

EVALUATION OFFICE

**Standard Operating Procedures
for timely preparation and implementation
of management responses to evaluations
commissioned by the Evaluation Office**

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Introduction

The Evaluation Office (EO) commissions a number of major evaluations each year. These include global thematic evaluations which usually address complex issues involving stakeholders from several headquarters divisions as well as from offices at regional and country level. Major evaluations of humanitarian action can also involve stakeholders at several levels and across a number of offices. Effective consultation and coordination is therefore needed in conducting such evaluations and also in preparing the management response to findings and recommendations from these evaluations.

However, the final stages of such evaluations and the preparation and approval of management responses can become unduly prolonged. To guide improved practice, this note presents Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) focused on the relevant roles, responsibilities and timeframes. These are set out in the next section. These SOPs complement guidance on procedures already available on the evaluation pages of the intranet.¹

The process begins at the very outset of an evaluation, when the client for the evaluation is identified, along with key stakeholders and a reference group. When the evaluation is completed, it will usually be the client who has responsibility for coordinating preparation and submission of the management response.

In concluding an evaluation, a draft final report is distributed for comments from the client, the Reference Group and other key stakeholders. The final evaluation report is completed taking these comments into account.² Senior management is therefore aware of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation several weeks before the final report issues. This period should be used by management to consider the broad lines of the eventual management response.

When complete, the final evaluation report is sent to the evaluation client by the EO Director with a request for a management response to be provided within 60 calendar days. The management response should address each of the recommendations made in the evaluation report, but also allows for recording a more general response to the evaluation findings and conclusions.

Preparation of the management response should be coordinated by the client or delegated by the client to a process manager. Depending on the scope of the evaluation results, the client or process manager may need to consult widely across the organization, including at regional and country levels. Once the final text of the management response is complete, the client should approve it and arrange for it to be uploaded to the evaluation management response tracking system.

¹ Although this guidance is intended for regional and country offices, the same principles apply to evaluation commissioned by EO. See: <https://intranet.unicef.org/epp/evalsite.nsf/8e1ddc662803020785256ede00706595/6a1a69ce471c376585257c40006677c1?OpenDocument>

² It is good practice to maintain a matrix listing comments received and actions taken to address each comment.

Implementation of the approved management response is monitored through the evaluation management response tracking system (EMR). This requires the text of the management response to be entered on the tracking system, followed by quarterly updates. Compliance can be monitored in real time through UNICEF's performance management system dashboard. The Evaluation Office undertakes periodic validation of the quality of management responses and of reported implementation as recorded in the EMR; and reports on results.

The Executive Board maintains oversight of UNICEF's performance in preparing and implementing management responses, through the Annual Report on the Evaluation Function, submitted by the EO Director.

From 2015, the Evaluation Office will monitor compliance with the SOPs and provide members of the Global Evaluation Committee with quarterly updates.

The following section sets out the key actions required, deadlines and accountabilities. Annex 1 provides clarification of key terms.

Key actions required, deadlines³, accountabilities

<u>Action 1</u>	<i>Action</i> <i>Deadline</i> <i>Accountabilities</i>	Evaluation launched. <i>Assumes preparatory consultation and scoping has been completed.</i> EO Director informs client for the evaluation and other senior stakeholders of the launch of the evaluation and invites nominations for staff to be appointed as members of the evaluation Reference Group. Evaluation client and other senior stakeholders nominate staff to join the evaluation Reference Group .
<u>Action 2</u>	<i>Action</i> <i>Deadline</i> <i>Accountabilities</i>	As the evaluation nears completion, the draft evaluation report is sent to the client, senior stakeholders and Reference Group members for final comments. <i>Assumes Reference Group members have already commented on previous working drafts and their comments have been addressed in the draft final report. It is not expected that final comments will raise major new issues.</i> EO Evaluation Manager distributes draft evaluation report.
<u>Action 3</u>	<i>Action</i> <i>Deadline</i> <i>Accountabilities</i>	Final comments sent to EO. Comments due within 14 days of the distribution of the draft evaluation report. Client, senior stakeholders and Reference Group members.
<u>Action 4</u>	<i>Action</i> <i>Deadline</i> <i>Accountabilities</i>	Final evaluation report prepared and approved. Due within 21 days of the deadline for comments on the draft evaluation report. <i>Assumes all comments are received by the deadline; comments received after the deadline may not be considered.</i> EO Evaluation Manager prepares final evaluation report, taking comments received into account. EO Director approves final evaluation report.
<u>Action 5</u>	<i>Action</i> <i>Deadline</i> <i>Accountabilities</i>	Request for management response sent to client, copied to senior stakeholders and Reference Group members. 1 day after approving final report. EO Director.

³ All days are calendar days.

<u>Action 6</u>	<i>Action</i>	Briefing meeting on requirements for the management response. <i>Assumes that client and senior stakeholders will understand the task better if requirements for the MR and any issues around the evaluation are clarified by the EO Evaluation Manager.</i>
	<i>Deadline</i>	Within 14 days of sending request for MR.
	<i>Accountabilities</i>	Client convenes the briefing meeting: client and senior stakeholders meet EO Evaluation Manager. EO Evaluation Manager provides briefing.
<u>Action 7</u>	<i>Action</i>	Management Response prepared, finalized and approved.
	<i>Deadline</i>	Within 60 days of transmission of the request for the MR. <i>Assumes that the client or client's nominee will take on the role of "process manager" responsible for coordinating preparation of the MR.</i>
	<i>Accountabilities</i>	Process manager coordinates preparation of MR. Relevant offices prepare response. Process manager collates inputs. Client approves final MR text.
<u>Action 8</u>	<i>Action</i>	Text of approved management response posted in Evaluation Management Response Tracking System (EMR).
	<i>Deadline</i>	Within 60 days of transmission of the request for the MR.
	<i>Accountabilities</i>	Process manager arranges for posting of approved text in the EMR.
<u>Action 9</u>	<i>Action</i>	Implement management response.
	<i>Deadline</i>	Due dates set out in the management response itself.
	<i>Accountabilities</i>	Various: key responsibilities are set out in the management response itself. Client oversees implementation.
<u>Action 10</u>	<i>Action</i>	Monitor implementation; update EMR tracking system.
	<i>Deadline</i>	Quarterly.
	<i>Accountabilities</i>	Process manager reports to the client on the status of implementation; and updates EMR tracking system.
<u>Action 11</u>	<i>Action</i>	Report on status of implementation to the Executive Board <i>(Annual Report on the Evaluation Function).</i>
	<i>Deadline</i>	Due in March each year.
	<i>Accountabilities</i>	EO Director.
<u>Action 12</u>	<i>Action</i>	Validation of quality and implementation of MRs through independent review of samples drawn from EMR.
	<i>Deadline</i>	Annual.
	<i>Accountabilities</i>	EO Director arranges for such reviews.

Annex 1: Key terms

Client. The client for an evaluation commissioned by the Evaluation Office is usually the Division Director with responsibility for the area of work principally addressed by the evaluation. The client engages with the evaluation throughout the process. The client considers the draft final report and may wish to provide comments to EO; takes receipt of the final evaluation report and leads preparation of the management response; approves the final text of the management response; and oversees implementation of agreed actions set out in the management response. Where appropriate, the client may delegate some tasks to another person to fulfill the role of process manager.

Process manager. While the client is responsible for overseeing the preparation of the management response, approval of the final text and oversight of the implementation of the agreed actions recorded in the management response, some tasks may be delegated by the client to a process manager. These tasks include the process of preparing the management response; coordination of its implementation; and monitoring and reporting on its implementation. Given the scope and complexity of many evaluations commissioned by the Evaluation Office, the process manager will normally need to seek and coordinate inputs from several HQ divisions and offices at each level of the organization.

Reference Group. Each evaluation commissioned by the Evaluation Office has a Reference Group which is usually composed of staff members from HQ and the field with responsibilities in matters relating to the topic being evaluated. It may be supplemented by external experts with relevant knowledge. The Reference Group should be established at the beginning of the evaluation process, when the EO Director will invite the client for the evaluation and other senior stakeholders to nominate staff to join the Reference Group. The role of the Reference Group is to advise the Evaluation Office on issues relating to the evaluation, to facilitate access to relevant materials and persons and to comment on key outputs from the evaluation, usually including the ToR, inception report, working drafts and the draft of the final evaluation report. Members of the Reference Group represent their divisions or offices, consulting colleagues as necessary and informing them of the progress of the evaluation.

Senior stakeholder. Each evaluation commissioned by the Evaluation Office addresses issues overseen by UNICEF's senior management. The evaluation may address activities overseen by a single client, normally a Division Director, who would provide the management response. Where the evaluation addresses a wide range of issues, responsibility to respond lies with a number of senior stakeholders: i.e. senior managers and staff. In such cases, the principal client for the evaluation will need to coordinate across senior management for the preparation and implementation of an agreed management response.

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