



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

Evaluation Guidance Note Series

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UN Women Evaluation Unit

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Guidance: Overview of the UN Women Evaluation Process

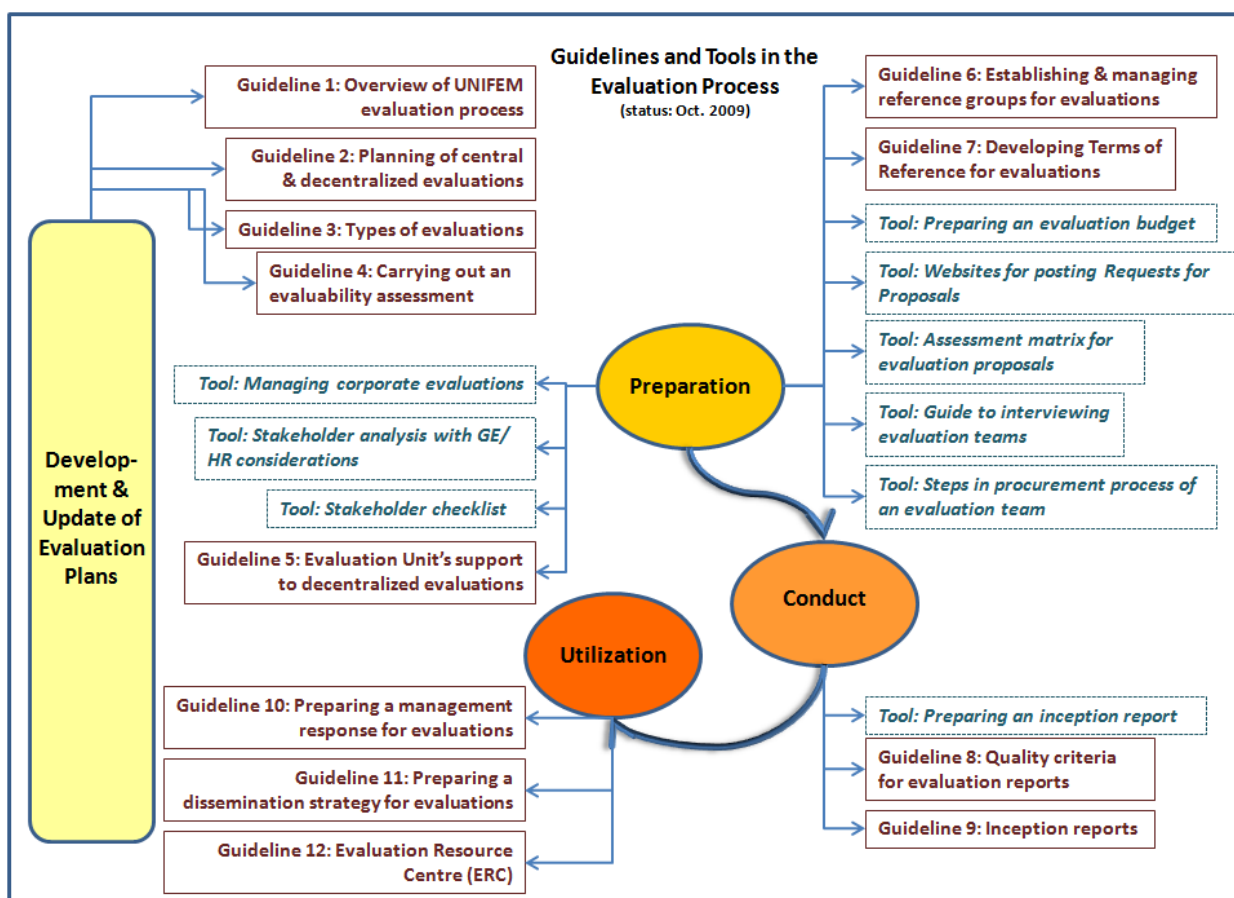
1. Introduction

The purpose of this guideline is to provide an overview to the key stages or phases in the evaluation process for centralized and decentralized evaluations in UN Women (part of UN Women). It outlines the main activities during each stage and indicates the different guidelines and tools that have been developed by the UN Women Evaluation Unit in order to support the process. All guidelines and tools can be accessed on the UN Women intranet under <http://intra.unifem.org/> in the section “Evaluation”. Guidelines are based on the principles defined by the UN Evaluation Group Norms and Standards for Evaluation. Additional guidelines will be issued by the Evaluation Unit. They are considered live documents and will be updated on a regular basis according to new developments in UN Women and the evaluation field.

2. Key Stages in the Evaluation Process

1. Development of evaluation plans

The planning of evaluations is done through the preparation or update of an evaluation plan. Separate evaluation plans are developed for centrally managed corporate (UN Women Evaluation Unit) evaluations and for decentralized evaluations that are managed or conducted by sub-regional offices (SROs), Geographic Sections, thematic and operational units at UN Women HQ. The criteria for selecting the evaluations to be undertaken in a given year are explained in **Guideline #2: “Planning of corporate and decentralized evaluations”** while the different types of evaluations in UN Women are outlined in **Guideline #3: “Evaluation Types and Modalities”**. During this stage, an assessment may be necessary about whether a project or programme is ready for an evaluation. The **Guideline #4 “Carrying out an evaluability assessment”** further explains how to undertake such an assessment.



There are typically three main stages involved in the evaluation cycle process: 1) preparation, 2) conduct and c) utilization and follow-up. Key principles and standards to respect in all UN Women evaluation processes are stated in **UN Women’s Evaluation Policy**, available on the UN Women public webpage. The diagram above illustrates the evaluation cycle as well as the guidelines and tools available during the different phases.

2. Preparing the evaluation

Once it has been agreed to undertake an evaluation, it is important to think about evaluation stakeholders and their role in the evaluation. Both **Tools “Stakeholder checklist”** and **“Stakeholder analysis”** help to identify potential evaluation stakeholders and ways how to engage them during the evaluation process. The **Guideline #5 “Roles and responsibilities in decentralized evaluations”** provides details regarding management arrangements around the evaluation, and the type of support provided by UN Women Evaluation Unit staff at sub-regional and at HQ level. At this point it is also recommended to establish a reference group to provide feedback on the evaluation Terms of Reference (TOR) and later on during the subsequent evaluation phases. This process is explained in the **Guideline #6 “Establishing Reference Groups for evaluations”**.

In close consultation with the reference group and other evaluation stakeholders, the person responsible for managing the evaluation process i.e. *evaluation manager*,

develops the ToR for the evaluation, prepares an evaluation budget and calls for evaluation proposals. The **Guideline #7 “Developing Terms of Reference for evaluations”** gives directions in structuring the TOR and identifying key information needs, and provides examples of questions based on evaluation key criteria. The **Tool “Preparing an evaluation budget”** helps to estimate the cost for an evaluation through the breakdown of budget for fees, travel, communication and translation etc. To help identifying good quality evaluation consultants, the **Tool “Websites for posting TOR”** provides a list of websites and list-servers for reaching out to the evaluation community.

Once the ToR is finalized, the most qualified evaluation team is selected and hired on the basis of the quality of the evaluation proposal and the qualifications of the evaluation team. The **Tools “Assessment matrix for evaluation proposals”**, the **“Guide to interviewing evaluation teams”** and the **“Steps in procurement process of an evaluation team”** provide checklists for issues that one needs to pay attention to during this stage.

3. Conducting the evaluation study

The evaluation study starts with a review of the work plan and reaching an agreement between the evaluation team and the evaluation task manager on the evaluation scope, design and timeframe. This is usually presented in the form of an **Inception Report, see the Guideline #9 “Inception Reports”**. Once this agreement is reached, data collection and analysis takes place by the evaluation team, in close consultation with the stakeholders represented in the reference groups constituted for the evaluation. Preliminary findings are presented to the evaluation task manager, the reference group and to other evaluation stakeholders. Based on the feedback received, a full report is drafted and finalized. To ensure quality, the **Guideline #8 “Quality criteria for evaluation reports”** outlines the key elements to a meaningful, useful and credible evaluation report. While the evaluation team is responsible for conducting the study, UN Women’s evaluation manager is responsible for coordinating the process in a consultative and quality assurance manner.

4. Using and disseminating evaluation findings

Once the evaluation report is completed and validated with key stakeholders, it is made publicly available through the online Evaluation Resource Centre at <http://erc.undp.org/>. For details see the **Guideline #12 on “Using the Evaluation Resource Centre”**. The management response is an important part of the evaluation where UN Women management decides on the appropriateness and feasibility of the evaluation recommendations. This includes identifying the follow-up actions to the recommendations and responsibilities for the follow-up. The **Guideline #10 “Preparing a management response for evaluations”** further explains the process for developing a management response. The implementation of agreed upon action is tracked through the online Evaluation Resource Centre at <http://erc.undp.org/>.

Evaluations are disseminated to evaluation stakeholders and a broader audience through different means or platforms such as web posting, printed documentation,

learning workshops etc. This process will also help to ensure that key evaluation findings and lessons are captured and incorporated in the design of new programmes and projects. Different evaluation products can be developed and tailored to different audiences. Examples are leaflets, flyers or a CD for audiences such as UN Women staff, partners, or donors. The **Guideline #11 “Preparing a dissemination strategy for evaluations”** provides examples on how to tailor evaluation products to specific audiences.

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