

Technical Note on Evaluation Compliance

1. Rationale

The goal of development assistance has always been to achieve long-term change, but too often the emphasis of reporting has been on good but limited accomplishments. Even efficient and well-managed projects lose their relevance if they yield no discernible improvement in development conditions at the end of the day. In recognition of this reality, UNDP is focusing more on results and how UNDP can better contribute to them. To support this strategic shift towards results, UNDP needs a strong and coherent monitoring and evaluation framework that promotes learning and performance measurement.

The new monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework as described in the *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results* (<http://www.undp.org/eo/>) is guided by three equally important objectives: to align the monitoring and evaluation system with results-based management; to promote evaluative knowledge and learning around results; and to simplify policies and procedures. As part of the new framework, the evaluation compliance system has likewise been revised with these three objectives in mind.

The new evaluation compliance system is therefore based on outcome evaluations, harmonized with the Country Programme (CP) cycle and entails a lighter evaluation workload than the previous \$1 million/10 year project evaluation requirement. It also aims to ensure that an acceptable percentage of UNDP resources is covered for accountability purposes.

2. New Compliance Scenario

Evaluation is important not only for accountability but for its value in helping us to learn from experience about why and how we succeed and fail, and to apply these lessons in a way that improves future interventions. To help us know more about results and the effect UNDP is having on them, evaluation compliance is now based on outcome evaluations—specifically, the number of outcome evaluations that a country office commits to undertaking during a given Country Programme (CP) cycle. The minimum number of outcome evaluations that a country is required to undertake during the CP cycle is based on the total resources expected to be available during the CP and the previous workload under the old project evaluation regime. See **Box 1** for the ranges; the Evaluation Office has derived these ranges based on past resource and evaluation compliance patterns and extensive consultations with the Regional Bureaux.

Box 1: New Compliance Scenario

Category	Resource range (in US \$ million)	Number of mandatory outcome evaluations per CP (depending upon resources and previous evaluations) Minimum of....
A	< 2	Optional or 1
B	2 < 5	1 or 2
C	5 < 10	2 or 3
D	10 < 20	3 or 4
E	20 < 70	4 or 5
F	70 <	6

Based on the minimum number of outcome evaluations required, country offices will draft their evaluation plans and submit them to the Evaluation Office; the Evaluation Office will use the plan to judge compliance at the end of the CP period. **Compliance is therefore only based on the mandatory aspects of the evaluation plan.**

Countries can also conduct evaluations—outcome or project—above and beyond the mandatory minimum, although these will not affect the compliance rate. Compliance will further be calculated over the course of the CP to allow for flexibility in exigent circumstances.¹ The Evaluation Office is responsible for monitoring evaluation compliance and systematically analyzing information generated to promote learning, and reports on this to the UNDP Executive Board and to the Executive Team.

3. Countries Mid-Cycle

There is at present considerable variety across countries and Regional Bureaux in terms of start and end dates of ongoing CCFs and new Country Programmes (CPs). Some countries are still finishing out CCFs that were drafted before the SRF, some are just beginning CPs according to the new requirements in line with the SRF, and some are in the middle. Therefore, compliance rates have been calculated country-by-country in collaboration with the Regional Bureaux taking this and other factors into account.²

The country-by-country calculations have been prorated for those CCFs and CPs currently in progress, taking into account three relevant factors (resources, previous evaluation workload and project evaluations, if any, already completed by the time the compliance regime changed in December 2001). Therefore, countries completing CCFs from 2001, 2000, 1999 or earlier, have been given various minimums of outcome evaluations for their compliance through the end of their current CCFs. As soon as the new CP begins, and assuming it is for five years, the country will assume the normal range of outcome evaluations as a minimum number for compliance.

To illustrate a typical transition breakdown by Category, a sample illustration of **Category E** from Box 1 is made in **Box 2**.

Box 2: Typical Transition Breakdown of Required Outcome Evaluations According to Status of CCF

Category	If a Country's CCF/CP cycle is...	...then the typical range of mandatory outcome evaluations from now (2002) until end of the CCF/CP will be (depending upon resources, previous evaluation workload and project evaluations already completed within the CCF/CP)...
E Normally Minimum of either 4 or 5	1999-2003	1 or 2
	2000-2004	2 or 3
	2001-2005	3 or 4
	2002-2006	4 or 5

If the new Country Programme begins in **2003 or later**, the normal range for Category E, found in Box 1 (4-5), would apply. All of the other Categories would behave in similar fashion.

4. Evaluation Planning

Submitting Evaluation Plans: The Evaluation Plan should be sent to the Evaluation Office, with a copy to the Regional Bureaux. The Regional Bureaux play an instrumental role in helping to monitor compliance with the

¹ Country offices must consult with the Evaluation Office and their Regional Bureau before making any changes to the mandatory aspects of the evaluation plan—in terms of the timing of outcome evaluations, their subject or their number.

² The change in the SRF, expected at the end of 2003 will also need to be taken into account when planning for outcome evaluations.

plan. The Evaluation Office is responsible for monitoring evaluation compliance and systematically analyzing information generated to promote learning. While indicators of compliance and a trend analysis of compliance will be presented every year to the UNDP Executive Board, a consolidated report will be submitted only periodically. An example of the Evaluation Plan format can be found in Annex A of the *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results*.

Selecting the Outcomes to Evaluate: Detailed guidance on selecting the outcomes to evaluate is located in the *Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results* (Chapter 5). The selection of outcomes and their description in the evaluation plan are within the purview of the country office. Offices are, however, expected to adhere to a number of principles in selecting outcomes for evaluation, focusing on those SRF outcomes that represent significant financial and other resource commitments; are strategic in nature; hold potential for learning; are likely to continue in future CPs; and/or are diverse in terms of timing and purpose within the CP. Regional Bureaux have an important role to play in helping country offices decide which outcomes to evaluate during the country programme cycle. Regional Bureaux are also in a good position to ensure that certain outcomes that are of strategic corporate interest are covered within their regions.

Tracking Ongoing Amendments to CCFs and Country Programmes: Many countries have or are planning extensions to their CCFs and CPs, of which the Evaluation Office may be unaware. The assistance of the Regional Bureaux and the Country Offices is therefore needed to get the most up-to-date information upon which to calculate the mandatory minimum number of evaluations per CCF/CP cycle. The Evaluation Office is working on a system whereby information on CP cycles can be easily tracked so that updates to the compliance rates can be made.

Covering Countries without CCFs/CPs: There are a number of countries for which the Executive Board approves projects annually (e.g., Iraq, Somalia and Myanmar). These countries need to be handled as exceptions to the compliance ranges and will instead be the subject of discussion with the Regional Bureaux. Regional Bureau support is instrumental in helping the Evaluation Office address compliance in these cases.

Examples of Various Evaluation Compliance Calculations

New Compliance Scenario:

Example #1: Country X is expected to have \$20 million at its disposal for a Country Programme (CP) from 2003 to 2007, and it was required to undertake 15 project evaluations over the past five years under the old system. In the new compliance system, Country X falls into Category D and, because it 1) falls into the upper range, 2) is just beginning its new CP and 3) had a significant number of project evaluations in the old system, the minimum number of required outcome evaluations for Country X from 2003 to 2007 is set at 4.

Example #2: A country office is required to conduct a minimum of 6 outcome evaluations over a five-year Country Programme (CP) and it conducts these 6 evaluations within the CP but in different years than indicated in the evaluation plan. Because the country office 1) consulted with the Evaluation Office and its Regional Bureau before making the change in timing; 2) presented adequate justification for the change; and 3) still conducted the mandatory minimum number of outcome evaluations, that country will earn a 100% compliance rate.

Example #3: A country plans to conduct 6 outcome evaluations over the Country Programme (CP) and instead conducts 3 during this period—all conducted in the years originally indicated in the evaluation plan. This country's compliance rate will only be 50%, however, irrespective of whether it conducts 20 project evaluations in addition to the 3 outcome evaluations during the same period, because it failed to conduct at least 6 outcome evaluations.

Example #4: Country B in Category E is drafting a Country Programme (CP) under the new guidelines and it is scheduled to run from 2003 to 2007. Country B expects \$65 million in resources over this time period and had 14 mandatory project evaluations from 1998 to 2002. In light of the previous evaluation workload and the fact that Country B falls into the upper range of Category E (a minimum of 4 or 5 outcome evaluations), it is required to conduct a minimum of 5 outcome evaluations during the CP running from 2003 to 2007.

Countries Mid-Cycle:

Example #5: Country Y is expected to have \$8 million at its disposal for a Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) that began in 2000 and ends in 2004, and it was required to undertake 1 mandatory project evaluation over the past five years under the old system. Country Y falls into Category C and, although it falls into the upper range, is only required to undertake 1 outcome evaluation between now (2002) and the end of the CCF in 2004 because the country 1) is halfway through its CCF and 2) its evaluation workload was considerably lighter under the old system.

Example #6: Country A in Category E has a CCF that began in 2000 and will end in 2004 and features \$30 million in resources. Country A is therefore more or less halfway through its CCF. Moreover, Country A already conducted half of its mandatory project evaluations for projects over \$1 million as of the end of 2001. Country A is therefore asked to conduct a minimum of 2 outcome evaluations between now (2002) and the end of the CCF in 2004.