

# Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit for Programme Managers

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Office of Oversight and Evaluation

Tool No 5  
May 2001

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## Planning and Managing an Evaluation

### Part IV: Managing the Evaluation Process

#### 1. Introduction

The Toolkit is a supplement to the UNFPA programming guidelines. It provides guidance and options for UNFPA Country office staff to improve monitoring and evaluation activities in the context of results-based programme management. It is also useful for other programme managers at headquarters and national levels. Many of the approaches described in this toolkit can be used as well for programme<sup>1</sup> strategy development.

This part IV of Tool number 5 discusses various aspects of managing the evaluation process: “who” does “what”; steps in the development of a terms of reference and in the selection of an evaluator/evaluation team; and pointers on managing and supervising the conduct of an evaluation. The tool provides overall guidance for a traditional approach to evaluation with limited stakeholder participation. However, the principles and management responsibilities mentioned in the tool should, with some adaptation, be applied to all types of evaluations. For further details on participatory monitoring and evaluation approaches, consult Tool Number 4: Stakeholder Participation in Monitoring and Evaluation.

The content is based on a review of the literature both from academia and international development agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, Save the Children and bilateral donor agencies such as DANIDA, OECD, USAID and the U.S. Department of health and Human Services.

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of brevity “programme” will be used throughout the tool kit to refer to a country programme as well as its sub-programme and project components.

## 2. Defining the evaluation questions

As discussed in Tool number 3, there are different evaluation purposes and types of questions they can address. Part I and II of Tool number 5 discuss the steps involved in defining the evaluation concerns and questions to be answered by the evaluation. Once these have been established, the evaluation manager needs to ensure that the evaluation is carried out in a systematic and structured manner by following a few basic steps as outlined below.

## 3. Who does what: delineation of roles and responsibilities

People can participate in an evaluation in various capacities, as managers, as evaluators, or providers of information. It is essential, however, to have a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities among the various interested parties. **Boxes 1 and 2** highlight the potential responsibilities of the evaluation manager<sup>2</sup> and the evaluator(s).

Stakeholders are important partners in any evaluation and should be involved to varying degrees in the evaluation process. It is important to identify what roles the stakeholders will be expected to play in the evaluation and indicate the extent of their participation at the different stages of the evaluation process – which will vary with the type of evaluation carried out. When stakeholders are to be involved in all stages of the evaluation process (i.e., design and planning, information collection, the development of findings, evaluation reporting and results dissemination) then the evaluator's function might range from team leader to that of facilitator/resource person to be called on as needed. Stakeholder participation can facilitate evaluation capacity building and increase the likelihood of their acting on evaluation recommendations.

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<sup>2</sup> The evaluation manager is usually UNFPA staff. Assigning a team composed of UNFPA staff to manage the evaluation can be useful to see the evaluation process through and ensure a higher quality product.

## Box 1 - Potential responsibilities of the evaluation manager

### Preparation:

- Determine the purpose and users of evaluation result;
- Determine who needs to be involved in the evaluation process
- Define evaluation concerns and questions together with key stakeholders
- Draft the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation; indicate a reasonable time-frame for the evaluation
- Identify mix of skills and experiences required in the evaluation team
- Oversee the collection of existing information/data; be selective and ensure that existing sources of information/data are reliable and of sufficiently high quality to yield meaningful evaluation results; information gathered should be manageable
- Commission/ supervise the preparation of background document(s) as necessary
- Select, recruit and brief the evaluator(s)
- Ensure that background documentation/materials compiled are submitted to the evaluator(s) well in advance of the evaluation exercise so that evaluator (s) have time to digest materials
- Decide whose views should be sought (e.g., service providers, service users, central and/or local government counterparts, etc)
- Develop additional information collection procedures and instruments (unless the evaluator is contracted to design information collection methods); ensure the use of a variety of data gathering methods to enhance the validity and credibility of evaluation results
- Propose an evaluation field visit plan
- Ensure availability of funds to carry out the evaluation
- Brief evaluator (s) on the purpose of the evaluation; use this opportunity to go over documentation and review evaluation work plan

### Implementation:

- Ensure that the evaluator(s) have full access to files, reports, publications and any other relevant information
- Ensure adequate administrative and logistical support during the evaluation
- Follow the progress of the evaluation; provide feedback and guidance to the evaluator(s) throughout all phases of implementation
- Assess the quality of evaluation reports(s) and discuss strengths and limitations with the evaluator(s) to ensure that the draft report satisfies the ToR, and that evaluation findings are defensible and recommendations are realistic
- Arrange for a meeting with the evaluator(s) and key stakeholders to discuss and comment on the draft report
- Approve the end product; ensure presentation of evaluation results to stakeholders; include country office programme staff in debriefing to promote information sharing and use of evaluation results

### Follow-up:

- Evaluate performance of evaluator(s) and place on record
- Disseminate evaluation results to the key stakeholders and other audiences (see Tool 5 part V)
- Promote the implementation of recommendations and use of evaluation results in present and future programming; monitor regularly to ensure that recommendations are acted on.

### Box 2 - Potential responsibilities of the evaluator(s)

- Provide inputs regarding evaluation design; bring refinements and specificity to the evaluation concerns and questions
- Conduct the evaluation; as team leader supervise team members and manage the day-to-day process of carrying out the evaluation; make sure all aspects of the evaluation are covered
- Review information/documentation made available by the country office
- Design/refine instruments to collect additional information as needed; conduct or coordinate additional information gathering
- Undertake site visits as necessary; conduct interviews
- Facilitate stakeholder participation if the evaluator is expected to conduct a participatory evaluation
- Provide regular progress reporting/briefing to the UNFPA evaluation manager
- As team leader act as mediator if there are dissenting views among the evaluation team
- Analyze and synthesize information; interpret findings, develop and discuss conclusions and recommendations; draw lessons learned
- Participate in discussions of draft evaluation report; correct or rectify any factual errors or misinterpretations
- Guide reflection/discussions if expected to facilitate presentation on evaluation findings in seminar/workshop setting
- Finalize the evaluation report and prepare a presentation of evaluation results

## 4. Developing Terms of Reference for the evaluation

After the roles and responsibilities for implementing the evaluation have been delineated, the Terms of Reference (ToR) that lists the evaluation background as well as services and products the evaluator(s) is/are expected to deliver should be drafted. Discuss the ToR with the evaluator(s) and make any adjustments before initiating the evaluation. The ToR should:

- Describe the purpose of the evaluation and who the stakeholders of the evaluation are; specify why the evaluation is being requested and what the information will be used for;
- In consultation with stakeholders focus on the key issues and concerns to be addressed and questions to be answered (see Box 3 – Handling an evaluation on sensitive issues);

- Specify the methodology. Describe the data gathering instruments and methods of analysis. The methodology may be developed with the assistance of an evaluator;
- List background documentation that will be provided to the evaluator(s);
- Specify the composition of the evaluation team (e.g., number of team members, specify individual members' profile). The evaluation focus and methods as well as the availability of funds will determine the evaluation team composition. Multi-disciplinary teams, including specialists in UNFPA mandated substantive areas and at least one evaluation specialist, are often used to conduct evaluations of large programmes. Indicate who on the evaluation team will be the team leader;
- Describe the evaluation work plan. Specify the responsibilities of the evaluator(s) and the team leader; detail specific tasks to be undertaken as well as the time lines involved (the evaluation may be conducted over an extended period of time or it may be a short study). Indicate which audiences are to receive which information at what times, what the nature and schedule of written reports and oral briefings will be, and how the findings will be disseminated and to whom;
- Specify the UNFPA-evaluator(s) and stakeholder-evaluator(s) relationships. The latter will depend on the extent of programme stakeholder involvement at the various stages of the evaluation

### Box 3 – Handling an evaluation on sensitive issues

- ✓ Involve stakeholders in the design of the evaluation
- ✓ Clarify with them the nature of the issues to be examined; give them an appreciation of the need to look at those issues
- ✓ Maintain the integrity of the evaluation by ensuring that the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations are objective and based on accurate information.

*Source: Adapted from UNDP Evaluation Tips, 2000*

## 5. Selecting appropriate evaluator(s)

The choice of evaluator(s) is an important factor in the effectiveness of evaluations. Evaluations can be conducted by **internal** or **external evaluators** or, as is often the case, by a combination. Careful consideration of the purpose of the evaluation will help to determine the best approach. Internal evaluations are conducted by evaluator(s) who is/are associated with the programme to be evaluated; external evaluations are conducted by evaluator(s) who is/are not associated with the execution, implementation and funding of the object of the study. For instance, if the purpose of the evaluation is to judge the overall effectiveness or impact of a programme then

external evaluator(s) may be the better option given that they would not have a stake in the evaluation’s findings, and that the results may be perceived as more objective. **Table 1** summarizes the possible advantages and disadvantages of using internal and external evaluators. A well-balanced combination of internal and external evaluators may be preferable for many purposes.

The inclusion of **national consultants** is useful and can enrich the evaluation exercise. They understand the evaluation context, and may provide the evaluation team with access to officials and sources of information that otherwise may not be available. Moreover, the inclusion of national consultants on a team can act as a catalyst for greater local “buy-in” into the evaluation results.

**Table 1: Trade-Offs between Internal and External Evaluators**

Someone associated with the programme	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows the implementing organization, its programme and operations.</li> <li>• Understands and can interpret behavior and attitudes of members of the organization.</li> <li>• May possess important informal information.</li> <li>• Is known to staff, so may pose less threat of anxiety or disruption.</li> <li>• Can more easily accept and promote use of evaluation results.</li> <li>• Is often less costly.</li> <li>• Doesn't require time-consuming recruitment negotiations.</li> <li>• Contributes to strengthening national evaluation capability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May lack objectivity and thus reduce credibility of findings.</li> <li>• Tends to accept the position of the organization.</li> <li>• Is usually too busy to participate fully.</li> <li>• Is part of the authority structure and may be constrained by organizational role conflict.</li> <li>• May not be sufficiently knowledgeable or experienced to design and implement an evaluation.</li> <li>• May not have special subject matter expertise.</li> </ul>
Someone not associated with the programme	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be more objective and find it easier to formulate recommendations.</li> <li>• May be free from organizational bias.</li> <li>• May offer new perspective and additional insights.</li> <li>• May have greater evaluation skills and expertise in conducting an evaluation.</li> <li>• May provide greater technical expertise.</li> <li>• Able to dedicate him/herself full time to the evaluation.</li> <li>• Can serve as an arbitrator or facilitator between parties.</li> <li>• Can bring the organization into contact with additional technical resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not know the organization, its policies, procedures, and personalities.</li> <li>• May be ignorant of constraints affecting feasibility of recommendations.</li> <li>• May be unfamiliar with the local political, cultural and economic environment.</li> <li>• May tend to produce overly theoretical evaluation results (if an academic institution is contracted).</li> <li>• May be perceived as an adversary arousing unnecessary anxiety.</li> <li>• May be costly.</li> <li>• Requires more time for contract negotiations, orientation, and monitoring.</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from UNICEF Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation, 1991.

The evaluation purpose, methods and resources available will not only determine whom to select but also how many evaluators to recruit. In selecting candidates of an **evaluation team**, consider what each member will contribute to the evaluation not only in terms of his/her individual expertise and experience, but also in terms of his/her ability to function as member of a team. **Box 4** suggests various requirements to bear in mind when assembling an evaluation team.

#### **Box 4 – What should UNFPA look for in assembling a team?**

- ✓ Evaluation skills (e.g. knowledge and practical application of evaluation methodologies)
- ✓ Knowledge of the subject region or country
- ✓ Subject matter expertise in the relevant area of UNFPA’s mandate
- ✓ Analytical skills
- ✓ Facilitation skills in the event that participatory evaluation is undertaken
- ✓ Familiarity with UNFPA
- ✓ Team leadership skills
- ✓ Language proficiency
- ✓ Good drafting skills
- ✓ Demonstrated performance levels (check references)

## **6. Managing and supervising the evaluation**

- **Briefing evaluator(s)**

At the beginning of the evaluation, the evaluation manager should meet with the evaluator(s) to ensure an understanding of the programme context, the evaluation purpose and approach, review the data collection instruments and the schedule of evaluation activities, and answer questions. Arrangements for administrative and logistical support should also be reviewed and any adjustments made. It is best at this juncture to discuss the format and content of the final evaluation report and the interim reporting arrangements.

- **Backstopping and supervising the evaluator(s)**

The evaluation manager should consult with the evaluator(s) or the team leader at various times during the evaluation and request a debriefing at its conclusion; obtain feedback from the evaluator(s) on whether the evaluation instruments are appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation; comment on and assess the quality of draft reports; respect the independence of the evaluation and be prepared to accept findings and conclusions that may not support preconceived notions about the programme.

- **Finalizing the evaluation report**

A report is needed to communicate evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations (see Part I of Tool number 5 for further details and definitions of these evaluation elements). **Annex 1** provides a suggested outline for the evaluation report. The report should be relatively brief and



concise. It should either be written in or translated into the official language of the country. During the drafting process the evaluation manager should provide feedback and review the quality of the evaluation results. A draft report should be given for review to Government counterparts, programme managers and other users as appropriate. The evaluation manager and users of the report should discuss the findings, conclusions and recommendations, and provide comments on the draft report to the evaluator(s) before it is finalized. Such discussions can bring out new perspectives on the meaning of the evaluation results or add information to rectify any factual errors. It is important, however, that the evaluator(s) maintain their independence at all times during the discussions and be prepared to decide what modifications to introduce to the draft report. Any dissenting views should be properly recorded in the report. In the case of evaluator(s) residing outside the country where the evaluation is being conducted, the main conclusions and recommendations should be finalized before the evaluator(s) leave the country. The evaluation report should normally be finalized two weeks after the conclusion of the evaluation exercise and submitted to the country office.

## Annex 1 – Evaluation Report: Suggested Outline

### *Title page*

- Name of project, programme or subject being evaluated
- Name of the organization to which the report is submitted
- Names and affiliations of the evaluators
- Date

### *Table of Contents*

### *Acknowledgements*

- Identify those who contributed to the evaluation

### *List of acronyms*

### *Executive summary*

- A self-contained paper of 1-3 pages
- Summarize essential information on the subject being evaluated, the purpose of the evaluation and methods applied, the major findings and conclusions, and recommendations in priority order

### *Introduction*

- Summarize the purpose of the evaluation, the key issues addressed and the methodology employed to conduct the evaluation
- Describe the structure of the evaluation report
- Describe the aims and strategies of the programme/ project

### *Findings and conclusions*

- State findings clearly based on the evidence derived from the information collected. Provide critical assessment of performance (including factors affecting performance), and the results achieved.
- Conclusions should include a discussion of the reasons for successes and failures, especially the constraints and enabling factors

### *Lessons learned*

- Based on the evaluation findings and drawing from the evaluator(s)' overall experience in other contexts provide lessons learned (both the best and worst practices) that may be applicable in other situations as well. Include both positive and negative lessons.

### *Recommendations*

- Base recommendations on the conclusions and lessons learned, and discuss their anticipated implications
- List proposals for action to be taken (short and long-term) by the person(s), unit or organization responsible for follow-up in priority order

- Provide suggested time lines and cost estimates (where relevant) for implementation

*Annexes*

- Attach ToR (for the evaluation)
- List persons interviewed, sites visited
- List documents reviewed (reports, publications)
- Data collection instruments (optional – e.g., copies of questionnaires, surveys, etc.)

*Sources:* Adapted from UNICEF Guide for Monitoring and Evaluation, 1991, and from UNDP Results-Oriented Monitoring and Evaluation: A Handbook for Programme Managers, 1997.

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*This tool is subject to constant improvement. We welcome any comments and suggestions you may have on its content. We also encourage you to send us information on experiences from UNFPA funded and other population programmes and projects which can illustrate the issues addressed by this tool. Please send your inputs to:*

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