedures to control quality of data?	Don't know	1	2	3	4	
18.	Is anyone responsible for controlling quality of data entries in your office? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know: <input type="checkbox"/>						

ACCESSIBILITY AND DATA OUTPUTS					
22.	Are procedures for retrieving data effective (simple, easy to understand, functional)?	1	2	3	4
23.	Do the available reports (options for data output) meet your needs?	1	2	3	4
24.	Is the system sufficiently flexible to meet your needs?	1	2	3	4
25.	Is the CD-ROM an adequate medium for dissemination (retrieving information)?	1	2	3	4
27.	What do you consider as the main barriers to access?				
28.	In the future where would you like to retrieve information from:				
	CD-ROM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	UNICEF Intranet	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>			

SATISFACTION WITH THE DATABASE					
29.	Do you find what you are looking for in the database?	1	2	3	4
30.	Does the available information and data meet your needs as a user?	1	2	3	4
31.	Do you trust the quality of data?	1	2	3	4
32.	Would you miss the database if it were not around anymore?	1	2	3	4
33.	If the database did not exist where would you search for information?				
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