

EVALUATION OFFICE

UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference

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*Approved at the UNEG AGM 2010, this quality checklist for evaluation Terms of Reference serves as a guideline for UNEG members in the design and conduction of evaluations. The original UNEG checklist is

Available at: [UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports
www.uneval.org](http://www.uneval.org)

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Introduction

A Terms of Reference (TOR) is a plan or blueprint outlining the key elements of the purpose, scope, process and products of an evaluation, including management and technical aspects as necessary.

Developing a TOR is a critical early step in any assessment, survey, research or evaluation. In the narrowest sense, it is the basis for contractual arrangements with external consultants, though it should first be developed as a means of clarifying expectations, roles and responsibilities among different stakeholders, providing the plan for overall activity, including follow-up. The time and effort spent in preparing a good TOR has big returns in terms of the quality relevance and usefulness of the product.

TORs are important:

- For all stakeholders – as they explain the agreed expectations in terms of the parameters and process of the exercise, and are a guide to each stakeholder’s specific role;
- For the evaluation team – as they ensure that expectations are clear and the objectives are met;
- For external and internal teams – as external teams may require more detail on background context and on intended audiences and uses; internal teams may simply need to clarify the parameters of the assignment.

TORs are often developed in stages. In programme evaluation, stakeholders will focus on the details on purpose and evaluation questions. A further developed version used for recruiting external consultants requires more detail on existing information sources, team composition, procedures and products, but may describe methodology and a calendar of activities only in broad terms. The TOR may then be further refined once an evaluation team is on board, with a careful review of the purpose and key questions and corresponding elaboration of methodology. This is particularly the case for items 7.0 to 7.9 and 8.4 to 8.6 as described below:

UNICEF- Adapted UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference		
Evaluation Title:		
Commissioning Office:		
1. Evaluation Purpose		
1.0	The Terms Of Reference specifies the purpose of the evaluation and how it will be used.	
1.1	The TOR references the mandate for the conduct of the evaluation.	
1.2	The purpose of the evaluation identified in the TOR clearly states why the evaluation is being done, including justification for why it is being done at this time.	
1.3	The TOR identifies the primary and secondary audiences for the evaluation and how the evaluation will be useful ¹ .	
2. Evaluation Objectives²		
2.0	The Terms Of Reference includes clearly defined, relevant and feasible objectives.	
2.1	The evaluation objective(s) clearly follow from the overall purpose of the evaluation.	
2.2	The TOR evaluation objectives are realistic and achievable, in light of the information that can be collected in the context of the undertaking.	
3. Evaluation Context		
3.0	The Terms Of Reference includes sufficient and relevant contextual information.	
3.1	The TOR adequately describes the particular political, programmatic and governance environment in which the evaluation will be taking place. For example, the most relevant aspects of the economic, social and political context are described.	
3.2	The TOR adequately describes the most relevant programmatic and/or thematic aspects relevant to the evaluation.	

4. Evaluation Scope		
4.0	The Terms of Reference includes the scope of the evaluation.	
4.1	The TOR explicitly and clearly defines what will and will not be covered, including, for example, the timeframe, phase in the project and/or geographical area to be covered by the evaluation.	
4.2	The scope of the evaluation is adequate to meet the stated evaluation objective(s).	
4.3	The scope of the evaluation is feasible given resources and time considerations.	
5. Evaluation Criteria		
5.0	The Terms of Reference specifies the criteria that will be utilized to guide the evaluation.	
5.1	The TOR specifies the evaluation criteria against which the subject to be evaluated will be assessed, including, for example, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and/or sustainability, human rights based approach, and results based management.	
5.2	The TOR spells out any additional criteria of relevance to the particular type of evaluation being undertaken, such as evaluations of development, humanitarian response, and normative programmes.	
6. Tailored Evaluation Questions		
6.0	The Terms of Reference includes a comprehensive and tailored set of evaluation questions within the framework of the evaluation criteria.	
6.1	The TOR contains a set of evaluation questions that are directly related to both the objectives of the evaluation and the criteria against which the subject will be assessed.	
6.2	The set of evaluation questions adds further detail to the objectives and contributes to further defining the scope.	
6.3	The set of evaluation questions is comprehensive enough that they raise the most pertinent evaluation questions, while at the same time being concise enough to provide users with a clear overview of the evaluation's objectives.	
6.4	Factoring in the information that will be collected and the context of the evaluation, evidence backed answers to the set of evaluation questions is achievable.	

7. Methodology		
7.0	The Terms of Reference specifies the methods for data collection and analysis, including information on the overall methodological design	
7.1	The TOR contains a clear and accessible methodological plan. Preferably, a standalone section that is clearly delineated from other information contained in the TOR.	
7.2	The TOR states the overall methodological approach and design for the evaluation. Examples of approaches include participatory, utilization-focused, theory-based and gender and human rights responsive. Examples of overall design include non- experimental, quasi-experimental and experimental.	
7.3	Existing information sources, such as monitoring systems and/or previous evaluations are identified. An appraisal of quality and reliability is provided.	
7.3	The data collection and analysis methods in the TOR are sufficiently rigorous to assess the subject of the evaluation and ensure a complete, fair and unbiased assessment. For example, there will be sufficient data to address all evaluation questions.	
7.4	The evaluation methodology includes multiple methods (triangulation); preferably with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data and with a range of stakeholders covered by the data collection methods.	
7.5	Logical and explicit linkages are provided between data sources, data collection methods and analysis methods. For example, sampling plans are included.	
7.6	The evaluation methodology takes into account the overall purpose of the evaluation, as well as the needs of the users and other stakeholders.	
7.7	The evaluation methodology explicitly and clearly states the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods.	
7.8	The TOR specifies that the evaluation will follow UNEG norms and standards for evaluations, as well as ethical guidelines.	
8. Evaluation Work Plan		
8.0	The Terms of Reference includes a work plan	
8.1	The TOR work plan states the list of products that will be delivered by the evaluation team. The evaluation report must be compliant with UNICEF-Adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standard.	

8.2	The TOR work plan describes the key stages of the evaluation process and the project time line. Consider for example meetings, consultations, workshops with different groups of stakeholders, key points of interaction with a steering committee, process for verification of findings with key stakeholders, presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations	
8.3	The TOR work plan establishes clear roles and responsibilities for evaluation team members, the commissioning organization and other stakeholders in the evaluation process.	
8.4	The TOR work plan describes the evaluation quality assurance process.	
8.5	The TOR work plan describes the process, if any, for obtaining and incorporating evaluation comments on a draft evaluation report.	
8.6	The TOR work plan includes an evaluation project budget.	
9. Gender and Human Rights, including child rights		
9.0	The Terms of Reference specifies how Human Rights, including child rights and gender perspective, will be incorporated in the evaluation design.	
9.1	The TOR indicates both duty bearers and rights holders (particularly women and other groups subject to discrimination) as primary users of the evaluation and how they will be involved in the evaluation process.	
9.2	The TOR spells out the relevant instruments or policies on human rights, including child rights and gender equality that will guide the evaluation process.	
9.3	The TOR includes an assessment of relevant human rights, including child rights and gender equality, aspects through the selection of the evaluation criteria and questions.	
9.4	The TOR specifies an evaluation approach and data collection and analysis methods that are human rights based, including child rights based and gender sensitive, and for evaluation data to be disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, disability, etc.	
9.5	The TOR defines the level of expertise needed among the evaluation team on gender equality and human rights, including child rights, and their responsibilities in this regard and calls for a gender balanced and culturally diverse team that makes use of national/regional evaluation expertise.	

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