

EVALUATION OFFICE

UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference



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INTRODUCTION

A Terms of Reference (ToR) is a plan or blueprint outlining the key elements of the purpose, scope, process and products of an evaluation, including management and technical aspects as necessary.

Developing a ToR is a critical early step in any assessment, survey, research or evaluation. In the narrowest sense, it is the basis for contractual arrangements with external consultants, though it should first be developed as a means of clarifying expectations, roles and responsibilities among different stakeholders, providing the plan for overall activity, including follow-up. The time and effort spent in preparing a good ToR has big returns on the quality relevance and usefulness of the product.

ToRs are important:

- For all stakeholders – as they explain the agreed expectations in terms of the parameters and process of the exercise, and are a guide to each stakeholder’s specific role;
- For the evaluation team – as they ensure that expectations are clear and the objectives are met;
- For external and internal teams – as external teams may require more detail on background context and on intended audiences and uses; internal teams may simply need to clarify the parameters of the assignment.

ToRs are often developed in stages. In programme evaluation, stakeholders will focus on the details on purpose and evaluation questions. A further developed version used for recruiting external consultants requires more detail on existing information sources, team composition, procedures and products, but may describe methodology and a calendar of activities only in broad terms. The ToR may then be further refined once an evaluation team is on board, with a careful review of the purpose and key questions and corresponding elaboration of the methodology.

UNICEF- Adapted UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference

Evaluation Title:

Commissioning Office:

1. EVALUATION OBJECT

1.0	The Terms of Reference describes the object of the evaluation.	
1.1	The ToR provides a clear and relevant description of the intervention, including: location(s), timelines, cost/budget, and implementation status.	
1.2	The ToR provides a clear and relevant description of the stakeholders intended to be benefited or influenced by the intervention, by type (i.e., institutions/organizations; communities; individuals...), by geographic location(s) (i.e., urban, rural, particular neighborhoods, town/cities, sub-regions...) and in terms of numbers reached (as appropriate to the purpose of the evaluation).	
1.3	The ToR gives a description of the relative importance of the object to UNICEF (e.g. in terms of size, influence, or positioning).	
1.4	The results framework, logframe or description of the intervention's intended results are provided; including outlining the intervention logic as a coherent theory of change (where no theory of change is available, the need for the evaluation to reconstruct a theory of change is clearly stated).	
1.5	The ToR identifies the main implementing agency(ies), development partners, primary duty bearers, secondary duty bearers, and rights holders; it notes the specific contributions and roles of key stakeholders (financial or otherwise), including UNICEF.	
1.6	The ToR includes an assessment of relevant human rights, including child rights and gender equality, aspects of the evaluation object.	

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE

2.0	The Terms of Reference specifies the purpose of the evaluation and how it will be used.	
2.1	The ToR states the type of evaluation according to UNICEF policy (formative, summative, combined, meta-evaluation).	
2.2	The ToR clearly states why the evaluation is being done, including justification for why it is being done at this time, in terms of what it is expected to achieve or contribute to.	
2.3	The ToR identifies the primary and secondary audiences for the evaluation and how the evaluation will be useful for these audiences.	
2.4	The ToR indicates both duty bearers and rights holders (particularly women and other groups subject to discrimination) as primary users of the evaluation and how they will be involved in the evaluation process.	

3. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

3.0	The Terms of Reference includes clearly defined, relevant and feasible objectives.	
3.1	The ToR gives a clear and complete description of what the evaluation seeks to achieve by the end of the process in order to achieve the overall purpose.	
3.2	The ToR evaluation objectives are realistic and achievable, in light of the information that can be collected in the context of the undertaking.	

4. EVALUATION SCOPE

4.0	The Terms of Reference includes the scope of the evaluation.	
4.1	The ToR explicitly and clearly defines what will and will not be covered (thematically, chronologically, geographically with key terms defined), as well as the reasons for this scope.	
4.2	The scope of the evaluation is adequate to meet the stated evaluation objective(s).	
4.3	The scope of the evaluation is feasible given resources and time considerations.	

5. EVALUATION CONTEXT

5.0	The Terms of Reference includes sufficient and relevant contextual information that supports understanding of the evaluation object and purpose.	
5.1	The ToR gives clear and relevant description of the context of the intervention (policy, socio-economic, political, institutional, international factors relevant to the implementation of the intervention).	
5.2	The ToR provides a clear and relevant description (where appropriate) of the status and needs of the target groups for the intervention.	
5.3	The ToR adequately describes the most relevant programmatic and/or thematic aspects relevant to the evaluation; and how the context relates to the implementation of the intervention.	
5.4	The ToR includes an assessment of relevant human rights, including child rights and gender equality, aspects of the context.	

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.0	The Terms of Reference specifies the criteria that will be utilized to guide the evaluation.	
6.1	The ToR specifies the evaluation criteria against which the subject to be evaluated will be assessed, including, for example, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and/or sustainability, human rights based approach, and results based management.	
6.2	The ToR spells out any additional criteria of relevance to the particular type of evaluation being undertaken, such as evaluations of development, humanitarian response, and normative programmes.	
6.3	The evaluation criteria are defined taking account of equity, human rights and gender equality. Optionally, the ToR includes a standalone criterion on human rights, equity or gender equality.	

7. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

7.0	The Terms of Reference includes a comprehensive and tailored evaluation framework including evaluation criteria, questions and required indicators.	
7.1	The ToR provides a set of relevant evaluation criteria that are explicitly justified as appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation (e.g. OECD-DAC/UNEG criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact; and coverage, coordination and coherence in humanitarian evaluations).	
7.2	The evaluation contains a set of evaluation questions that are directly related to both the objectives of the evaluation and the criteria against which the subject will be assessed; these add further detail to the objectives and contribute to further defining the scope.	
7.3	The set of evaluation questions is comprehensive enough that they raise the most pertinent evaluation questions, while at the same time being concise enough to provide users with a clear overview of the evaluation's objectives.	
7.4	Factoring in the information that will be collected and the context of the evaluation, evidence backed answers to the set of evaluation questions is achievable.	
7.5	The ToR mainstreams equity and human rights, including child rights and gender equality, through the description of the evaluation questions and indicators.	

8. METHODOLOGY

8.0	The Terms of Reference guides the methods for data collection and analysis, including information on the proposed (or required) overall methodological design.	
8.1	The ToR contains a clear and complete description of a relevant design and methodological approach that are suitable for the evaluation's purpose, objectives and scope. Examples of approaches include participatory, utilization-focused, theory-based and gender and human rights responsive. Examples of overall design include qualitative, quasi-experimental and experimental.	
8.2	Existing information sources, such as monitoring systems and/or previous evaluations are identified. An appraisal of quality and reliability is provided.	
8.3	The data collection and analysis methods in the ToR are sufficiently rigorous to assess the subject of the evaluation and ensure a complete, fair and unbiased assessment. For example, there will be sufficient data to address all evaluation questions.	
8.4	The evaluation methodology includes multiple methods (triangulation); preferably with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data and with a range of stakeholders covered by the data collection methods.	
8.5	Logical and explicit linkages are provided between data sources, data collection methods and analysis methods. For example, sampling plans are included.	
8.6	The evaluation methodology takes into account the overall purpose of the evaluation, as well as the needs of the users and other stakeholders.	
8.7	The evaluation methodology explicitly and clearly states the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods.	
8.8	The ToR specifies that the evaluation will follow UNEG norms and standards for evaluations (N&S), as well as ethical guidelines. It provides hyperlinks to the N&S and to the ethical guidelines.	
8.9	The ToR specifies an evaluation approach and data collection and analysis methods that are human rights based, including child rights based and gender sensitive, and for evaluation data to be disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, disability, etc.	

9. EVALUATION WORK PLAN

9.0	The Terms of Reference includes a proposed work plan.	
9.1	The ToR work plan describes the key stages of the evaluation process and the implementation time line. Consider for example meetings, consultations, workshops with different groups of stakeholders, key points of interaction with a steering committee, process for verification of findings with key stakeholders, presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations.	
9.2	The ToR work plan provides a list of deliverables/products that will be submitted by the evaluation team. The ToR states that the evaluation report must be compliant with UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards (updated version of 2017).	
9.3	The ToR establishes clear governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities for evaluation team members, the reference group, the commissioning organization and other stakeholders in the evaluation process.	
9.4	The ToR describes the evaluation quality assurance process.	
9.5	The ToR work plan describes the process, if any, for obtaining and incorporating evaluation comments on a draft evaluation report. It identifies the role of stakeholders in formulating recommendations (if any).	
9.6	The ToR work plan includes an evaluation project budget and/or expected level of effort.	
9.7	The ToR defines the level of expertise needed among the evaluation team on gender equality and human rights, including child rights, and their responsibilities in this regard and calls for a gender balanced and culturally diverse team that makes use of national/regional evaluation expertise.	

10. GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING CHILD RIGHTS

10.0	The Terms of Reference specifies how equity and Human Rights, including child rights and gender equality, will be incorporated in the evaluation design.	
10.1	The ToR spells out the relevant instruments or policies on human rights, including child rights and gender equality that will guide the evaluation process.	
10.2	The ToR provides a hyperlink to UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, and the UN-SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator.	

This updated version has been revised to reflect UNEG Norms and Standards (2016) and the GEROS evaluation quality assessment tool (2016).

Available at: UNICEF GEROS (www.unicef.org/evaluation/index_GEROS.html)

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