



unrwa
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evaluation manual

version 1.1

Department of Internal Oversight Services
Evaluation Division



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intended users

This manual has been tailored for managers of decentralized evaluations. Its guidance and tools may also be useful to UNRWA project and programme managers who work closely with donors in the formulation of projects and multi-year agreements.

This guide will also be useful to external evaluation consultants commissioned to conduct evaluations of UNRWA activities.

the manual's structure

Evaluations are designed and delivered in four broad phases including i) planning, ii) preparation or inception, iii) data collection or implementation, and iv) reporting and use including the management response and dissemination of results. Each section of the manual of the manual focuses on one of these phases.

Section 1 provides an overall introduction to evaluation. **Section 2** places evaluation in the context at UNRWA and within the UN system. It details important concepts about evaluation including types and purposes, introducing the norms and standards for evaluation in the UN system.

Section 3 provides guidance for the **planning phase** of an evaluation. This involves ensuring that needs for an evaluation of an intervention are considered in the initial project/programme design, and that evaluation plans and resource requirements are detailed in project documents and relevant Agency results monitoring and management plans.

Section 4 provides details on the **preparation phase** of the evaluation which covers the period from the appointment of an evaluation manager, drafting and finalizing the evaluation ToRs, and the selection and recruitment of the evaluation team.

In **Section 5**, evaluation managers and practitioners can find information on the **implementation phase** which starts once the evaluation team or evaluator is recruited up until data analysis is concluded.

Section 6 covers the **reporting phase**, including the drafting and review processes of the evaluation report, the preparation of the management response, and the dissemination of evaluation results.

Throughout, the manual provides users with access to additional guidance and templates. These are signposted by icons:



Click this icon to become an expert



Documents, templates, tools, or checklists that can help with the task



Tips to mainstream cross-cutting issues

foreword and acknowledgements

In 2022, UNRWA developed and issued a revised Evaluation Policy to help strengthen the guiding framework for the Agency's evaluation function. This Evaluation Manual is designed to stimulate and support Agency staff in applying the Policy, and in using evaluation to improve our understanding of the needs facing Palestine refugees and the extent to which UNRWA services are meeting those needs.

Given the criticality of project funding to UNRWA Fields and Programmes, individual project officers and programme support staff play an important role in evaluation activities. This manual is tailored to provide them with practical, step by step support in planning for and managing decentralized evaluations. It condenses information on UNRWA evaluation processes, makes use of lessons learned and provides valuable reference materials to staff involved in evaluation – including evaluation managers, UNRWA project officers and external relations staff.

The manual was developed by external consultants Eva Otero Candelera, Joy McCarron and Sadie Watson from IOD PARC, and UNRWA Evaluation Officer Anshuman Bhargava, under the supervision and guidance of the Chief of the Evaluation Division, Leslie Thomas. Significant contributions were made by UNRWA staff Siham Houweidi, Vickram Chhetri, and Samar Al-Moghany, as well as members of the UNRWA Evaluation Network. Special appreciation is expressed to Scott Cameron of IOD PARC for his design assistance.

In May 2023, an evaluation management workshop was organized to introduce this Manual. The workshop was attended by UNRWA staff from headquarters as well as all fields of operation. Feedback from participants helped in finalizing the manual.

We would also like to thank the government of Switzerland for their contribution that enabled this work.

1. introduction

to evaluation



There is no consistent definition of evaluation, and it is defined differently across organizations. Equally, evaluation functions within organizations are managed differently depending on their internal policies, interests, and institutional culture.

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)¹ defines evaluation as “an assessment, conducted as systematically as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors, and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. An evaluation should provide **credible, useful, evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations, and lessons** into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders”.

The underlying common denominator of all definitions is that an evaluation **is a learning and accountability exercise**. The balance between the two can shift depending on organizational needs, and in how the evaluation is used.

“Evaluation is thus critical for promoting accountability and for understanding what we are doing right and what we may be getting wrong”.

– Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations

It is NOT...	
an investigation	An evaluation is a learning process. The aim is not to identify weaknesses, mistakes, or wrongdoing. It provides learning spaces where challenges are discussed but also where results and efforts are recognized. The purpose of an evaluation is not to give a grade, but to provide opportunities for shared analysis and proposing potential improvements.
monitoring	Monitoring and evaluation are sometimes mixed up, especially with process evaluations. The main (but not only) difference is that monitoring tends to measure and document what is happening while evaluations explore the effects of the activities and value to stakeholders. Further, an evaluation takes place at one point in time and monitoring takes place throughout an intervention. This said, evaluations utilize monitoring data to measure effectiveness aspects.
an audit	Audits follow similar processes to evaluations (planning, data collection, analysis and report writing). However, audits tend to focus their analysis on the efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization (inputs, activities, and outputs) as well as the adequacy of risk management, internal controls, and governance processes. Evaluations explore additional issues, including the relevance, coherence, impact, and sustainability of results, and on dimensions of human rights, gender, and disability inclusion.
a staff appraisal	While evaluations do address the effectiveness of teams and systems of coordination, they do not explore the performance of individuals.

¹The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) is an interagency professional network that brings together the evaluation units of the UN system, including UN departments, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and affiliated organizations.

1.1 the purpose of an evaluation

Evaluations can be incredibly useful exercises for the managers of the Agency's programmes, operational and functional units, and projects, as well as for partners and project/programme participants. The primary purpose and uses of an evaluation are to ensure accountability and learning.

In the case of UNRWA, the clearest lines of accountability are with the Palestine refugees and the donors who require information on the effectiveness of interventions. Evaluations can generate evidence on outcomes and aid in this process. The clearest line of learning is for Agency staff, as the evaluation can reflect on factors influencing achievements and potential areas for improvement. However, there are additional types of accountabilities and learning that are equally important and are listed in the table below.

Learning and accountability for different stakeholders

Accountability	Stakeholder	Learning
Each donor has internal reporting requirements. To inform these, it is essential to conduct independent evaluations.	Donor	Learning from evaluations is an essential element for donors to make future programmatic decisions and funding allocations.
Evaluation findings are used by UNRWA managers to present evidence-based information to the Agency's advisory bodies.	UNRWA Management	Evaluations help UNRWA decision-makers to learn from independent sources what results the various interventions are achieving and what challenges need to be addressed. Evaluation analyses are also used to inform programming and strategic decisions.
<p>The most important line of accountability. Evaluation findings can help the communities UNRWA serves have a more holistic view of what UNRWA has done and hold the Agency to account.</p> <p>Depending on the scope of the evaluation, evaluation managers should share evaluation results with communities through in-person briefings and high-level, user-friendly summaries on results in Arabic.</p>	Palestine Refugees	Evaluations are very useful processes to capture the voices of affected populations and bring them to decision-makers in the organization.

Other Accountability Lines

The complexity of the 2030 Agenda, including the interlinkages with the Sustainable Development Goals, can only be assessed through evaluation efforts across projects/programmes/themes by all UN entities.

UNRWA has made certain commitments in this regard which must be fulfilled by conducting evaluations in accordance with UN standards. These include commitments to the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UNSWAP), the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), and the Framework for Advancing Environmental and Social Sustainability.

Each stage of the evaluation process can have an immediate use. The graphic below lists some of the key ones across each evaluation phase.

An evaluation is a process, not only a report

Preparation

The process of developing the evaluation Terms of Reference brings attention to the project/programme beyond the implementing team. This is done by engaging different stakeholders in drafting them, e.g., the donor, senior UNRWA staff including relevant headquarters' departments, and affected populations.

Implementation

Data collection processes create spaces for reflection and immediate learning. For example, conducting focus group discussions allows stakeholders to connect and reflect on the intervention. It is common that in these meetings alliances are created and actions are decided.

Reporting

The evaluation process does not end with the publication of the report. Evidence generated and recommendations inform decision-making and action plans to strengthen activities. Evaluations can be used to inform future project proposals.

The management responses to the evaluation often result in development or refinement of policy, procedures, and norms which change operational approaches.



Become an expert

1.2 key types of evaluation

The following table (evaluation types) lists some of the key evaluation types based on what they cover. Most often, an evaluation combines several aspects and therefore supports multiple purposes for interventions and organizations. Evaluations can also be categorized depending on how they are conducted. These could include developmental or real-time evaluations, cluster evaluations, and joint evaluations. These are described in more detail in [Section 3.2.2](#).

Evaluation types

Type	Primary focus	How it is used
Process Evaluation	Examines and defines operational activities and measures their quality against the most critical performance indicators of key stakeholders (donors/hosts, affected populations and staff). Additionally, it clarifies how activities are implemented and processes managed.	Used to see if activities are going as planned and if the right mechanisms are in place to support implementation. They are used when the intervention needs (or can only afford) a more lightweight evaluation.
Outcome Evaluation	Examines the short-term results and long-term changes that are lasting beyond the end of the project period.	Done to give meaning to the project and to show with evidence how the intervention has contributed to concrete changes.
Impact Evaluation	Assesses change that can be attributed to a particular intervention or activity.	Specialized exercises that require a rigorous methodology to accurately estimate the change, and can only be used in specific contexts. Impact evaluations are not the same as the OECD-DAC impact criteria.
Evaluation Syntheses	Combines evidence from multiple evaluations.	Very useful in informing the decisions of senior managers as they identify general trends that are repeated in the evaluations of different projects/programmes and departments.



Become an expert

1.3 guiding principles

Within the UN, evaluations are used to inform decision-making and improve policies and interventions carried out by various entities within their own operational settings. They are instruments to ensure accountability of investments made and serve as a basis for learning for teams implementing the interventions. With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, evaluations are an essential part of the UN system to understand what works and to provide evidence-based guidance to recalibrate for success.

The rigor of evaluations as evidence and knowledge generating exercises is ensured by a set of norms and standards developed by the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) which aim to harmonize and strengthen evaluation practice across the UN as well as ensure ethical conduct in gathering evidence.

1.3.1 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation norms

Internationally Agreed Principles, Goals, and Targets	Evaluation managers and evaluators have a responsibility to uphold and promote the United Nations principles and values: respecting, promoting, and contributing to the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
Utility	There should be a clear intent to use the results of the analysis, conclusions, or recommendations to inform decisions and actions. This includes relevant and timely contributions to organizational learning, informed decision-making processes, and accountability for results. Evaluations could also be used to contribute beyond the organization by generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders.
Credibility	Credibility is grounded in independence, impartiality, and a rigorous methodology. Key elements of credibility include transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders, and robust quality assurance. Credibility requires that evaluations be ethically conducted and managed by Evaluators who exhibit professional and cultural competencies.
Independence	Independence influences the ways in which an evaluation is used and allows Evaluators to be impartial and free from pressure throughout the evaluation process. Evaluators must have the full freedom to conduct their evaluative work impartially, without the risk of negative effects on their career development and must be able to freely express their assessment. Organizational independence requires that the central evaluation function is positioned independently from management functions, that it carries the responsibility of setting the evaluation agenda and is provided with adequate resources to conduct its work. Organizational independence also necessitates that evaluation managers have full discretion to directly submit evaluation reports to the appropriate level of decision-making, and that they should report directly to an organization's governing body/the Executive Head.
Impartiality	The key elements of impartiality are objectivity, professional integrity, and absence of bias at all stages throughout the evaluation process. Some of the stages covered include planning an evaluation, formulating the mandate and scope, selecting the evaluation team, providing access to stakeholders, conducting the evaluation, and formulating findings and recommendations. Evaluators need to be impartial, implying that evaluation team members must not have been responsible for the policy setting, design, or management of the evaluation subject.
Ethics	An evaluation must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for: the beliefs, manners, and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the 'do no harm' principle for humanitarian assistance. There are essential principals that all Evaluators and evaluation managers should respect in the conduct of their mission: integrity, accountability, respect, and beneficence. Evaluators should obtain informed consent for the use of information from those who provide it. Specific ethical considerations must be applied when evaluations involve research with children, persons with disabilities, or the Agency's protection activities. Specific guidance around ethics and safeguarding has been issued by relevant agencies and groups including UNEG and UNICEF (references provided Section 1.4).
Transparency	Transparency establishes trust and builds confidence, enhances stakeholder ownership, and increases public accountability. Evaluation products should be publicly accessible.
Human Rights and Gender Equality	The values and principles of human rights and gender equality need to be integrated into all stages of an evaluation. It is the responsibility of Evaluators and evaluation managers to ensure that these values are respected.
National Evaluation Capacities	National evaluation capacities should be supported to ensure the effective use of evaluation results.
Professionalism	Evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity, contributing to the credibility of evaluators, evaluation managers, and evaluation heads, as well as the evaluation function. Key aspects include access to knowledge; education and training; adherence to ethics and to these norms and standards; utilization of evaluation competencies; and recognition of knowledge, skills, and experience.

1.3.2 mainstreaming key issues

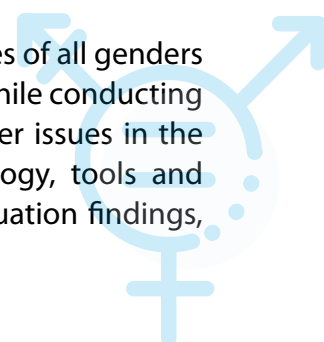
Given the volume and complexity of challenges faced by Palesine refugees, service providing agencies like UNRWA must work together in seeking collective and balanced outcomes for different groups affected by crises. This is achieved by ensuring that protection considerations underpin all stages of the project/programme during an evaluation by identifying and mitigating potential protection risks from the outset and respecting individual rights as part of the evaluation process.


This can also be achieved by exploring the extent to which projects, programmes, and strategies contribute to the promotion of human rights; creating inclusive and participatory processes; contributing to gender equality; and being aware of environmental sensitivities. More details on how to include these concepts into the evaluation questions, approach, and methodology are detailed in Sections 4 and 5 of the Evaluation Manual. The sections below provide some key details on each of these concepts to be considered during the evaluation process.



Gender Equality: This refers to the equal ease of access and exercise to rights, responsibilities, resources, and opportunities, including economic participation and decision-making regardless of whether they identified as a woman, man, or other gender identity.

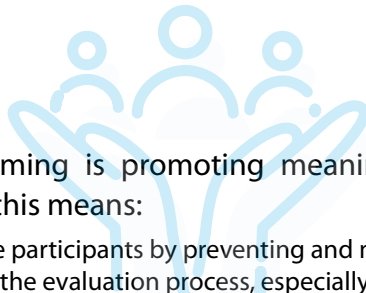
Gender equality for evaluations mean that the interests, needs, and priorities of all genders are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups while conducting an evaluation. More specifically, it implies systematically integrating gender issues in the evaluation criteria and questions, using a gender responsive methodology, tools and data analysis techniques, and reflecting a gender analysis within the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations.





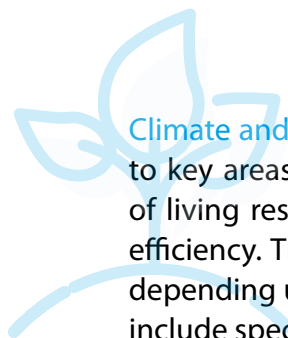
Human Rights: Human rights are rights we simply have because we exist as human beings. These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. The UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines refer to the principles of the UN Statement of Common Understanding on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development Cooperation and Programming. It highlights some of the key principles particularly relevant to evaluations that evaluation teams have the responsibility to ensure:

- **Non-discrimination and Equality:** All individuals are equal as human beings, by virtue of the inherent dignity of each person. All human beings are entitled to their human rights without discrimination of any kind, such as sex, ethnicity, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, disability, property, birth, or other status as explained by the human rights treaty bodies.
- **Participation and Inclusion:** Every person and all peoples are entitled to active, free, and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural, and political development in which human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realized.
- **Accountability and the Rule of Law:** States and other duty bearers are answerable for the observance of human rights. In this regard, they have to comply with the legal norms and standards enshrined in human rights instruments. Where they fail to do so, aggrieved rights holders are entitled to institute proceedings for appropriate redress before a competent court or other adjudicator in accordance with the rules and procedures provided by law.



Protection Mainstreaming: Protection mainstreaming is promoting meaningful access, safety, and dignity in all interventions. In practice this means:

- Prioritizing the safety and dignity of project/programme participants by preventing and minimizing as much as possible any unintended negative effects of the evaluation process, especially during data collection, that can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks.
- Ensuring meaningful access to assistance and services, including to evaluation processes and its results, is arranged without any barriers (e.g., discrimination) while paying special attention to individuals and groups with vulnerabilities. These barriers to access can be physical, logistical, environmental, social/cultural, and attitudinal.
- Ensuring accountability through participation of targeted individuals and groups in evaluation processes and with access to evaluation results, in a way that they can measure adequacy of interventions and discuss concerns.
- Promoting participation and empowerment to support the development of self-protection capacities and assist people to claim their rights, including – not exclusively – the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education. Evaluations should put the people at the centre of its approach, ensuring participation of, and consultation with, the most at-risk and marginalized members of society.



Climate and Environment: In the development context, climate and environment can refer to key areas such as environmental footprints of interventions, sustainable management of living resources, climate change and disaster risks, pollution prevention, and resource efficiency. The importance of including climate and environment considerations will vary depending upon the scope of the evaluation. However, where relevant, evaluations should include specific questions and appropriate methodologies to assess such issues.

Disability Inclusion: This refers to the obligation to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. In the latest Disability Policy, UNRWA recognizes the barriers faced by persons with disabilities to fully exercise their rights and is committed to ensuring that its policies, programmes, services, and processes address the needs and interests of Palestine refugees with disabilities. Its commitment is based on the implementation of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), which has a specific performance measurement indicator for evaluations. The indicator assesses the extent to which ‘an entity considers disability inclusion in all phases of the evaluation process and in every type of evaluation that it does’.

Adequate representation of persons with disabilities in evaluations is essential to ensure their perspectives and interests are reflected. Consistent attention should be paid to the level of access men, women, girls, and boys with different disabilities have to UNRWA services, and their fair representation in consultations.

Special attention to disability inclusion should be paid when designing data collection tools and methods, ensuring they are in line with global standards² and are adapted to ensure accessibility. This means that the evaluation team should plan and budget for communication aids and access to locations, as needed.



Click the links below to learn more about mainstreaming cross-cutting issues



- [Gender and Human Rights](#)
- [UN Evaluation Group \(UNEG\) Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#)
- [\(Dis\)ability](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [UN Evaluation Group \(UNEG\) Guide on Evaluation Ethics](#)

² The Washington Group Questions (WGQ) are a global best practice to identify disability and should be adopted where applicable.

1.4 professional ethical requirements

This section provides an overview of the ethical aspects to be considered during an evaluation including key templates and tools. Here are some general considerations on these issues.

1.4.1 cultural awareness

Cultural competence in evaluation is necessary and important for all evaluators. The first step is to learn and appreciate each project/programme's cultural context and acknowledge that we may view and interpret the world differently from many evaluation stakeholders. Therefore, while deciding on the composition of the evaluation team, evaluation managers should ensure that a team member or the team leader has substantial experience in the specific cultural setting.

1.4.2 working with children and vulnerable groups

In evaluations involving human subjects or including the analysis of sensitive secondary data, ethical conduct in evidence generation is necessary. Further caution needs to be applied when children and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities and survivors or witnesses of violence and abuse, are involved to ensure their safety. It is important to note that in most UNRWA evaluations input from such groups is critical and cannot be avoided.

Questions regarding experience of violence should not be asked directly to children and if deemed critical for the evaluation exercise should be managed by a trained social worker.

In all instances of research with children under the age of 18, parental consent is required. In addition to parental consent, evaluators should also request consent directly from children and youth and explain how their feedback will be anonymized and used by the evaluation.

The evaluation team including the evaluation manager should consider the power dynamics at play and whether children and vulnerable groups can provide free and informed consent to participate. They can also be pressured by others and may not be able to express their sentiments, experience, and opinions freely. Therefore, it is important to assess the risks and prepare mitigation strategies. At any time during the evaluation process, participants should be able to withdraw their consent to participate. The evaluators should also monitor verbal and non-verbal cues and choose to terminate an interview or a group discussion if they believe that continuing could bring potential harm to participants.

General guidelines developed by United Nations Evaluation Group establish minimum standards for ethical research, evaluation, and data collection. Evaluation managers must ensure that evaluation teams abide by these principles in the design and implementation of evaluations.

Additional guidance has been developed by specialized agencies such as UNICEF and Save the Children to assist with research involving children. In cases of evaluations involving participation of children and vulnerable groups, evaluation managers and teams should consult the Agency's Protection Division to assess ethics of the research design, data collection, and analysis methods.

1.4.3 evaluations involving sensitive topics and the agency's work

As in research projects involving children, it is essential to ensure specific safeguarding processes when conducting research or evaluating interventions concerning the Agency's protection activities or involving sensitive topics such as gender-based violence, violence against children, child labour, or early marriage as they present specific ethical challenges. As in other instances, it is essential that research designs comply with professional ethical standards and 'do no harm' principles. As a starting point, expert consultants with a depth of subject matter knowledge and research skills should be sought to provide technical guidance to the evaluation. Additionally, and similar to all other evaluation research involving direct feedback from stakeholders, informed consent processes should be in place and data collected should be anonymised and protected by restricted access to ensure confidentiality.

In the case of abuse and violence, and the threatening and traumatic nature of the abuse, the safety of victims needs to be at the forefront of research protocols. The World Health Organization published "Putting Women's Safety First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Violence against Women." These are considered a gold standard for the ethical conduct of research on gender-based violence (WHO, 1999). These recommendations need to be followed by both Evaluators and evaluation managers.

WHO Recommendations for Ethical Conduct of Research on GBV

- 1 The safety of the respondents and the research team is paramount and should guide all project decisions.
- 2 Prevalence studies need to be methodologically sound and to build upon current research experience about how to minimize the under-reporting of violence.
- 3 Protecting confidentiality is essential to ensure both women's safety and data quality.
- 4 All research team members should be carefully selected and receive specialized training and on-going support.
- 5 The study design must include actions aimed at reducing any possible distress caused to the participants by the research.
- 6 Fieldworkers should be trained to refer women requesting assistance to available local services and sources of support. Where few resources exist, it may be necessary for the study to create short-term support mechanisms.
- 7 Researchers and donors have an ethical obligation to help ensure that their findings are properly interpreted and used to advance policy and intervention development.
- 8 Violence questions should only be incorporated into surveys designed for other purposes when ethical and methodological requirements can be met.

Participants in an evaluation should be protected against any repercussions resulting from their participation in studies, and evaluators and managers should consider this at all phases of the evaluation. Some examples include:

- In the design phase, it may be appropriate to frame the evaluation around health promotion or promotion of healthy relationships to avoid participants in research addressing violence being put at risk within their household or community.
- Choosing the language used to present the evaluation to different stakeholders is an important step and the evaluation team must use culturally appropriate and stakeholder-specific language.
- Finally, the team should monitor how the evaluation is being discussed within the stakeholder groups to ensure the safety of participants and quality of data collected.

Further, it is important that evaluators are aware of reporting protocols within the field of operation when protection issues are uncovered.

1.4.4 protecting confidentiality

The protection of confidentiality is an ongoing process and should be reaffirmed on an ongoing basis. At the same time, evaluators need to be aware of the norms and regulations in force in the context in which the study is being conducted that limit their availability to protect participants' confidentiality. These limitations need to be outlined during the inception phase and should be included in tools and processes used to gather participants informed consent. Evaluators need to be aware of key points of contact at the headquarter and field levels to report potential fraud or misconduct by staff, or instances of exploitation, abuse, or violence against a Palestine refugee or staff member. In some cases, even without the consent of a project participant, evaluations may be ethically required to report certain types of conduct.

Evaluation teams should be aware of relevant guidelines for mandatory reporting applicable. Details on UNRWA specific guidelines can be found in the template for data collection tools in [Section 5.3](#).

1.4.5 reducing distress caused to participants

Interviews and focus group discussions can sometimes cause emotional distress to participants. Evaluators, researchers, and enumerators must be sensitive to respondents' experiences and try to minimize their distress. In some cases, this means terminating the interview or reassuring participants the purpose of the evaluation.

All team members should be carefully selected and trained to undertake research on sensitive issues if needed. Researchers and evaluators should be aware of referral processes for women requesting assistance to available local services and sources of support.

1.4.6 data protection

According to Organization Directive 14, DIOS and the evaluation function (centralized and decentralized evaluations) have unrestricted access to all organization units, records, property, premises, personnel, documents, and information needed in connection with an assignment (evaluation, audit, or investigation). Non-anonymised medical records are an exception and can only be made available following written consent.

The [UNRWA Data Protection and Disclosure Policy](#) (General Staff Circular No. 01/2021, 11 January 2021) provides guidance to ensure that all types of Agency data are handled safely. The Policy defines four types of Agency data, including affected population data, staff data, operational data, and archival data; outlines requirements concerning informed consent, ‘do no harm’, and humanitarian principles, appropriate retention of data, confidentiality, and inviolability;³ and Section 6 of the Policy outlines provisions to ensure the responsible transfer and disclosure of data to third parties.

Evaluation managers and the evaluation team are responsible for complying with the UNRWA policy. Evaluation managers should share the Policy with evaluation teams as part of the document library, and ensure that data compiled, received, and managed is treated as confidential and on completion of the work is handed back over to UNRWA or its deletion confirmed.⁴ Further, third parties are expected to handle data with care and discretion to avoid disclosure, publication, or dissemination of data made available to them by UNRWA; and use that data solely for the purpose for which it was disclosed.⁵

Appropriate measures for data management should be planned and included in the inception report, including plans for data sharing, storage, and destruction after the end of the evaluation. Concretely, the following steps should be considered:

- Information and data shared should be purposefully selected and evaluation managers should only share the minimum data required relative to the purpose. To the extent possible, personal data should be aggregated and de-identified.
- To protect data in line with Agency requirements, evaluation managers should share data files with third parties through the Agency’s OneDrive space.
- If the third party is unable to use OneDrive/needs to download the data to their servers, the consultants should sign a statement that they will commit to implement processes, such as password protection, to documents, emails, and databases, to ensure that data access is restricted, and data is always kept confidential. If available, the third party should share their data management protocols with the Agency.
- Evaluation managers should ensure that all data is removed from the databases of the third party as soon as the assignment with UNRWA ends. Sensitive data, such as personal Palestine refugees or staff data should be deleted from internally and externally held evaluation files as soon as it is no longer needed.

Click the links below to learn more about the above concepts



[UNRWA Data Protection and Disclosure Policy](#)

[UNRWA’s Organization Directive 14](#)

[Working with Children: UNICEF Guidance](#)

[Working with Children: Save the Children Guidance](#)

[Working on Sensitive Issues such as Gender-based Violence](#)

³Inviolability in this context means that UNRWA has the right to determine which categories of data should be considered sensitive and confidential and under which conditions, if any, data may be disclosed. (para 6.1.1 in UNRWA Data policy)

⁴General Terms and Conditions of Individual Service Provider Contracts Awarded by UNRWA, paragraph 5.8; General Conditions of Contract for the Provision of Services Only, paragraph 10

⁵General Conditions of Contract for the Provision of Services Only, paragraph 12

2. evaluation

at UNRWA

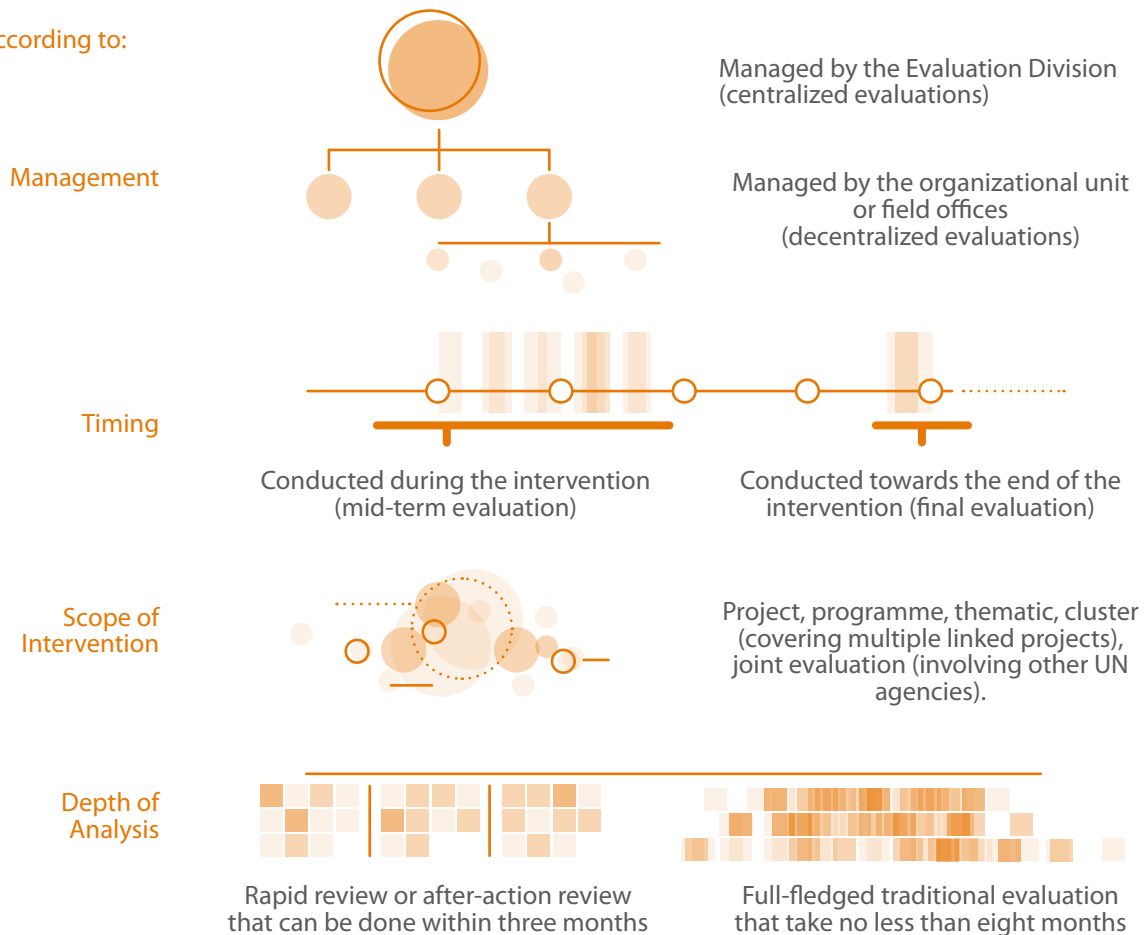


UNRWA’s evaluation system consists of the central evaluation function in DIOS and decentralized evaluation functions in HQ departments and field offices. Evaluations at UNRWA are intended to address both accountability and learning dimensions, and they assess UNRWA’s policies, programmes, projects, and activities to determine the extent to which the Agency’s interventions achieve their intended results, and to identify the factors that strengthen or constrain performance.

Evaluations at UNRWA can be categorized depending on their scope, who manages them, the depth of their analysis, and the timing of the intervention. These categories may vary across organizations. The graphic below details the most frequent terms used when referring to evaluations at UNRWA.

Evaluation terminology at UNRWA

according to:



[Latest UNRWA evaluation policy](#)



[Latest UNRWA multi-year evaluation workplan](#)

[Click to learn more about evaluation policies and plans at UNRWA](#)

2.1. linkages to UNRWA management cycles

Centralized Evaluations: The Evaluation Division prepares a six-year evaluation plan for strategic evaluations that accompany the Agency's multi-year strategic plans. The six-year plan aspires to ensure that the UNRWA Evaluation Division provides central evaluation coverage across each of the Agency's key strategic areas over the strategic planning period, with a target to conduct two central evaluations concerning each of the Agency's seven strategic objectives.

All Agency programmes, projects, activities, and emergency appeals can be subject of a centralized evaluation, and the Evaluation Division proposes, prioritizes, and finalizes evaluation topics for its annual work plan through consultations with field and headquarter departments/divisions, as well as through the consideration of current and emerging organizational issues.

Centralized evaluations are managed by the Evaluation Division of the DIOS and may be carried out by its staff, commissioned to external independent evaluation consultants, or implemented using a hybrid approach utilizing both Evaluation Division staff and external independent consultants.

Decentralized Evaluations: In parallel, many evaluations completed of UNRWA activities are decentralized. These are managed and commissioned by field offices or departments responsible for the work being assessed and are conducted by independent external Evaluators. Decentralized evaluations focus on specific programmes or projects and are mostly linked to Donor requirements. However, field offices and departments are encouraged to proactively plan for decentralized evaluations based on their learning needs. Suggested criteria for identifying such evaluations is detailed in [Section 3.2.1](#).

In cases where the donor does not require evaluations, it is recommended that project/programme managers plan a mid-term or final evaluation to support learning, and for the purpose of accountability to various stakeholders. Donors generally welcome this and prefer to include it in the budget they allocate to the intervention.

2.2. UNRWA evaluations at a glance

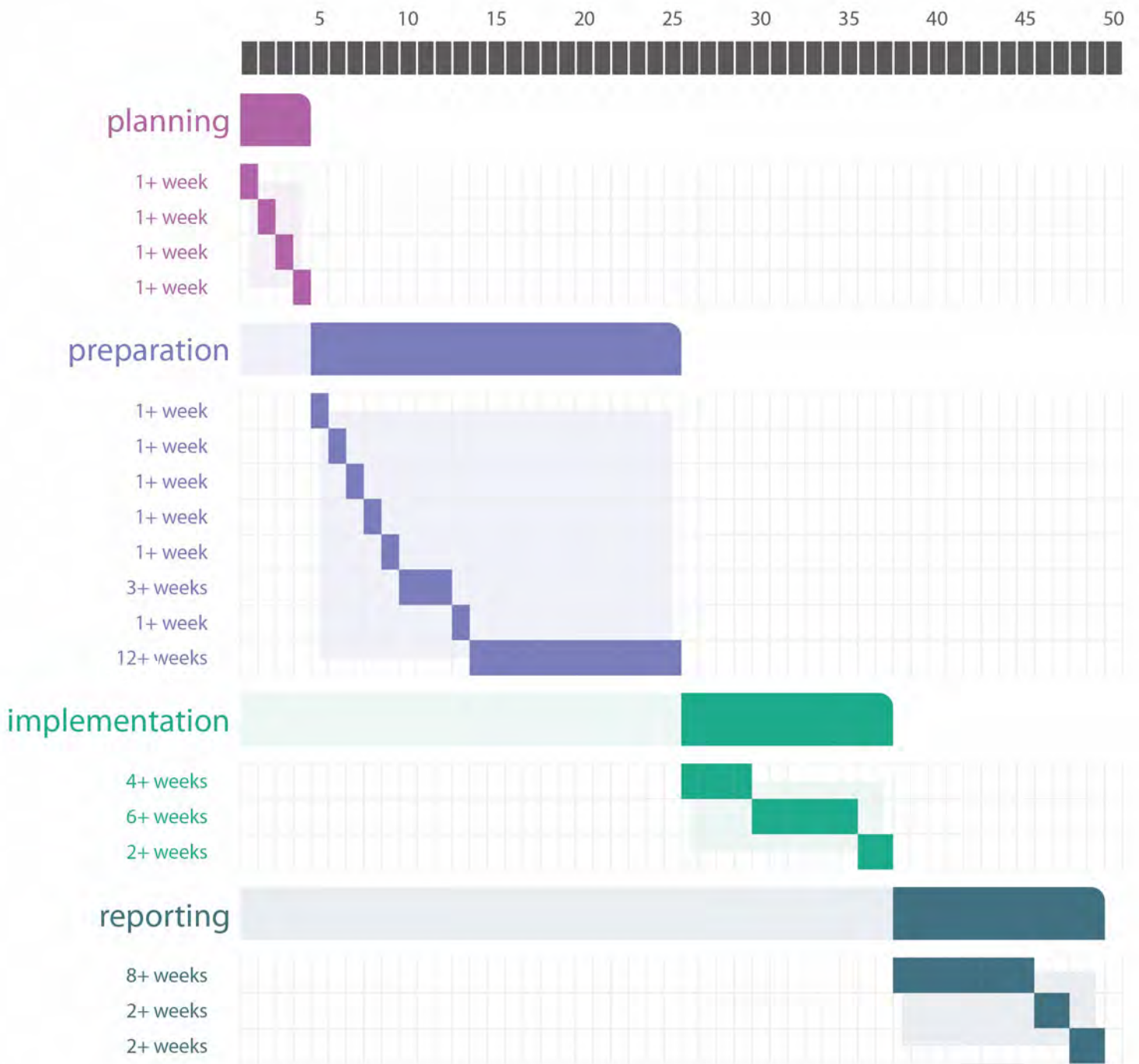
UNRWA evaluations can be divided into four phases. The first is the **planning phase**, which starts when the initiative is being designed and ends with evaluation agreements in the project document. Followed by the **preparation phase**, which covers the period from when the evaluation manager is appointed to when the evaluation team has been selected and recruited. The third phase is the **implementation phase**, where the evaluation team prepares the inception report, conducts the data collection, and analysis. The last phase is the **reporting phase**, during which the evaluation report is drafted, and all deliverables are reviewed and finalized. This phase also includes the preparation of the management response and dissemination of evaluation results. The following sections of the manual are organized according to these four phases.

Actual time commitment (days)



*the time estimated for the **planning phase** refers to programme managers' time and not to evaluation managers' time

Estimated duration (weeks)



*in case of urgency, some of the tasks can be performed simultaneously. Hence, the timeline can be condensed



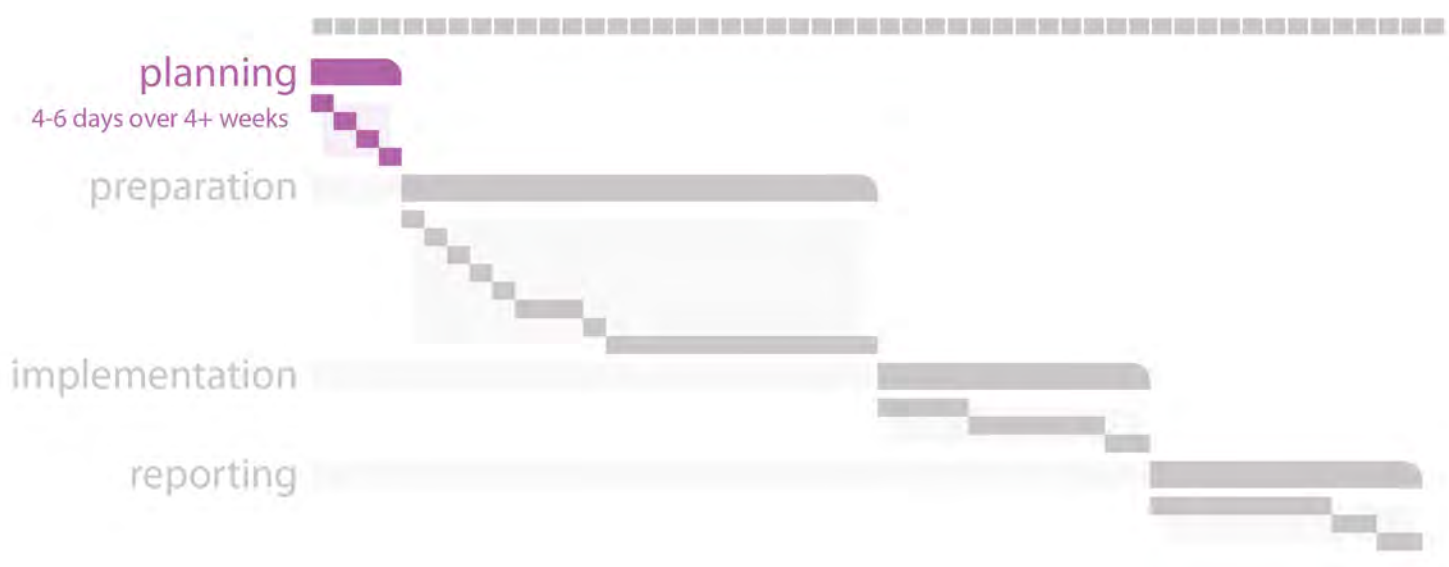
3. planning

phase

3.1 overview

The needs for evaluation coverage and the planning of decentralized evaluations should ideally be undertaken as part of the Agency’s results-based management cycle. It is most timely for evaluation planning to take place during the design phase of strategic plans, projects, and multi-year agreements with donors. In addition, Agency staff should use evidence from previous evaluations covering similar activities to inform planning, as well as the design of interventions.

The planning phase includes (i) deciding on key aspects, such as, the thematic focus of the evaluation, its purpose, timing and the frequency that an evaluation is needed (ii) establishing an overarching approach to the evaluation (iii) estimating a tentative budget (iv) assigning evaluation management responsibility to a particular division or unit. The following sub-sections are organized according to these steps.



This phase requires the team planning the evaluation to agree on the above aspects in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including donors and the Department of Internal Oversight Services (DIOS) Evaluation Division; ensuring that these plans are adequately incorporated into donor agreements and annual operational plans.

Decentralized evaluations are often linked to donor requirements, so their involvement, especially in the planning phase of the evaluation, is critical. Later sections provide suggestions on how to involve donors in other phases of an evaluation through an Evaluation Reference Group.

As per the UNRWA Evaluation Policy, the director of the department which is planning the evaluation is required to notify the Chief of the Evaluation Division of the plans for the decentralized evaluation.

3.2 steps for the planning phase

3.2.1 deciding on key aspects of the evaluation

a) evaluation purpose and frequency

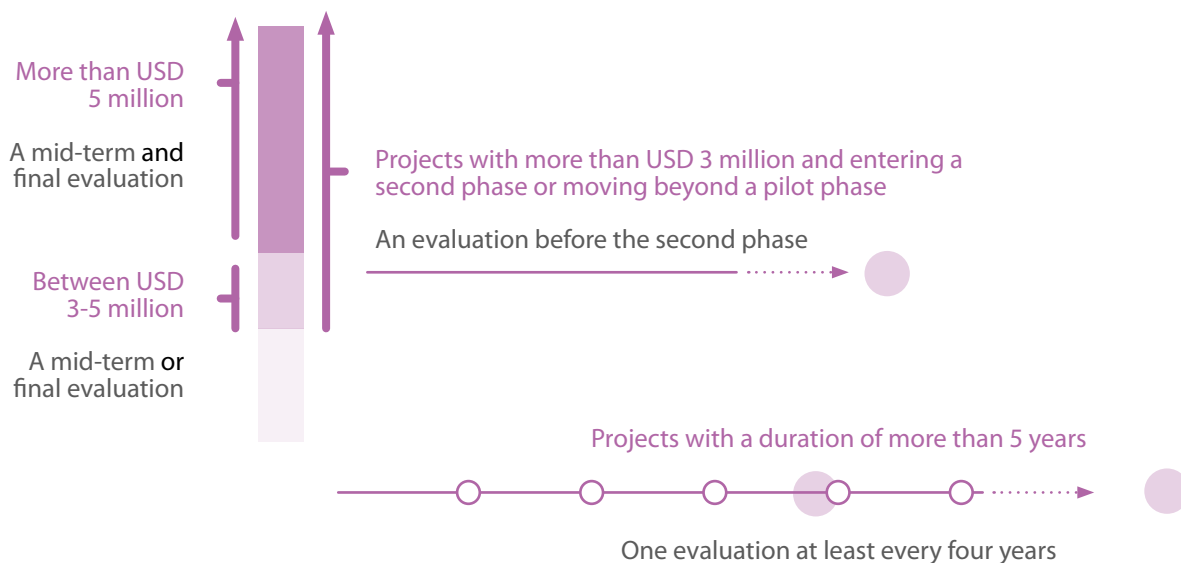
As detailed in [Section 1.1](#), evaluations are conducted for two key purposes. Firstly, to demonstrate accountability to stakeholders on the Agency's performance in achieving results with invested resources, and secondly, to support organizational learning. The latter is particularly important to ensure a utilization-based approach to the evaluation and the application of results for evidence-based decision-making. UNRWA evaluation guidance encourages participatory approaches in evaluation phases to increase the potential for learning, as well as the relevance and use of evaluations. These purposes form the basis of determining the rationale behind conducting an evaluation.

In the case of centralized evaluations, decisions of what is evaluated and when is guided by a six-year evaluation workplan developed by the Evaluation Division to complement the Agency's medium-term strategy. The criteria to select centralized evaluations is guided by the UNRWA Evaluation Policy and includes (i) gaps identified where evaluations can add value; (ii) strategic priorities concerning the UNRWA Strategic Plan in force; and (iii) formal commitments including consideration of UN targets for evaluation, such as the UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS).

For decentralized evaluations, in most cases, the donor determines when and how often the intervention is evaluated. However, project/programme managers must be involved and proactive in these discussions to ensure that the timing responds to the needs and capacities of both the Agency and the subject of the evaluation. The opportunity should be used to support organizational learning, carefully considering an evaluation purpose and scope of value to the project/programme team and donors.

As mentioned earlier and in line with the UNRWA Evaluation Policy, evaluations should be used by the field offices or headquarter departments to support results-based management and evidence-based decisions. Besides those with mandatory evaluation requirements, the Evaluation Division proposes that the Agency's directors of programmes, support departments, and fields of operation apply a mix of the following criteria to decide and prioritize needs-based evaluations to support their accountability, learning, and decision-making needs:

- **Knowledge Gaps:** Has the subject not been adequately covered through an evaluation? How much time has elapsed since it was last evaluated?
- **New Policies and Innovative Programmes:** Would an evaluation provide valuable knowledge to managers in a pilot phase of a programme or policy implementation?
- **Financial Significance:** Is the subject significant to the field offices' or departments' portfolios of work considering the allocated budget? The following financial criteria is based on a current analysis of UNRWA's funding patterns and is subject to change depending on future funding patterns.
- **Feasibility to Implement:** Does the commissioning office have the resources available to design and manage a high-quality evaluation?



b) evaluation timing

Overall, evaluations should be timed to fit into the decision-making processes of current or upcoming projects and programmes. They should also be timed in a way that the evaluation implementation phase begins when almost all activities to be evaluated have been completed. Importantly, a significant time-lag between the completion of activities and the evaluation's implementation phase should be avoided, to the extent possible.

Mid-term evaluations should be carried out three to four months before the mid-term of a project or programme implementation, in time for the recommendations of the evaluation to be useful for modifying or strengthening relevant aspects of the Agency's work.

The final evaluation ideally should begin three to four months before all project/programme activities have been completed. This would allow the evaluation manager to complete the preparation phase of the evaluation and for the evaluation team to begin the evaluation's implementation phase as soon as the project/programme activities have ended.

Note: The timing for mandatory evaluations needs to be well negotiated and coordinated with the Donor. Often, evaluations are regarded as any other activity of the intervention and are required to be completed before the project or programme is closed. This implies that the evaluation team will be implementing the evaluation before all activities have been completed, which is not ideal for a final evaluation.

It is also important to note that to avoid evaluation fatigue, there should be at least a two-year gap between the end date and the start date of evaluations covering the same subject. In cases where the gap is less than two years, a strong justification should be provided.

Evaluation fatigue

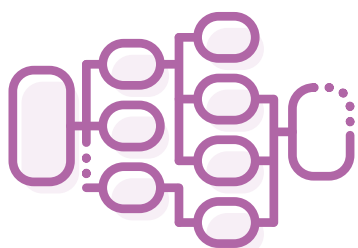
In setting the frequency and timing of evaluations, it is important to avoid evaluation fatigue. Evaluation fatigue can happen when:

- Two or more evaluations are happening in parallel or in a short space of time which involve consulting the same stakeholder groups. In such cases, evaluation managers should aim to coordinate, understanding implementation timelines and the stakeholder groups and organizational units involved to minimize burden and overlap on staff, Agency areas of operation, installations, and communities.
- The same project/programme has been covered by multiple evaluations in a close sequence: most significantly when the mid-term evaluation ends at the same time as the start of a final evaluation. Spacing the two evaluations with a gap of at least two years is important. Another case can be when two donors of the same project require separate evaluations in the same time frame, maybe with different approaches. Effort should be made to combine activities to the extent possible.

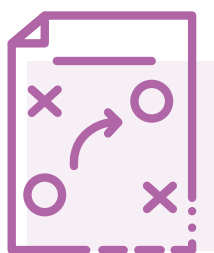
3.2.2 establishing an overarching approach to the evaluation

An evaluation approach refers to a specific evaluative perspective. The type of approach chosen for the evaluation will depend on the purpose of the evaluation and will have an impact on the evaluation cost and the overall project/programme budget. Some of the key evaluation approaches used are listed below, and the following sections provide further detail on each. These are not mutually exclusive and can include overlapping elements.

Most frequent evaluation approaches in UNRWA



Theory-based Approach: Based on assessing the Theory of Change of the intervention and its impact pathways.



Developmental Evaluations: Conducted during the design or implementation phase of an intervention to feed into specific design and planning processes.



Real-time Evaluations: Give instant or near instant feedback and are often used in humanitarian and emergency contexts.

a) theory-based approach

Theory-based approaches use an explicit Theory of Change to draw conclusions about whether and how an intervention contributed to observed results. It is used to complement most evaluation types. In UNRWA evaluations, a theory-based approach is most widely used to conduct process and outcome evaluations using the OECD-DAC and ALNAP evaluation criteria. More details on the evaluation criteria are provided in [Section 4.2.6](#).

Theory-based evaluation is an approach to evaluation (i.e., a conceptual analytical model) and not a specific method or technique. It is a way of structuring and undertaking analysis in an evaluation

A Theory of Change explains how an intervention is expected to produce its results in a particular context. The Theory of Change typically starts out with a sequence of events and results (outputs, immediate outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and ultimate outcomes) that are expected to occur owing to the intervention. This is commonly referred to as the “program logic” or “logic model.” However, the Theory of Change goes further by outlining the mechanisms of change, as well as the assumptions, risks, and context that support or hinder the theory from being manifested as observed outcomes.

This opens the “missing middle” and allows evaluators to better examine the causal link between the intervention outputs and the observed and desired outcomes. The Theory of Change can be used to test — with evidence — the assumed causal chain of results with what is observed to have happened, checking each link and assumption in the process to verify the expected theory.

Strengths and challenges of the Theory-based Approach

Strengths	Challenges
<p>It is a widely used approach.</p> <p>It helps in understanding the intervention better, hence it unveils assumptions that make a causal claim.</p> <p>It is a neutral approach: potentially, it can be used with a wide range of evaluation methodologies and frameworks; quantitative and qualitative methods, like statistical modelling; interviews; observation studies; etc.</p>	<p>In cases where a project or programme does not have an explicit Theory of Change or logic model, the evaluation team must reconstruct the Theory of Change from scratch.</p> <p>It is not possible to conclusively prove a theory, although it is sometimes possible to disprove it. A theory-based evaluation may help provide a convincing and plausible case that shows what changes have occurred, and how a development intervention or interventions contributed to those changes.</p>

b) developmental approach

A developmental approach can be used during the design or the implementation of an intervention. It can be used to analyse the extent to which Agency activities and outputs are contributing to desired effects and the extent to which underlying assumptions are holding true. Evaluation results are provided depending upon the need to inform learning and opportunities to improve the intervention's overall effectiveness and impact as it is being implemented. This approach resembles the role of a research and development process because it facilitates close to real-time feedback to project/programme teams.

If a project/programme team is interested in testing a programmatic or operational approach, gathering evidence on how a programme's design is influencing desired results, a **Developmental Evaluation** could be useful. In this approach, questions are adapted according to the learning needs of the stakeholders of the intervention as it develops. Therefore, they do not necessarily cover the OECD-DAC criteria.

As a general principle the questions in developmental evaluations revolve around three themes: What is taking place as per the intervention? How and where is the work of the intervention delivering results? What, if any, adaptations are needed?

The developmental approach is particularly suited to evaluate innovation, programme reforms or re-design, replication of approaches, and interventions in complex environments or in crises. In these situations, developmental evaluations can help by framing concepts, testing quick iterations, tracking developments, and surfacing issues.



	Traditional	Developmental
Purpose	Supports improvement, summative tests, and accountability.	Supports the development of new and innovative approaches or adaptation in dynamic environments; aims to nurture learning.
Measurement	Measures performance and success against pre-determined goals and outcomes.	Develops measures and tracing mechanism as outcomes emerge with an agile process; measures can change during the evaluation as the process unfolds.
Evaluation Results	Detailed formal reports at the end of the intervention or covering a defined period.	Close to real-time feedback; diverse, user-friendly forms of feedback.
Complexity and Uncertainty	The evaluators try to control design, implementation, and the evaluation process.	The design, implementation, and process of the evaluation responds to the unfolding intervention with a certain degree of a lack of control.
Standards	Focus on methodological commitment to rigor.	Focus on methodological flexibility and a higher tolerance for ambiguity; agile.

Strengths and challenges of the Developmental Approach

Strengths	Challenges
<p>Enables the project or programme team to respond to stakeholder feedback and apply learning in real-time.</p> <p>It positively influences stakeholders' use of the project reports and their responses to the findings.</p>	<p>It can be difficult for evaluators to navigate the tension between co-creation, impartiality, and independence.</p> <p>Contracts for developmental evaluators may not always fit with the norms and rules of procurement and administration.</p>



[Learn more about developmental evaluations](#)

Learn from the father of development evaluation (this is not a free resource)

c) real-time

A real-time evaluation is a participatory evaluation that is intended to provide immediate feedback during implementation. In contrast to the developmental approach, it is utilized to analyse operational response to an unplanned event. For example, real-time evaluation activities were conducted by the DIOS and some fields of operation as the Agency responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Real-time evaluations provide instant input to an ongoing intervention, and can foster policy, operational, and procedural changes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Agency's overall response. These are formative evaluations of intermediary results. They can provide real-time learning and free-up operational bottlenecks.

Real-time evaluations are improvement-oriented reviews, using dynamic tools to adjust and improve planning and performance. They can contribute to reinforcing accountability to affected populations, implementing partners and donors, and can bridge the gap between monitoring and ex-post evaluation. They are, as noted, generally carried out during an emergency operation.

Strengths and challenges of the Real-time Approach

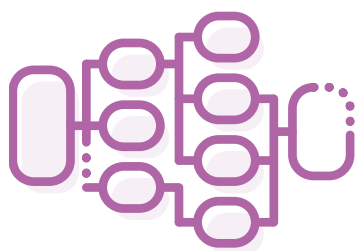
Strengths	Challenges
<p>Data collection is undertaken during the intervention. This allows time to document the implementation more comprehensively and accurately than other approaches, especially in rapidly changing interventions.</p> <p>Rapid feedback of findings is provided, which is useful when there is scope to make changes.</p> <p>Assessments are conducted at several points throughout implementation, for example, monthly or quarterly and not as episodic activities – such as a mid-term or a final evaluation. This promotes the systematic use of evidence in between different iterations of the intervention.</p>	<p>It is not appropriate where the intervention cannot use the information during implementation to make changes, including changing its conceptualisation or actions. This considerably reduces the number of interventions in which it can be applied.</p>



[Learn more about real-time evaluations](#)

[What do the experts say?](#)

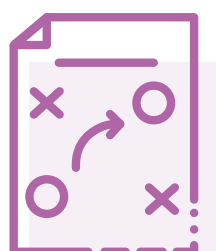
d) summary



Theory-based Approach

It is not an evaluation framework but an approach. As such it can be used in most evaluation types.

It is based on using the intervention's Theory of Change, explicit or implicit, to validate or challenge the assumptions on which it is based.



Developmental Evaluation

It is carried out throughout the intervention and not at specific moments to provide close to real-time feedback.



Real-time Evaluation

It is used especially in emergency and humanitarian interventions.

It is highly dynamic and provides immediate feedback on how the intervention is developing.

3.2.3 budgeting for decentralized evaluations

UNRWA Evaluation Policy recommends that field and headquarter units set aside 0.5% to 3% of the project or programme budget for decentralized evaluation purposes, as part of the direct cost of a project or programmatic intervention. This allocation should primarily be used to fund mid-term and final evaluations but could also be used to conduct baseline studies to enable the analysis of change.

The Evaluation Division encourages a minimum budget of between \$35,000 and \$40,000 USD for a decentralized evaluation and adequate spacing between evaluations focused on the same project to allow time for the uptake of lessons learned and to minimize the risk of stakeholder fatigue and duplicative analysis. A spacing of at least two years is suggested between the end of a mid-term evaluation and the start of a final evaluation.

DIOS also suggests that project managers discuss opportunities with donors to combine resources from multiple small projects to resource larger evaluations, clustering projects to evaluate a thematic, programmatic, or operational area of work.

The budget required for an evaluation depends on several cost factors that affect the time required for preparation and costs incurred for data collection and reporting. The core factors influencing cost include:

Geographic scope

The number of fields and areas of operation covered by the project or programme that require review and need to be included in the evaluator's research activities, with potential field missions.

Magnitude of project expenditure

This can affect the scope and complexity of the activities that have been implemented and are to be evaluated.

Range of project interventions/ activities or thematic areas

Programmes or projects with a varied range of activities might require different experts on the evaluation team, adding to the costs and complexity of data collection.

Types and Range of Key Stakeholder Groups

If research needs to include data collection from donors or host government representatives, children, or especially vulnerable groups, the expertise required from an evaluation team will increase.

Reporting Plans

The types of results briefings and evaluation products planned will influence costs. The Evaluation Division suggests allocation of funding to produce two-page summary reports on evaluation results in both English and Arabic to share results with direct service delivery staff and refugee communities. It is also valuable to organize results briefings with refugee communities and minor resources to provide refreshments to participants and possible transport costs may be needed.

Evaluation Approach

Depending on the need of the stakeholders and the relevance of the approach, an in-depth developmental evaluation would require more days/evaluation team members than a lighter review based on secondary data and selected key informant interviews.

Further, adopting a participatory approach throughout the evaluation phases is key but is likely to be more time consuming for the evaluation manager and potentially involve expense to the evaluation. This includes stakeholder consultations during the preparation and implementation phases of the evaluation, as well as participatory approaches to data collection, such as focus group discussions and workshops. Other factors that might affect the costs would include the quality of available monitoring and evaluation data or past evaluations that the evaluation team can use.

During the planning phase, the role of the programme/project manager would be to ensure that the project/programme budget contains a realistic provision for evaluations based on the expected scope and overall approach. The following table (budget lines of an evaluation) indicates the standard items that can be used to estimate an evaluation budget. This can be further refined by the evaluation manager during the preparation phase of the evaluation.

Consultant fees

Fees for International Consultants

This tends to be the highest budget item as these are specialized professionals with years of experience. Depending on the days required and the number of different experts required, this item will be higher or lower. The tool linked below would help in estimating the number of experts and the number of days required of each expert.

The Evaluation Division or colleagues who have recently managed evaluations, should be able to provide the current market fees.

Fees for National Consultants

As in the case of international consultants, these will also be specialized professionals. Their fees would be linked to the Agency's pay scales for national personnel.

The Evaluation Division or colleagues who have recently managed evaluations, should be able to provide the current market fees.

Data collection costs

National Support Staff and Enumerators

This item is not always needed. For example, enumerators would only be used if there is a need to conduct many in-person or telephone surveys beyond the capacity of the core team or team leader. Depending on the sample size of the survey, this option may make the evaluation considerably more expensive.

The Evaluation Division or colleagues who have recently managed evaluations, should be able to provide the current market fees.

Translator Fees

Even if team members speak both Arabic and English it is always advisable to budget for translation costs. The translation of the report's executive summary and other products requires skills that may not necessarily be held by core evaluation team members.

If the commissioning unit cannot support the translation of tools for the data collection phase, costs for interpreting services would be necessary to budget if all or some team members do not speak Arabic.

The most direct way to calculate this item is to consult national companies or professional translators. Notice that the Agency has a long-term agreement with a translator service so Central Support Services can also help with this.

Travel for Consultants

In the case of hiring international consultants, this item would cover travel to and from the place where consultants are based and a daily subsistence allowance (DSA) for the duration of the field mission. To calculate the DSA rates, please consult the International Civil Service Commission.

Costs for internal travel required by consultants for adequate data collection should also be budgeted for.

Note: In cases where the evaluation is commissioned to a consultancy firm, internal travel would generally be facilitated by the Agency for international consultants and will need to be budgeted for.

Support Costs

This includes expenses such as space rentals, refreshments for focus groups or workshops, or transport for people to venues where data collection meetings are held (particularly affected populations).

Note: mainstreaming cross-cutting issues may require additional budgeting consideration, especially for the inclusion of people with disabilities, this may include sign language translators, or assistants for children with mental disabilities, use of adapted venues, adapted transportation, or specially printed materials. In some contexts, women, particularly younger women, may require assistance and safety processes to travel.

Note: to cover unforeseen expenses, it's always advisable to add some contingency funding.

Usually, around 70 percent of the costs of an evaluation are comprised of the consultancy fees. The tool linked below will help estimate the number of evaluators needed for the evaluation and the approximate number of days each evaluator will need to spend on the evaluation. The result should be multiplied by the market fees to have a rough idea of the two items. Also, a sample budget is linked below with space to amend values for all budget lines.

In addition to the evaluation team, project or programme evaluation can take between nine and ten months, and strategic evaluations take a minimum of one year. During this time the project/programme team must allocate at least one part-time staff member to assist during the preparation and implementation phases of an evaluation, as the evaluation focal point. This should be taken into consideration while planning for an evaluation.

Click the links below for an estimate of how many consultants/ days the evaluation needs



[Budget template with key budget guidelines](#)

3.2.4 assigning evaluation management responsibilities

During the planning phase of the evaluation, it is important that the project/programme manager liaises with internal stakeholders and determines where responsibility of management of the evaluation best resides, either with a headquarters unit or a field programme support office. Ideally, the responsibility of managing the evaluation should be with a staff member with previous experience supporting the implementation of a centralized or decentralized evaluation. The sections below on the preparation and implementation phases, as well as the checklists for the evaluation managers will help in estimating the level of effort required to manage an evaluation.



3.3 checklist for project/ programme managers

	Tasks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Review recently completed evaluations to inform the project/programme design.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Liaise with DIOS for information on evaluations in the pipeline on similar interventions to ensure coordination across planned evaluation activities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Liaise with the donor to understand their interests concerning: (1) the evaluation purpose; (2) to what extent they want to be involved; (3) when they want the evaluation to be delivered, i.e., what are the hard deadlines for them and why, keeping in mind that the preparation and implementation phases of an evaluation in UNRWA take a minimum of nine months; and (4) what information they expect to find in the final report. This will help secure Donor agreement on a useful and realistic evaluation plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decide on the overall approach to the evaluation based on both donor requirements and the criteria suggested in Section 1.2 in line with organizational learning objectives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Depending on the evaluation needs that have been determined, (i.e., how many evaluations are needed and when) and the overall approach, estimate the budget needed for quality evaluation(s).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consult with DIOS on key decisions taken on the evaluation purpose and frequency, timing, budget, and overall evaluation approach, as well as provisions outlined in donor agreements.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that management of the evaluation is added to the workplan of the responsible unit, and there is regular communication between the project team and the unit on the status of the implementation of project/programme activities and the evaluation start date.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that all decisions based on the above steps are adequately captured in the project/programme documentation.

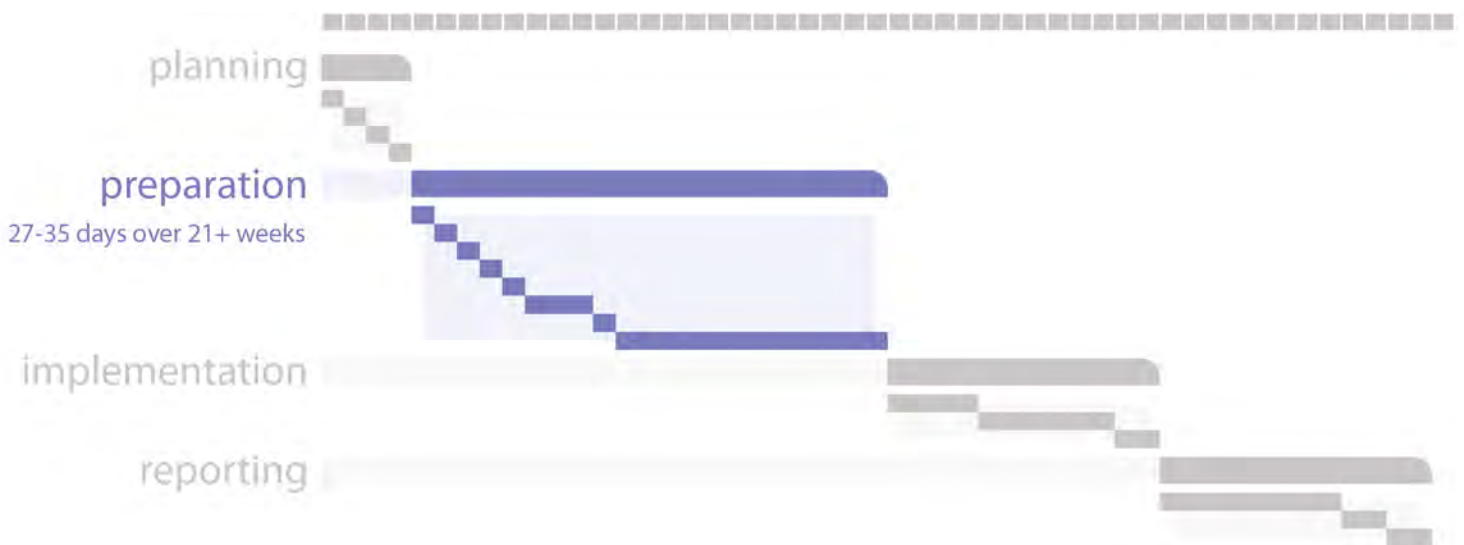
4. preparation

phase



4.1 overview

The preparation phase covers all steps of the evaluation from the appointment of an evaluation manager to the selection and recruitment of the evaluation team. The role of the evaluation manager during this phase is critical and the bulk of their time for an evaluation is spent on this phase, especially on drafting and finalizing the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR). This phase is estimated to take around 5 to 7 weeks of an evaluation manager's focused time over a period of 21 weeks.



Activity

Appointment of the Evaluation Manager

1. The unit responsible for the evaluation should appoint an evaluation manager, keeping in mind the level of commitment required from the role, as well as the skills and institutional knowledge important for completing the key tasks.
2. As soon as an evaluation manager is appointed, the unit responsible should notify the DIOS Evaluation Division about the selection of the evaluation manager.

Preliminary Review of Documents and initial Stakeholder Mapping

1. Collate and review key project/programme documents to assess evaluability, reflecting on what is realistically achievable and whether it is the right time to carry out the evaluation. The availability of information to inform the evaluation and evaluability should be further discussed during preliminary meetings with key stakeholders.
2. Initial mapping of the key evaluation stakeholders based on the document review should also be conducted.

Preliminary Stakeholder Meetings

1. Send email notifications to key stakeholders about the evaluation.
2. Meet separately with the DIOS Evaluation Division, key members of the project/programme team, and the donor to discuss key aspects and timelines (suggested areas to be covered in these meetings are detailed below in [Section 4.2.3](#)).
3. Request relevant documentation and data on the project/programme.
4. Request nominations for evaluation focal point(s) from the subject area, and for Evaluation Reference Group members (more details on the Evaluation Reference Group in [Section 4.2.7](#)).
5. For evaluations involving data collection from multiple fields of operation or programmatic units, seek nominations for focal points for an Evaluation Management Group to provide logistical support for data collection and reporting activities.

Evaluation Budget Requirements

1. Validate the adequacy of the initial budget set for the evaluation in the planning phase based on the evaluation scope and approach finalized during the initial meetings.
2. If resources initially allocated in the project/programme document are insufficient, the evaluation manager should negotiate possible solutions with the project team and the donor (although this is generally set during the planning phase and is not variable past that).
3. In cases where an initial budget was not set in the planning phase, the evaluation manager will need to follow steps outlined in [Section 3.2.3](#) to create a tentative budget and discuss it with all relevant stakeholders to secure funding.

Activity

Building a Document Library

1. Set up a document library to include the main project documents, existing Theory of Change, project progress reports, and monitoring data or reports, and any relevant Agency strategic or policy documents.
2. Build a preliminary list of stakeholders based on the mapping of the stakeholder groups.
3. All documents should be stored in an online library that can be shared with the evaluation team for their use during the implementation and reporting phases.

Drafting the Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR)

1. The evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR) is drafted by the evaluation manager. All the information from the previous steps forms the backbone of this draft. This Section incorporates guidance in the sections below and the template to develop them. The quality assurance tool provided at the end of [Section 4.2.6](#) should be used to ensure that the document complies with UNRWA standards.
2. Involve the evaluation focal point to ensure the accuracy of the intervention description, the context, and the feasibility of the overall approach.
3. Share the ToR with the Evaluation Division to fine-tune the key evaluation questions and the evaluation methodology.
4. Share the ToR with all other key stakeholders for comments, including the Evaluation Reference Group (more details in [Section 4.2.7](#)).
5. Incorporate feedback and share the final version of the ToR with all key stakeholders for future reference.

Setting up Evaluation Reference Group

1. Establish the Evaluation Reference Group in parallel to drafting the evaluation ToR ([Section 4.2.7](#)).
2. Composition of the Evaluation Reference Group is to be based on discussions in Step 3.
3. Reach out to all members of the Evaluation Reference Group with their Terms of Reference, outlining their roles and responsibilities and points of engagement.
4. During this phase, engage with them by sharing the evaluation Terms of Reference for their input. Feedback can be requested through written inputs or through an initial group discussion.

Selecting and Recruiting the Evaluation Team

1. Liaise with Human Resources or Procurement to plan recruitment activities and to develop a vacancy announcement or request for proposal aligned to the evaluation's needs and Agency procedures.
2. Develop in collaboration with Human Resources or Procurement the framework for assessing proposals in response to tenders or calls for consultants.
3. Publicise the ToR through various networks.
4. Chair panel for assessments and selection of individual consultants or a consulting firm.

4.2 steps for the preparation phase

4.2.1 appointment of the evaluation manager

The evaluation manager oversees the management of the evaluation from start to finish. They are the first point of contact for the evaluation stakeholders and facilitate all phases of the evaluation. Their role involves ensuring that the evaluation is carried out ethically and in compliance with UNRWA's regulatory framework and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) quality standards, as described in [Section 1.3.1](#).

For decentralized evaluations, evaluation managers should be appointed by the unit responsible for commissioning and managing the evaluation. They should have sufficient technical knowledge of the subject matter and basic-to-advanced knowledge of evaluation. Field-level decentralized evaluations are most often managed by a member of the field's Programme Support Office, while at the headquarters-level, programme monitoring staff generally manage decentralized evaluations. For centralized evaluations, the evaluation manager is a staff member of the Evaluation Division of DIOS.

Importantly, the evaluation manager should not be or have been directly involved in the implementation of the intervention that will be evaluated.

While appointing the evaluation manager, the relevant unit/division should take into consideration the time commitment required for managing an evaluation, especially during the preparation and implementation phases:

Preparation

The evaluation manager prepares a comprehensive, clear, and useful ToR for the evaluation through a participatory process; and coordinates recruitment of the evaluation team through Human Resources (individual consultants) or a procurement process (consulting firm). The preparation phase will take 5 to 7 weeks of an evaluation manager's focused time, spread across 5 months.

Implementation

The evaluation manager is responsible for quality assurance; providing inputs on the draft inception report; and facilitating data collection activities. The implementation phase will take an average of 2 to 3 weeks of an evaluation manager's focused time, spread across 3 months.

Reporting

The evaluation manager facilitates the finalization of the evaluation report by providing comments on the draft version and organizing stakeholder feedback. The evaluation manager is also responsible for requesting management response; preparing the transmittal letter; and ensuring a broad dissemination of evaluation products. The last phase will take approximately 1 to 2 weeks, spread across 3 months.

While appointing the evaluation manager, the relevant unit/division should take into consideration the time commitment required for managing an evaluation, especially during the preparation and implementation phases.

The Evaluation Division brings technical expertise to support evaluation managers. The level of input from the Evaluation Division depends on the evaluation manager's experience in evaluation and the capacity and resources within the Division itself. The type of support that can be expected from the Evaluation Division includes:

- Quality Assurance (if needed) of the evaluation Terms of Reference and the Terms of Reference of the Evaluation Reference Group;
- Discussion on the evaluation process and phases outlined in the evaluation manual;
- Participation in the Evaluation Reference Group and on the technical committee selecting an evaluation firm or consultant (more details in [Sections 4.2.7](#) and [4.2.8](#) respectively).

The unit responsible for the evaluation should notify the Evaluation Division once the evaluation manager has been assigned, such that required support can be provided.

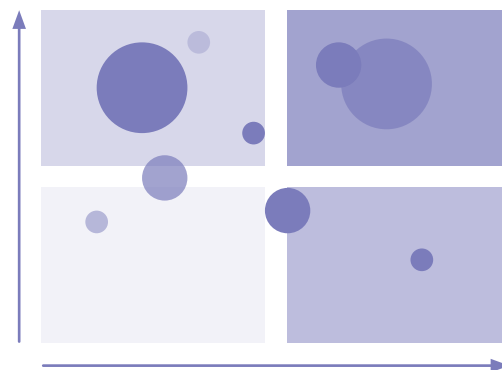
4.2.2 preliminary review of documentation and initial stakeholder mapping

As a first step, the evaluation manager should make themselves familiar with the project and review any documentation available at hand. This includes the main project document with information on evaluation provisions; the log frame; donor requirements; and project timeline.

The evaluation manager should reflect on the feasibility and timing of the data collection for the evaluation based on the current operational and security context, and the extent to which project/programme activities are completed. These points should be further discussed with key stakeholders during the preliminary meetings.

This initial review should enable evaluation managers to obtain an overall view of what can be realistically evaluated so that they can manage expectations placed on the evaluation process within preliminary meetings. It will also help them anticipate some of the evaluation limitations and discuss with stakeholders whether it is the right time to carry out the evaluation.

At this stage, the evaluation manager should also conduct a preliminary mapping of key stakeholder groups, such as the [project team](#); [donors](#); [project/programme participants](#); [implementing partners](#); and their respective interests and concerns in relation to the evaluation. This initial mapping will allow an understanding of who the primary users of the evaluation are to be obtained, as well as who should be closely involved in the development of the evaluation Terms of Reference, and potential Evaluation Reference Group members.



Additionally, this preliminary mapping will give evaluators an idea of what groups are important for inclusion in research. The mapping will need to be further elaborated by the evaluation team during the implementation phase.



Sample of stakeholder groups

For evaluations involving multiple fields of operation, the evaluation manager needs to appoint an [Evaluation Management Group](#) composed of personnel from each field office. This is to facilitate the implementation of the evaluation, including providing information and inputs for the development of the inception report; gathering relevant field-level documents and data; and facilitating stakeholder consultations and logistics. The need for such a group should be discussed with the Evaluation Division and the project manager. The group should be set up while the evaluation Terms of Reference is being drafted to discuss feasibility of the timeline and logistics for data collection.

4.2.3 preliminary stakeholder meetings

The evaluation manager should conduct preliminary meetings with (i) the Evaluation Division of DIOS, (ii) the project manager and key programmatic staff, and (iii) with the Donors. Other stakeholder groups may be consulted at this stage depending on the context and scope of the evaluation.

While contacting the groups for a meeting, the email should inform them about the evaluation, its value, and key details on the purpose and scope of the evaluation. Key points for discussion will vary across groups: suggested topics are listed below.

Importantly, notes from these meetings should be stored digitally for future reference during the drafting of the evaluation Terms of Reference or for the evaluation team. Below are suggested topics for discussion during these preliminary meetings.



Email template to introduce an evaluation and request preliminary meetings

The meeting with the
Evaluation Division



should cover:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | The purpose, scope, and approach of the evaluation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Ongoing evaluation activities that can help build synergies. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | Experiences from past evaluations on similar topics or contacts of individuals who have recently managed similar exercises. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Consideration of the need for an Evaluation Management Group to facilitate the implementation and reporting phases. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 | Recommendations for Evaluation Reference Group members. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 | The evaluation timeline and planned next steps. |

Note: The Evaluation Division will provide inputs on the draft evaluation Terms of Reference (more details in [Section 4.2.6](#)) as will a member of the Evaluation Reference Group (more details in [Section 4.2.7](#)).



The meeting with the
Project Manager and key programmatic staff
 should cover:

<input type="checkbox"/>	1	The purpose, scope, and timeline of the evaluation, as well as roles, responsibilities and key stages where the project team will be involved.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<p>Details on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The status of project implementation; • Latest developments, issues regarding security, operational context, or other sensitivities for data collection, such as, any host authority consultations or facilitation required, holidays, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Potential uses for the evaluation, any upcoming meetings, and processes that the evaluation needs to feed into.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	Reflection on the OECD-DAC/ALNAP criteria: inputs on what are the most important questions for them.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	Proposed composition of the evaluation team and different expertise required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Proposed composition of the Evaluation Reference Group and the expertise and representation required (see Section 4.2.7 for more details).
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	Evaluation budget, if not already finalized during the Planning Phase of the evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	Nomination of a focal point for the evaluation (see following box).
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	Consideration of the need for an Evaluation Management Group to facilitate the implementation and reporting phases.
<input type="checkbox"/>	10	<p>Data and document requests (can also be directly discussed with the nominated evaluation focal point):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of stakeholder groups that should be consulted in the evaluation. At this stage, the identification may not be individuals but groups, e.g., UNRWA relevant departments, programme/project participants, etc. This can be followed up by an Excel table for the evaluation focal point to populate; • Available documentation and datasets, including from existing monitoring mechanisms, information management systems, and the project Theory of Change.
<input type="checkbox"/>	11	<p>Next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tentative date for draft evaluation Terms of Reference to be shared; • Tentative start date for field data collection.
<input type="checkbox"/>	12	Any other concerns they may have.

Responsibilities of the Evaluation Focal Point

The evaluation focal point will generally be a staff member within the organizational unit of the project/programme. In some instances, especially for evaluations managed by HQ units, the evaluation manager and the focal point can be the same person.

The evaluation focal point is the first point of contact for the evaluation responsible for:

- Providing information and inputs for the development of the evaluation Terms of Reference;
- Gathering relevant documents and data on the evaluation subject;
- Supporting the evaluation manager with stakeholder consultations and logistics;
- Reviewing the draft evaluation Terms of Reference.

The meeting with the
Donor
should cover:



<input type="checkbox"/>	1	The purpose, scope, and timeline of the evaluation, as well as roles, responsibilities and key stages where the donor will be involved.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Potential uses for the evaluation, any upcoming meetings, and processes that the evaluation needs to feed into.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	Reflection on the OECD-DAC/ALNAP criteria: inputs on what are the most important questions for them.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	Evaluation budget, if not already finalized during the Planning Phase of the evaluation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	Introduction to the Evaluation Reference Group mechanism, and request for a nominee of a donor representative (see Section 4.2.7 for more details).
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Nomination of the first point of contact for the evaluation (if different from the Evaluation Reference Group member). The evaluation manager should provide regular updates to the contact on progress made on the evaluation and share various evaluation products.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	Next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tentative date for draft evaluation Terms of Reference to be shared; • Tentative start date for field data collection.
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	Any other concerns they may have.

4.2.4 evaluation budget requirements

As detailed in [Section 4.2.1](#), ideally the budget required for the evaluation is determined during project design in consultation with all key stakeholders. In such cases, during the preparation phase, the role of the evaluation manager is to review and finalize the evaluation expenditure plan based on decisions made during the preliminary meetings.

However, in cases where a tentative budget has not been determined during the intervention design stage, the evaluation manager needs to follow guidance provided in [Section 3.2.3](#) on estimating a tentative budget and liaising with the project team to confirm the budget.



Sample evaluation budget

If the evaluation budget is assessed as insufficient, the need for additional resources should be justified and detailed, and the evaluation manager should liaise with the project manager and donor relations regarding possible options. The increase in costs could be linked to research requirements given the nature of the scope of the evaluation and expenses related to data collection. Based on available options, ways to accommodate increased costs or to make the evaluation more affordable should be decided upon in discussion with key stakeholders.

Reducing the budget could affect the depth/credibility of the evaluation, and it is therefore essential that any implications of it are understood by all stakeholders, including the donor (see following table). Any cost-cutting measures taken should be reflected in the evaluation Terms of Reference.



Significantly, while streamlining the coverage of evaluation criteria may be helpful in reducing evaluation costs, it is important to maintain coverage of cross-cutting issues. If any doubts, representatives in the Evaluation Reference Group on cross-cutting issues or the Evaluation Division should be consulted.

How to make an evaluation more affordable

Possible Actions	Implications
<p>Assign one person from UNRWA to support the evaluation team to lighten their workload during the implementation and reporting phase, and hence reduce the number of days assigned to them.</p>	<p>Through these tasks the person could potentially influence the evaluation. The more they are involved in the evaluation process, the less independent this process will appear to be.</p>
<p>Conduct remote evaluations to reduce field trip costs.</p> <p>The possibilities for remote research have recently improved. Multiple tools allow data collection from project/programme participants through mobile devices as texts or audio recordings, even with limited connectivity. The Evaluation Division can provide examples of recently used tools.</p>	<p>Remote evaluations may require more time to plan, and importantly, the evaluation team will learn less about the security, operational and social context, concerning UNRWA's work.</p> <p>Even with the innovative tools, remote data collection tends to be less participatory and inclusive.</p>
<p>Combine a team comprising of one international and one national consultant. This option combines the two previous ones but without their disadvantages, as the national team member could be independent and can provide contextual knowledge.</p>	<p>The local team member could be perceived as eliciting bias, which could detract from their credibility. Further, as with all recruitment processes, it could be challenging to find someone suitable.</p>
<p>Conduct a lighter assessment exercise, for example, a desk-based review with few selected remote interviews.</p>	<p>This would detract from the depth and legitimacy of the process.</p>
<p>Narrow the scope of the assessment by concentrating on the most critical project components or focusing on a select set of evaluation criteria and research questions.</p>	<p>Stakeholders are most common with evaluations that cover all OECD-DAC criteria and sensitizing teams with the value of a smaller scope can take time. Evaluation Division staff can provide support in this regard.</p>

4.2.5 building a document library

During this phase, it is advisable that the evaluation manager builds an online repository of key documents received from the evaluation stakeholders. The repository should ideally be created within UNRWA's corporate OneDrive data storage system. It is important that the folder has restricted access and is only accessible to the evaluation manager, the evaluation team, and the Evaluation Division. The evaluation team may use the same folder for future sharing of information within the team, keeping confidential documents or meeting notes password protected.



Suggested documents to be collected during this phase by the evaluation manager include:

- (i) Background and contextual documents – both internal and external – such as UNRWA's Strategic Plan; relevant policies; annual operational reports; previous relevant thematic or programme evaluations (including central and decentralized); and documents from other UN agencies on the subject of the evaluation and cross-cutting issues;
- (ii) Project/programme documents including the main project document with the project log frame/Theory of Change; any progress reports; monitoring data, final report and the mid-term evaluation; and documents on cross-cutting issues related to the project/programme, if available;
- (iii) List of key stakeholder groups based on the stakeholder mapping in [Section 4.2.2](#), (it is important to note that at this stage any details of the programme/project participants should not be collected as they might involve certain sensitivities);
- (iv) Notes from the preliminary meetings with key stakeholders and records of the decisions taken in those meetings.

The repository will help the evaluation manager in drafting the evaluation Terms of Reference and will be critical for the evaluation team during the implementation phase of the evaluation.

4.2.6 drafting the evaluation terms of reference

The evaluation manager is responsible for drafting and finalizing the evaluation Terms of Reference based on the initial decisions made during the planning phase (see [Section 1](#)), discussions with key stakeholders, and a review of available documentation.

The evaluation Terms of Reference summarizes the agreement between all key stakeholders on major aspects of the evaluation and forms the basis for the evaluation team's work. It also serves as the contractual basis for engaging the evaluation team.

The sections below provide guidance on how each of the key components for the Terms of Reference should be developed. Additionally, please see the evaluation Terms of Reference template for specific guidelines on each sub-section length, formatting, and suggested wording.




UNRWA Evaluation Terms of Reference template

In terms of the process, once the draft Terms of Reference is prepared, the evaluation manager should involve the project/programme managers or Team to ensure the accuracy of the description of the intervention and the overall evaluation approach. It should then be shared with the Evaluation Division for preliminary comments. Once these comments have been addressed, the draft should be shared with all key stakeholders, including the relevant Department/Field Office directors, donors, and the Evaluation Reference Group for their inputs and comments.

The table (chronological list of key reviewers) lists the three review groups, main reviewers for each group, and their focus. On average, at least one week should be allocated for the review for the first two groups and at least two weeks for the third group including the Evaluation Reference Group. Between each review, the evaluation manager should budget for a few days to respond to the comments. In some cases, the review process may take longer depending on the availability of the reviewers and the nature of their comments.

The evaluation Terms of Reference is considered final once all comments have been adequately addressed by the evaluation manager.

Chronological list of key reviewers

Review Group	Reviewer	Focus
1	Project/ Programme managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are no factual errors. • Update the description of the subject and context as necessary. • Consider the feasibility of the evaluation methodology outlined • Alert to situations that may affect the evaluation (academic calendar, holiday periods, etc.). • Ensure the team composition includes appropriate technical skills.
2	Evaluation Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the completeness and technical quality of the evaluation Terms of Reference. • Ensure that UNEG/UNRWA guidelines are followed.
3	Relevant Department/ Field Office Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the purpose and key questions align to critical evidence needs of the Agency and the project/programme. • Review the adequacy of the contextual references concerning the need for and intended uses for the evaluation. • Ensure that the evaluation budget and timeline are adequate. <p>It is essential to involve senior level managers from the beginning as they will play an important role in the use of the evaluation results and will be accountable for implementing evaluation recommendations.</p>
	Donor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the content and the deliverables requested address their reporting needs. • Check that the timeline is realistic and fits their institutional needs. <p>Donors can be requested to review the Terms of Reference as part of the Evaluation Reference Group review. However, their preference to provide inputs separately should always be checked.</p>
	Evaluation Reference Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and provide higher-level feedback. • Representative(s) of cross-cutting themes provide input to ensure adequate mainstreaming. <p> Note: The Evaluation Reference Group only provides feedback and comments for the evaluation manager's consideration and does not approve any evaluation products.</p>

a) background and context

This Section should include a brief description of the context of the intervention, the humanitarian-development landscape, and relevant policy and normative frameworks in which the project/programme is set.



It should further include a sub-Section on the object of the evaluation; key activities; target participant groups; expenditures disaggregated by activity type; intended outcomes; and impact. Including a short history of the intervention, how objectives and targeted outcomes evolved over time, and the intervention logic is useful. If project logical frameworks are available, these should be added as an annex to the Terms of Reference. A brief analysis should also be included describing how the intervention has considered cross-cutting issues.

Importantly, this Section should describe what was planned and has been done but should not pass any judgements on the quality of the delivery. It is also a good opportunity to refer to previous studies, evaluations, or similar activities that have been conducted on the project/programme.

In a separate sub-Section, the evaluation manager may also add a brief description of the project/programme Theory of Change if it exists.

The information to develop this part of the evaluation can be found in progress reports and the original programme/project document. Managers of the intervention can also be consulted for more details.

b) evaluation purpose and scope

This Section should include the evaluation **purpose**, its importance, and the rationale for its timing. It should detail the kind of learning, programme improvement, scaling-up opportunity or accountability purpose the evaluation serves. It should also include details on who is commissioning the evaluation (i.e., which department or field office) and the function of the evaluation (formative and/or summative, mid-term, or final).

Another important component is to define the **scope** of the evaluation and outline what will be included or excluded in the study and the reasons why. This means setting the parameters for the intervention to be evaluated, the timeframe to be covered, the geographic scope (fields of operation), and the thematic scope, (i.e., whether to evaluate a complete intervention or only certain components).

This Section should also include a description of the **user(s)** of the evaluation results and their intended use(s) based on the preliminary stakeholder mapping detailed in [Section 4.2.2](#). A sample table with the main users of an evaluation is added below. The information will need to be tailored to the specific evaluation.

Users of an Evaluation

Users	Descriptions
Primary Users	
Senior management	Senior management can make decisions to re-adjust, continue, scale-up, or interrupt an intervention based on evaluation results. Evaluations can also inform corporate-level strategic planning processes.
Project/ programme managers	Project/programme managers can use evaluation results to inform future/current programme design and implementation.
Field Offices	Frontline staff, and more broadly field office staff, can benefit from lessons learned and good practices to implement into their work. This applies to both staff directly involved in the evaluation process but also staff involved in field management and direct service delivery. Depending on the scope, the evaluation may also provide useful lessons for field offices not directly involved in the evaluation.
Palestine Refugee Participants	Evaluations can be used as a tool for accountability, and provides a channel to voice concerns, satisfactions, or dissatisfactions.
Other Potential Users	
Other Projects/ Programmes	Projects/programmes share similar operational requirements and challenges, and evaluation results can be useful for other similar works.
External Relations and Communications	Evaluations provide evidence on what is working, UNRWA's contributions, and gaps that remain to be achieved. This information can feed into reports to external stakeholders and is essential for mobilizing resources. Stories of impact and proven results of the initiatives can provide valuable evidence-based information for official communications.
Other UN Agencies INGOs Research Institutions Grassroot Organizations	External users in other organizations can benefit from learning about UNRWA evaluations. For instance, they could use context-specific results and lessons for implementing similar projects. Research institutions and grassroots organizations can use data produced by evaluations for their activities.



c) key evaluation questions

The Terms of Reference should outline the key evaluation questions and sub-questions that form the main lines of enquiry and will be explored during the evaluation. **What is not asked will not be assessed.** Their formulation is perhaps the most important part of the Terms of Reference. The questions should be related directly to the purpose of the evaluation and needs of the users. They should be specific to the intervention being evaluated.

UNRWA evaluations are generally guided by the standard international criteria of OECD-DAC, and when relevant, ALNAP (for humanitarian interventions). Guidance frameworks are also available to support mainstreaming of human rights, gender equity, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability through UNEG. More details on OECD-DAC and UNEG guidance can be found at the end of this Section.

The following graphics illustrate the OECD-DAC and ALNAP criteria, as well as the criteria for considering cross-cutting issues, with a brief explanation and sample questions for each.

To what extent did the design and objectives of the intervention respond to the needs of the different stakeholder groups?

How has the intervention adapted to recent changes in the national landscape?

This involves examining the extent to which the intervention's objectives and design respond to stakeholder needs and priorities, as well as those of the field of operation, UNRWA, and any relevant partner organization.

If during implementation the operational context substantively changes, evaluations should also look at whether interventions remained relevant, and the flexibility of its design.

Relevance

Is the intervention doing the right thing?

To what extent were the objectives of the project achieved?

What were the major factors that influenced results achievement?

To what extent have results differed across involved groups?

This examines the extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve results while considering the relative importance of its objectives. Analysis of differential results across groups (for example, women and men) and the extent to which the intervention contributes to or exacerbates equity gaps is encouraged.

Effectiveness

Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

How have the results generated by the intervention contributed to or transformed people's lives?

To what extent has the intervention contributed to institutional changes?

This examines the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive, negative, intended, or unintended, higher-level effects.

Impact addresses the intervention's ultimate significance and potentially transformative effects: holistic and enduring changes in systems or norms. The impact criterion goes beyond effectiveness and encourages consideration of the big "so what?" question.

This is where evaluators look at whether the intervention created change that matters to people.

As with effectiveness, it is important to analyse whether these effects have affected certain groups differently and whether they have contributed to perpetuating or improving inequality gaps.

Note: Impact here does not necessarily mean change attributed directly to the intervention as in the case of impact evaluations. Under this criteria contribution to impact can also be captured.

Impact

What difference does the intervention make?

How well aligned are project interventions to UNRWA strategic priorities and regular programme activities?

To what extent have Agency processes supported complementarity of the intervention to the work of other relevant development actors?

This involves examining the extent to which the intervention is aligned to other ongoing activities which includes internal coherence such as synergies and interlinkages with other activities ongoing within UNRWA, and external coherence, such as with those of other actors in the same context.

Coherence includes concepts of complementarity, harmonization and coordination, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

In line with the 2030 Agenda, greater attention must be paid to coherence, with an increased focus on synergies (or trade-offs) between actors.

Coherence

How well does the intervention fit?

Efficiency

How well are the resources being used?

This examines the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

“Economic” is the conversion of inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) into results in the most cost-effective and timely way possible, as compared to feasible alternatives in the same context.

This criterion helps to see whether resources used (human and financial) can be justified by the results. Stakeholders, including project/programme participants, care about efficiency because it can support better use of limited resources to achieve more.

To what extent has the intervention been implemented in a timely and cost-effective manner?

How efficient were the processes for managing and delivering project activities, including results monitoring activities?

Sustainability

Will the benefits last?

This examines the extent to which net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

Depending on the timing of the evaluation, this may involve analysing the actual flow of net benefits or estimating the likelihood of the continuation of net benefits over the medium and long-term. A mix of several elements should be considered while analysing sustainability, including financial, social, and environmental aspects.

What elements have been considered to ensure the sustainability of the intervention's results?

To what extent do project/programme participants/partners have the will, technical capacity, and financial capacity to sustain the results of the intervention?

To what extent has the intervention benefited the most vulnerable households and the most vulnerable people in the household?

This examines the extent to which major population groups facing life-threatening suffering were reached by humanitarian action. Depending on the context, this can be merged with the relevance criteria.

Coverage/ sufficiency

Is the intervention able to access the people and services it needs to?

Coordination

Does the intervention work well with actors in the space?

This examines the extent to which the interventions of different actors that are harmonized with each other promote synergies and avoid gaps, duplication, and resource conflict (often coincides with coherence).

To what extent are interventions of different actors harmonised with each other? Are there any duplications, synergies, or conflicts?

Connectedness

Is the intervention part of the bigger picture?

This examines the extent to which activities of a short-term nature are carried out in a context that considers long-term and interconnected problems. Replaces the sustainability criterion mentioned above.

To what extent have food distributions affected economic activities in the camps?

Cross-cutting Issues

Cross-cutting issues can be included as a separate criterion (adjoining column) or transversally in the rest of the criteria (suggestions below). The latter option has the advantage of connecting the cross-cutting issues to all other criteria however, this can dilute the issues being considered. The evaluation manager can decide how best to incorporate cross-cutting issues based on the level of importance of each and how well they align with the other evaluation criteria.

To what extent are dimensions of gender equity, disability, inclusion, and environmental sustainability reflected in the design of the project/programme? (Analysis of whether there were dedicated objectives and linked indicators in the results framework, and how the activities conducted incorporate any of these three aspects).

How conducive is the context (institutional, cultural, etc.) for the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues?



Integrating Cross-cutting Issues with other Evaluation Criteria

Ensure that evaluation questions are disaggregated by group. For example, how did the intervention address the needs of the project/programme participants (women, men, girls, boys, people with disabilities, etc.)?

When referring to policies and strategies of both UNRWA and partners, make sure that those addressing the inclusion of marginalized groups and those promoting sustainable environment/adaptation to climate change are included.

When asking about the adequacy of resources devoted to the project, add whether the resources (time, capacity, and financial) devoted to cross-cutting issues were adequate.

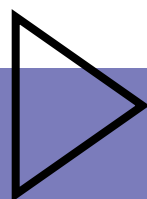
When asking about the impact of the intervention, disaggregate the audience. For example, how has the intervention contributed to positive changes in women, men, girls, boys, people with disabilities, etc.? This will compel evaluators to look for differentiated effects among different audiences.

Under effectiveness, consider adding a separate question about whether/how the intervention has contributed to promoting environmental sustainability and adaptation to climate change.



steps to follow while developing key evaluation questions

1 narrow evaluation criteria



2 draft evaluation questions

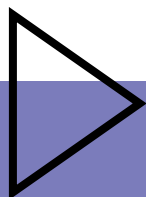
From the OECD-DAC/ALNAP and the criteria for mainstreaming cross-cutting issues, the evaluation manager should use those that are most useful given the need/purpose of the evaluation and the nature of the intervention. Not all criteria need to be applied and some will be more important than others.

To narrow down the criteria, the evaluation manager should refer to the preliminary meetings with stakeholders. Below is a series of questions that the evaluation manager should reflect on, while narrowing down the evaluation criteria (see table below).

Narrowing the Criteria

Prioritize	What are the most important criteria to be covered?
Depth vs. Breadth	Is there sufficient time and resources to adequately address all criteria of interest, or will focusing the analysis on some provide more valuable information?
Best Suited	Which criteria are best addressed through an evaluation, and which might be better addressed through other means (such as a research project, evidence synthesis, monitoring exercise, or facilitated learning process)?
Realism	Are the enabling environment and available data sufficient to provide a quality response to these criteria?

Evaluation questions should be drafted under each of the selected criteria for OECD-DAC and/or ALNAP. Points to keep in mind while developing the questions are listed below and there is also a toolkit at the end of this Section with more extensive sample evaluation questions and links to OECD/DAC and ALNAP manuals for more information.



3

refining the questions

- Before deciding what questions to develop [think about the use\(s\)](#) of the evaluation.
- Evaluation questions should be designed to be answered within the [timeframe](#) set for the evaluation.
- Decide whether the cross-cutting issues are to be included as a separate criteria or transversally with the rest of the criteria.
- [Avoid yes/no questions](#), or questions that elicit descriptive rather than explanatory answers.
- Evaluations are also an opportunity to highlight achievements and recognize efforts made. It is therefore not wrong to ask a relevant question where the answer is presumed to be positive. An evaluation must be [balanced](#).
- [Do not copy and paste](#). Questions that other evaluations have developed can inspire but should not guide what is included in the Terms of Reference. Otherwise, there is a risk for the evaluation to be an administrative exercise
- Finally, [never write two questions](#) in one.

The Evaluation Division can help refine the questions developed by the evaluation manager. The evaluation manager should seek the support of the Evaluation Division prior to sharing the draft Terms of Reference with other key stakeholders.

A further note should be added to this section stating that the evaluation questions will be further refined and adjusted by the evaluation team, if necessary, during the inception phase of the evaluation.



Click to access:

[Complete manual on the OECD-DAC criteria](#)

[Complete ALNAP guide](#)

Note: There is no set number of questions that is advisable, however, it is important to consider that the more questions asked, the more superficial the depth of the analysis will be. Therefore, it is recommended that the Terms of Reference include two to three questions per criteria, and that the total number of questions not exceed 15.

d) approach and methodology

The Terms of Reference should present the preferred approach and methods for the evaluation in alignment with the key evaluation questions. The section should be complete based on information regarding the availability, quality, and types of existing data that will be used during the evaluation and how the stakeholders will be involved in the collection of additional data.

At this stage, any ethical considerations should also be mentioned as well as any limitations faced by the evaluation. This section should include:

- The principles that will guide the evaluation, including a statement on the UNEG norms and standards as a general commitment that will underpin the entire evaluation. See [Section 1.4](#) for more details
- A brief outline of the evaluation approach and the methods that are expected to be used in the evaluation. Generally, UNRWA evaluations use a mixed methods approach that integrate both qualitative and quantitative data collection. Please refer to [Section 3.2.2](#) for more details on evaluation approaches and methods
- Preliminary details of existing data sources which will be available, such as monitoring and operational data, project/programme documentation, past evaluation reports, etc.

	Some key concepts
Evaluation Approach	Refers to a specific evaluative perspective. The most used is the theory-based approach (when in doubt this can be used as default).
Evaluation Methods	Concrete tools for data collection and analysis. For example, desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys.
Qualitative Data	Information that is not based on numerical parameters, for example, the content of a focus group discussion.
Quantitative Data	Information that is based on numerical parameters, such as project delivery statistics and quantitative surveys.

e) roles and responsibilities

The Terms of Reference must outline the roles and responsibilities for different stakeholders, such as the evaluation manager, the Evaluation Reference Group, and the Evaluation Division, and must also detail the management arrangement. A brief description of the evaluation team's role should also be added here. More detailed responsibilities across the team will be elaborated in the inception report.

Management arrangements explain how different stakeholders of the evaluation will relate to each other and how the evaluation manager as a representative of UNRWA and the evaluation team Leader will communicate. An important aspect to highlight as part of these roles is regarding quality assurance reviews: consultants have a responsibility to quality assure work prior to submission to UNRWA and that the UNRWA evaluation manager is the first point of contact for the evaluation and approves the deliverables.

Please refer to the Terms of Reference template for suggested wording and examples on the roles and responsibilities for this section.

f) evaluation team composition

An important part of the Terms of Reference is where requirements for the composition of the evaluation team are outlined. This should include details on the technical/thematic expertise needed, the level of experience of consultants, and can include the estimated number of team members and their roles. Here are some points that can help with this task:

- Approximate **number of team members** should be based on the calculations made in preparing the evaluation budget (the estimation tool for which can be found in Section 4). Depending on the complexity, scope, and data collection requirements of the evaluation, the number of evaluation team members will vary. Evaluations with limited scope might be carried out solely by a single team member/ leader. However, even in such cases it is advisable to engage an additional team member to the extent possible to gain additional expertise and support gender balance.
- The evaluation team will need to have a mix of **expertise**, geographic (such as national consultants), thematic (such as education, healthcare, cash assistance, or on cross-cutting issues such as gender), and evaluative (mixed methods, quantitative, or qualitative methods) experience. In this section, the evaluation manager should list the specific expertise required across the evaluation team to conduct the evaluation.



A sample description of the team composition is included in the UNRWA Evaluation Terms of Reference Template

g) timeline and deliverables

The timeline should detail the duration of the evaluation; the most significant milestones; and when the deliverables can be expected. Requirements for two to three rounds of review for the inception and draft final reports, and any relevant information on hard deadlines should also be mentioned here. For example, if the evaluation needs to be completed before the end of a project for administrative reasons, or within a certain timeframe so that it can be used to inform the drafting of a strategy.

The detailed work plan describing each task and specifying who is responsible for what in the evaluation team and in UNRWA, will be included in the evaluation's inception report.

A sample timeline is available in the evaluation ToR template ([link above](#))

This section should also list the expected deliverables, i.e., the evaluation products (inception report, draft evaluation report, dissemination products, etc.), their formats (number of pages, languages, etc.), and an outline of contents for each (for example, proposed index).

Details on expected deliverables are available in the evaluation ToR template ([link above](#))

h) proposal submission and payment terms

Evaluation managers have two options when resourcing an evaluation team: they can either recruit individual consultants or a consultancy firm to carry out the evaluation. Both approaches have pros and cons, and the option selected will mostly depend on the number of team members required. If the evaluation can be conducted by one or two people, it could be easier to use human resources processes to directly recruit individual consultants.

However, for teams exceeding two people, consultancy firms provide a more straightforward solution since the firm has responsibility for performance management of the team (refer to [Section 4.2.8](#) for more details on human resources, procurement processes, and their respective timelines to decide the most appropriate approach for resourcing an evaluation team).

This section of the Terms of Reference only needs to be completed for evaluations that are planned to be conducted through a consultancy firm involving a “request for proposal” and Agency procurement processes. The Terms of Reference will need to include details on the financial and technical proposal consulting firms would need to submit to be considered, the deadline for receiving proposals, and the submission process.

The Terms of Reference will also need to provide a summary of the criteria against which the proposals will be assessed: which should be divided into mandatory and technical criteria. The evaluation manager will need to develop a scoring rubric for assessing the technical strength of vendor proposals. Technical criteria should provide a structure for assessing the technical experience of the firm, proposed evaluation team members, and the quality of the proposal submitted.

Additionally, the financial approach and the deliverables required to approve payments to the firm will need to be outlined in this section. Payments are generally made after the inception, draft, and final reports are approved.

Examples of the financial and technical proposals, the assessment criteria, and a payment scheme are provided in the evaluation Terms of Reference template.



Quality Assurance tool for the Terms of Reference

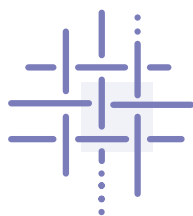
4.2.7 setting-up the evaluation reference group

The Evaluation Reference Group brings together key internal and external evaluation stakeholders who can provide different perspectives and knowledge on evaluation/the subject being evaluated and should be established for all evaluations. The Evaluation Reference Group can be an evaluation's main consultation platform, and the evaluation manager should seek inputs on membership from the primary clients of the evaluation and the Evaluation Division during the preliminary stakeholder meetings (see [Section 4.2.3](#)). The Evaluation Reference Group serves in an advisory capacity and does not provide clearance or approvals on any of the evaluation products.

The Value Added of an Evaluation Reference Group

- Enhances the participatory nature of the evaluation.
- Strengthens the relevance, credibility, and impartiality of the evaluation.
- Ensures that the evaluation scope is appropriate and that the evaluation is useful.
- Aims to promote evaluation results and their use.
- Strengthen evaluation culture within UNRWA.
- Members with subject matter expertise or experience in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues can help ensure the adequacy of evaluation design and data collection tools.

a) recommended composition



For decentralized evaluations managed by a field of operation, the Evaluation Reference Group should include a staff member from the Evaluation Division, a representative from the relevant technical department(s), and the donor. Further, to ensure that gender equality, human rights, and disability inclusion dimensions are integrated into the evaluation, staff specialists in mainstreaming such issues especially within the Protection Division should be included. Decentralized evaluations managed by a HQ-based unit should also include key staff from the relevant field(s) of operation. A gender balance in the Evaluation Reference Group should be ensured.

The Evaluation Reference Group can also include external stakeholders. These can be representatives that either i) are partner organizations and have linkages to the intervention being evaluated; ii) are experts in the subject under evaluation; or iii) bring expertise in evaluation design and methods. If feasible, the Evaluation Reference Group may also include refugee/community members to represent project/programme participants.

In decentralized evaluations of simpler projects, the Evaluation Reference Group will be smaller in number than in the case of larger programme or strategic evaluations. However, it is best if the total number of participants in the group is no greater than 10 to ensure active participation of all members.

b) key activities by evaluation phase

Ideally, the Evaluation Reference Group is set up while the evaluation Terms of Reference is being developed to provide inputs on the draft evaluation questions before they are finalized. The graphic below summarizes the main tasks of the Evaluation Reference Group members across the evaluation phases.

Responsibilities of the ERG	Approximate level of effort
<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide comments to the evaluation Terms of Reference specifically considering the utility and practicality of evaluation questions, and the credibility of the evaluation approach and methods. • If needed, participate in a discussion on key aspects of the evaluation Terms of Reference. 	1 day
<p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in individual and group discussions with the evaluation team to provide input to the final evaluation design and methodological approach to further support its contextual relevance and the practicality of the evaluation plan. • Review and provide comments on the inception report. • Attend a debriefing on preliminary evaluation results, focusing on factual accuracy, the quality of findings, and the evidence base. Provide input to draft recommendations to ensure their relevance, targeting, and practicality for Agency action. 	2.5 days
<p>Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and comment on the draft evaluation report, focusing on the accuracy, quality, and comprehensiveness of findings and the linked conclusions and recommendations. • Support the dissemination of evaluation products, i.e., participate in results briefings with stakeholder groups, share the executive summary, and the evaluation report as relevant. 	1.5 days



A template for an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) ToR is linked below. The ToR should be shared with the ERG members as soon as they are nominated.

Template for the ERG ToR

4.2.8 selecting and recruiting the evaluation team

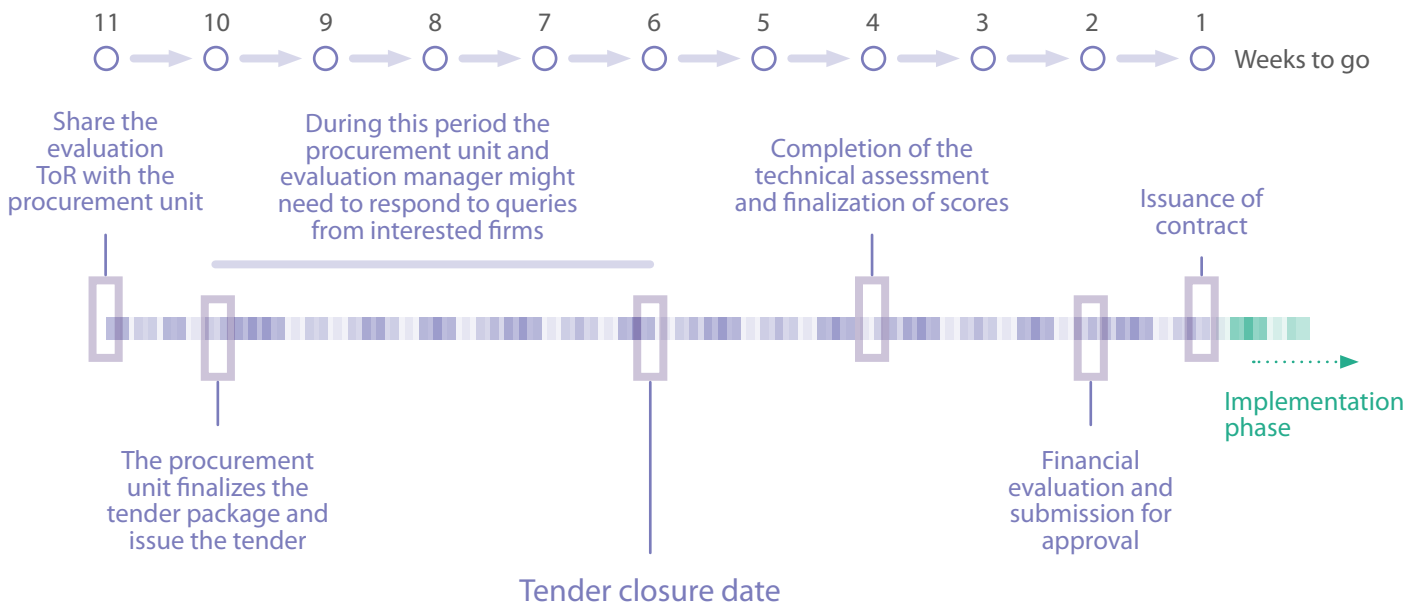
Evaluation managers have two options for resourcing evaluation consultants: they can either recruit individual consultants through Human Resources or hire a consultancy firm through a procurement process. While drafting the evaluation Terms of Reference, the evaluation manager should decide on the most appropriate approach for the specific evaluation.

a) procurement of a consultancy firm

If selecting a consultancy firm, irrespective of the total budget a request for proposal (RFP) will need to be used as a solicitation method. To support firms in responding to a request for proposal, the evaluation terms of reference will need to include detailed instructions on the financial and technical proposal required from firms; a defined set of technical criteria for assessing and scoring proposals; and information on the submission process and deadlines. Once this information is detailed in the evaluation terms of reference, the evaluation manager should then share the draft version with the procurement unit for their inputs. The procurement unit will review the terms of reference to ensure:

- Instructions for proposals are complete, clear, and include the criteria that will be used to assess mandatory and technical requirements;
- The criteria used to assess and score the technical strength of the evaluation teams and their methodological approach aligns to the required experience and competencies defined in the terms of reference;
- That all necessary information on the Agency's regulatory framework is appended to the request for proposals.

The Procurement Unit will then complete the tender package and advertise it on the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM). The evaluation manager and the Evaluation Division should publicize the tender across professional networks, including UNEG, LinkedIn and EvalMena, the Middle East and North Africa Evaluation Network. The evaluation manager should encourage the project/programme staff and the Evaluation Reference Group to also advertise the tender.



Once the tender is closed, the evaluation manager should complete the following steps, ensuring strict confidentiality of the process:

1. Review proposals for their completeness: within the first few days of the tender closing date, the evaluation manager should ensure that the proposals submitted include all required information as outlined in the mandatory criteria. If material related to mandatory requirements is incomplete, the procurement unit will contact the firm to allow for opportunity to complete the submission.
2. Assess mandatory requirements (pass/fail criteria): the evaluation manager should assess proposals against each of the mandatory requirements, providing justification for the assessment.
3. Form a review committee to assess proposals against the technical criteria: the evaluation manager should set up a committee of at least three UNRWA staff members to assess proposals. If the evaluation budget is large and the subject complex, a larger committee can be formed, but it should not exceed five members.
4. Assess technical requirements: for firms that pass the mandatory requirements, each member of the committee needs to independently review the proposals and score them according to the technical assessment criteria. The evaluation manager should facilitate this step and ensure that it is done according to procurement procedures.
5. Finalize the scores: after all members of the committee have completed their scoring, the evaluation manager should develop a consolidated version, noting any differences in the scoring and convening the committee to finalize its assessment. The committee needs to agree on a final score across each of the technical criteria for each firm and scores cannot be averaged. Based on the discussions, the evaluation manager should prepare a comprehensive report on the final technical assessment scores that is signed by all Committee members.
6. Opening of the financial proposals: once the technical assessment report is finalized, the procurement unit will review the financial proposals. Generally, the financial proposal is given a 30% weight in the total scores, and 70% weight is given to the technical proposal. A contract is awarded based on the combined score of each firm based on a value-for-money approach.



Excel spreadsheet from Procurement Unit
with all the steps in the process

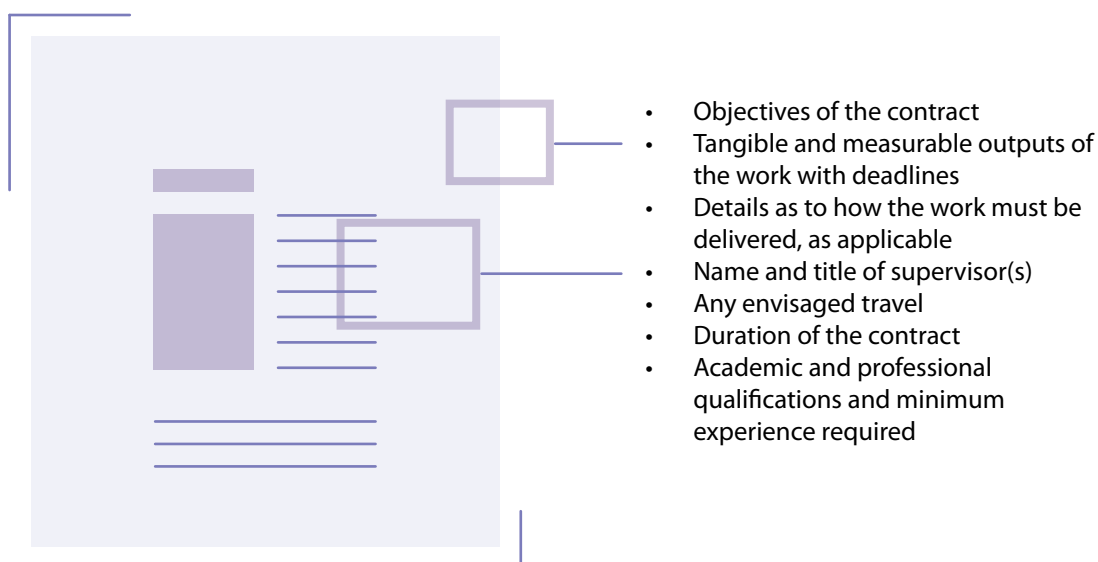


Procurement manual with more
details on the entire process

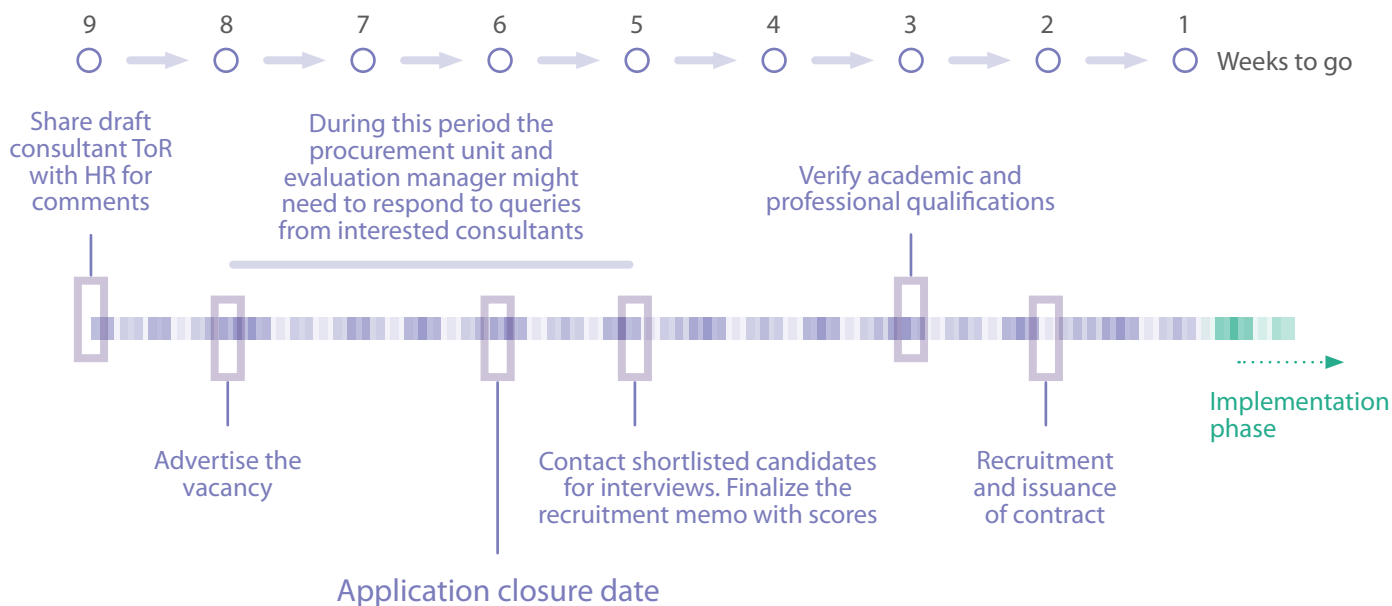
b) recruitment of consultants through human resources

To select and recruit individual consultants, the evaluation manager should follow the Human Resources Department's guidance on administration of Individual Service Providers (ISPs). Individual Service Providers are used for short-term or temporary assignments for tasks that require expert knowledge or skills, consistent with the needs of an evaluation.

In terms of the process, the evaluation manager should develop an individual Terms of Reference for each consultant to be hired. A sample Terms of Reference is linked below, and it should reflect details in the evaluation Terms of Reference and typically specify the following:



Once the consultant Terms of Reference is drafted, the evaluation manager should seek inputs from the Human Resources Department to ensure that all necessary details are included. The Terms of Reference for the consultancy can then be advertised by Human Resources on the UN Careers website. The evaluation manager should widely publicize the opening and encourage the project/programme staff and the Evaluation Reference Group to share it within their own networks. The opening should be advertised for a minimum period of two weeks.



From the submitted applications, the evaluation manager should shortlist candidates based on the criteria mentioned in the Terms of Reference, ideally including the years of relevant experience in the subject matter; evaluation; and regional knowledge. The graphic below provides suggestions for shortlisting potential candidates for the evaluation team Leader position. The table should be adjusted based on the evaluation team composition listed in the evaluation Terms of Reference for other team members.

Requirement	Assessment Scale	Assessment Scale
Ideally an advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) from an accredited educational institution in a field relevant to the evaluation	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #4a4a8a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #6a6a9a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #8a8aaa; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> </div>	3 If a PhD 2 If a master's degree 1 If a bachelor's degree
Ideally a minimum of 7 years of experience in the conduct of evaluations of a similar complexity/theme (depending on the roles within the team, team members may require experience in a specific thematic area)	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #4a4a8a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #6a6a9a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #8a8aaa; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> </div>	More than 10 years 7 to 10 years Less than 7 years
In-depth knowledge and proven experience in the application of various quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques and methodologies (not all team members may need this)	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #4a4a8a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #6a6a9a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #8a8aaa; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> </div>	16 or more evaluations using mix-methods 9 to 15 evaluations using mix methods 5 to 8 evaluations using mix-methods
Understanding and knowledge of the UN mandate in relation to human rights, gender equality, and protection mainstreaming (not all team members may need this)	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #4a4a8a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #6a6a9a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #8a8aaa; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> </div>	Expert in mainstreaming issues inside and outside the UN Some knowledge in mainstreaming issues within the UN System Knowledge in mainstreaming issues but not in the UN
Command of English (Arabic desirable) and understanding of the Palestine refugee context would be advantageous	<div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #4a4a8a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #6a6a9a; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> <div style="width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #8a8aaa; margin-bottom: 2px;"></div> </div>	Working knowledge in English and Arabic Working knowledge of English and some Arabic Working knowledge of English

At least three of the highest scoring candidates should be interviewed. The interview should be conducted by the evaluation manager and one to two other staff members. The evaluation manager could request someone from the Evaluation Division or someone with experience in evaluation from the unit commissioning the evaluation to participate in the interview. The interview questions should probe further into the quality of experience in the specific technical area, in evaluation, and in the UNRWA context. For candidates with similar levels of expertise, their daily rates for the assignment should also be considered when making the final selection.

The selection process needs to be competitive and transparent, and the evaluation manager is responsible for documenting the entire process. Once all candidates have been interviewed, the evaluation manager should prepare a brief recruitment memo, providing details of all shortlisted candidates, scores given to each during the interview for each question, and the justification for selection.

Prior to submitting the final decision to Human Resources, the evaluation manager should also verify the academic and professional qualifications of the selected candidate and contact at least two previous employers for more detailed references.

When deciding on the evaluation team, the evaluation manager should consider their geographical background, as well as their gender and other variables such as age, dis(abilities) etc., which will bring certain views that already carry a bias. Therefore, a team as diverse as possible should be engaged.

UNRWA encourages locally contracted evaluators (or having them a part of the team), particularly Palestine refugees. They bring to the evaluation (i) valuable knowledge of local conditions and practices, and linguistic, cultural, and social affinities, and (ii) the team composition suggested in the evaluation Terms of Reference is not final and might change depending on availability of consultants.

Learn more about procurement processes



Sample Terms of Reference for an evaluation team leader and team members
Human Resources Department ISP directive

4.3. checklist for the evaluation manager for the preparation phase

Steps	Tasks
Preliminary Document Review and Stakeholder Mapping <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Review available key project/programme documents. <input type="radio"/> Conduct an initial mapping of the key evaluation stakeholder groups.
Preliminary Stakeholder Meetings <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Conduct preliminary meetings with the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Division of DIOS • Project manager and key programmatic staff • Donors • Evaluation Management Group (if applicable) • Any others applicable depending on evaluation scope <input type="radio"/> Save all meeting minutes for future reference.
Budget Validation <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Check if the evaluation budget is adequate. <input type="radio"/> If insufficient, liaise with the project manager and donor relations to find a solution. <input type="radio"/> If still insufficient, find ways to make the evaluation more affordable.
Document Library <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Build an online repository of key documents received from the evaluation stakeholders and notes from the preliminary meetings. <input type="radio"/> Put together a list of key stakeholders and their contact details that have been identified up to now. Avoid collecting any names or contact details of project/programme participants at this stage.
Terms of Reference <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Draft Terms of Reference based on guidance in the module and the template. <input type="radio"/> Involve the project/programme manager in the drafting stage to ensure the accuracy of descriptions of the intervention, and feasibility of the overall approach. <input type="radio"/> Share the draft with the Evaluation Division for comments and incorporate any feedback. <input type="radio"/> Share the draft with all other stakeholder groups, as well as the Evaluation Reference Group. Propose to receive consolidated inputs if multiple people from the same team are commenting. <input type="radio"/> Incorporate all relevant feedback and comments to finalize the draft and share the final version with all stakeholders for future reference.
Evaluation Reference Group <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Set up the Evaluation Reference Group while drafting the evaluation Terms of Reference. <input type="radio"/> Share the Terms of Reference of the group detailing their responsibilities. <input type="radio"/> Set up a preliminary meeting to discuss key aspects of the evaluation Terms of Reference (if needed).
Selection and Recruitment of the evaluation team <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Decide on whether to recruit individual consultants through Human Resources or select a consultancy firm through procurement. <input type="radio"/> Follow the steps listed in the corresponding Sections for each.

5. implementation

phase



5.1 overview

The implementation phase covers the development of the inception report, data collection and analysis, and the presentation of preliminary findings. The following sections provide further detail on what is included in each step and include information and tools to guide evaluation managers in ensuring the quality of the evaluation process and products. Evaluations must comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines which are provided at the end of this section.

The duration of the implementation phase can vary considerably based on the type and scope of the evaluation. The graphic below provides an estimated range of how long this phase can take based on average timeframes for each step. However, unforeseen circumstances out of the control of the evaluation manager may affect this timeline, especially during the data collection phase. In such cases, all key stakeholders should be informed of delays and potential mitigation measures should be discussed.



5.1.1 role of the evaluation manager

During the implementation phase, evaluation managers are responsible for ensuring the quality of the evaluation process and the deliverables. They coordinate with stakeholders engaged in providing feedback on various evaluation products, such as the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), the Evaluation Division and if utilized, the Evaluation Management Group (EMG).

Quality Assurance: the evaluation manager should provide real-time inputs to improve the evaluation process and its deliverables. They should ensure that the evaluation follows an appropriate and inclusive methodology, complies with professional and ethical standards, and that all evaluation products adhere to UNWRA's standard of quality.

The evaluation manager should organize regular meetings with the evaluation team to ensure timely progress on key deliverables; discuss upcoming work plan items; and resolve any issues. These meetings may vary in regularity during the process.

For each meeting, the evaluation manager should set the agenda in consultation with the evaluation team leader. It is recommended that the agenda be forward-looking and focused on key upcoming work plan items. It is also important to record key decisions and action points to discuss at the next meeting.

If the evaluation scope is particularly complex, i.e., it covers multiple fields of operation or Agency programmes, the evaluation manager should involve an **Evaluation Management Group** in addition to an **evaluation focal point**. The Evaluation Management Group is likely to be most relevant for centralized evaluations, but some decentralized evaluations may also require one. The group will help support the data collection phase by facilitating document/data access, stakeholder consultations, and logistics. More details on how and when to set up the Evaluation Management Group are provided in **Section 2.7**.

Section 5.5 provides an overall checklist for the evaluation manager. More details on specific components of the checklist can be found in the sections that follow.

5.1.2 Role of the evaluation team leader

The table below lists the evaluation team leader's key tasks

Activity	
General	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be the first point of contact between UNRWA and the evaluation team, unless otherwise decided for ad-hoc tasks. 2. Guide the team members in their tasks and coordinate their inputs. 3. Provide updates on the implementation of the evaluation to the evaluation manager and lead briefings to the Evaluation Reference Group. 4. Ensure that the evaluation is conducted according to the standards set by UNRWA and UNEG, and adheres to ethical standards during all phases of the evaluation.
Development of the Inception Report	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree on stakeholders to be consulted for inception interviews with the evaluation manager. 2. Complete desk research and key stakeholder interviews to inform inception report and final Terms of Reference. 3. Develop the inception report, including the evaluation matrix, data collection tools, a detailed work plan, methodology, and approach. 4. Incorporate feedback from the evaluation manager and the ERG to finalize the draft. 5. Provide a comments matrix reflecting feedback and responses.
Data Collection	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pilot the data collection tools/protocols to the extent possible and revise them as needed. 2. Ensure processes adhere to ethical standards. 3. Establish mechanisms to ensure sensitive information is safeguarded, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, in line with UNRWA policy and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. 4. Provide training to team members and, if needed, enumerators on the data collection tools and protocols to ensure consistency. 5. Ensure that appropriate consideration is given to specific contexts of different stakeholders, ensuring a balanced representation of people consulted (gender, geographic, (dis)ability, and other inclusion considerations).
Data Analysis	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that data collected throughout the evaluation is systematically compiled and codified in evidence tables, ideally using a qualitative research software. 2. Lead data analysis using triangulation techniques to validate findings. 3. Ensure that the approach is responsive to the evaluation questions and appropriate for analysing cross-cutting issues, including gender, environment, and human rights.. 4. Lead discussions on preliminary findings to feed into the information analysis phase.

5.2 development of the inception report

Developing a well-thought-out inception report is critical for conducting an evaluation and substantially improves the efficiency of the data collection and analysis phase. The table below lists the key tasks for this first step of the implementation phase.

Development of the Inception Report – key tasks

Task	Description
Kick-off Meeting	The first meeting with the entire evaluation team to introduce each other, discuss key sections of the evaluation Terms of Reference, and the next steps including the content of the preliminary stakeholder meetings.
Access to Relevant Documents	Compiling and sharing Agency-level and project/programme documentation with the evaluation team to inform the inception report and for future use.
Updating the List of Stakeholders	Discussing the stakeholder list compiled during the preparation phase (see Section 4.2.2) with the evaluation team to identify individuals for inception meetings.
Inception Meetings with Key Stakeholders	Reaching out to key stakeholders to introduce the evaluation team and to coordinate inception meetings.
Drafting the Inception Report	Facilitating the drafting of the inception report as per the UNRWA template, providing comments on the draft version, and coordinating the feedback process involving the ERG and the Evaluation Division.

5.2.1 kick-off meeting

The implementation phase of the evaluation begins with a meeting between the entire evaluation team and the evaluation manager after the contractual processes have been completed. Before the meeting, the evaluation manager should, at a minimum, provide the team with a preliminary set of documents: the evaluation Terms of Reference, and the main project/programme documents. This will help the team in familiarizing themselves with the object of the evaluation before the meeting. This first meeting will include introductions, key points from the evaluation Terms of Reference (including the evaluation scope, approach, methodology, and timeline), will be an opportunity to discuss any concerns or suggestions and agree on a communication approach between the evaluation manager and team, including the frequency of team meetings.

At this time, the evaluation manager should also briefly discuss the key stakeholder groups to be contacted for the inception meetings. The evaluation team could suggest alternatives if needed. The discussions should be informed by the stakeholder list developed by the evaluation manager during the preparation phase (see [Section 4](#)). A separate meeting should be set up to discuss a revised stakeholder list in further detail. It is also advisable to address administrative issues related to team payments in this meeting, explaining the payment processes and timeline. If the evaluation team includes a Project Director or project manager, such issues should be discussed separately with them.

5.2.2 access to relevant documents

The evaluation team will require immediate access to the online document library to inform the inception report. The evaluation manager should ideally create the library on the UNRWA SharePoint platform (Section 4.2.5) during the preparation phase. The library should include this manual, the UNRWA evaluation quality assurance checklists, and templates for the inception and evaluation reports.

The evaluation manager should update the document library at this stage with any new documents if needed, and operational data should be shared and stored with the UNRWA data protection policy in mind. Please refer to Section 1.4.6 for the data protection policy.

If required, the evaluation manager should facilitate the provision of UNRWA email addresses for the evaluation team to provide them with access to internal documents.

5.2.3 updating the list of stakeholders

The evaluation manager in consultation with relevant Agency staff and the evaluation team, should revise and update the stakeholder list developed during the preparation phase. The evaluation team may identify gaps in the stakeholder list based on their initial document review. If a list was not developed during the preparation phase, the evaluation team can develop one based on a review of documents and share it with the evaluation manager for input. It should include functional roles and positions within the Agency or in partner organizations and their contact information. A basic template is linked below.

The stakeholder list is a live document and will need to be updated regularly based on the inception interviews and additional documents reviewed.

The list should not include any personally identifiable data on project/programme participants (beneficiary data). Such details should only be made available depending on the sampling framework for the selected number of participants that are required to be surveyed/contacted. For example, at this stage, the list may highlight that “input from a minimum of 150 students is needed” without the names or contact details of the students. Finally, it should provide indications and demographics on the population of interest such as location, gender, and age to support sampling activities.

The aim is to help define a more realistic scope for data collection and to adjust expectations regarding the number of people that can be consulted within the evaluation budget and outlined methodology. Hence, it will help in developing the data collection plan for the inception report.



Template of a stakeholder's inventory

5.2.4 inception meetings with key stakeholders

Based on initial discussions with the evaluation team, the evaluation manager should reach out to selected stakeholders for preliminary discussions, to introduce the evaluation team and include any key details of the evaluation. It should reiterate the subject and scope of the evaluation, and its purpose, and should include the final version of the evaluation Terms of Reference as an attachment. It is recommended to keep the email concise. A sample email is linked below for reference.

It is essential at this stage that UNRWA staff in charge of cross-cutting issues are contacted. In certain instances, it can be valuable to propose small group interviews with focal points. To guide these inception meetings, the team leader should develop questions/discussion points around the interviewees' roles, the context of the intervention, their involvement, and expectations from the evaluation. These discussions should also explore potential analysis types. The team leader should also use this opportunity to discuss the proposed approach and methodology for the evaluation.

UNRWA Microsoft Outlook accounts can be established for core team member(s) to help them independently review people's availability and schedule meetings with staff members. The evaluation manager should take time to orient the team so they get familiarised with this system.



[Template to introduce the evaluation and contact stakeholders for inception meetings](#)

5.2.5 drafting the inception report

With the document library set up and the inception meetings complete, the evaluation team should be well-prepared to draft the inception report. The drafting should be led by the evaluation team leader with support from team members on certain sections as necessary.

The inception report is usually the first deliverable of the evaluation team. It sets out how the evaluation will be carried out and builds on the evaluation Terms of Reference to outline a complete evaluation plan, including the evaluation matrix, data collection tools, and a detailed timeline. It serves as a technical contract on which the evaluation team and the evaluation manager can agree. Once the evaluation manager has reviewed the inception report for technical accuracy, alignment to the preliminary Terms of Reference, and the quality assurance checklist (further detail on this is provided in the section below), the Evaluation Reference Group must also complete a review and provide their input before the report is finalized.

The evaluation manager should ensure that any deviations in the inception report from the evaluation Terms of Reference especially on areas such as evaluation scope and questions are carefully calibrated and communicated within the inception report.

Key components of the report include:

- A descriptive overview of the evaluation subject and relevant contextual information, building on sections from the evaluation Terms of Reference;
- A refined version of the purpose and scope of the evaluation based on inception meetings;
- A detailed methodology, including an estimated number of key informant interviews, focus group discussions as applicable, and the sampling strategy. All data collection tools including surveys, interview guides/protocols, and interviewee lists should be annexed. The section should also include details on how the collected data will be analysed to develop the findings;
- The evaluation matrix linking the evaluation criteria and questions with indicators, sources of information, and data collection methods;
- The complete work plan, including a detailed timeline of the evaluation with key tasks for each team member. It is also important to note that sufficient time should be allocated to preparatory work in cases involving field missions or in-person household interviews or surveys, as well as multiple rounds for review of the draft evaluation report;
- A section on roles and responsibilities between UNRWA and the evaluation team or consultancy, including clarity on the responsibility for data collection logistics, and the quality assurance procedure for the deliverables;
- A clear description of the ethical issues considered and the informed consent process for evaluation participants, especially if the sample includes children;
- List of limitations and risks anticipated for the evaluation and mitigation measures, particularly for data collection.

Informed Consent Process and Tools

Informed consent is the voluntary agreement of an individual, or his or her authorized representative, who has the legal capacity to give consent and who exercises free power of choice, without undue inducement or any other form of constraint or coercion to participate in research. The individual must have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the nature of the proposed evidence-generating activity, the anticipated risks and potential benefits, and the requirements or demands of the activity to be able to make an informed decision.

Evaluation teams must outline clear processes to collect informed consent during the inception phase. Tools and scripts should be included in annexes to the inception report and used on an ongoing basis during data collection with participants. Examples from previous UNRWA evaluations are linked below.

The consent forms should also include names of protection focal points and contact details for the Evaluation Division should be shared with the enumerators in case those consulted as part of the evaluation wish to raise complaints.

As part of the document library, evaluation managers should provide the evaluation team with the UNRWA inception report template that includes more details on the above components and the quality assurance matrix (linked below).

Quality Assurance Checklist for the Inception Report

The evaluation manager is responsible for conducting the final check of the inception report using the criteria set out in the quality assurance checklist. If important components are missing, the evaluation manager should work with the evaluation team to complete these before sharing the report with the Evaluation Reference Group. evaluation managers are responsible for ensuring that the report is of sufficient quality while the Evaluation Reference Group should make factual or strategic comments. Sufficient time should be allocated to quality assure the report as the checklist includes adherence to technical quality standards and substantive content.

Learn more about the review tools for the inception report



Quality assurance matrix for an inception report

Template of the inception report including a template for the evaluation matrix

Evaluation matrix template

Criteria and quality indicators for an Inception Report

Criteria	Quality Indicators
<input type="checkbox"/> Structure and Clarity	The report is logically structured and follows the suggestions of the template. The report is concise and contains relevant graphics for illustrating key points. Annexes are clear and increase the usefulness of the report. Roles and responsibilities are described. The report is accessible in a clear manner. The sections hold together in a logically consistent way and present a coherent report.
<input type="checkbox"/> Context and Purpose	The purpose is clear. It provides a relevant and sufficient analysis of the institutional, local, and national contexts within which the intervention is operating. Issues and problems of particular relevance to the evaluation are identified. Key linkages are identified between the intervention and other relevant projects, programmes, and strategies.
<input type="checkbox"/> Scope and Objectives of the Evaluation	The objectives are articulated and consistent with the evaluation Terms of Reference and divergences are explained and justified. The scope is clearly defined and justified. The report provides a clear understanding and reflections on the project/programme.
<input type="checkbox"/> Approach and Methodology	<p>The report sets out the evaluation questions which reflect the criteria and include uniquely or through cross-cutting methods relevant dimensions of human rights, gender equity, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability. The evaluation questions meet the needs of the objectives of the evaluation. The report elaborates on and, where appropriate, adds to them. Sound reasons are provided for adding, amending, or deleting questions.</p> <p>The evaluation design and approach are clearly explained concerning evaluation objectives, questions, and other requirements specified in the evaluation Terms of Reference.</p> <p>The Theory of Change or Intervention Logic is presented.</p> <p>The appropriate criteria are identified and justified and a framework (or matrix) for addressing the criteria and questions is included. Expected data sources are established and they allow for multiple lines of inquiry/triangulation of data. A process for triangulation is explained and if not, there is a clear rationale for doing otherwise. The inception process is explained, and a data analysis plan is included.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Methods and Data	Methods for data collection and the rationale for choosing them are included and appropriate to answer the evaluation questions. Methods are designed to ensure participation. Limitations of the evaluation methods are listed, and implications/measures of attenuation are included. An appropriate sampling strategy and criteria are explained. The methods are inclusive of human rights and gender-based considerations and for all key stakeholders, including hard-to-reach groups, a plan for the collection and analysis of disaggregated data. Data collection tools are included in the annex and questions are aligned with the evaluation matrix. Provisions are made for testing and validating tools. Logistics, administration, and support arrangements are planned for data collection involving beneficiaries, including communications planning with communities and with host authorities if appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ethics and Safeguarding	The report describes how the approach adheres to international best practices and standards of ethical conduct in evaluation. The consent-seeking process is clearly explained. The report includes responsible data management protocols for data protection and ensuring confidentiality. If required by the evaluation, provisions for formal ethical approval are included.
<input type="checkbox"/> Detailed Work Plan	<p>The work plan of the evaluation is fully elaborated, showing timings and sites for data collection/ field work phases and meetings/workshops.</p> <p>There are estimates of the number of person-days required and which team member is allocated to each task. It has interpretation/translation requirements that are included (and costed) in the work plan.</p> <p>The work plan is realistic, adequate for the task, and allows for unanticipated issues to be addressed.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrangements for the Management of the Evaluation	The report describes the roles and responsibilities of each team member, including the specific duties of the evaluation team leader in managing the evaluation on the contractor's side and the nature of the contractor's internal quality assurance processes.

5.3. data collection

During data collection, the evaluation team collects all the information required to answer the evaluation questions, as per the evaluation matrix. The evaluation manager's key role is to facilitate the evaluation teams' access to relevant sources of information, namely stakeholders, documents, and operational data.

Data collection does not only encompass a field mission but includes information collected using virtual methods that can be used before or after a field mission. A particularly important part of data collection is the collection of relevant documents, which starts during the preparation phase of an evaluation.

The below sections provide a brief introduction to key data collection concepts and methods. [Section 5.3.3](#) provides details on the data collection modalities and the evaluation manager's role for each.

5.3.1 key concepts for data collection

In evaluations, certain concepts related to data collection and analysis are widely used. Evaluation managers should be familiar with these concepts to ensure that the data collection is adequate and appropriate for the context. It is also essential that evaluation managers are aware of the ethical principles to be followed in this phase (details on the ethical principles are provided in [Section 5.3.2](#)).

a) primary and secondary data

Primary data is information collected directly from key informants during the evaluation through methods such as key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Secondary data is information that is collected not directly by the evaluation team but by other sources that are relevant to the evaluation. These sources can be internal or external to the Agency and can include statistics from fields of operation; operational data from UNRWA systems such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS) or eHealth; official documents; research reports; monitoring reports; annual operational reports; evaluation reports; lesson-learning documents; and audit reports.

Strong evaluations use a mix of both primary and secondary data sources. However, in some cases due to the context or budget constraints, primary data might be limited this should be outlined as a limitation of the evaluation.

b) qualitative and quantitative data

Qualitative data is information collected that cannot be counted, for example, perceptions and feedback. Analysis of qualitative data tends to explain the reasoning behind why something happens. It examines behaviour through trend analysis. A quantitative analysis can also be applied to qualitative data, for example, a perception survey that points to findings such as x % of respondents think that...".

Quantitative data is information based on numerical variables, such as statistics on the target group of the intervention, on the context, or more specific data such as the number of people receiving cash assistance or using microfinance services. Its analysis tends to put forth what is happening and is usually used for statistical purposes.

Some people assume that quantitative analysis is more rigorous than qualitative data and analysis. This is however not true, as qualitative methods can be just as rigorous as quantitative methods; it would entirely depend on the context and the questions to be answered. In general, evaluations use a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative analyses.

Investing in expensive data collection

Collecting quantitative primary data that is statistically representative through in-person household surveys is usually more expensive and time-consuming than an evaluation can afford. However, the sample selected does not always need to be statistically representative, especially in cases where such surveys are used as an additional data source for triangulation.

In cases where statistical representation is essential, such data can be less expensive if collected through online surveys or telephone surveys. However, this may not always be possible and the most appropriate way to collect such data would depend on the context. Online surveys can also sometimes be less representative because only the people who want to respond or have internet access may respond. They might be those that have something to say (good or bad), which already includes a bias.

In all cases, before investing in any expensive data collection method, the evaluation team must fully articulate the value added of such data, which evaluation questions it responds to, and how it would enrich the overall analysis in the report.



Further guidance on combining qualitative and quantitative data

c) participatory approach

Participatory approaches are those in which stakeholders are involved in a non-extractive way, i.e., in a way that does not simply seek to obtain information from them.

Participatory Approaches

The degree of participation can differ depending on the requirements of the evaluation Terms of Reference and the context of the evaluation. Participatory approaches can help in enhancing the buy-in of the overall evaluation.

The extent to which participatory approaches are used will depend on the evaluation budget, the capacity of the evaluation team, the time available, and above all, the context of the object of the evaluation.

As Sette¹ indicates, participation can occur at any stage of the evaluation process, from the evaluation design to the data collection and analysis. A participatory approach can be taken with any evaluation design, and with quantitative and qualitative data. However, the type and level of stakeholder involvement will necessarily vary between different types, for example between a local-level impact evaluation, and an evaluation of policy changes. It is important to consider the purpose of involving stakeholders and which stakeholders should be involved to maximize the effectiveness of the approach.

The evaluation team and evaluation manager should also be aware that power relations that exist in society can contribute to bias/discrimination; for example, when deciding who participates and who does not, and which voices are given more credibility. Equally, evaluators using online methods should be encouraged to consider whether digital exclusion may reinforce or further compound social exclusion. Research should confront and not reinforce existing patterns of discrimination and exclusion, encouraging groups who typically suffer discrimination and are often excluded from being involved.



Further guidance on participatory approaches by UNICEF

d) beneficiary data protection

When data collection involves research with beneficiaries, evaluation managers will need to guide and oversee the processes supporting beneficiary selection, working with organizational units on the provision of beneficiary data to support this selection. Evaluation managers should also ensure that data is used and shared in line with the Agency's data protection protocols ([Section 1.4.6](#)).

¹<https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/participatory-evaluation>

5.3.2 key data collection methods

This section describes various data collection methods often used by evaluation teams. Appropriate data collection tools for each selected method should be well developed in the inception report by the evaluation team.

The intention of this section is for evaluation managers to understand each of the methods and the type of tasks they will need to perform to support the evaluation team.

As an overall principle, it is important to highlight that all data collection methods and tools should be aligned with the [United Nations Evaluation Group guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality](#) and relevant standard data collection guidance such as the [Washington Group Questions on Disability](#).

a) key informant interviews

Key informant interviews are one-on-one interviews of varying lengths depending on the interviewee. Key informant interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or free-form:

- Structured interviews have a strict script with a series of questions that the evaluators ask in a tightly sequenced manner;
- Free-form interviews are not scripted. The interviewee is simply given a context and the evaluator discusses what seems relevant to them;
- Semi-structured interviews are the most common style of key informant interview. They have a general script that follows the evaluation questions. The evaluator can follow up on other issues that arise and are relevant to the information gathering.

Advantages and disadvantages of Key Informant Interviews

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>A trained and experienced interviewer can build a more personal rapport with the informant.</p> <p>The content and flow of the interview can be customized.</p> <p>Key informant interviews are particularly suitable for persons who are short on time, as it is the tool that is most adaptable to the time available to the people consulted.</p> <p>They are appropriate when dealing with sensitive issues/when the informant needs to maintain strict anonymity and confidentiality; not only concerning what is written in the evaluation report but also with the rest of the evaluation stakeholders.</p>	<p>In fully structured interviews, participants may not feel fully heard and offered the opportunity to express full views.</p> <p>It is not particularly time efficient as only one person can be consulted at a time.</p>

Note for both Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Interview protocols and questionnaires should be included as annexes to the inception report. evaluation managers must ensure that these are tailored to different stakeholder groups. Adequate provisions in the protocols should be made for people with disabilities, men and women, and any disadvantaged groups. evaluation managers can support the design of the protocols by providing insights into the institutional and cultural context of the informants.

evaluation managers should ensure that protocols and approaches respect guidelines on confidentiality and anonymity. They need to be familiar with the basic principles of data collection tools to ensure that these align with UNEG technical and ethical standards.

Protocols should include clear procedures to report abuse, misconduct, or other serious ethical concerns identified during an evaluation (for example, ensuring that the evaluation team is aware of and can convey referral pathways for complaints either about the Agency, intervention, or the evaluation).



Protocols to make interviews more ethical

b) focus group discussions

Focus group discussions are widely used in evaluations and are eminently participatory. Consultations can usually include up to 12 people. Focus group discussion participants can be selected using various criteria, grouping people with similar professional profiles, people facing similar issues, or people from the same geographic area. To increase active participation and create a safe space women can be grouped separately from men. Focus group discussions can also be organized with different people to generate various opinions on the same topic.

In focus group discussions, the evaluator raises a topic related to the evaluation questions and facilitates a discussion among the group members. Depending on the length of the session and the complexity of the issues, more or fewer topics can be raised.

Just as with key informant interviews, these can be organized both face-to-face and virtually (depending on the connectivity of the participants) and the skills of the evaluation team. However, it is generally preferred to conduct focus group discussions in person to ensure active participation, to the extent possible.

Focus group discussions can range from 1 to 3 hours. Working groups can be used to discuss various aspects relevant to the evaluation and dynamic activities are used to generate reflection and knowledge from diverse perspectives through dialogue. Although the organization of virtual workshops is becoming increasingly common, this method is usually organized on-site.

Advantages and disadvantages of Focus Group Discussions

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>A larger number of people can be consulted in a participatory manner.</p> <p>Depending on the type of facilitation, focus group discussions have the potential to exchange and generate information that can be of immediate use to participants. It is therefore less extractive.</p> <p>Focus group discussions have transformative potential. They can bring together people who share the same views on certain issues but do not normally have the space to exchange their views, for example, people with the same job in different geographical areas.</p> <p>They are time efficient as several people are consulted at the same time and the information obtained is rich.</p> <p>In addition to generating rich information, relationships are established or strengthened between participants beyond the evaluation.</p>	<p>If there is an imbalance of power among participants, not everyone may be comfortable expressing their perceptions freely and the information obtained may be biased. Therefore, it is important to ensure all participants are on equal footing in the group or have the chance to speak.</p> <p>It is not an appropriate method for addressing sensitive issues unless all participants are affected, e.g., women who are survivors of abuse.</p> <p>They are more difficult to organize than interviews because it requires more coordination (finding a time that works for all participants).</p> <p>Evaluation teams must have specific skills to facilitate groups.</p>

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions tend to generate extra costs for the evaluation that are often not considered, such as transportation of participants, room and equipment rental, refreshments, and the necessary stationery required.

This method is more time-consuming for participants, especially if travel is required. If the participants are people who benefit from the evaluated initiative or who are not in positions of power (for example, those who are not managers), they may assume that they have no choice but to attend the meeting, which results in an extra burden on their day.

evaluation managers should keep this in mind when convening this activity, especially in the case of women who normally have a heavier workload, paid or unpaid, compared to men.

Learn more about organizing workshops



Example of transportation allowance sheet for participants to sign (Arabic)

Template document recording payments to participants of focus groups

Useful resource from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

c) surveys

Surveys are a series of questions asked mostly to a pre-determined population or a subset of the population (a sample). They can be conducted online, face-to-face, or via telephone calls. Surveys are used to reach a larger number of stakeholders and in some cases to obtain statistically relevant information from the population consulted.

The most used method of sampling in evaluations is purposive sampling, where people are selected based on certain characteristics or those assumed to have the most information on the issue. In purposive sampling, the participants consulted are selected based on one or more predetermined characteristics (for example, leaders in the community, government officials, or a female government official). Among each group, those who can offer the richest information on the evaluation questions are selected. Other types of possible sampling include:

- Probability sampling options use random or quasi-random options to select the sample and then use statistical generalization to draw inferences about that population
- Convenience sampling is a cluster of options that use samples already available

Additionally, survey tools can allow for branching so that survey respondents are only presented with questions of direct relevance to them.

Advantages and disadvantages of Online Surveys

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Online surveys can reach a large number of people and can be especially useful to gather input from Agency staff.</p> <p>It is a useful method to collect information from people who have not been included in other methods of data collection but have something to say.</p> <p>Even if the sample used is not statistically representative, it is a useful method to gather views or perceptions from different stakeholder groups to strengthen triangulation.</p>	<p>Surveys can provide more superficial information than other methods as they do not include follow-up questions and the opportunity for open-ended responses is limited.</p> <p>For in-person surveys, oversight for enumerators to ensure consistency across their approach can be limited. Therefore, enumerators should be trained to follow relevant protocols and ethical guidelines.</p> <p>Some UNRWA direct service staff may not have an official email address. This is a caveat to be noted when lists of respondents are drawn up.</p> <p>Online surveys can have an inherent bias, as only the most motivated individuals may respond. It can be difficult to collect neutral or balanced opinions.</p>

Planning for In-person or Telephone Surveys

If in-person or telephone surveys (in the field with project/programme participants for example) are to be conducted, evaluation managers must ensure clarity on who recruits and administers payments to the enumerators. A specific budget line should be included in the financial proposal of the consultant/firm, as needed.

Moreover, enumerators should be carefully selected to ensure they have the training and experience in the Agency's areas of operation and in conducting household surveys/vulnerability assessments. Please refer to the box on pg 94 for specific instructions on survey administration in Syria.

The evaluation manager should facilitate the evaluation team's access to an up-to-date contact list of survey recipients. It should be compiled as soon as the inception report is approved.

Planning for in-person household surveys should involve enumerators, to the extent possible, to ensure an efficient and timely process. Inputs from enumerators will be important to assess risks (such as accessibility) to refine the protocols and test the survey instrument. Evaluation managers should also ensure adequate internal communication such that staff across the field are aware of the survey. Enumerators should have letters from the Agency, as well as leave-behind cards with Agency hotline contact details, to leave with households, in case participants have a concern or complaint.

Finally, evaluation managers should check whether UNRWA is required to inform government counterparts about surveys and enumerators. Evaluation teams will have to factor in the time required for such processes.

d) observation

Observation consists of having one or more of the evaluation team members present at the activities of the project/programme being evaluated. It can be a one-off activity, such as a workshop or presentation, or a regular activity such as a staff meeting. Observations can also be based on a field visit to an installation relevant to the project (such as a health clinic or school classroom), or to a geographical area where work is being carried out (such as a specific governorate or Agency area of operation).

Advantages and disadvantages of Observation

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>During observations, the evaluation team can document many subtleties that are intangible and difficult to capture with other methods, e.g., relationships between people, level of engagement of participants in the activity, etc.</p> <p>It is an essential method in infrastructure projects where evaluation teams document important outputs of the initiatives.</p>	<p>This method is susceptible to observer bias; people usually perform better when they know they are being observed. Indirect or 'covert' observation can mitigate this issue.</p> <p>Does not increase understanding of why people behave as they do.</p>

Observation

Observation of activities can be quite intimidating for people who are being observed, especially when the activity involves fewer people and the observer's presence is noticeable, for instance in UNRWA school classrooms, health clinic service areas, or staff meetings. In these cases, evaluation managers must make sure that everyone involved in the activity agrees to the observer's presence.



Become an expert in ethical and other issues to consider during observation

e) desk review

A desk review generally forms the basis of an evaluation, and it complements the use of other data collection methods. It is a systematic analysis of the available secondary data, including existing project/programme documents and datasets/external reports on the subject. The analysis should respond directly to questions in the evaluation matrix. The approach taken by the evaluation team to conduct a desk review should be detailed in the inception report, and the feasibility of compiling relevant datasets/documents should be ensured by the evaluation manager.

For any handling of personally identifiable data, teams must follow the Agency's data protection policy. For more details on the UNRWA data protection policy, see [Section 1.4.6](#). If the evaluation team does not have sufficient capacity to analyse specific technical data sets, it should be highlighted as a limitation in both the inception and evaluation reports. Below is a list of information types that the evaluation team can use for a desk review, and suggested ways to obtain this information.

Types of information for desk review

Type of Information	How to Obtain This Information
<p>Internal UNRWA Documents</p> <p>For example, financial information; project/programme design; delivery; monitoring and results; donor reporting; and relevant strategic and policy documents.</p>	<p>A list of documents can be consolidated and annexed to the inception report. The evaluation manager can help compile these if they are not already provided in the shared folder.</p> <p>The evaluation team should request documents during the inception interviews. Follow-ups should be completed by the evaluation manager or the evaluation team.</p> <p>For relevant financial and operational data, evaluation managers should work closely with the evaluation team to understand the specifications of the data required and liaise with relevant departments and field offices.</p>
<p>Documents such as research, reports, or statistics that are publicly available.</p>	<p>The evaluation team will be responsible for collecting this type of information.</p> <p>Inception meetings can be an opportunity to discuss ways to find these with key stakeholders.</p>

5.3.3 data collection modalities

Using methods in [Section 5.3.2](#), data can either be collected through in-person field visits by the evaluation team or enumerators, or through remote means. The sections below provide details for facilitating data collection in each case.

a) in-person data collection

Field Visits: In evaluations, “the field” refers to the geographical scope of the intervention being evaluated, including field offices or a headquarters location.

A field visit consists of one or more members of an evaluation team travelling to the field to consult relevant stakeholders and observe project/programme activities and outputs. Even though field visits enable contextual nuances and can enhance participation, in some cases due to financial or security constraints, these might not be possible. Instead, evaluations may rely only on remote data collection or a sub-optimal combination of the two modalities. All methods described in [Section 5.3.2](#), besides a desk review, are typically used by the evaluation team during field visits.

The duration of these visits depends on the evaluation scope, the number of team members involved, and the weight given to the visit vis-à-vis remote data collection methods. A rough estimate for a field visit duration is one to two weeks for UNRWA evaluations.

Field visit preparation and support require a substantive amount of time and effort on the part of the evaluation manager. Preparation for a field visit should begin at least five weeks in advance of the estimated travel date. The evaluation manager in consultation with the evaluation focal point(s) and the Evaluation Management Group (for more complex evaluations), would need to assist the evaluation team by:

- **Developing an Agenda:** This would include scheduling and planning for in-person meetings, identifying locations for interviews, and ensuring adequate time for travel is budgeted for;
- **Planning the Logistics:** This would include planning the travel, security briefings, and safety arrangements for international consultants.

Steps for preparing a Field Visit

Clarifying the Duration: Using the inception report, the evaluation manager should confirm with the evaluation team the mission requirements, the planned activities, and estimated durations for the key informant interviews, focus group discussions, installation visits, and observations. The activities planned and in-field movement needs will help inform the overall mission agenda and days needed.

Discussion with the Evaluation Focal Point or the Evaluation Management Group: The evaluation manager should re-check the current feasibility of the plan, including determining if any specific protocols are needed given the security context or if governmental clearances for enumerator movement are needed. For example, in Jordan, household surveys may need additional clearance. For Syria-specific requirements please see the following box on pg 94.

At this stage, the evaluation manager should also obtain an indication from the evaluation focal point or the Evaluation Management Group of the availability of key stakeholders during the visit dates.

Organization of Travel: In parallel, the evaluation manager should plan for any travel-related support required for team members, especially for international consultants. Travel to Gaza by international consultants would require visa support for example. Support for international consultant transport for installations visits within a field of operation can be finalized closer to field mission dates.

Drafting a Tentative Agenda: Based on the field visit plan and days at each location, the evaluation manager should develop a tentative agenda in consultation with the evaluation team and the evaluation focal point/Evaluation Management Group. The following points should be kept in mind while preparing this:

- Ensuring that those invited have access to planned meetings and can attend the specific timeslot. For example, women in the community may find it difficult to attend at certain times, either due to security or other engagements, and people with disabilities may be unable to attend spaces that are not adapted. evaluation managers should make sure that for sensitive issues, such as gender-based violence, private and discreet spaces are available;
- Ensuring that the agenda is not overloaded and there are enough breaks for teams to debrief, for meals and travel between locations.

Prepare all Logistics: This should be done in parallel with developing the agenda. This includes:

- Communicating: it is important to develop the community communication plan so relevant staff members or internal/external stakeholders are aware of the evaluation research;
- Facilitating visas: to process visas in certain territories such as Gaza and Syria (see box on pg 94), consultants will need UNRWA's help. The evaluation manager should facilitate this. Note that consultants need to be aware that they are responsible for booking their insurance which is not covered by UNRWA;
- Evaluation managers should adhere to HR rules when evaluation consultants are engaged through an Individual Service Provider contract: Human Resources Department - CPD 1 Contracting of Individual Service Providers. Official travel associated with an evaluation should be specified in the contract and the costs be included in the fee for services and expressly stated in the contract. While travelling on behalf of the Agency, it remains the responsibility of the individual contractor to apply for and obtain required visas and local travel. evaluation managers and the Agency may assist in this process, e.g., by providing a formal UNRWA document to the authority issuing the visa;
- Evaluation managers should ensure that either UNRWA or the evaluation team has arranged for **internal transport** required for the visit, including travel between venues. Field offices should advise international consultants on hotels convenient to the field office;
- Before the field mission and throughout its duration, evaluation managers should coordinate with the field security office to ensure the **safety and security** of all (informants, evaluation team and enumerators), including the presentation of mandatory briefings upon arrival, if required;
- Additional support may be agreed upon with the evaluation team in the inception report such as a) **translators**: evaluation managers must make sure they are professional and accredited translators and b) **enumerators**, people who will help to conduct surveys/short interviews, e.g., with households. It can be difficult to find good enumerators. Field offices may have suggestions for both.

Contacting Individuals to Confirm their Availability: For individuals taking part in key informant interviews or focus group discussions, initial emails should be sent to confirm the date and time. For government counterparts, this might have to be achieved through the field office, and for others, the most effective communication channel should be discussed in consultation with the evaluation focal point/Evaluation Management Group. For focus group discussions, evaluation managers do not have to contact all participants for their availability, instead, the people helping in organizing them such as community leaders or school principals should be contacted. The process should begin at least two weeks before the mission start date.

If any data collection activity is planned that involves **consultation with minors**, the explicit consent of their guardians must be obtained at this stage.

Data collection requirements for Syria

Data Collection in Syria

Evaluation methods to collect views of beneficiaries or external stakeholders in the Syria field of operations (SFO) require additional planning and approvals from host authorities, including the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the General Authority for Palestine Refugees (GAPAR).

Evaluation managers should coordinate with the SFO to clarify the latest procedures considering the research methods and tools planned, including the Deputy Director of Programmes, the Programme Support Office, and Protocol Officers.

Collecting Views of External Stakeholders: Beneficiaries, Partners, Host Authorities

For evaluations that necessitate feedback from non-staff Palestine refugees, or any other external stakeholder based in Syria, current requirements include:

- Implementation by a registered Syria evaluation consulting firm approved by the MOFA (this approval can take a month to secure);
- Face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions need to be conducted in an Agency facility (phone interviews have been arranged with hard-to-reach populations, however home-to-home surveys have not been possible);
- Providing information in Arabic on the evaluation purpose, scope, and key questions, copies of the interview guides and survey questions, a list of interviewees (sample population lists), the data collection plan (dates, time, locations of focus group discussions and key informant interviews) to GAPAR for review and approval. The time needed for review and approval can vary between several weeks to months;
- Additionally, if interviews with government officials are required, the Field Management Team will need to prepare a note verbale for the relevant ministry, with a copy sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This note verbale should include a scanned copy of the Syria consulting firm registration. Government officials will request interview questions to be provided in advance, in Arabic.

Collecting Views of SFO Staff

Process requirements to gather feedback from SFO staff are similar to other UNRWA fields of operation:

- International consultants or firms can conduct the research;
- Interviews through Microsoft Teams and personal phones are possible;
- GAPAR approval is not required, however, it is suggested that the evaluation team share interview/focus group discussion guides and survey questions with SFO to ensure the scope of inquiry and methods are acceptable.

Some online survey tools may be accessible in Syria. It is strongly suggested that before selecting a survey tool it is tested with an SFO staff member to ensure feasibility. Thus far, Microsoft Forms and Zoho Survey have been successfully utilized for staff surveys.

Access useful tools that can help you organize and support a successful field mission



Template consent form, including consent form for children

Template for a one-week agenda

b) remote data collection

Remote data collection involves either online or telephone data collection, including online surveys, virtual key informant interviews, or focus group discussions. As stated previously, remote data collection is an approach often used mostly in combination with field missions. Remote data collection might save time and effort required in the preparation and planning of a field visit. However, it might be more time-consuming to coordinate virtual interviews, not all stakeholders might have access to the internet and important contextual nuances can often be missed.

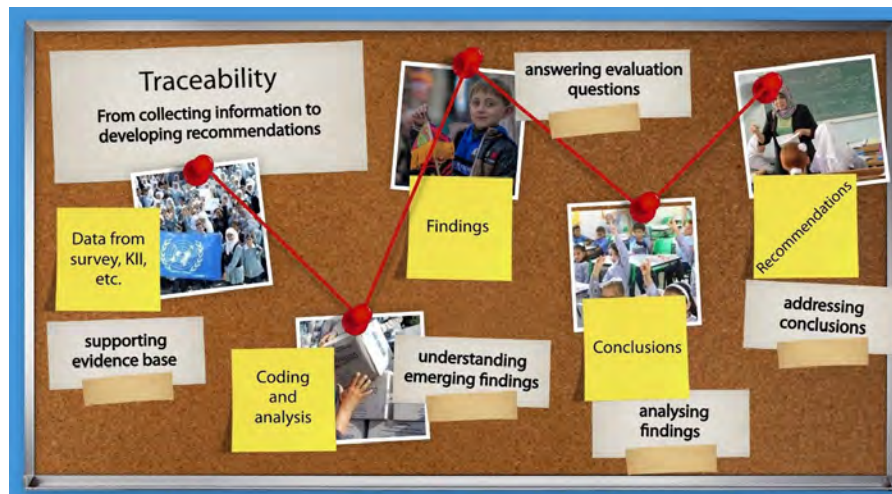
There are multiple tools available online that help data collection through remote methods in a more participatory way. However, before evaluation managers approve these tools in the inception report, it is advisable to check with the UNRWA IT Department if these are in line with the Agency's data/information protection procedures/practices. The evaluation manager should encourage the use of innovative tools but should ask the evaluation team to justify the use of the tools and outline the advantages and risks associated with them.

evaluation manager's Tasks for Remote Data Collection

Task	Description
Online Interviews and Focus Group Discussions	<p>The evaluation team will be responsible for organizing these according to their availability. However, the evaluation manager may facilitate the process by:</p> <p>Communicating to all stakeholders to be consulted introducing the evaluation and informing them that the evaluation team will contact them.</p> <p>If the evaluation team have UNRWA email addresses, explain to them how to access staff calendars to facilitate the organization of interviews.</p>
Online Survey	<p>Facilitate the collection of emails and other data required by the evaluation team, e.g., names, gender, organization, etc. in the form they need (Excel, CVS, etc.).</p> <p>Help test the survey, including the feasibility of the selected online platform in the field of operation, the wording, and translation of the questions (piloting the questionnaire with selected respondents). Evaluation team to understand the specifications of the data required and liaise with relevant departments and field offices.</p>

5.4 Data Analysis

Traceability



During data analysis, the evaluation team organizes and examines the information that has been or is being collected regarding the evaluation questions. Once the information has been organized, emerging themes are identified under each question. This forms the basis of the evidence for formulating evaluation findings. It entails processing large amounts of data, coding it, analysing trends, and triangulating information. This stage also includes prioritizing information that is imperative to outlining key findings, as opposed to sharing all results which may not be important.

The conclusions are a second-level analysis based on the findings. Recommendations, on the other hand, directly address the issues raised by the conclusions. This sequence in the evaluation is called traceability, as illustrated in the graphic above. The process is time-consuming, therefore sufficient time should be allocated to allow for this to be completed. During this process, evaluation managers can act as a sounding board for the evaluation team and facilitate any remaining data needs.

This logic must be present in the evaluation report, coherently connecting findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The graphic above presents key steps for data analysis that the evaluation manager should be aware of.

5.4.1 key steps for data analysis

a) coding

This term is used for the process by which evaluation teams organize information under the different evaluation questions or around emerging themes/typologies. Codes are defined, according to numerical or descriptive elements and indicators, to which data is linked. For example, distinct parts of the key informant interviews, collected documents, surveys, etc. Exact sources must be maintained for future reference.

Coding can be achieved using evidence tables in Excel. Some evaluation teams use specific software, for example, [Deedose](#), [NVivo](#), or [MaxQDA](#).

b) triangulation

Triangulation is used to compare information that has been collected from various sources. The evaluation team may have different methods of triangulating this data. For example, comparing the coincidence or discrepancy of various sources or comparing emerging themes that have been analysed independently by different consultants. Triangulation of methods is used to analyse overlaps or discrepancies between, for example, qualitative data and quantitative data. Triangulation is also used to compare the different emerging issues voiced or shared by participants from different stakeholder groups such as women/men/others; people with different abilities; environmental policymakers; experts; etc. This type of triangulation will facilitate the cross-cutting analysis of the intervention being evaluated.

Analysis of Cross-cutting Issues, including Gender and Disability

In both coding and triangulation, cross-cutting issues must be present. In coding, the evaluation team will have to connect relevant information to the questions that are specific to these themes. For example, "Do women and men benefit equally from the activity?" Or, for a component of questions that may be more subtle, "Is this initiative aligned with national policies, including environmental policies?"

During triangulation, the evaluation team should be aware of which sources are given the most credibility, why, and whether there is any bias. Everyone's cultural and social background, including the evaluation team, may influence them to inadvertently give more weight to certain sources and disregard others.

If the sampling during data collection reflects diversity adequately, the triangulation process can be strengthened by disaggregated analysis of the inputs from different stakeholder groups that have been consulted.

c) validation of preliminary results

Most evaluations should integrate a requirement for participatory analysis through a discussion of the preliminary findings and conclusions. This should take place between the end of the data analysis, once the evaluation manager has reviewed the preliminary results, and before drafting the evaluation report. Such sessions can be as participatory as required and would generally include members of the Evaluation Reference Group and any other key stakeholders. The process assists in achieving greater ownership of the evaluation results and validating the results with those that have been most involved with the project/programme being evaluated.

The opportunity should also be used to develop or obtain insights on draft recommendations.

"Intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings [and that] [t]hey are more likely to understand and feel ownership if they've been actively involved. By actively involving primary intended users, the evaluator is preparing the groundwork for use."

- (Patton, 2008)

5.5 checklist for evaluation managers for the implementation phase

<p>Development of the Inception Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct and record the kick-off meeting with the evaluation team. ○ Organize and participate in initial meetings between the evaluation team and key stakeholders of the evaluation, including the Evaluation Reference Group. ○ Coordinate weekly or bi-weekly meetings with the evaluation team for the entire phase to track progress. ○ Share the document library built during the preparation phase, ensuring that all relevant Agency-level documents, project/programme documents, UNRWA evaluation templates and checklists, and guidelines on ethical conduct and UNEG norms are provided at the end of this section. ○ Provide logistical support to the evaluation team to conduct inception interviews, including sending introductory emails. ○ Coordinate the review process for the inception report which should provide for at least two rounds of review. A first draft of the inception report should be reviewed considering its accuracy, completeness, and quality. Contents should be reviewed against the UNRWA checklist and template. ○ Follow up with the evaluation team to ensure that relevant feedback is integrated into the report and justification is provided where comments are considered invalid by evaluation team. <p style="text-align: center;">Note: The greater the effort placed on developing the inception report, the easier and faster the rest of the evaluation will be.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deliverable: Inception Report</p>
<p>Data Collection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitate access to relevant information, including contact details of programme units, senior management, and key evaluation stakeholders for interviews and focus group discussions. ○ Provide logistical support for organizing field missions, supporting the development of agendas, facilitating travel for installation visits, provision of interpreters, etc. ○ Coordinate the development of a communications plan about evaluation activities as well as consent processes involving Palestine refugees. ○ Ensure a fully inclusive, respectful, and transparent approach to data collection. ○ Convene and potentially chair Evaluation Reference Group meetings, or with other key stakeholders to provide updates on the evaluation process. <p style="text-align: center;">Note: More details on key tasks for in-person vs remote data collection are provided in Section 5.3.3.</p>
<p>Data Analysis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serve as a sounding board for the evaluation team while they develop preliminary evaluation results. ○ Facilitate requests for additional information, if needed. ○ Review preliminary evaluation results to ensure clear linkages between the evidence, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. ○ In coordination with the evaluation team, organize a discussion on the preliminary results with the Evaluation Reference Group. ○ Depending on the need and nature of the evaluation, organize tailored briefings for relevant departments and fields of operation. <p style="text-align: center;">Deliverables: Presentation of Preliminary Results</p>

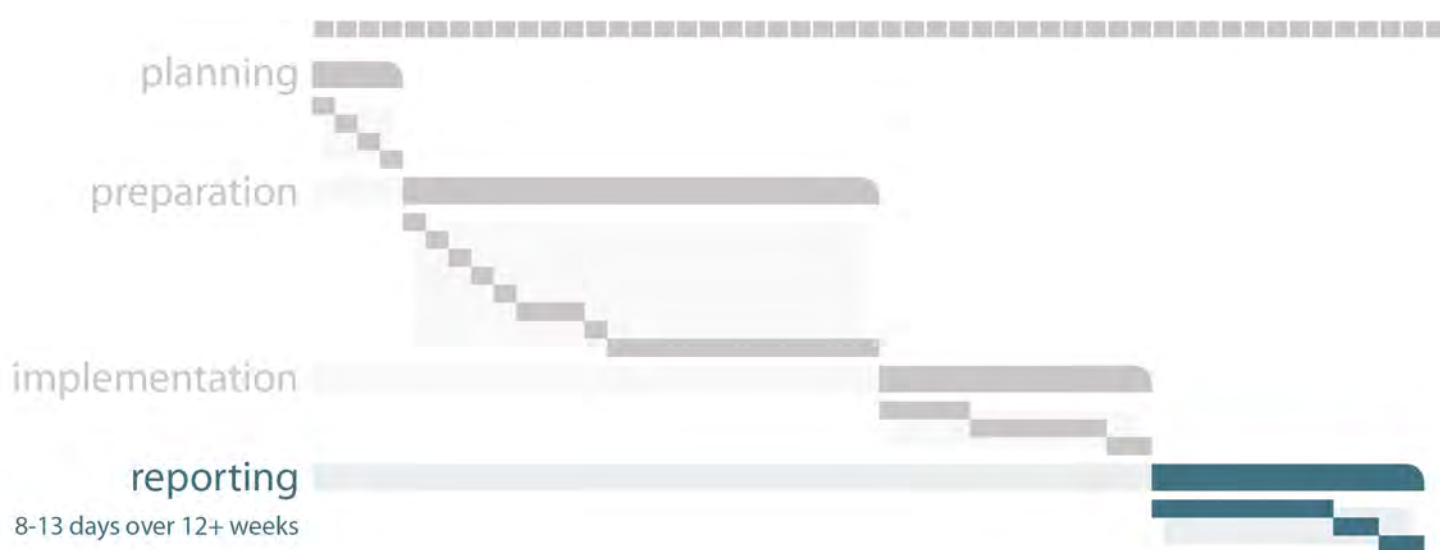
6. reporting

phase



6.1 overview

The reporting phase follows the evaluation team's presentation of preliminary results. It includes drafting and finalizing the evaluation report; requesting the Management Response; and the evaluation closure and dissemination. The sections below provide details on each of these steps, including key tasks for the evaluation manager. They contain information and tools to guide the evaluation manager in ensuring the quality of the process and the evaluation products. As in the other phases, evaluations must comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines (see [Section 1.3.1](#) for more details).



The duration of the reporting phase would largely depend on the quality of the draft report prepared by the evaluation team. The graphic above provides an estimated range of how long this phase can take based on average timeframes for each step.

6.1.1 role of the evaluation manager

[Section 4](#) and [Section 5](#) detail the function of an evaluation manager in the preparation and implementation phases. In the reporting phase, they coordinate the feedback process and the Management Response, and the dissemination of evaluation results. They are responsible for ensuring the quality of the evaluation process and the deliverables.

The following table provides an overall checklist for the evaluation manager. More details on specific components of the checklist can be found in the sections below.

Reporting Phase Checklist

Drafting and Finalizing the Evaluation Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure the evaluation team has a copy of the UNRWA report template and the quality assurance matrix to guide the drafting process. ○ Ensure that the evaluation team is working towards the timeline outlined in the inception report. ○ Be the first to review the draft and provide feedback, keeping in mind the quality assurance matrix and the report template. ○ Once the evaluation manager's feedback has been incorporated into the draft, coordinate the report review process in two rounds and provide consolidated comments to the evaluation team for each round: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round 1: Share the draft report with internal UNRWA stakeholders for their review; • Round 2: Once the internal feedback has been incorporated into the report, share the revised version with the entire Evaluation Reference Group for their review. ○ Once feedback from all key stakeholders is adequately addressed, complete a final quality assurance review and scoring of the report.
Requesting the Management Response	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share the final evaluation report and Management Response template with the directors of the unit(s) that the recommendations are targeted to, providing managers with two weeks for a response. ○ Review the response to ensure that all recommendations have been covered and the response includes how the recommendations will be addressed, by whom, and the timeline for implementation. ○ Share the final version of the Management Response with the Evaluation Division.
Evaluation Closure and Dissemination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft a transmittal letter to accompany the internal distribution of the report to relevant Agency directors (to be distributed by the Director of DIOS). ○ Draft a short paragraph for publishing the report on the Agency website. ○ Ensure the finalization and dissemination of other planned evaluation products, such as presentations, briefs, and audio/video recordings.

6.1.2 role of the evaluation team leader

During the reporting phase, the evaluation team leader plays a key role in leading the drafting process. The box below lists the main tasks of the evaluation team leader:

Lead and organize the drafting of the evaluation report (the team leader is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the draft report is delivered on time and that it adheres to the inception report and UNEG standards).

Update the evaluation manager on the progress, including the length and structure of the contents of the draft for timely adjustments.

With the support of the rest of the evaluation team, incorporate stakeholder comments and add responses to the comment matrix. The team leader should also be available if a meeting is needed to clarify specific points.

Finalize the report with all annexes and executive summary.

6.2 drafting the evaluation report

While the evaluation report is being drafted, the evaluation manager should ensure that the requirements outlined in the evaluation ToR and the inception report are followed.

6.2.1 evaluation report structure

The structure of the report should be based on the UNRWA template for evaluation reports and the format aligning with UNRWA brand standards. An evaluation report should include the following elements:

a) executive summary

The Executive Summary should be a clear, succinct, and stand-alone summary, conveying key information about the evaluation. It should not simply be a repetition of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the report. It should not be longer than three to six pages depending on the scope and depth of the evaluation. If needed to reach a wider audience, especially those who have contributed to the evaluation, the executive summary should be translated into Arabic.

b) introduction

The introduction contains two parts:

- The background contains a brief description of the context in which the project/programme is set up, and the overall set-up of the object of the evaluation, including the linked strategy, duration of implementation, financial and human resources, as well as details on the logic of the intervention (and the Theory of Change, if applicable)
- The evaluation details the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the key evaluation questions, the methodological framework and overall approach, and limitations.

c) findings

The Findings section of the report should objectively present the most important results of the evaluation including both positive and negative findings. The presentation should include a mix of quantitative and qualitative information, and the narrative complemented with charts, graphs, and tables to engage audiences and support their understanding of what was found.

The findings form the basis of the evaluation report and are formulated based on the analysis of evidence gathered and triangulated during data collection. The findings section is usually organized according to the evaluation matrix, with headings that align with the key evaluation questions. It is common for this part of the report to be broken down into the OECD-DAC criteria (as detailed in [Section 4.2.6 c](#)) if these are the criteria used to develop the evaluation matrix. Within each of these sections will be finding(s) that answer all or certain aspects of the questions.

Each evaluation team will have different methods of formulating a finding; an important aspect is that the link between the evidence presented, and the finding is clear to the reader. An effective way to achieve this clarity is by formulating the finding as a clear numbered statement to answer the evaluation question followed by paragraphs of supporting evidence:

Finding 1: Among the five countries/territories surveyed, only two saw tangible progress in national human rights legislation processes. The reason most respondents reported lower performance for in some areas was that the initiatives were designed without consideration of national situations. The analysis of the contents of the regional seminars indicates that they provided the same content to countries with different degrees of progress in human rights systems and were considered too general to suit anyone.

d) conclusions

The Conclusions section of the report will present an interpretation of the results and what they mean in relation to the evaluation questions. It is valuable to ensure this section is organized similarly to the Findings section. The Conclusions section will help the evaluation team and stakeholders to formulate appropriate recommendations based on the evidence presented.

One suggestion to encourage and understand the traceability of conclusions and findings is to indicate in each conclusion which finding conclusions relate to. It is possible and likely that several findings contribute to the formulation of a single conclusion, and that the same finding is referred to in multiple conclusions.

Conclusions generally point out the factors of success and failure of the evaluated initiative, with special attention paid to the intended and unintended results and impacts.

e) recommendations

A recommendation is a suggestion or a proposal as to the best (or a better) course of action based on the conclusions of the evaluation report.

Recommendations in an evaluation are meaningful as long as they are connected to the rest of the analysis. They must be based on conclusions, which in turn are based on findings that answer the evaluation questions and are supported by evidence. It is from this process of traceability that the legitimacy of the recommendations emanates.

Further, the way recommendations are developed can help in ensuring that evaluative evidence is used and is reflected in future work, and to increase the sense of ownership of the recommendations among stakeholders and their commitment to implementing them. Developing recommendations should be a participatory process to ensure that relevant stakeholders who will have to act on the recommendations have been given a chance to provide their perspectives on utility and actionability.

The entire evaluation process and all consultations inform the development of recommendations. The [presentation of preliminary results](#) is an opportunity to validate or co-develop recommendations with key stakeholders, including the Evaluation Reference Group (more details in [Section 4.2.7](#)). The process should not however supersede the independence of the evaluation process and evaluators have the final responsibility for formulating the recommendations. Any reservations on the final recommendations can be voiced in the Management Response (see [Section 6.3](#)).

The recommendations will be useful to the evaluation subject and UNRWA in general if they meet the following requirements:

Targeted

These should always indicate which department/unit/field office, etc. is responsible for their implementation. For example, if the recommendation requires a policy or procedural change from HQ, then it should be targeted to HQ and not both HQ and field office.

Realistic

Realistic recommendations suggest actions that the stakeholder(s) can implement with the operational control and resources available to them. This means that recommendations should be implementable without a need for additional resources for capital investments or additional staffing unless critical needs have been identified by the evaluation to address operational risks. In this case, this should be indicated in a separate recommendation. Sometimes the evaluation team may also recommend actions that are unrealistic in the context of competing priorities and resource constraints, but the Agency should consider reaching certain commitments, for example increasing gender and inclusion capacity in the Agency to reach goals on these issues. However, even in such cases, the recommendation should be discussed in detail with the management and possible second-best realistic alternatives should be proposed.

Actionable

Recommendations that are too vague or that are formulated as conclusions or even opinions are not useful. They need to give clear an indication of what needs to be done, when, and what the consequences of implementing or not implementing such actions would be.

Few

It is preferable to limit the number of recommendations to 10 or under, otherwise, it may well not be possible to address them all and it may dilute their importance. (Note: Often, paragraphs following each recommendation are sub-recommendations. To avoid this, suggested pathways to addressing the recommendation should be included instead of sub-recommendations).

Clustered According to Criticality

It is good practice to emphasize criticality in terms of high or medium. Anything that is rated as low should not be recommended.

f) annexes

The annexes of the report should include at minimum the bibliography, the evaluation ToR, and the list of stakeholders interviewed. Anonymised survey results or specific analysis conducted for the evaluation may also be annexed.



Template of UNRWA evaluation report

6.2.2 reviewing and clearing the draft report

To ensure the accuracy and quality of the evaluation report, the review process needs to be thorough, and three rounds of feedback are recommended. Each round may take at least one to two weeks, depending on the quality of the draft and the availability of stakeholders. It will involve 3 steps:

- An internal review involving the evaluation manager and Agency staff who are members of the Evaluation Reference Group to check factual errors, the quality of the evidence presented, and the traceability of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. In this review, the evaluation manager should use the quality assurance matrix and the inception report as a guide to provide comments. Ideally, at least two weeks should be allocated for this review. Depending on the extent of comments received, a round might need to be repeated. The quality assurance matrix does not need to be completed at this stage, but the evaluation manager should include comments based on the quality indicators listed in the table below.
- Once all comments are adequately addressed, the Evaluation Reference Group including external members should review the report. A separate comments matrix should be created for this process. Ideally, two weeks or more should be allocated for this review.
- The last review is a light-touch review by the evaluation manager. At least two days should be allocated to it. The purpose of this review is to ensure that the evaluation team has proofread the document and formatted it in line with the UNRWA evaluation report template and Agency branding standards. At this stage, the evaluation manager should also conduct the final quality assurance assessment and fill in the scoring matrix.

Between each of these iterations, the evaluation team should integrate relevant comments and respond to all comments through a comment matrix. The matrix ensures transparency in the evaluation process and allows the evaluation team to receive consolidated feedback, and for stakeholders to note how comments were incorporated into the report by the evaluation team or justification for why they were not. A template for the comment matrix is linked below.

The evaluation report is an independent product, and the evaluation team determines which comments are to be incorporated into the final draft. When the final draft is submitted to UNRWA, the contents should only be modified by the evaluation manager in consultation with the evaluation team. The Agency can highlight any differences or views on the evaluation results in the management response.

quality assurance matrix

The quality assurance matrix should be completed when the final light-touch review is undertaken by the evaluation manager. Reports that do not meet minimum standards are not published or disseminated. Ideally, this should not be the case since the evaluation manager would have provided comments based on the matrix during the first round of review.

Criteria	Quality Indicators
Structure and Clarity	The report is logically structured, clear, and coherent. It contains an executive summary that is accurate and can stand alone. The report is concise and contains relevant graphics for illustrating key points if needed. The supporting data tables and other matrices are presented as annexes. The annexes are clear and increase the usefulness of the report.
Context and Object	The report presents a complete description of the 'object' of the evaluation (what is being evaluated). The Theory of Change or Intervention Logic is described, and the report provides a relevant description of the social, political, economic, demographic, and institutional context. An assessment of the policy context particularly of relevant policies on human rights, gender, and equity is included.
Purpose, Scope, Objectives and Key Questions	The report presents a complete description of the 'object' of the evaluation and the evaluation's purpose, objectives, and scope are fully explained. The target audience for the evaluation findings is described and the report explains how they have been involved in the design and how they will use the results of the evaluation. The timing of the evaluation is justified. Key evaluation questions address the objectives and are appropriate to address the specific issues that relate to the object of the evaluation. They draw on evaluation criteria and are contextualized.
Methodology	The report presents a transparent description of the design and methods used in the evaluation that clearly explains how the evaluation addresses the evaluation criteria, yields answers to the evaluation questions and achieves evaluation purposes. The primary and secondary sources of data are identified, and sampling strategies are justified. Any departures from the Terms of Reference or inception report are explained. Ethical considerations and actions taken are discussed, and the participation of stakeholders in the evaluation is explained.
Findings and Conclusions	Findings respond directly to the evaluation criteria and questions detailed in the scope and objectives section of the report and are based on evidence derived from data collection and analysis methods. Context has been taken into account in the analysis. The report illustrates the extent to which the design and implementation of the object, the assessment of results, and the evaluation process incorporate a gender equality perspective and human rights-based approach. Unintended results are identified. Conclusions provide a reasoned judgement based on the evidence. The information contained in the report must be anonymous.
Lessons and Recommendations	Recommendations are relevant to the object and purposes of the evaluation, are supported by evidence and conclusions, and were developed with the involvement of relevant stakeholders. Recommendations are prioritized, actionable and realistic. Lessons of good practices are identified.
Cross-cutting Issues	The evaluation report showcases appropriate and relevant mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues including gender equity, disability inclusion, and environmental considerations as relevant and required by the Terms of Reference.



6.3 management response

The management response is a formal mechanism required by the UNWRA Evaluation Policy to ensure that evaluation evidence is used to improve UNRWA's programmes and policies. The management response should describe UNRWA's commitments to act on evaluation recommendations. It is a public document that ensures accountability and is included as the first annexe to the evaluation report.

The evaluation manager is responsible for requesting the management response by sharing the final version of the evaluation report and the management response template with the head of the relevant department/field office that the recommendations are targeted to.

The management response should be completed within three weeks of the report's finalization. Following completion, on a bi-annual basis, the evaluation manager will follow up with recommendation owners to track and report on actions taken.

The team drafting the management response should address each recommendation in the evaluation report. They can decide to accept, partially accept, or reject a recommendation, and provide justification for their response. They should outline a specific and time-bound action plan for the implementation of the recommendation and indicate resource allocation if necessary.

Once the management response has been drafted, the evaluation manager should review its adequacy and completeness, and share the final version with the Evaluation Division.

	Description	Implication for the Management Response
Accept	The field office or headquarter department accepts the recommendation in full. Factual errors can be amended such as changes in context, resources or targeted groups.	The management response includes concrete steps to be taken to implement the recommendation, including a target date for implementation, allocated resources to be mobilized for this purpose, and key stakeholders involved in the implementation.
Partially Accept	The field office or headquarter department accepts some elements of the recommendation but disagrees with part of it for a justifiable reason. This may include a recommendation based on erroneous or unreliable findings or an inappropriate response to valid findings.	The management response includes a justification for why part of the recommendation was not agreed upon, and it describes appropriate actions to address the parts of the recommendation that have been accepted including a target date for implementation and key stakeholders involved in the implementation.
Reject	The field office or headquarter department fully rejects the recommendation and provides justification. The recommendation is deemed to be based on erroneous or unreliable findings, or an inappropriate response to valid findings.	The management response includes a justification for rejecting the recommendation and provides alternative actions to address findings that the stakeholders deem to be valid and fit for purpose.



Management Response Template

6.3.1 monitoring implementation of the recommendations

Once the management response is finalized, the DIOS Evaluation Division is responsible for uploading the recommendations into the Agency's RBM system and leading a follow-up process on the status of implementation in January and July of each year. The Agency's progress in implementing evaluation recommendations is featured in two annual reports, including the DIOS Annual Report and the UNRWA Annual Operational Report. The DIOS Annual Report is initially shared with the Executive Office and the Advisory Committee of Internal Oversight (ACIO) and then published on the UNRWA website.

For decentralized evaluations, the commissioning office for the evaluation is responsible for monitoring and validating the implementation of recommendations and providing updates to DIOS. DIOS uses these inputs at face value for its two annual reports.

Likewise, DIOS has the responsibility for monitoring and validating the implementation of recommendations issued through central evaluations.



6.4. evaluation closure and dissemination

Once the final versions of both the evaluation report and the management response are available, the evaluation manager is responsible for closing the evaluation and ensuring wider dissemination of the evaluation results.

6.4.1 transmittal Letter

For closure of the evaluation, the evaluation manager should draft a transmittal letter for UNRWA's Commissioner-General and relevant Agency directors to inform them of the outcome of the evaluation with key points on the evaluation process, results, and the management Response. The draft letter should be shared with the Evaluation Division to be reviewed and prepared for use by the DIOS Director for Distribution. A sample transmittal letter is linked below for reference.

6.4.2 evaluation dissemination

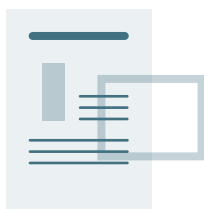
The evaluation report, its annexes, and the management response are shared on the UNRWA website. However, the evaluation team and the evaluation manager should ensure that the results of the evaluation are accessible to all stakeholders and contribute to further learning on the subject. This can be achieved through focused discussions and tailored evaluation products for different audiences. Selected options must be included in the budget of the evaluation and its Terms of Reference.

Discussions on Evaluation Results

Depending on the scope of the evaluation, the lead evaluators and selected members of the evaluation team should present key evaluation results in briefings targeted to specific audiences. The unit responsible for implementing the recommendations should also take this opportunity to present the Management Response. These discussions can be tailored to groups such as agency staff, ERG members, and community representatives.

Tailored Products

To increase the reach of results to a wider audience, tailored communications products can be developed by the evaluation team. These include short evaluation briefs and infographics in Arabic, digital storytelling (video format), and other video or audio products. For some evaluations, alternative communications approaches may be crucial to ensure accessibility to key stakeholders. For example, audio recordings for the visually impaired.



Briefs

Evaluation briefs should be less than two pages in length and should be tailored to the audience that they are targeting. For example, briefs to communities should highlight key takeaways most relevant to them and not list all findings/conclusions of the report.

Video/Audio Recordings:

A more innovative way of presenting evaluations is the use of video and audio recordings. Click on the image to see an example of a UNICEF evaluation in conjunction with the firm Insightshare. There are also other ways to present the results of an evaluation using platforms that use a mix of video and audio presentation and can even be interactive. For example, Sprockler (click on the image to see how it works).



[Sample transmittal letter template](#)

[Sample evaluation brief- English template](#)

[Sample evaluation brief- Arabic template](#)

annex

01. [Budget template with key budget guidelines](#)
02. [Sample of stakeholder](#)
03. [Planning Phase Introductory Email](#)
04. [Template Evaluation ToR](#)
05. [Evaluation terms of reference template](#)
06. [UNRWA TOR checklist](#)
07. [ToRs for the reference group and guidance notice](#)
08. [Procurement process](#)
09. [2021 Procurement Manual](#)
10. [ToR template for the evaluation team leader](#)
12. [Stakeholder inventory template](#)
13. [Quality Assurance matrix for an inception report](#)
14. [a\) Template Evaluation Inception Report](#)
14. [b\) Template Evaluation Matrix](#)
15. [Protocol to make interviews more ethical](#)
16. [Example of transportation allowance for participants to sign \(Arabic\)](#)
17. [Template to advance payment to participants of Focus Groups or workshops](#)
18. [Informed consent form for guardians of children](#)
19. [Template for a one week agenda](#)
20. [Template Evaluation Report](#)
21. [Quality Assurance matrix for a draft evaluation](#)
22. [Management Response template](#)
23. [Sample Transmittal Letter](#)
24. [a\) Sample Evaluation Brief - English](#)
24. [b\) Sample Evaluation Brief - Arabic](#)