



UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports

Approved at the UNEG AGM 2010, this quality checklist for evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports serves as a guideline for UNEG members in the design and conduct of evaluations.

Based on the UNEG norms and standards for evaluation, this checklist includes critical indicators for a high-quality evaluation terms of reference and inception report.

UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Terms of Reference and Inception Reports		
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.	

¹ Executive Summary: Critical elements are listed in UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System ([UNEG/FN/Standards\[2005\]](#)), page 18, Standard 4.2, Number 3.

² The “object” of the evaluation is the intervention (outcome, programme, project, group of projects, themes, soft assistance) that is (are) the focus of the evaluation and evaluation results presented in the report.

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.	
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.	
5.3	The scope of the evaluation is feasible given resources and time considerations.	
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 ³ .	

³ UNEG Standards: Evaluations should be "based on empirically verified evidence that is valid and reliable.

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	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 outputs that will be delivered by the evaluation team, including information on the degree to which the evaluation report will be accessible to stakeholders, including the public.	
8.2	The TOR work plan describes the key stages of the evaluation process and the project time line.	
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 evaluand comments on a draft evaluation report.	
8.6	The TOR work plan includes an evaluation project budget.	
9. Gender and Human Rights		
9.0	The Terms of Reference specifies how a human 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 and gender equality that will guide the evaluation process.	
9.3	The TOR includes an assessment of relevant human 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 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 and their responsibilities in this regard and calls for a gender balanced and culturally diverse team that makes use of national/regional evaluation expertise.	